

# Impact of reviews on SEO – everything you need to know



**Frontline Estates Group**

[www.frontlineestatesgroup.com](http://www.frontlineestatesgroup.com)

4.9 ★★★★★ (2,381)

**Spartan Realtors**

[www.spartanrealtors.com](http://www.spartanrealtors.com)

**GreenStreet Realty**

[www.greenstreet-realty.com](http://www.greenstreet-realty.com)

# Table of Contents

<b>00</b>	<b>Abstract</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>01</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>02</b>	<b>Why do online reviews matter for SEO?</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>03</b>	<b>Quantity of reviews matter</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>04</b>	<b>What about reviews from other sites?</b>	<b>14</b>

# Table of Contents

<b>05</b>	<b>Do reviews on your website improve search ranking?</b>	19
<b>06</b>	<b>Reviews directly impact keyword targeting for SEO</b>	21
<b>07</b>	<b>Do negative reviews impact SEO?</b>	23
<b>08</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>	25
	How Birdeye can help	25

# Abstract

Imagine 40,000 index fingers worldwide, clicking on the Google Search bar every second of every day. Those 40,000 searches each second translate into **1.2 trillion** searches per year - which has meant that organic search has become the dominant method for your business to be found online. However, you're competing with every other business for the attention of consumers online. Having a comprehensive SEO strategy in place is imperative if you're interested in having a healthy portion of those 1.2 trillion clicks come your way.

This shift to an even more digital-dependent society has caused companies to rapidly evolve their online presence. With more companies competing for the attention of consumers online, it's imperative to have a comprehensive SEO strategy in place.

SEO is one of the most complex elements of online marketing, with a laundry list of factors that influence your search ranking. For years companies have focused on the usual inputs to SEO strategy such as content, topic clusters, keywords and backlinks. However, one often overlooked and significantly influential piece of the SEO puzzle for local businesses in particular is the **impact of customer reviews**.

Google now takes reputation management into stronger consideration than ever before. Consider that **93%** of consumers use online reviews in determining their buying decisions; search engines are well aware of this, and they factor it into a business's SEO ranking.

In this guide, we'll break down everything you need to know about the impact of reviews on your company's SEO, and how to ensure that you're set up beautifully to drive more reviews and higher rankings in the months to come.



🔍 Banks near me

**Magna Financial**

[magnafinancial.com](https://magnafinancial.com)

4.9 ★★★★★ (2,381)

Hummingbird Credit Union

[www.hummingbird-cu.com](https://www.hummingbird-cu.com)

