THE PROSPEROUS PARTNER

THE BEST
LOYALTY & REWARDS PROGRAMS
FOR SMALL BUSINESSES

Is Your
REPUTATION
Costing You Business?

How to Turn Your
FANS AND FOLLOWERS
INTO PAYING CUSTOMERS

How to Create a
Relationship-Building
AUTORESPONDER SERIES
FOR NEW SUBSCRIBERS

Contents

Welcome To The Prosperous Partner

Thanks for checking out our 65th issue of The Prosperous Partner, your online marketing resource guide for small business. Each month we will be covering topics that resonate with local businesses just like yours.

Our goal is simple. We want to enable you to do big things online, and it all starts by breaking down the complexities of marketing your business online.

It doesn't matter if you're just starting out, or an established business owner in your local community, you can always benefit from increasing your brand's visibility online.

To your Success,

Eddie Hill
Grand Master Prosperite

BROUGHT TO YOU BY

Prosperous Internet Marketing Inc. is the leading small business marketing service in the U.S. for over 8 years. We help small businesses connect with more customers online.

If you want to build your business, you need to market, it's that simple. But you can lose thousands of dollars if you don't know what you are doing. So we urge you to take action with some of the strategies we recommend.

For a more "hands off" approach, we offer affordable solutions and can deliver results. We hope you enjoy this issue of The Prosperous Partner and feel free to reach out to us anytime.

Repeat Business is GOLD!

Here's the Best
LOYALTY PROGRAMS
to Keep Customers Coming Back!

There's plenty of evidence that customer loyalty and reward programs drive sales for businesses of all sizes. 72% of all adults in the US belong to at least one loyalty program, and 87% are willing to have their consumer activity tracked if they get something in exchange.

I've written about the importance of loyalty and reward programs before, but it's time for an update. Technological advances have made loyalty programs more effective than ever.

THE QUALITIES OF AN EFFECTIVE LOYALTY PROGRAM

There's no question that consumers love loyalty programs, but what are the qualities that make a loyalty program desirable? Here are the boxes your program must tick:

➤ A memorable name – after all, you want people to talk about and remember your program. Some good examples are Sephora's Beauty INSIDER program and AMC's Stubs program.

➤ Multiple rewards – the best programs offer a variety of rewards. For example, you might offer free products combined with discounts and admission to members-only events.

➤ A deeper meaning – your loyalty program will work best if it's tied to your company's values. A Good example is TOMS One-for-One program, which pays the reward forward by donating a pair of shoes for each pair that customers buy.

➤ Points with real value – the points your customers earn should have a clear value, which is the way cash back credit card programs are structured.

Within this framework, there's still plenty of room for innovation.

THE BEST REWARDS PROGRAMS

Now, let's talk about how to build your rewards program. We'll take these options in order from low-tech to high-tech.

Punch Cards

A punch card is the least expensive option to put in place and arguably, the least effective. While punch cards are cheap to produce, they are also disposable and don't link to your point of sale or to a customer email. That means the customer must have physical possession of the card to benefit from it. It also means you can't communicate with the customer about their rewards.

If you've got a restaurant or service-based business like a salon or spa punch cards are an effective tool to earn repeat business – and a punch card reward program is better than no loyalty program at all, but it won't get you much beyond surface loyalty. It's all about the data.

Charity Programs

If your company's ethics are part of your brand, then you may want to consider a charity program. I already mentioned TOMS loyalty program, which donates shoes to people in need. Another example is The Body Shop's Love Your Body program which allows members to donate the vouchers they earn.

There's plenty of research to show that younger consumers want to support brands that support charitable causes. Teaming up with a local or national charity could be a good way to encourage them to buy from you.

Points Programs

Points programs are usually linked to a customer via their email or mobile number. They enable customers to earn points each time they buy a product and redeem them against future purchases.

The key to creating a successful point program is to have a clear value assigned to the points you reward and communicate it to your customers. For example. North Face's VIPeak rewards program allows customers to earn 10 points for each dollar spent in stores or online and five points for purchases at their outlet stores. Smile.io logo sells software you can use to manage your points program.

