

Online Reviews: How to Get Good Ones and Fix the Bad Ones

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Agenda

- Why you need online reviews
- Which review sites you should focus on:
 - Google
 - Yelp
 - Facebook
- How to remove negative reviews
- How to get more positive reviews
 - Manual & Automation



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FINALLY!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!



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The FTC Just Banned Fake Reviews


- The Federal Trade Commission issued a new rule targeting fake reviews and testimonials
- Violations can lead to civil penalties up to \$53,088 per violation
- The rule targets deceptive practices such as fake reviews, undisclosed insider reviews, and review suppression
- The goal is to protect consumers and create fair competition



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Practices That Are Now Explicitly Prohibited


- The FTC rule bans several deceptive review practices:
 - Creating or buying **fake reviews**
 - Paying for reviews **without proper disclosure**
 - **Employees or insiders posting reviews without disclosure**
 - Suppressing negative reviews
 - Operating fake review websites that appear independent
 - Using fake indicators of influence (fake followers, fake engagement)



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Why This Matters for Home Care Agencies


- Common mistakes agencies make:
 - ✗ Asking caregivers to leave Google reviews
 - ✗ Having office staff post reviews to boost ratings
 - ✗ Offering incentives only for **positive reviews**
- Why this is risky:
 - Employees are considered "**insiders**"
 - Reviews must disclose the relationship
 - Otherwise it can be considered **deceptive marketing**
- This can trigger **FTC penalties and platform violations.**



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Google's Review Policy: Conflict of Interest


- Google prohibits reviews from people **affiliated with the business**.
- This includes:
 - ✗ Employees or caregivers → (Go with Indeed & Glassdoor)
 - ✗ Owners or managers
 - ✗ Friends or family members of staff
 - ✗ Anyone with a **conflict of interest**
- Even if the reviewer **discloses the relationship**, the review **still violates Google's policy**.
- Google expects reviews to come from **real customer experiences**.



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What This Means for Home Care Agencies

- Do **NOT** ask for reviews from:
 - ✗ Caregivers (Indeed and Glassdoor are fine)
 - ✗ Office staff
 - ✗ Owners or managers
 - ✗ Friends or family of staff
 - ✗ Anyone paid or incentivized to leave a review
- Instead request reviews from:
 - ✓ Client families
 - ✓ Clients receiving care
 - ✓ Former clients or families
 - ✓ Referral partners who interacted with your agency
 - ✓ Hospital discharge planners
 - ✓ Case managers or social workers



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How Google Is Using AI to Fight Fake Reviews

- **Suspicious reviewer behavior**
(example: accounts leaving many reviews across different cities quickly)
- **Unusual review patterns**
(example: sudden spikes of 5-star reviews)
- **Spam or generic language**
(example: identical or repetitive comments)
- **Coordinated review activity**

• Google's AI systems automatically **flag, filter, and remove suspicious reviews** to keep business information trustworthy.



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Importance of Reviews



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The Importance of Reviews

- 80% of American consumers say they trust online reviews as much as personal recommendations*
- 80% already know they will do business with you when they contact you — if you have good reviews


**BrightLocal survey*



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Consumers do most of their initial research online, even if a potential lead came from **offline** or a **referral**

Consumers **do** Google You

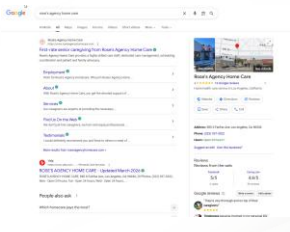



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Google Search

Reviews show up prominently on search engines

Google your own business

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AI Is Now Reading Reviews to Recommend Businesses

- Tools like **ChatGPT, Gemini, and other AI assistants** are increasingly helping families research services, including home care.
- When someone asks AI:
 - "What is the best home care agency near me?"
- AI often looks at signals such as:
 - Online **reviews and ratings**
 - Review **volume and sentiment**
 - What families say about their **experience**
 - Consistency of positive feedback across platforms
- This means your **online reputation is now training the AI that recommends you.**



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Beware

- Beware Reputation Management companies!**
 - They can't literally "push down" or hide negative reviews on search engine results pages (SERPs)
 - They can't help to get negative reviews removed
 - They can't **legitimately** post positive fake reviews for you — that will only get you into serious trouble

Take matters into your own hands!




