



How to Effectively Manage Your Property's Online Reputation

A guide to managing reviews and maintaining
a strong online presence



A publication of **updater.**



Table of Contents

Introduction	2-3
Control the Conversation Around Your Property	4-5
“We got a review! Now what?”	6-8
Public Comment vs. Private Message	9-10
A must read!	
 Life-Saving Email Templates	11-14
The Do’s and Don’ts of Responding to Online Reviews	15
Takeaways	16



Introduction



Your residents may consider your property an oasis and your site teams may consider it a well-oiled machine, but a single scathing review can tarnish your otherwise glowing reputation. How can your property combat negative publicity, stand out to prospective residents, and boost retention? Is there a secret?

Two words:

Online Reputation.

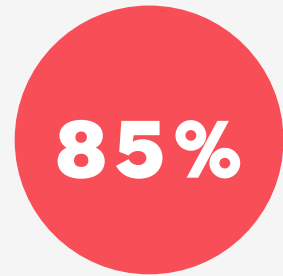


Your online reputation is based on what potential residents see on the internet — your website, the social networks you use, the amenities you advertise (and how), and so on. All of these pieces fit together to craft your online presence. Ultimately, your online reputation is defined by how trustworthy and put-together folks perceive you to be. This directly impacts your bottom line.

We're here to help you build and/or maintain an awesome online reputation. With this eBook, you'll learn how to:

- **Defend** your brand against negative reviews
- **Amplify** the power of positive reviews
- **Leverage** knowledge against your competitors to win your market

Let's get to it!



**of consumers
use the Internet
to find local
businesses.**

(Source: Yelp)





Control the Conversation Around Your Property



IF YOU DON'T STEER THE ONLINE CONVERSATION AROUND YOUR PROPERTY, SOMEONE ELSE WILL. THAT'S WHY IT'S IMPORTANT TO TAKE STEPS NECESSARY TO GAIN CONTROL, ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY, AND WIN THE HEARTS AND MINDS OF PROSPECTIVE RESIDENTS.

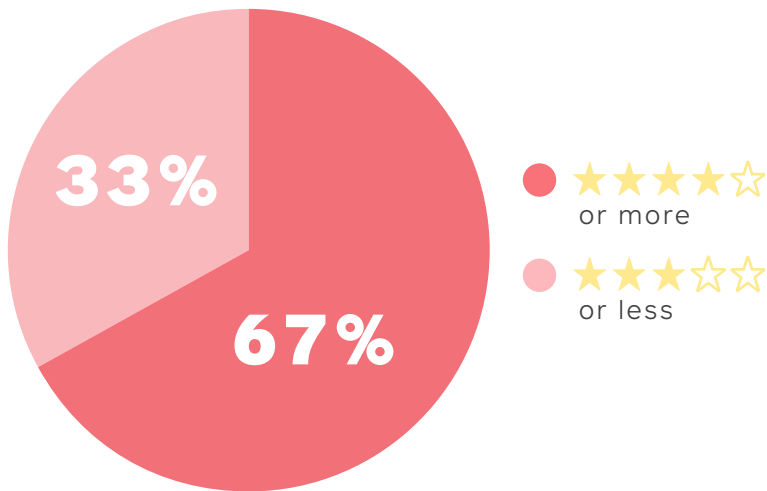
Yelp, Zillow, ApartmentRatings.com, and even your own website can make or break the decisions of prospective residents. That's why your property likely spends hours upon hours (and marketing dollars) working to maintain a great reputation. So it's natural to feel frustrated when an online complaint is lodged against your property. Despite your best efforts, your property may not always be a hit with everyone.



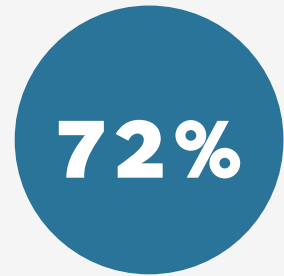
While Updater certainly can't guarantee positive reviews in the future, we can guarantee a better defense. We can equip you with best practices for both proactive and reactive measures to protect your property's unique brand and online reputation.

Note: It's important to stay positive! Though it may feel bleak at times, Yelp reports that 67% of its 71 million reviews are 4+ star reviews. (Source: Yelp)

TOTAL YELP REVIEWS



Which brings us to...



72%
of consumers trust
online reviews as
much as personal
recommendations
from real people.

(Source: Search Engine Land)





“We got a review! Now what?”



SCORE!

The good news is that people are talking about your business. But in order to take action or repeat positive processes as a result of a review, it's important to:

- *Read* the review; don't *speed* through it
- Understand the feeling being expressed
- Practice empathy for the resident's experience with your property

Once you've carefully read through the review and understood what's being expressed, you can use the following workflows to figure out the best course of action.

82%

of small business owners have said their main source of new business is referrals.

(Source: Constant Contact)



YOU RECEIVED A POSITIVE REVIEW...