Tiered Programs

Do you want to reward new customers and your most loyal, highest-spending customers according to what they spend? If so, then a tiered program might be right for you.

There are lots of examples of effective tiered programs. I already mentioned beauty retailer Sephora. Their Beauty INSIDER program is the first tier of their rewards program. Members get one point for every $1 they spend. Once they spend more than $250 in a year, they advance to the VIB (Very Important Beauty) tier, where their rewards increase to 1.25 points for each dollar spent, and then to the Rouge tier, where they get 1.5 points. Members of the higher tiers get additional rewards and access to special events, as well.

While tiered programs require a bit more work than regular points programs, they also add levels to incentivize customers to spend more.

Shop > **Earn** > **Redeem**

Paid Programs

Paid programs don't require any more technology than tiered programs, but they are more work because you must convince customers to buy a membership. The most successful example of a paid program is Amazon Prime, which charges an annual fee but offers customers a host of quantifiable rewards, including free two-day shipping and free streaming of Amazon Prime videos.

If you decide to try a paid program, you must make it clear that the benefits of joining outweigh the price. A clearly stated value proposition will ensure that your customers understand what they're getting if they join – and why it's a good idea.

Gamified Programs

It might surprise you to learn that 56% of all loyalty programs employ game mechanics to encourage members to spend more. Of course, gamified programs involve more technology than other rewards programs and cost more money to implement.

The great thing about gamifying your rewards program is that it encourages customers to buy from you and sing the praises of your brand. The best game-based programs reward a variety of behaviors, including:

> In-store purchases
> Social media mentions
> Social sharing
> Online purchases
> Customer reviews
> Referrals

The downside of gamification for some small businesses is that to do it effectively, you need to invest in the technology that allows people to participate. That may mean building an app or partnering with a company such as Antavo, which designs gamified rewards programs for clients.

There are plenty of companies that gamify their rewards programs. NIKE is a good example. Their program offers rewards for purchase as well as for meeting fitness goals. The program ties in nicely with their "Just Do It" slogan and their brand.

If you don't already have a loyalty program, now is the time to create one. It may cost you a bit of money to link the program to your point of sale, but the benefits are huge in terms of customer retention and increased profit.

VOCAL COLA

CALL TRACKING MADE EASY

WE GET IT, YOU WANT THINGS TO BE SIMPLE. NO PROBLEM, PICK A PACKAGE, WE WILL HANDLE THE REST.

info@vocalcola.com
vocalcola.com
(850) 378 - 2552
(850) 37 - TALK2

Call Tracking... made EASY
They say only 50% of your marketing actually gets you a ROI... only you don't know which 50%. Well...not anymore. Track all your calls from cradle to grave and see where you are getting the bang for your buck.

WHISPER
$25/MONTH
4 local phone numbers
500 Shared Minutes
and more!

CHAT
MOST POPULAR
$69/month
10 Local Phone Numbers
1200 Shared Minutes
and more!

CHEER
$120/MONTH
25 Local Phone Numbers
2500 Shared Minutes
and more!

ROAR
$599/MONTH
100 Local Phone Numbers
20,000 Shared Minutes
and more!

START YOUR FREE TRIAL NOW!

How to Create a Relationship-Building

AUTORESPONDER SERIES

For New Subscribers

Email marketing is one of those topics that keeps coming up – and for good reason. Email is still one of the most cost-effective ways to connect with your customers, nurture leads, and build your business.

Arguably the most important time to engage with subscribers is when they're new. By subscribing to your list, they've indicated a serious interest in your company and what you have to offer. It's the ideal time to start building a relationship with them.

That means you need to create an autoresponder series that will grab your subscribers' attention and give them what they need to take the next step – paying you! Here's what you need to know.

How Long Should Your Autoresponder Series Be?

Autoresponder series can have as few as two emails and as many as 100. There's no one magic number that works for every business.

The best way to figure out how many emails to put in your relationship-building sequence is to start by looking at the most common buyer objections. What prevents people from taking the next step? Here are some examples:

1. Your company is new and doesn't have the same brand recognition as your competitors.

2. Your products or services are unique, and people may not understand what they're buying.

3. Your prices are high (or perceived to be high) and customers may need justification for them.

4. The solution you're offering is unconventional or unexpected and people aren't yet comfortable with it.

The (probably annoying) answer to how long your email sequence should be is "long enough." It needs to give your subscribers the information they need to move to the next step. That may mean introducing yourself and your brand first before you offer details about your products. It may mean educating them about your unique or unconventional approach.