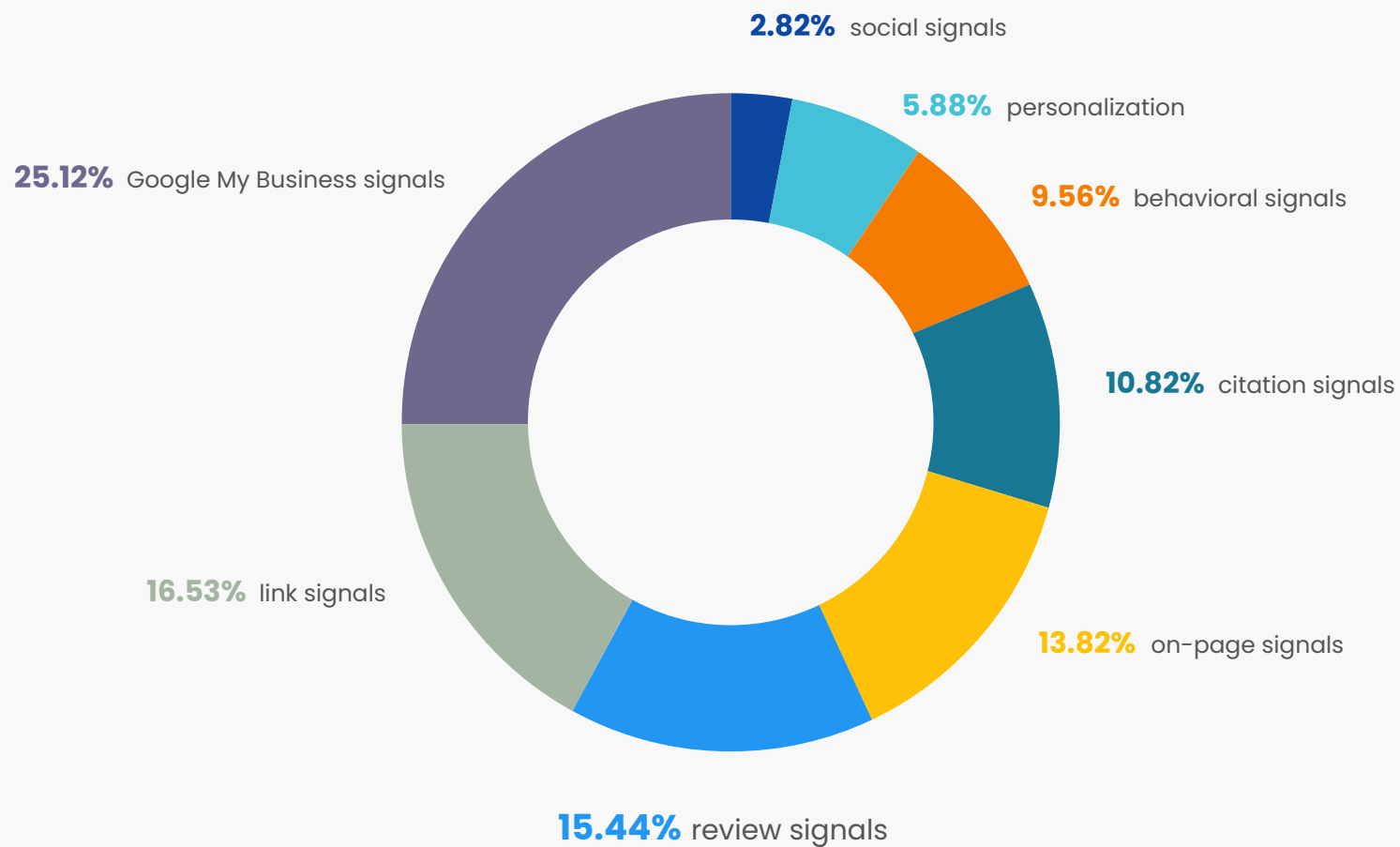
# 01 Introduction

Website traffic can be an important KPI for any company. More traffic often means more potential leads and more engagement from existing customers. Keeping up with Search Engine Optimization (SEO) best practices is an essential part of hitting your traffic targets.

However, keeping up with SEO is easier said than done. As technical as it can be, one important often overlooked influence on search ranking is **online reviews**.

Your company's reviews provide Google with a highly-regarded data point to understand the legitimacy and trustworthiness of your business. When companies use reviews properly, they can increase their visibility on search engines and attract new customers.

## “Review signals” play a significant role in Google’s search algorithm



Source: [Moz](#)

Let's dig a little deeper to understand what is it about reviews that gives them such significant impact on your SEO.

# 2 Why do online reviews matter for SEO?

It comes down to trust. Ask yourself, whom do you trust more – a salesperson telling you that their company/product is the best, or a customer who says the same? We tend to trust what others say about us more than what we say about ourselves, and so does Google.



Google's algorithm measures how trustworthy your company is by "reading" what customers are saying about it. When a customer gives your company a review, whether positive or negative, it tells Google a few important things:

- The company is a legitimate operation
- It has real customers who have interacted with it
- How well the company serves its customers

That third point is a crucial part of SEO. If we go back to how Google approaches their platform, they aim to provide their users with the highest-quality search results. The more positive reviews your company has, the more likely Google will view your brand as a trustworthy resource and boost your search ranking for relevant keywords.

Given that **75%** of people never scroll past the first page of search engines, and that organic search drives **51%** of all website traffic, it's easy to see why companies should invest time into getting more online reviews.



**Travis Hughes**

They care about their customers!



**Jennifer Potts**

If you're in the area, this is the place to be!

