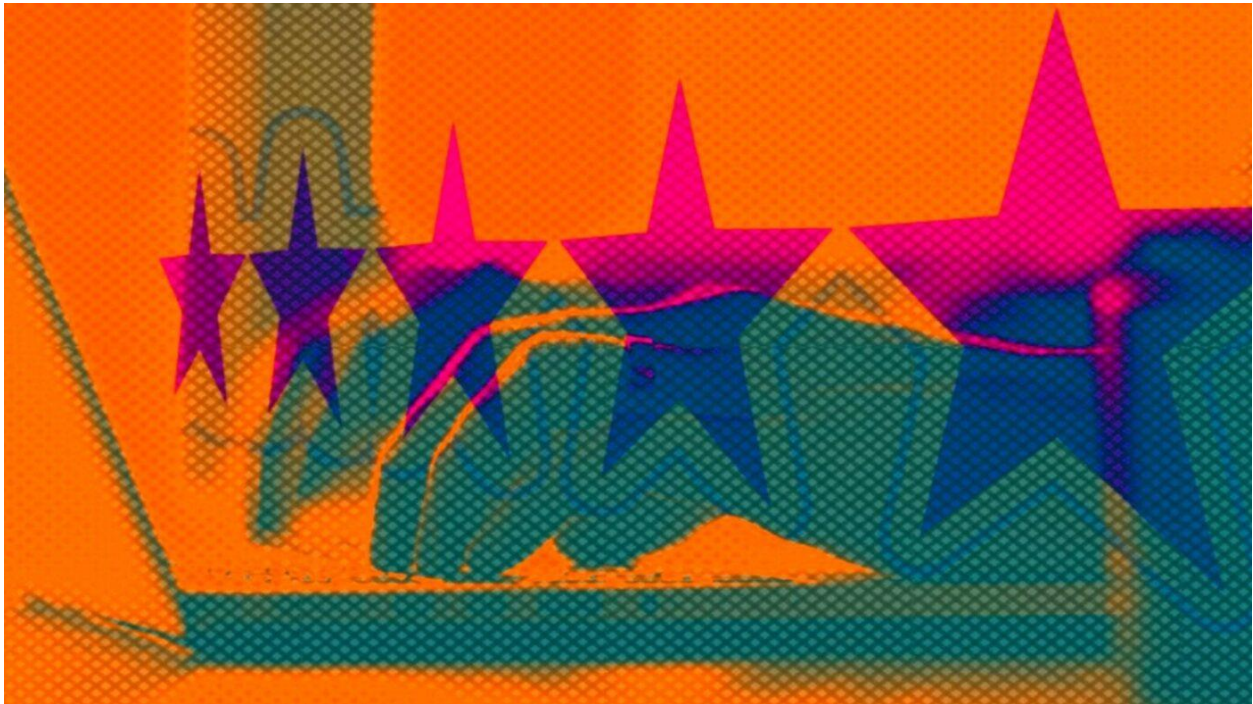


Want more good buzz? 18 tips for boosting online reviews



Make getting reviews part of your process, reply to all your reviews and reach the masses who use reviews to help them find a service provider

BY [JAY THOMPSON](#)

July 22, 2020

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The one question I got most often when I worked at Zillow was, “How do I get more reviews?” Yes, way more often than, “Why does the Zestimate suck?” Really! The review bandwagon opened years ago, most are onboard and understand why reviews are an important part of marketing and client acquisition. Simple fact is, most also struggle with [securing more reviews](#).

So, I spent significant time conversing with agents, brokers, team leaders and members who were adept at getting reviews published, be that on Zillow, Facebook, Google, Yelp or other review publication platforms. Everyone had their own personal twists and techniques, but the same tips for boosting quantity and quality of reviews came up repeatedly.

Whether you love reviews, or think they’re a waste of time and energy, you can’t ignore the fact that [research shows](#) that 91 percent of people regularly or occasionally read online reviews, and 84 percent trust online reviews as much as a personal recommendation. In this day and age, if potential clients can’t find a review for you, they’re quite likely to move on to someone who does business like it’s the year 2020, not 1985.

Be upfront

1. Ask for reviews

Very few people will just write a real estate agent review on their own. You have to ask them to do it. A word of caution for this and every other tip that follows: Understand the rules and terms of use of your chosen [review platform](#). Don’t just scroll through those terms of use pages — actually read and comprehend them. Some platforms, [Yelp for example](#), don’t allow solicitation of reviews.

2. Start talking about reviews from Day 1

If the first time clients hear how much you value a review is at closing, how likely are they to believe that it's important at all? Don't make closing time the first time you mention reviews: Let people know you'll be requesting a review, and then bring them up early when meeting a client or potential client.

3. Drop a hint

In your day-to-day dealings with a client. They will often say things like, "Wow, thanks for pointing that out, such a super-useful tip!" This presents you with a great opportunity to say, "That would be a perfect statement to put in a review!" Even if they don't use that specific example in the review, dropping those hints helps reinforce the importance of reviews.

4. Don't wait until closing

Ideally, you've been mentioning reviews from the get-go. Still, lots of real estate agents say they wait until closing to ask for a review, as that's when the clients are happiest. True, but it's also when they are the busiest. Closing is a stressful time; ask before then. Come closing day, mention it again, and then wait until a couple of weeks after closing to ask again.

5. Send a video email

It's easy to ignore an email, even if it's personalized. It's much harder to ignore your smiling face in a short video requesting a review.