I recommend a minimum of 5 emails for your welcome sequence. That said, I know some companies who have introductory sequences that are 30 or 50 emails long.
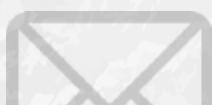
THE POWER OF WORDS

What Are the Elements of an Effective Autoresponder Series?

Just as there's no magic involved in choosing the length of your autoresponder series, there's no one answer to how your autoresponder series should look. There are, however, certain elements that all effective autoresponders have in common.

1. A killer subject line. People need a good reason to open your email. Even though email open rates have remained consistently high over time, it's still a good idea to have a compelling headline. Some of the best headlines ask a question or offer a provocative statement.

2. A personalized greeting. While some marketers don't personalize emails, most understand that a bit of personalization – and it can be as simple as starting your email with "Hi FirstName" – is something people like and appreciate.

3. Relevant and actionable information. Your subscribers may have arrived at your site for a variety of reasons. Some may have subscribed to get your lead magnet. Others may simply want to learn about your company. Either way, your email topics should be highly relevant to your subscribers and offer useful information. It's the best way to demonstrate your authority and build trust with your readers.

4. A compelling call to action. Every autoresponder you send must have a call to action – and you may want to include more than one. Some people put a call to action above the fold, so that readers see it as soon as they open an email. Others prefer to place the CTA at the end. And some put it in multiple locations throughout the email, including in the post-script.

5. Something special. I know saying that your emails need something special isn't enlightening but let me explain what I mean. Your emails must be readable, entertaining, and compelling. You've got to find ways to keep people reading.

In an email sequence, here are some pointers for keeping people reading – and looking forward to your next email:

> Create a soap opera sequence that builds suspense and makes people eager to find out what happens next.

> Use a 'PS' at the end of one email to tease what's coming in the next email.

> Include special offers at the end of your email (and mention the offer at the beginning)

> Talk directly to the reader using a conversational tone

> Include humor in your emails

Here again, there's no one "correct" answer. Your email sequence should be written to appeal to your target audience and address their most pressing needs and concerns.

Tips for Writing an Effective Autoresponder Series

The way your autoresponders are written will make a big difference in how people respond to them. Here are some pointers to help you.

1. Use a consistent tone. The tone of your emails should echo the tone you use on your website, blog, and social media pages. Consistency tells people what to expect and makes people comfortable with you and your brand.

2. Use proper spelling and grammar. There's some wiggle room – depending on what your brand is, you may be able to get away with using slang and even profanity, but it's got to fit with the image you want to project.

3. Include plenty of white space. Nobody's going to read an email if they open it and see an impenetrable block of text. Break up your writing into short paragraphs, add images, and make your emails as easy to read as possible.

4. Emphasize what's important. While it might seem cheesy to use bold or italicized fonts liberally, it's a great way to make sure that people don't miss the important stuff in your emails. There's nothing wrong with using some strategic formatting to make your point.

5. Create an email course that teaches your subscribers something they want to know.

6. Add some drama. Even if you're not writing a soap opera sequence, you should still try to make your emails entertaining. Tell stories, make jokes, and do everything you can to engage your readers.

There's no reason your emails can't be something that your subscribers look forward to receiving.

> **The key is not to bombard your subscribers with unwanted emails.**

Timing Your Emails

The final step is deciding when to send each email in your sequence. There's more than one way to do it. Let's start with the obvious. If your opt-in form tells people they're subscribing to a weekly newsletter, you should confine your emails to once a week.

Even if you didn't specify email frequency in your form, you should still be careful not to overdo it. I generally recommending sending one email every two to three days unless I'm doing a countdown sequence to a product launch or promoting a time-sensitive offer. In those cases, sending one daily email can be very effective.

Your autoresponder sequence's goal is to build a relationship, not frighten subscribers away. If you follow the steps I've outlined here, you should end up with a compelling sequence that turns your subscribers into loyal customers.