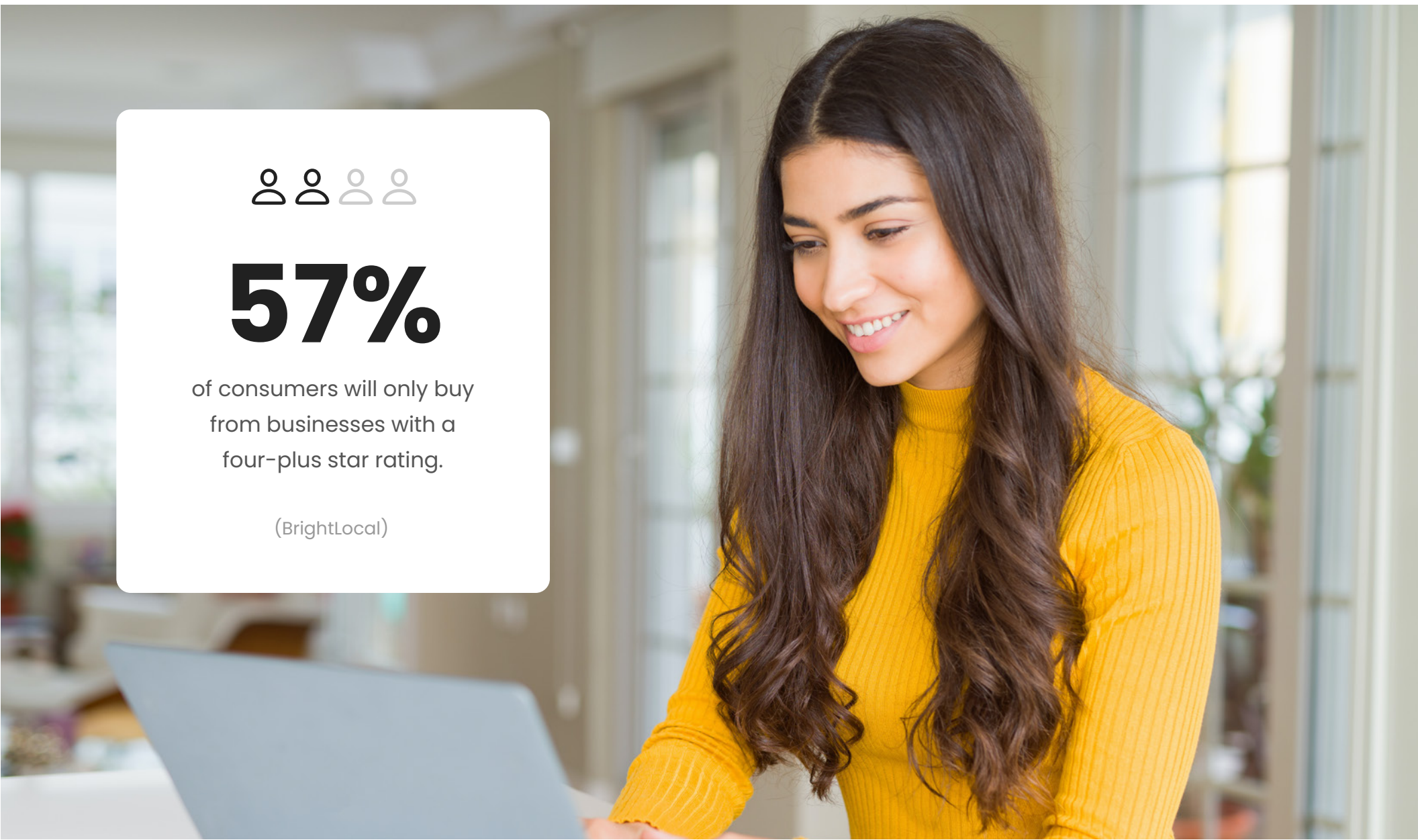
Reviews not only increase your search ranking, they can also have a significant impact on conversions. BrightLocal found that **57%** of consumers will only buy from businesses with a four-plus star rating.



**57%**

of consumers will only buy  
from businesses with a  
four-plus star rating.

(BrightLocal)



# 03 Quantity of reviews matter

Google's SERP (search engine results page) shows all the relevant results for the search that a consumer does online. For local searches, consumers are shown 'Google's Local 3-Pack' in the search results. The local 3-pack is a group of three local business listings that appears in response to search queries for products or services most often provided by local businesses.

The local 3-pack typically features companies with the highest star ratings and most positive reviews. It's a prime example of why review quantity is important to increasing clicks. Click through rates (CTR) for the 3-pack make up a combined total of **47.79%** of clicks.