6. Make a personal call

It's even harder to ignore a personal phone call. Yes, it takes a little more effort, but even if you don't get the review, you've made contact with a past client — and that's never a bad idea. Be human, not just a review-seeker. Ask them how the home is working out. Find out how many times they've been to the local home improvement store. *Then* ask for the review.

Make getting reviews a regular habit

7. Make reviews part of your daily business

Real estate agents who have the most success getting reviews consider them integral to their business marketing. They mention reviews (and the process for writing them) to *every* client, throughout their buying or selling experience.

8. Incorporate 'the ask' into your process

It never ceases to amaze me how often I hear a real estate agent say, "Oh, I always forget to ask for reviews." Well, don't forget. Do you forget to enter a new listing in the MLS? Do you forget to take an earnest money check to title? Do you forget a contractual form or addenda?

Of course you don't because those things are a part of your process. They are in your checklists, practically on auto-pilot — just how asking for reviews should be. Enter it as a calendar reminder, and add it to your buyer and seller checklists. You can even include it in the material you hand out to clients: "Don't open a credit card account. Read all documents. Leave me a five-star review!"

9. Don't rely only on closed transactions for the opportunity to get a review

Many agents seem to feel that the only people they should ask for reviews are clients who closed a transaction with them. Not so. There's no reason you can't get a great review from a buyer who didn't close the transaction. Reviews like this help you stand out in the sea of sameness.

10. Be persistent, but not annoying

People tend to need reminding more than once to write a review. It's hard to keep bugging people to do it because you don't want to come across as a whiney, [pushy salesperson](#). If you use a CRM, set up a "request review" campaign and send monthly or quarterly emails or text messages requesting reviews from those who haven't left them.

11. Personalize the language in the standard review invitation

Most review systems use canned language in their review requests. Delete it, and write a personal message instead. Remind clients of what you did and [how important reviews are](#) to your real estate business.

Make it easy to review you

12. Explain the importance of real estate agent reviews in your business

Yes, asking for a review is a very "me" thing. But sometimes that's what you have to do. Explaining *why* you'd like an honest review helps people understand the importance of them. Here's a simple script: "Reviews are an integral part of my business. You saw my reviews, and they helped you make a decision to hire me. I'd appreciate it

greatly if you would help others do the same by leaving me an honest review.”

13. Offer examples

For many people, looking at a blank screen and trying to come up with words is extremely difficult, so make it as easy as possible for your clients.

You want the review to reflect the reviewer’s voice and not yours. In other words, don’t write the review for them. You can provide lots of examples of previously written real estate agent reviews and even include a few sentences that clients can copy and modify.

Also, don’t strive to get only five-star reviews: You don’t want any potential clients to question your authenticity. Let your clients know that you want their honest and fair opinion about their satisfaction with you and the services you provided and that it’s OK to give you fewer than five stars.

14. Mine your database of past clients for those who haven’t written a review

Remember the client you sold a home to three years ago whom you haven’t reached out to in forever? Here’s your chance. Forget the awkward, “If you know anyone in the market, I’d appreciate a referral” notice and instead hit them up with a friendly request for a review.

Try, “Hey, Jim and Sally! Long time no talk! Hope you are doing well. I’ve started a new thing in my real estate business — client reviews — and would really appreciate it if you would consider writing one for me.”

15. Post a 'review of the week' on your Facebook business page

This appeals to the ego. People like to be recognized and see their "name in lights," so be sure to tag the person who gave you the review in your post. It's simple to do and helps remind others to write a review for you.

What not to do

16. Don't expect a review from everyone

Some people just won't write them. Some will promise repeatedly that they will, but it never happens. Accept the fact that you can't win them all.

17. Do not, ever, buy reviews

There are many websites out there that for a fee will put reviews on all the popular review platforms. For obvious reasons, every single one of these platforms is against purchased reviews, and most spell that out in their terms of service (which you should have read per tip No. 1).

The last thing you want to do is build up your reviews, only to have them all yanked off the site that you can no longer access. Trust me, I've seen it happen at Zillow, and there's plenty of anecdotal evidence it happens elsewhere.

Just imagine this conversation with a seller:

Seller: "You'll put our home on Zillow, right?"

You: "Well, uhm, I can't. You see, I got banned from Zillow because I cheated and paid for reviews."

That would be awkward to say the least. Just don't.

18. Think through incentives

How about “incentivizing” a legit reviewer with the offer of a small token of appreciation? Maybe a \$5 Starbucks card or a donation to the reviewer's charity of choice? Seems innocent enough, and you're not really buying a review, right?

I don't know. There was a time when I thought this was a good idea. Now, I don't think it's worth the risk. And let's face it, there are plenty of people out there willing to sing your praises for kick-ass customer support. You don't really need to incentivize everyone.

Bonus tip

Hopefully, your primary platform for collecting and displaying reviews allows you to write a response. You should do this for all reviews, be they positive, [negative](#) or neutral. Why? Because the reviewer will appreciate it.

Others reading your reviews will appreciate it. Search engines appreciate the additional content and context. And that wide-ranging sea of sameness is full of reviews with no response. Stand out, be different.

Jay Thompson is a real estate veteran and retiree living in the Texas Coastal Bend, as well as the one spinning the wheels at [Now Pondering](#). Follow him on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#). He holds an active Arizona broker's license with eXp Realty. “Retired but not dead,” [Jay speaks](#) around the world on many things real estate.