... and you've interacted with the resident personally.

Respond publicly to the review. In your response, show appreciation with personalized language.

... and you don't have personal input.

Respond privately to show appreciation. Keep it short, but be sure to thank them for taking the time to give positive feedback.

Giving thanks (publicly or privately) shows your brand's character and proves your professional demeanor is aligned with your strong values as a people-first community. Most importantly, it displays a level of professionalism that should make a prospective resident want to sign with you. Remember, if you exude professionalism from the get-go (and particularly when you're shown gratitude or when things go wrong), prospective residents will have reason to believe in your integrity. They will trust you to care for them throughout their time at your property.



PRO-TIP: If you got it, flaunt it. Highlight positive reviews on your social media channels and property website to help advertise your community and inspire people to check you out. In fact, many review sites make it easy for to embed reviews right on your site. And in some cases, you can even showcase aggregated review scores.





YOU RECEIVED AN UNFAVORABLE REVIEW...

... and there's a legitimate issue.

It's easy for even the best of intentions to get lost in translation online. Respond publicly, address their concerns, and encourage offline communication as a means of reaching a resolution.

Let them know that you'll be reaching out directly. It's easier to understand the scope of the situation and respond correctly on a call or in person.

... and it's a rant (or downright false).


Respond privately first. Then put on your sleuthing cap and try to hunt down the reason for the terrible review.

If the trail runs cold, don't panic. Politely respond to the reviewer publicly, noting that you've reached out and that you still want to understand their experience. Prospective residents who read the review and see your attempts at communication will take note of your sincerity.

... and there has been a miscommunication.

Respond publicly. If applicable, take a moment to reiterate your property's policies and procedures. Also, clarify any inaccuracies present in the review in a polite, non-accusatory manner.

Remember: a calm, thoughtful response is more likely to be met with a positive reaction.

 **PRO-TIP:** Having problems penning a response? Check out page 11 for life-saving (and time-saving) email templates!



Public Comment vs. Private Message



SO GENERALLY SPEAKING, YOU HAVE THREE OPTIONS FOR RESPONDING TO AN ONLINE REVIEW:

- Privately offline
- Privately online
- Publicly online

Knowing the best course of action for every scenario can be difficult. Follow the guidelines below to make the right call for every review.



WHEN TO RESPOND PUBLICLY

- 1 When you want to update the status of communications with a reviewer or clarify comments in a review. It's perfectly acceptable to use this time to update the online community on changes to the review.

Always be kind. You never know which review a potential resident may read; you can only control your side of the conversation.

- 2 After a great exchange with a reviewer. This is a good opportunity to let your reviewer know that you remember and appreciate them. Thanking them for choosing your community and sending them well wishes will get you remembered for all the right reasons.

- 3 If you receive a “bad” review.

It's important to show competency in your resident relations through your response. Practice penning the perfect response to a disgruntled resident in order to craft a response that's as articulate and courteous as possible.

WHEN TO RESPOND PRIVATELY

- 1 After receiving a positive review.

Send a short, sweet message that will remind them why they were happy with your property in the first place and further solidify your relationship with that resident.

- 2 If you receive a questionable or negative review, a private message can serve as an introduction to the resolution, at which point you can gather more information *before* connecting with the reviewer offline.

Do your research!

PRO TIP: Don't be afraid to make a message to a reviewer personal. Be sure to include important information like when you'll be reaching out, or asking for their phone number for a follow-up call. And if a bad review reached a positive resolution, politely ask the reviewer to consider removing their negative review.

Your ultimate goal is to contribute to your property's success and pristine reputation. Sometimes, that means handling your brand one review at a time.



Life-Saving Email Templates



YOU'VE JUST READ YOUR LATEST REVIEW...

And you're completely at a loss for words. Below, we've included some truly life-saving email templates to cover all of your common concerns.



The Ideal Customer Review



The Damaged/Stolen Goods Review



The Profoundly Unhappy Camper Review



The No Good, Very Late Maintenance Review



The Team Member with a "Bad Attitude" Review



THE IDEAL CUSTOMER REVIEW

Hi (Reviewer's Name),

Thank you for taking time out of your busy day to leave us great feedback! Our site team works hard to make sure you feel at home at our property, and we pledge to you that we'll never stop improving our amenities and services to make sure you always feel that way.

Thanks again!

Best,

(Your Name)

Property Manager

(555) 555-5555



THE NO GOOD, VERY LATE MAINTENANCE REVIEW

Dear (Reviewer's Name),

I'm so sorry that you've had to deal with added stress to an already stressful situation. At (property name), we pride ourselves on values that support our residents and their everyday needs. We don't condone late facilities support and take such a matter very seriously.

As a next step, I'd like to reach out to you over the phone to see how we can rectify the situation. Please let me know the best time and number to reach you.