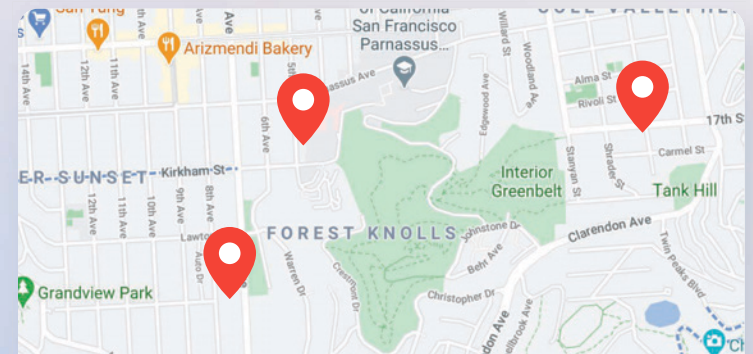
Ideally you'd want to get the biggest cut possible from that percentage. This is where quantity becomes the great divider.

Out of the three companies listed in the image, which are you most likely to click on? Two out of the three companies have 5-star ratings, yet one has significantly more reviews than the other. Most people will click on the company with more reviews.

In fact, the average consumer expects a business to have **40 reviews** before trusting its star rating. Given that Google aligns their algorithm to consumer behavior, it shouldn't be surprising that there is a clear correlation between review quantity and higher local rankings.



Dentists near me



### **Palo Alto Dental**

5.0 ★★★★★ (11 Google reviews)

### **Mountain View Dental Group**

4.9 ★★★★★ (228 Google reviews)

### **Kyle Luong, DDS**

5.0 ★★★★★ (10 Google reviews)

## The average number of Google reviews by local ranking position

Source: [BrightLocal](#)



This chart shows the average number of Google business reviews for each grouped local ranking position. Companies in the top 3 search results typically have an average of 47 Google reviews - and consumers expect a minimum of 40. Coincidence? We think not.

# What about reviews from other sites?

It's no surprise that Google Reviews impact SEO, but what about other review sites?

Consumers have a plethora of options on which to share their experience with your brand. Depending on the reviews site, Google factors them into your search ranking as well. What's important to remember is that not all of these sites are created equal, at least not to Google.

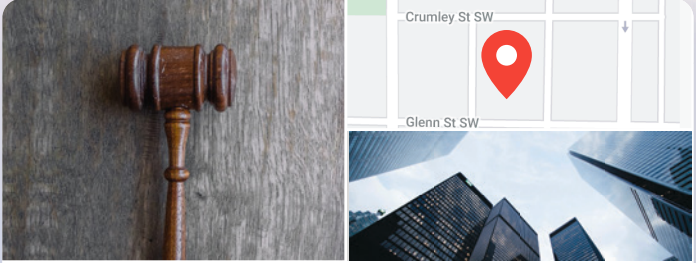


As we detailed already, Google’s platform revolves around consumer behavior. Therefore **Google prioritizes review sites that consumers frequent.**

We spoke with Joey Randazzo, CEO of [Portland SEO Growth](#), who explains it best, “Reviews are important based on where consumers are reading them. So if you’re a lawyer getting 150 reviews on Facebook, but your audience usually goes to a niche site like FindLaw to find the right lawyer, then Google will prioritize reviews on FindLaw over reviews on Facebook for relevant search queries.”

Google has updated the Knowledge Panel for Google My Business to include reviews from around the web — not just from Google.

Like all things Google, “Reviews from the web” are based on an algorithm. However, unlike most of the other elements of the local Knowledge Panel, “Reviews from the web” are actually dynamic.



## Republic Law Group

[Website](#) [Directions](#) [Call](#)

**4.9** ★★★★★ (826 Google reviews)

Lawyer in San Francisco, CA

✓ Appointment required ✓ Video appointments

**Address:** 350 Townsend St, San Francisco, CA 94107

**Hours:** **Open** today until 5pm

**Health & safety:** Mask required • Staff wear masks • Staff get temperature checks • [More details](#)

### Reviews from the web

<a href="#">FindLaw</a>	<a href="#">Facebook</a>	<a href="#">Birdeye</a>
<b>4.9/5</b>	<b>4.6/5</b>	<b>5/5</b>
645 reviews	629 reviews	93 reviews

The general rule seems to be that if Google finds a third party review site with rich snippets ranking on the first page they will be included in the Knowledge Panel display. Rich Snippets are normal Google search results with additional data displayed. This extra data is usually pulled from Structured Data found in a page's HTML. Common Rich Snippet types include reviews, recipes and events.