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Top Review Sites

<p><u>Drive Reviews & Monitor</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Google • Facebook • Yelp • Caring.com, etc 	<p><u>Monitor</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BBB • YP • SuperPages
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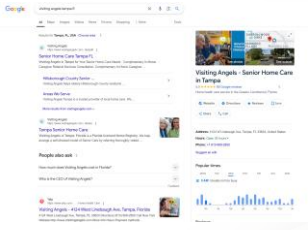

Why Is Yelp Getting Too Big To Be Ignored?




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Google Organic

Yelp shows up prominently on Google Search






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Google Organic

Yelp reviews are **highly ranked** on Google = **free leads**

Yelp also indirectly gets leads **from** Google

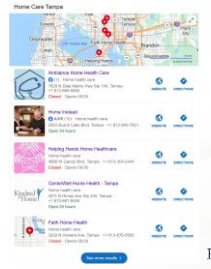




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Bing/Yahoo

Local Search reviews are pulled **directly** from Yelp

If a business has both Facebook and Yelp reviews, Bing may choose the source with more reviews or higher engagement (e.g., frequent updates, user interactions).

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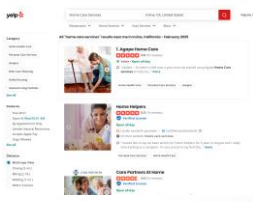

Competition

Your competition is getting **free leads** from Yelp.com

The Yelp algorithm is mostly based on:

1. **Number** of reviews
2. **Distance** from physical location

Get **more reviews than your competition** to be highly ranked on Yelp

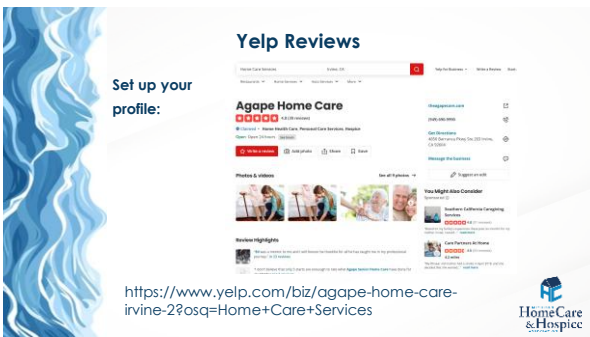
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How Does the Yelp Filter Work?


- Filters out most reviews from people who are **not** active/regular Yelpers (Yelp puts far more trust in reviews by consistent Yelpers)
 - Little to no history of using Yelp account to look up businesses
 - Incomplete profile
 - Few reviews and/or few friends
- Filters out reviews that use **profanity**
- Not permanent filter (Automated software)
- Largely prevents business owners from leaving **5-star reviews for themselves** or **1-star reviews for competitors**



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How To Prevent Yelp Filters

- It's impossible to control who will be leaving you reviews
 - Focus on quantity (simply accept that **25-30%** will be filtered)
 - Yelp Elite Member** reviews will **not** be filtered
- Don't use the same IP address you registered for Yelp Business Account
 
- Don't have multiple reviews from same IP address (e.g., your dental office)
 - Make sure customers use **their own internet connection** when they are at your location
- Don't have lots of reviews arrive over a short time frame



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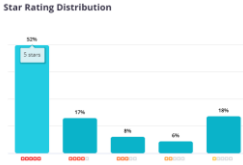

Reviews

MYTH: most Yelp reviews are negative

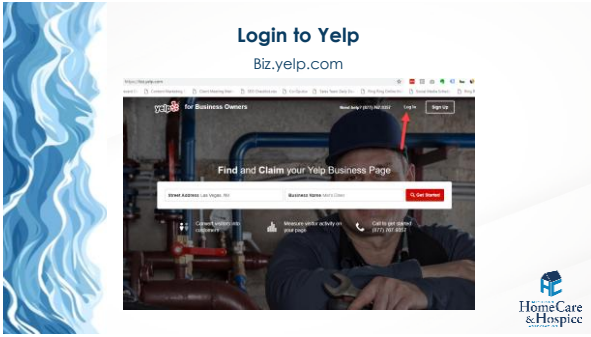
FACT: most Yelp reviews are **positive** (69% are either four or five stars)

It's normal to have negative reviews!

