



FREE GUIDE · NO EMAIL REQUIRED

Getting reviews that actually come in.

Most businesses ask badly, once, at the wrong moment. Here is the ask, the timing, the exact words, and what to do about the bad one.

Reviews are the cheapest marketing that exists and the one almost every small business is passively bad at. Not because the customers are unwilling. Because nobody asks them properly, at the right moment, with a link they can actually tap.

“Ask at the peak, not at the end. The peak is usually earlier than you think.”

The moment

The peak is the moment the customer is happiest, and it is almost never when they are paying. It is when the thing works. When the food arrives. When they see the finished job. When you solved the problem they walked in with. That is a window of about ten minutes and it closes.

The three-step ask that works

1. **Ask in person, first, out loud.** A cold link gets ignored. A link after a real human asked does not. This step is the whole thing.
2. **Send the link the same day**, by text if you can, while they still remember your face.
3. **Make it one tap.** Get the short review link from your Google dashboard, save it in your phone notes, and send just that. Never make someone search for you.

The words

SITUATION	WHAT TO SAY
In person	Really glad that worked out. If you have a minute this week, a Google review makes a huge difference for a small shop like us. I can text you the link right now if that's easier?
By text, same day	Hey [name], thanks again for coming in today. If you've got 30 seconds, here's the review link: [link]. No pressure at all, but it genuinely helps us.

NEVER DO THESE

Never offer a discount, freebie or entry into a draw in exchange for a review. It violates Google's policies and can get your reviews removed or your listing suspended. Never buy reviews. Never write them yourself, or ask staff to. One bought review is worth less than none, and the risk is the entire listing.

Reply to every single one

Replies are public and permanent, and the person reading them is not the reviewer. It is the stranger deciding between you and the shop down the road, six months from now. Write for them.

REVIEW TYPE	WHAT A GOOD REPLY DOES
Glowing	Thank them by name, mention the specific thing they mentioned, invite them back. Three lines.
Good but qualified	Thank them, acknowledge the qualifier honestly, say what you did about it.
Bad but fair	Apologise once, state the fact, offer to fix it, give a direct way to reach you.
Bad and unfair	Stay calm, correct the record once, factually, and stop. Do not argue twice.

The bad review, handled

A bad review is not a disaster. A profile with nothing but five stars reads as fake to most people. What damages you is a bad review with no reply, or a defensive one.

DO	DO NOT
Reply within a week	Reply while angry
Apologise for their experience	Apologise for something you did not do
State one fact if the account is wrong	List every fact and relitigate the whole thing
Offer a direct contact to resolve it	Argue in public more than once
Fix the thing if they were right	Ask them to take the review down

THE REPLY TEMPLATE

Thanks for taking the time to write this, [name], and I'm sorry your visit didn't go the way it should have. [One factual sentence about what happened or what has changed.] I'd genuinely like to make it right. You can reach me directly at [email or phone] and I'll sort it out.

Make asking automatic

- ☐ Save the short review link in your phone notes, in a text shortcut, and printed on the counter.
- ☐ Put it in your email signature and on the receipt or invoice.
- ☐ Pick one person on the team whose job it is to ask, and tell them it is genuinely part of the job.
- ☐ Set a weekly reminder to check for new reviews and reply to them.
- ☐ Track it: how many did you ask this week, and how many landed?

A realistic target

Roughly one in ten people you ask properly will actually leave a review. So five new reviews a month means asking about fifty people. That sounds like a lot until you realise it is two or three asks a day, and that in a year it puts you ahead of every competitor in town who never asked at all.

REVIEWS YOU HAVE	WHAT IT SIGNALS TO A STRANGER
0 to 5	Either new, or nobody cares enough to say anything
10 to 30	A real business that people actually use
50 plus, recent	The obvious choice, before they have even read one

Recency matters as much as volume. Thirty reviews with the newest from 2022 reads worse than twelve with three from this month. A slow, steady trickle beats a burst followed by silence, which is the same rule as everything else in this business.