

10 Best Practices for Asking Your Customers for Google Places Reviews

All your customers need to write you a review is that one-page handout. But keeping in mind a few best-practices can help you get more reviews, better reviews, more local visibility in Google Places, and ultimately more customers and profits.

1. Don't expect every customer to write you a review. It's *always* a numbers game.
2. Ask your customers in the most unobtrusive way possible. People appreciate a no-pressure demeanor. Generally, you should avoid offering incentives, or customers will write you an insincere review just to get the prize.
3. Unless *all* of your customers seem really happy (quite possible), only ask your most satisfied customers for reviews.
4. Don't tell your customers exactly what to write or how many stars to rate you. If they aren't sure what to write, give them a couple of examples, but make it very clear you don't want to put words in their mouths.
5. Make asking for reviews a habit, not a chore. Don't put it off for weeks and then try to ask 30 customers in one day. It's harder on you, and red flags go off at Google when more than a handful of reviews appear at once.
6. When possible, ask your customers how they'd prefer the handout: as a hardcopy or in an email.
7. *If* possible, casually ask your customers how easy it was for them to write you a review. The easier it is for them, the more and better reviews you'll have. Always look for ways to make it easier for them. (This also helps you gauge how many people actually end up writing reviews.)
8. Check your Google Places listing every couple of weeks. Maintain a rough idea of how many reviews come in.
9. If you're thinking outside the box, you could incorporate the handout into your website. I'd only suggest this if your customers generally visit your site on more than one occasion, and if you have a way of contacting them to ask them to go to your site and follow the instructions there. You could upload the document I gave you and then provide customers with a link to it, or you could turn it into a separate page on your site.
10. When you have a minute, log into your Google Places page and respond to the reviews that customers have written. *IF* there are a couple of duds, just take a deep breath respond, and show everyone what a nice person you are. More likely, you'll have a bunch of very happy reviews from satisfied customers. Take a second to write a one- or two-line reply in which you thank them. This shows that you care about your customers opinions, that you appreciate their high opinions of you, and encourages future customers to write you even more reviews.