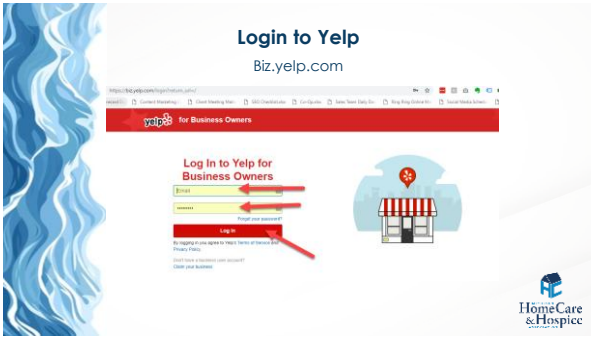
- They provide feedback for improvement
- If it looks **suspicious** when you don't have negative reviews

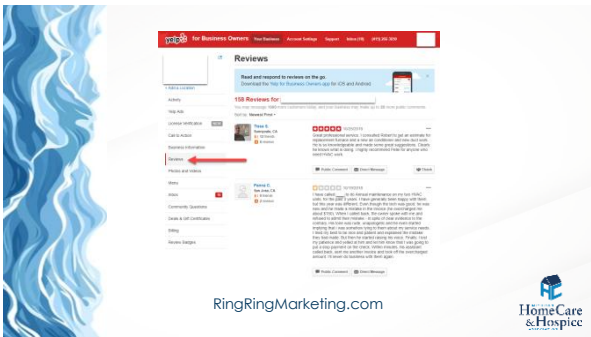
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Positive Reviews

Paul G.
Palo Alto, CA
1 review

★★★★★ 11/12/2018

You had our new heating, AC, and...
The support I am now writing this...
inspector call underneath the floor...
about me said that the junctions were perfect, the insulation was...
clean and intact, and that the ducts were secured in such a way that...
nothing was blowing on the dirt. They had even made sure that...
there was room to breathe.

I know the HVAC installation was beautifully done, but I don't do...
great service, and never checked the work done before. I was...
excellent feedback to get - 3 YEARS LATER - and I wanted to share...
it, so that those looking for HVAC work will know that Pulse Heating...
& Air will do excellent work.

In addition, there were other companies that told me the original job...
would take several weeks to complete, but Pulse did it last day...
ONCE they start a job, they have a same crew working until...
completion. I'd give them 10 stars if I could! Well done, Pulse!

Public Comment Direct Message Thank

1. Respond privately to thank the reviewer
2. Share the review

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Positive Reviews

Share the review:

Share review

Share on Facebook Share on Twitter

<http://www.yelp.com/updates/heating-and-air-conditioning-com-2>

OR

Your Name

Your Email

To: Email address

Add a note

Send

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Yelp Negative Review

Panna C.
San Jose, CA
19 reviews
2 reviews

★★★★★ 10/19/2016

I have called... to do Annual maintenance on my two HVAC...
units, for the past 3 years. I have generally been happy with them...
but this year was different. Even though the tech was good, he was...
new and he made a mistake in the invoice (he overcharged me...
about \$100). When I called back, the owner spoke with me and...
refused to admit their mistake - in spite of clear evidence to the...
contrary. His tone was rude, unapologetic and he even started...
implying that I was somehow lying to them about my service needs...
(I had my best to be nice and patient and explained the mistake...
they had made. But then he started raising his voice. Finally, I lost...
my patience and yelled at him and let him know that I was going to...
put a stop payment on the check. Within minutes, his assistant...
called back, sent me another invoice and took off the overcharged...
amount. I'll never do business with them again.

