CHATMETER

The Ultimate Reputation Management Guide for Restaurant Brands

Fire Up More Five-Star Experiences

What do hungry people worldwide do before deciding where to dine? They read online reviews. The words customers see in those reviews can move them towards your restaurant – or push them away and through the doors of your nearby competitor.

While online reviews are critical within any industry, few feel the weight like the restaurant and food service industry. First, there are the paper-thin profit margins. Then, you can't ignore the ever-evolving customer expectations like new culinary trends, on-the-go ordering options, and squeaky-clean facilities.

Just one missed mark can pop up on Yelp for the world to see.

94% of restaurant diners check reviews before choosing where to eat out.

Yes! Online Reviews Really Matter

- **60% of consumers say negative reviews have turned them away**

- **3 out of 4 consumers trust a company more if it has positive reviews**

- **The average diner *considers four restaurants* before picking one**

- **Over 50% of "near me" searches result in a physical restaurant visit**

Why Your Restaurant Needs More Customer Reviews

90% of consumers read online reviews before visiting a business, indicating that reviews play an outsized role in shaping consumer opinion about a restaurant. Studies also show that diners are likely to spend 31% more at a restaurant with excellent reviews — another huge signal that higher reviews mean higher revenue.

Reviews Increase Online Visibility

Over 50% of 'near me' searches result in a physical visit to a related location within 24 hours. When a search can reveal dozens, hundreds, or even thousands of results, how will your restaurant stand apart from the rest?

While there is no single silver bullet, the more positive online reviews your restaurant has, the more likely potential customers will see and ultimately choose your brand. First off, people naturally prefer well-reviewed restaurants. Whether diners are ecstatic about a juicy burger or sharing an amazing culinary experience, great reviews are simply some of the best publicity that you don't have to buy.

Reviews are also a significant part of your brand's online ranking factor. About 15% of a Google search ranking is tied to reviews. Considering 92% of people never go past Google page one, you need your restaurant to land near the top.

Taking the time to respond to reviews doesn't just earn your business more reviews. A large number of high-quality reviews directly increases your local search rankings as well — bringing more hungry customers to sit down at your restaurant or order a bite to go.

Reviews ⓘ | Write a review | Add a photo

"Excellent **price**,portions,**service** and most importantly **food quality** top notch"
★★★★★

"The **manager** never came, and the **experience** ruined our rare date **night**."
★★☆☆☆

"Nice combination of crisp **greens**, **red onion**, **tomatoes &** cucumber."
★★★★★

View all Google reviews
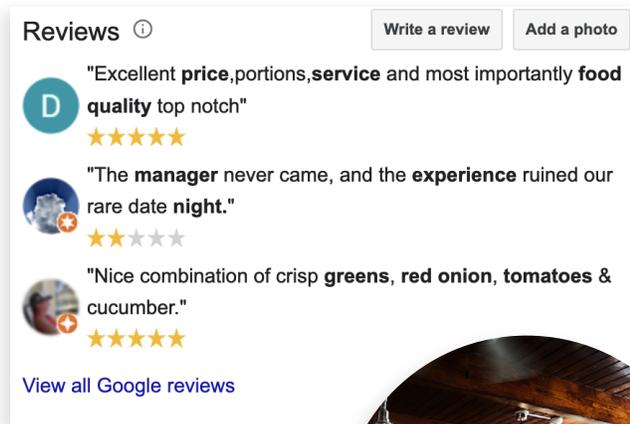
Snapshot: Reputation's Role in the Restaurant Industry

In 2021, Chatmeter analyzed customer sentiment for 75 restaurant chains in the United States. The findings from this research gave insight into how customers felt about everything from the food itself to the process of ordering a meal through various channels.

Average Sentiment by Topic

Average sentiment across all topics mentioned in reviews

Average topic sentiment across all brands

85% of consumers who search for business locations online have found incorrect or incomplete listing information.