To give you an idea of the difference, a normal snippet usually looks like this:

## Omnicorp Retail Group

[www.omnicorp-retail.com](http://www.omnicorp-retail.com)

We are offering the latest within modern interior design and accessories.

A rich result or snippet shows lots of extra information between the URL and the description. It can look like this:

## Furniture Mill

[reviews.birdeye.com/furnituremill](http://reviews.birdeye.com/furnituremill)

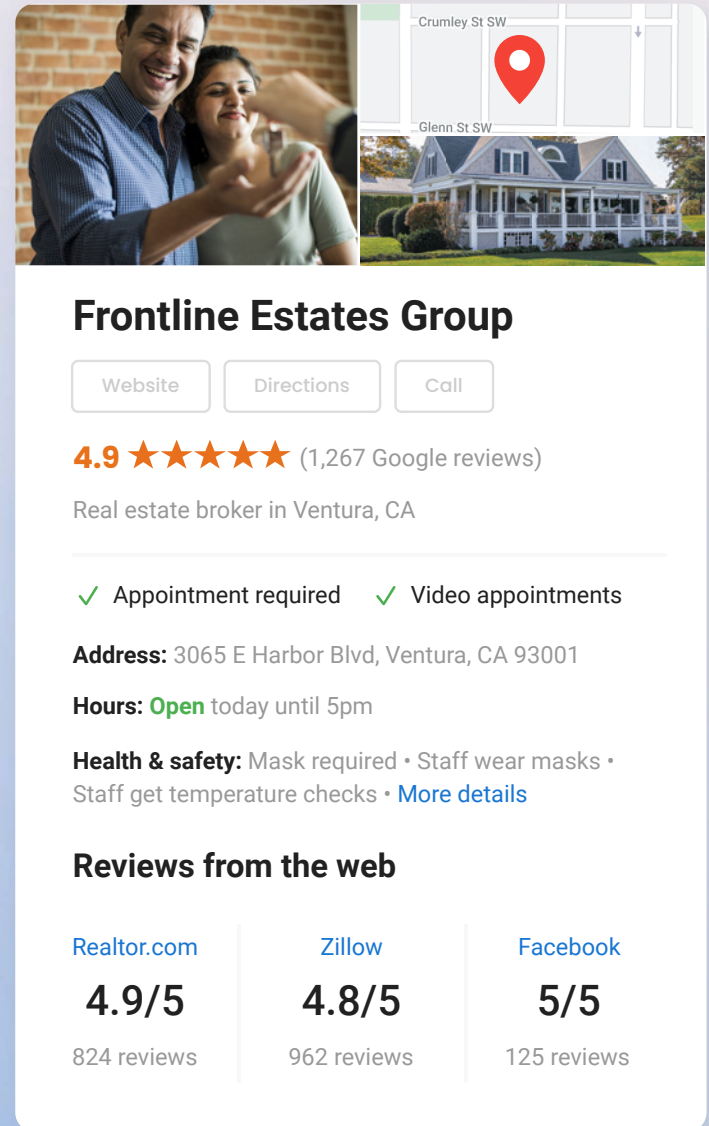
4.8 ★★★★★ (816) • Rating for Furniture Mill

Find modern, mid-century furniture, home decor and small space ideas at Furniture Mill.

When we consider that Google highly values expertise, authority and trustworthiness (**E-A-T**) when prioritizing websites for search results, it should become apparent which type of review sites are likely to populate in the “Reviews from the web” section of your GMB profile.

Google will prioritize review sites that meet the criteria set by E-A-T. For example, for realtors, Google will look at reviews on authoritative realtor review sites like Zillow and Trulia to determine how good the company is for SEO purposes. It also showcases ratings from some of these sites within the **Google Knowledge Panel**.

This further highlights how valuable reviews on relevant third party sites are to your company’s growth strategy. They not only give your company more social proof to attract new customers, but also provide Google with additional data points to assess the quality of your company for SEO. Take the time to identify the most popular and relevant review sites to your industry. Then execute a reviews campaign to generate more reviews for each site.