Public Comment Direct Message

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How to Handle Severely Negative Reviews

Severely negative (particularly one-star) reviews obviously are **very harmful** to your Home Care's reputation

1. If it's a legitimate criticism, **fix the issue** (if possible) that prompted the negative review and work with the reviewer to either get the review removed or at least get an updated review/improved rating
2. Get as many **positive reviews** as possible to **mitigate the damage** of negative reviews and **improve your overall rating**




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Process Flow

Step 0: Cool Down

Step 1: Direct Message

- Reach out to the reviewer right away
- Call AND Email

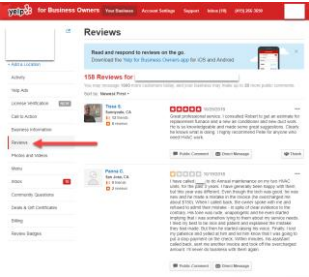

Step 2: Public Comment

Step 3: Flag

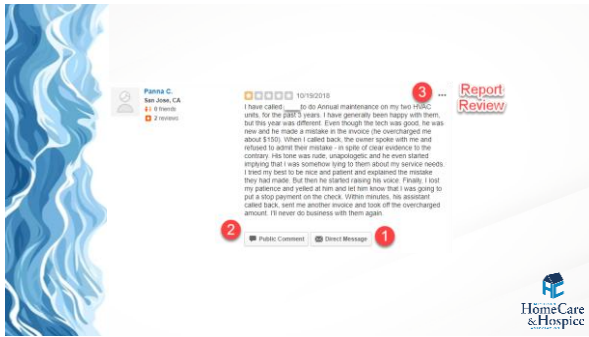
RingRingMarketing.com



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Step 3: Flag for Review

Step 3: If the review clearly is false/unfair/not legitimate and attempts to reach the review's author fail, you can **flag it for review** by Yelp:

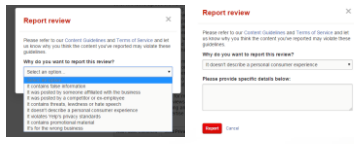




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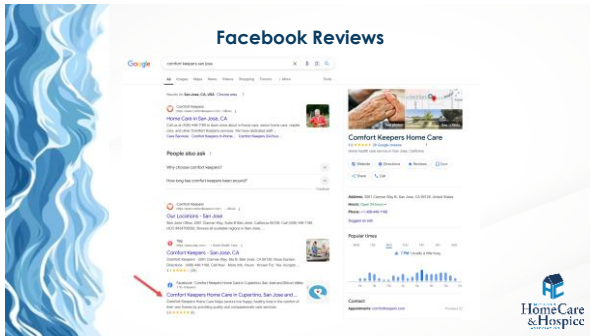
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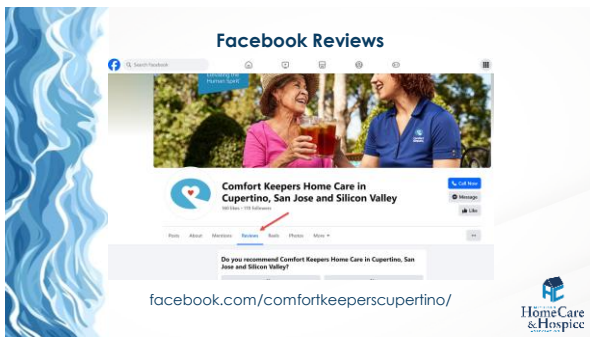
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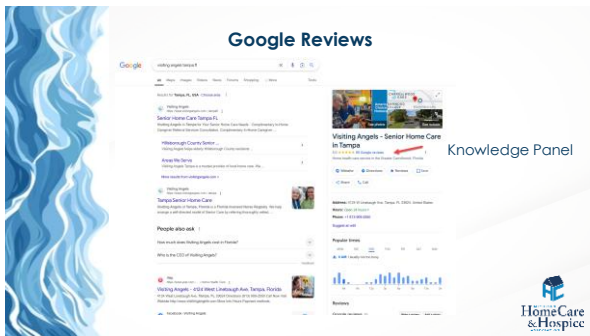
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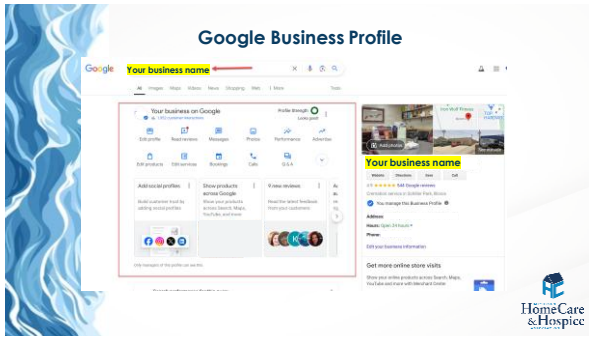
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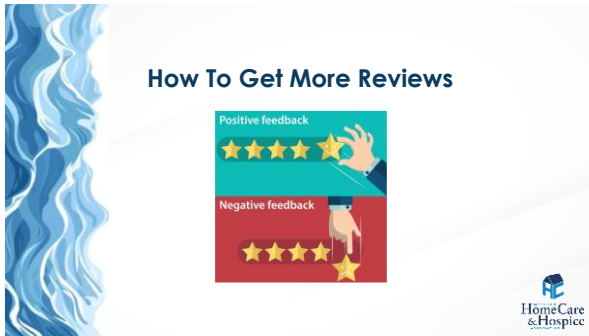
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Yelp Crackdown (October 2017)