76% of consumers arrived at a business too early or late because its opening hours were wrong online.
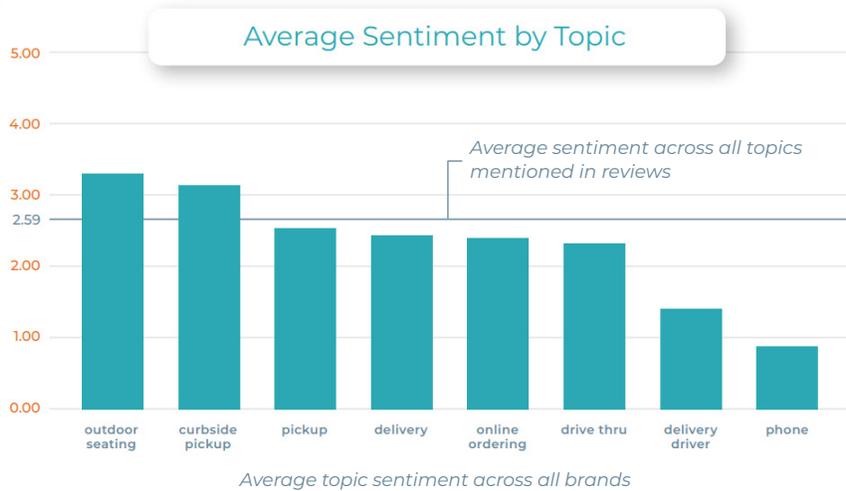
Topics like "outdoor seating" and "curbside pickup" earned mostly positive sentiment from customers in reviews. Conversely, "delivery driver"and "phone" leaned more negative in customer reviews.

We also found that customer sentiment around certain topics varied by the size of the brand. Topics like "menu" were mentioned more in reviews for brands with smaller location counts, topics around "location" appeared most in mid-sized brands, and "service" was most popular in the reviews of large brands.

If customers see misinformation on a business' listing, 63% will stop using that brand.

Source BrightLocal Business Listings Trust Report

As brands grow or trends shift, so will your customers' wants and needs. By analyzing reviews and gaining insights directly from the voice of your customers, it'll be easier than ever to track, understand, and adjust your strategies based on these changes.

Read the entire 2021 Reputation Management Brand Report for Restaurants.

Managing Your Online Reputation

1. LISTEN

Reviews and Social Media

• Get insight into each business location by monitoring reviews.

• React quickly to both customer complaints and positive feedback.

• Monitor mentions, hashtags, comments, photos, and videos on social media.

2. RESPOND

Create a Plan and Find Your Voice

• Before addressing customer feedback, create a plan for how to respond to all comments, conversations, and reviews appropriately.

• Define a voice that's in line with your brand's personality and tone.

• Always remain authentic. Authenticity goes a long way when building a loyal customer base.

3. REPEAT

Implement a Routine

• Monitor and respond to reviews daily.

• Delegate tasks to your team.

• Regularly monitor and track analytics.

• Identify – and act on – areas for improvement.
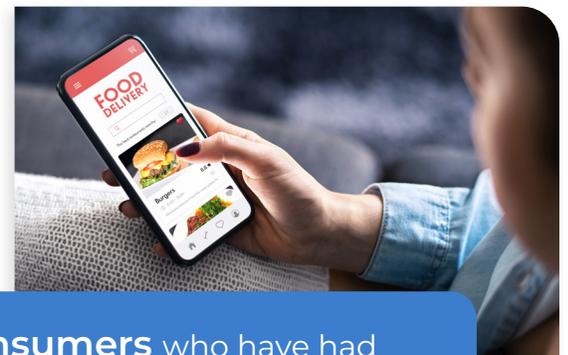
71% of consumers who have had a positive experience with a food service brand on social media are likely to recommend it to their friends and family.

Best Practices for Review Response

POSITIVE REVIEWS

Positive reviews show you who your brand champions are. As promoters of your business, it's important to thank your top food fans and treat positive reviews as an opportunity to create a deeper relationship.

Writing a response to a positive review can lead to more repeat diners telling their friends and family about your business.

Write Their Name

When you want to create a personal connection, always start by saying someone's name. It shows you care enough about who your customers are to engage with them as individuals. Maybe you'll even remember their name the next time they pop into your business.

Express Your Gratitude

There are a lot of ways to express gratitude. People want to feel heard, especially when they share a detailed review about your restaurant. Instead of limiting your reply to a thank you, dive into the details. It's also a great way to incorporate any keywords you want to use for SEO purposes.

Entice Them to Return

They loved what you had to offer. Now encourage them to become repeat customers! Whether you tempt them with a new product or simply let the customer know you can't wait to see them again. Give them a reason to come back and bring their friends.

Thank Them Again and Sign Off Thoughtfully

Close the response with a thank you to drive the key message home. Most importantly, express how grateful you are for their loyalty and their willingness to advocate for your restaurants. Sign off with a warm, positive sentiment and your name to add transparency and a personal touch.

31%
Customers are willing to spend 31% more on a business with excellent reviews

Best Practices for Review Response

NEGATIVE REVIEWS

Although negative reviews are difficult to receive, they can be a valuable learning tool and an opportunity to rebuild a connection. Responding to negative reviews highlights your restaurant's commitment to customer satisfaction. It also shows that you care about their experience.