Do you want to convert more subscribers into customers with a compelling autoresponder series, that's written exclusively for your business?

WE CAN HELP! Contact us today to learn more!
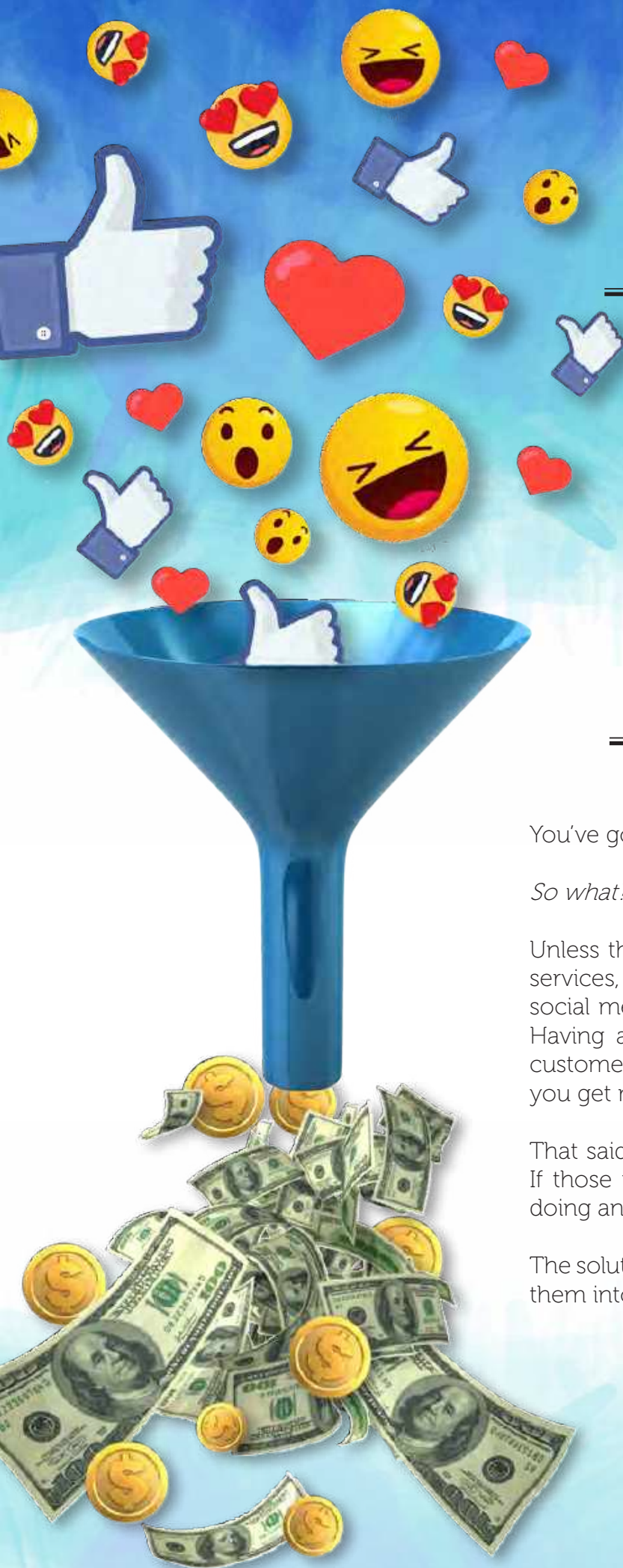
How to Turn Your FANS *and* FOLLOWERS into Paying Customers

You've got a big following on social media.

So what?

Unless those followers are paying you for products or services, they don't mean much. I'm not saying that social media followers aren't important in some ways. Having a lot of followers sends a signal to potential customers that you have a popular brand. It can help you get more traffic and attention.

That said, sales and profits are the name of the game. If those followers aren't buying from you, they're not doing anything for you in real terms.

The solution? Take those fans and followers and convert them into paying customers. Here's what to do.

Get to Know Your Audience

As the owner of a small or medium-sized business, you may not have given a lot of thought to what makes your customers tick. And yet, customer analysis is the key to turning casual fans and followers into customers.