- Yelp wants reviews to be unbiased
- Not allowed to "Ask" for reviews



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How to Get More Reviews

- It's a numbers game: 1 out of 10 will leave a review
- **Ask** in person
- **Call** after service
- **Send** a thank-you email
- **QR Codes**
- Use automation: survey tools

Don't bribe or incentivize:
that violates terms & conditions



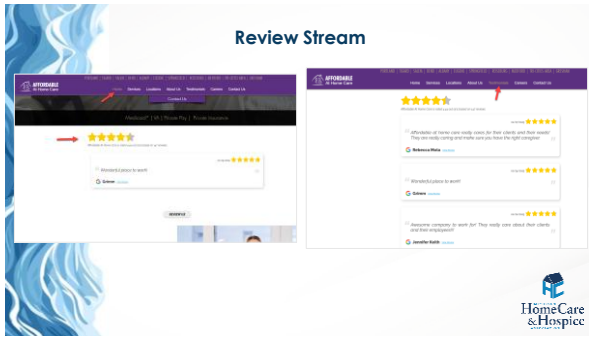
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Monitor Reviews + Instant Email Alerts

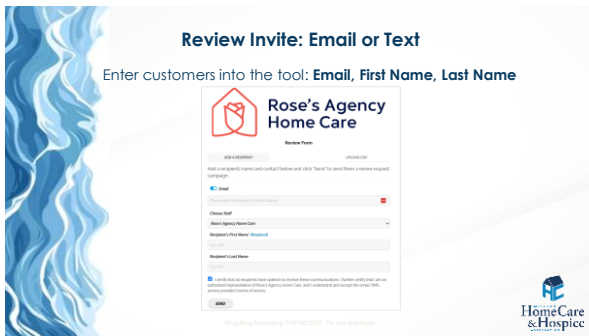
Respond to any negative reviews **right away**.



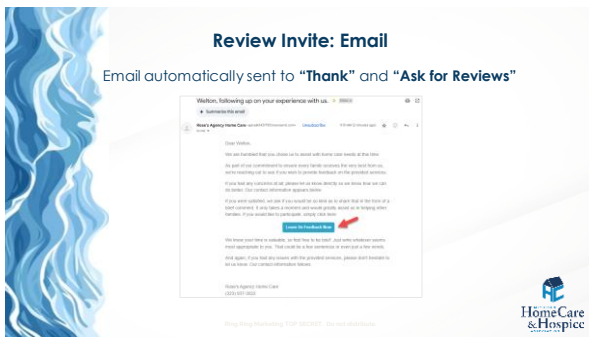
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