Respond Quickly

Nobody likes a one-sided conversation. Why should it be any different online? Don't leave your customers hanging responding to every review as fast as possible. This ensures that they feel heard and that you care. It also adds a human element to an online engagement.

Be Authentic

Customers want to know there's an authentic human behind your brand and response — not a robot. Avoid marketing speak, industry jargon, and lengthy explanations. Make your response conversational, humble, and honest.

Keep It Polite

Always take the high road. Even if a customer posts a low blow, keep your response polite, civil, and aimed at the problem at hand: the customer's dissatisfaction.

Be Empathetic

Empathize with the customer's complaints. Saying "I'm sorry" or "I understand" can go a long way in making a customer feel like their opinion is valid and valued.

Think of Future Customers

If a potential patron were to read a bad online review, what concerns could they have — and more importantly — what is your brand doing to solve that issue from happening again? This can significantly set the worries of hesitant future customers at ease.

Take it Offline

When responding to a negative review, especially a particularly harsh or sensitive one, always offer a way for the customers to reach you offline. This offers a safer– and privacy-sensitive – place to connect one-on-one, make it right, and prove that you truly care about their experience.

70%
of unhappy customers will eat at your restaurant again if you properly address their issue.
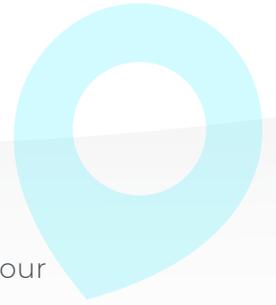
What's Next?

A well-optimized reputation management strategy must be a top priority for your restaurant. Like it or not, it's quickly becoming a food service industry must-have. Your competitors are funneling increased resources into their online review and reputation management process. The longer you wait, the farther you'll have to catch up.

No matter where you're at, it's easier than you think to implement and fully support an incredible, revenue-building reputation management program. You just need the right tools and team at your side.

Trusted by major restaurant brands worldwide, Chatmeter offers a comprehensive suite of software solutions including:

• A single user-friendly feed to view every online review

• Rapid and bulk review response features

• Head-to-head competitor comparisons

• 1000s of customizable review response templates

• In-depth online review analytics and reporting

• Real-time customer sentiment analysis
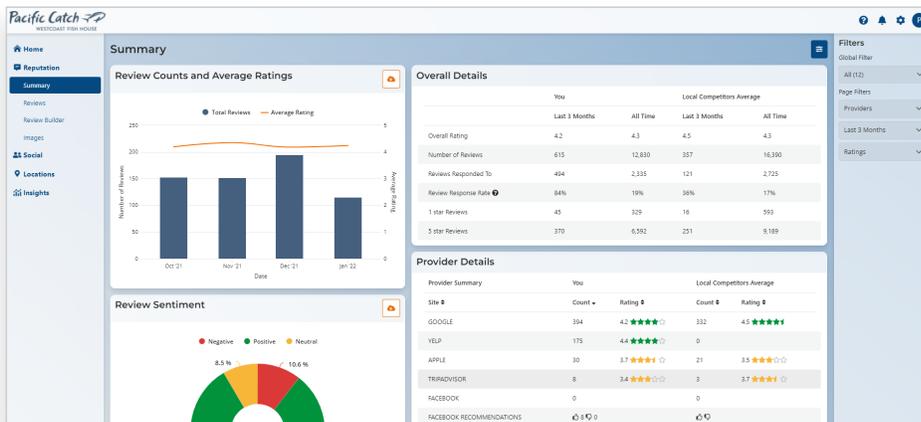
Reputation Management Dashboard

That's just the start. Learn more about how Chatmeter can help you build an irresistible online reputation that drives growth, customer loyalty, and tons of 5-star reviews. **Set up a demo today!** ▶

Restaurant Reputation Resources

CASE STUDIES

• Dog Haus

• A&W

BLOGS

• 5 Steps to Restaurant Loyalty & Sales with Reputation Management

• Customer-Centric Reputation Recovery Strategies For Restaurants

• Agile Brands That Transformed The Restaurant Experience Post-Pandemic

WEBINAR

• Scoring Google 5-Star Reviews for Multi-Location Restaurants

TESTIMONIALS

• Hospitality Restaurant Group

• Good Times

Click here to set up a Chatmeter demo, email us at **info@chatmeter.com**, or call us at **619.795.6262.**

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