Creating a detailed customer persona can help you understand your audience. Your persona should include:

> Demographic information, including the age, gender, educational background and income of your ideal customer

> Psychographic information, including what your ideal customer likes and dislikes, and most importantly, the pain points that led them to look for your product or service.

I should point out that you may need more than one customer persona depending on what your business is. For example, if you sell products for both children and adults, you might need a Parent Persona and a separate Adult Persona for people without children.

Provide Value to Your Target Customers

Once you know who your target customers are, your next mission is to give them what they want. Here, I'm talking about entertaining and ACTIONABLE content that provides tangible value to the people you want to convert.

In other words, be generous with your knowledge. It doesn't matter what your business is, you know it better than anybody else. Give some thought to what brings your customers to you – and what would convince them that your product or service is the best option to solve their problems.

You can provide value in a variety of ways. Here are some examples.

1. Write blog posts that address common questions and offer real solutions.
2. Do a live Q & A on social media.
3. Create a lead magnet that demonstrates your authority and provides a solution to a common problem.

Regardless of the type of content you create, your goal should be to make it immediately and undeniably useful to the people you most want to reach.

Interact with Your Followers and Fans

Having a large following is one thing, but ultimately, we all want to feel valued. Your job as a business owner is to make your fans and followers understand that you value them and care about them.

The answer is communication. That can mean a lot of different things, but here are some effective tactics that have been proven to work.

> Ask your followers' opinions and use the responses to focus your content on their needs.

> Integrate your social media with your customer service, empowering your employees to respond to questions and complaints quickly.

> Create a chatbot to provide immediate help when someone messages you or visits your website.

> Create a lead-nurturing email sequence to inform subscribers about your product and give them an incentive to buy it.

Ultimately, consumers want to feel that the companies they buy from care about them and want their business. Without communication, you can't demonstrate the importance of your customers.

Create *Content* Your AUDIENCE Finds *Value In*

Curate Content

Do you know that feeling when you walk into a store and a salesperson pounces on you before you have time to draw a breath? Very few of us enjoy that feeling, and the chances are good that your customers don't, either.

While your social media content can and should focus on what you and your products can do for potential customers, it's important to keep the direct sales pitches to a minimum. The solution? Curating content from other sources.

Content curation means pulling content from:

> Industry-relevant publications
> Influencers
> News sites
> Social media pages from other companies (just don't share things from your competitors!)

Make sure that the content you choose to share is highly relevant to the people in your target audience. While there's nothing wrong with (occasionally) sharing content without adding anything to it, I think the best way to curate content is to add your take on it before posting.

Here's a quick example. Say you own a gym and you find an article about the health benefits of exercise. If the article left anything out, you could mention it in your post. Or, you could elaborate on something that's in the post to add your own take on it.

It's a good rule of thumb that no more than 20% of your social media content should be direct sales pitches. The remaining 80% should offer value, information, and entertainment.

Use Retargeting

Retargeting is one of the most cost-effective forms of advertising because it focuses on people who are already engaged with your business and interested in your products.

By using a Facebook pixel, for example, you can target people on Facebook who have:

> Visited your website or read your blog
> Put items into their cart without checking out
> Followed you on Facebook or Instagram
> Clicked an ad

You probably know the statistic that says it can take between five and seven "touches" from a brand or company before conversion. The more often you can get your name and products in front of people, the more likely it is that they'll eventually become customers. It's a numbers game and retargeting can help you win it. I've focused here on Facebook retargeting, but you can also retarget on Google – something to keep in mind.

Remember, your social media followers are following you for a reason. They are interested in you and your company. It's up to you to give them a reason to take the next step and become customers – and the tips I've listed here will help you to accomplish that goal.

Is Your REPUTATION Costing Your Business?

The song says, "I don't give a damn 'bout my bad reputation." Those lyrics sounded fun and rebellious when Joan Jett sang them but taking that attitude when it comes to your online reputation can be disastrous to your business.

Not caring about your online reputation is a mistake. And your online reputation consists of more than your carefully-thought-out website and social media pages.

Most importantly, your online reputation is something you can control – for the most part.

Here's what you need to know.