Best,

(Your Name)

Property Manager

(555) 555-5555



THE DAMAGED/STOLEN GOODS REVIEW

Dear (Reviewer's Name),

While we're happy that you've generally enjoyed your time at our property, we're disappointed your experience with our on-site storage wasn't perfect. Our mission is to keep your belongings safe and secure, and I'm very sorry some of yours were **damaged/stolen**.

Unfortunately, only renters insurance covers a percentage of your lost or stolen belongings — whether they're at home or with you on your travels. Still, I would love to try to rectify the situation. Please let me know the best time and number to reach you, and I'll be in touch.

Thank you for moving with us!

Best,

(Your Name)

Property Manager

(555) 555-5555



THE TEAM MEMBER WITH A "BAD ATTITUDE" REVIEW

(Reviewer's Name),

I'm deeply sorry for the poor service you received.

Our property has never tolerated behavioral issues with any team member, and will not make an exception for this individual. We have since spoken to the them and are handling the situation accordingly.

I'd like to apologize to you more formally on behalf of our entire community. Please message me with your number and the best time to reach you.

Best,

(Your Name)

Property Manager

(555) 555-5555



THE PROFOUNDLY UNHAPPY CAMPER REVIEW

(Reviewer's Name),

This is the first I've heard of your negative experience, and I'd like to offer my deepest apologies. We do our best to stand for excellent service at (property name), and we don't take your review lightly.

I would like to speak with you as soon as possible in order to fully understand the scope of this experience and work with you to determine how we can rectify the situation.

Please message me with your phone number, and I will gladly reach out so we can come to a resolution.

Best,

(Your Name)

Property Manager

(555) 555-5555



The Do's and Dont's of Responding to Online Reviews



DO'S

- ✓ Always take a polite, thoughtful tone with your audience.
- ✓ Upload a professional picture of yourself for display. Your face humanizes your property as a whole.
- ✓ Write to residents on a one-on-one basis and not as a team (especially if you, the property manager, are reaching out personally).
- ✓ Conclude with your name, your title, and a contact number.
- ✓ Encourage unhappy residents to reach out to you offline. Ask to call them.
- ✓ Always reread your responses before you send them.
- ✓ Follow up cordially a couple of days after your initial response.
- ✓ Speak to the reviewer — not the readers.
- ✓ Take responsibility immediately when problems arise.
- ✓ Write a message that feels personal, never robotic.



DONT'S

- ⊘ Don't send anything that can come across as defensive or publicly accusational to a reviewer.
- ⊘ Don't mock the reviewer's comments or insinuate fault on their behalf.
- ⊘ Don't leave lengthy explanations or justifications to your reviewer's problem or unique situation.
- ⊘ Don't make yourself sound like the good guy for a reviewer who didn't accept compensation for a bad or mixed experience.
- ⊘ Don't blame technology or glitches for your shortcomings.
- ⊘ Don't try to reason, threaten, or take only partial responsibility for a negative experience.

If you believe a review, message, or photo is in violation of the platform's guidelines, you can flag the content for the platform support team to review.



Businesses who have 1-5 reviews and 10 photos get 200% more user views than businesses with the same number of reviews and no photos (Source: Yelp).



Takeaways

At the end of the day, the most effective way to stand out online (aside from offering Updater) is to control the conversation around your brand. Your online reputation is the greatest way that you can differentiate your property from the competition. With what you've learned thus far, you're better equipped to set the right tone to attract prospective residents and provide greater value to current residents.

LEARN A BIT MORE ABOUT UPDATER

In case you're not familiar with Updater, we're a customized web app that helps your residents save time on moving-related tasks. Think of us as your in-house moving concierge or amenity. Residents can seamlessly transfer utilities, update thousands of accounts and records, forward mail, find a moving company, send digital moving announcements, and much more. Best of all, we build a version of our app that's completely branded for your property, reminding your residents that you're there every step of the move.

But what do online reviews have to do with Updater? Simply put, our goal is to make you look like a can-do hero, whether that's by simplifying your residents' moving experience or helping you generate more online reviews. By offering Updater to your residents, you'll generate more positive online reviews from residents who rave about this awesome service that has saved them hours of time — right when they need it most. Plus, with more reviews, you'll consistently retain current residents and become inherently more enticing to prospective residents in the process.

Apply what you've learned here, and you'll be well on your way toward crafting a positive, prolific online presence, improving your resident experience, and winning over new residents one 5-star review at a time.

[Learn More](#)



Sources

- <https://biz.yelp.com/blog/two-great-reasons-to-upload-photos-to-your-yelp-business-page-today>
- <http://news.constantcontact.com/press-release/customer-engagement-major-focus-small-business-technology-according-constant-contact-t>
- <http://searchengineland.com/study-72-of-consumers-trust-online-reviews-as-much-as-personal-recommendations-114152>
- <https://biz.yelp.com/blog/your-reviews-on-yelp-focus-on-the-positive>
- <https://biz.yelp.com/blog/survey-85-of-consumers-use-the-internet-to-find-local-businesses>