THE ELEMENTS OF YOUR
ONLINE REPUTATION

Your online reputation is the total of everything shown or said about your company online. That means that all of these play a role in creating your reputation:

> The quality and design of your website
> Your blog
> Your social media pages and posts
> Your online reviews

> Your testimonials and professional credentials
> Your online business listings

In other words, you can have the best website in the world. But, if your online reviews are terrible and you're not managing them properly, your reputation may be significantly less wonderful than you want it to be.

HOW TO GET A HANDLE ON **YOUR ONLINE REPUTATION**

Not sure what your online reputation says about you? The first step is doing a reputation audit. That means Googling your company and getting into the nitty gritty of what people are saying about you – and what they think.

I suggest starting with Google and scrolling at least the first three pages of results. Visit any sites that mention your business and read what they say about you. Make notes of any factual inaccuracies or negative comments – you'll need those down the line.

Likewise, track your social media mentions. If you don't know what people are saying about you on Twitter or Instagram, it's possible that you could be allowing incorrect or negative information about your company to spread.

Make a list of all review sites where consumers have reviewed your company. At the same time, audit your NAP listings so you can standardize them and consolidate your online presence.

CLAIM YOUR LISTINGS ON **REVIEW SITES**

Next, visit every review site where your company is listed and do what you need to do to claim the listings. The process may be involved, so it's important to start as soon as possible.

Once you have claimed your listings, you should:

> Update all relevant information about your business
> Create compelling descriptions
> Upload photographs (include images of the inside and outside of your business)
> Set up a system for responding to all reviews, positive and negative.

Negative reviews aren't the end of the world, but they can cause real problems if you don't respond to them promptly and professionally. Remember, every negative review is an opportunity to demonstrate that you care about your customers.

GET MORE REVIEWS

Reviews play a huge role in your reputation because more than 80% of all consumers read reviews before purchasing a product. Old reviews don't carry as much weight as new ones. That means it's your job to encourage your customers to leave reviews.

Here are a few creative ways to get more reviews:

> Create an email sequence to ask your customers to write reviews, including links to one or more review sites.

> Explain how easy it is to leave a review.

> Provide a basic review template for your customers to use.

> Give products to charities or do pro bono work. Not only will you generate some good karma, but it's likely the people who are at the receiving end of your generosity will say positive things about your business.

> Incentivize your employees to ask for reviews.

> Give customers a small freebie when you ask them for a review. It's unethical to offer remuneration for reviews but giving a gift that the recipient can keep regardless of whether they review your business is fine.

> Send a handwritten, personalized note asking for a review.

> If a customer praises you or expresses gratitude, thank them and ask if they've left a review. If they haven't, tell them how grateful you'd be if they would share their experiences in a review.

> Respond to all reviews. Customers who look up a business on Yelp may be more likely to leave a review after the fact if they see that the business owner regularly responds to reviews.

Many of the same rules apply to testimonials. The best time to ask for a testimonial is when you know the customer is likely to be highly satisfied. For example, a real estate agent might ask for a testimonial right after a successful closing, or a wedding photographer might ask after delivering the pictures to a happy couple.

MAKE REPUTATION MANAGEMENT **A PRIORITY**

The key to keeping your reputation strong is to make managing it a priority for yourself and your employees. That means doing the following:

> Creating high-quality, relevant content for your website and social media pages

> Keeping up with technological advances – adding chatbots to your website, using automation to improve customer service, and providing self-service options are all examples. Another key example: accepting mobile payments at your business.

> Regularly engaging and interacting with your fans, followers, and customers

> Monitoring your social media mentions and responding when it's appropriate to do so

> Having a system in place to regularly request reviews and testimonials

> Responding to all reviews, good and bad, in a professional manner

> Asking your online followers for their opinions and listening to their concerns and suggestions

> Regularly showing appreciation to your most loyal customers and incentivizing them to become brand ambassadors

While it's true that you can't control every aspect of your online reputation, you can control a lot of it. By taking an active interest, engaging with your followers online, and making their satisfaction a priority, you can give your reputation a boost.

Ultimately, your online reputation plays a big role in your success. In just a few minutes a day, you can implement procedures that will ensure your online reputation remains strong – and helps you to attract new business and retain your most loyal customers.