**Frontline Estates Group**

Website Directions Call

**4.9** ★★★★★ (1,267 Google reviews)

Real estate broker in Ventura, CA

✓ Appointment required ✓ Video appointments

**Address:** 3065 E Harbor Blvd, Ventura, CA 93001

**Hours:** Open today until 5pm

**Health & safety:** Mask required • Staff wear masks • Staff get temperature checks • [More details](#)

**Reviews from the web**

Realtor.com	Zillow	Facebook
<b>4.9/5</b>	<b>4.8/5</b>	<b>5/5</b>
824 reviews	962 reviews	125 reviews

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## Pro-tip:

Generating and managing reviews for multiple sites can be challenging. Consider leveraging customer experience software that allows you to generate reviews at scale and then manage them in one place.

**Birdeye** Lumen Healthcare Send JS

**4,153 reviews** 4.5 ★★★★★ Recent reviews ▾ Bulk actions ▾

★★★★★ **Dave Conner** 1:02 PM ▾ 341198 Mark Rogers Palo Alto, CA

This location is consistent in delivering the experience for your teeth according to your likings the service is extremely pleasant and they make you feel completely at ease! Would definitely recommend to anyone!!!!

Actions ▾ Reply

★★★★★ **Andrew Smith** Dec 31, 2020 ▾ Palo Alto, CA

I have an issue with Lumen Healthcare requiring their employees to park on marble st and Charleston st and thereby denying parking to local residents and neighbors. Also, these employees regularly park illegally and operate vehicles in an illegal and unsafe manner causing detrimental effects to actual residents. Lumen needs to provide parking to their employees on their own property and not require employees to occupy nearby streets. I have contacted 311 and they have promised parking enforcement will stop by, and I will report this to the city every time.

Michael Glenn replied to this on Jul 30, 2020 11:15 AM

Andrew, I'm sorry that you feel that Lumen Healthcare is not a good neighbor. Marble and Charleston are both owned by the city and anyone is able to park on these streets. If you have any more questions, feel free to reach out

**Filter by**

Search

State ▾

City ▾

Location ▾

Review source ▾

Time period ▾

Status

Replied

Not replied

[More filters](#)

# Do reviews on your website improve search ranking?

It's now clear as day that Google reviews and reviews on third party sites directly impact SEO. The same can't be as definitively said for reviews on your company's website.

Most companies tend to duplicate customer reviews from other sites such as Google, Facebook, Yelp, etc. and publish them to their own websites. The reason this practice won't directly impact your search ranking is because Google's algorithm is smart enough to recognize duplicate content, and will prioritize the original review.

However, there are some ways that displaying reviews to your company website can indirectly help with your SEO strategy.

SEO expert Joey Randazzo explains, "Data shows that having social proof on your website improves the user experience, because it builds trust. Since Google includes the user's experience as an SEO ranking factor, posting reviews on your website can indirectly help with search ranking by increasing time on page, reducing bounce rates, and influencing similar metrics".

Randazzo goes on to say that "Because customer reviews typically have keywords within them that talk about your services, it adds more content to your website. Google highly values content to understand the context of your company in relation to search queries. Therefore, displaying reviews on your website can also possibly help with SEO by providing Google with context."

John Mueller, Search Advocate at Google, expressed a similar sentiment on the topic.



# Reviews directly impact keyword targeting for SEO

Good reviews can improve your ranking for targeted keywords. Google categorizes reviews as content, therefore reviews act as user-generated content for your brand, and that is pure *SEO gold*. Authentic, quality content is the key to a durable SEO strategy.

Google crawls reviews, identifies keywords and, thanks to **Natural Language Processing** (NLP), understands the context of those keywords directly related to your company. For example if your guests seem to be raving about their experience of Swedish massage at your spa – review after review, Google will infer that you offer *great Swedish massage* and present your business as a local option when someone looks for *"best Swedish massage near me."*

The more reviews a business gets, the more user-generated content is created. This content, in turn, is loaded with keywords that you want your business to rank for.



**Grace Lau**

I've been looking for a good **hair salon** in **Simi Valley** for a while and found this one. Toni was my **hair stylist**, and she was so nice and funny. She also did a really good job! ❤️

# 07 Do negative reviews impact SEO?

Keywords impact your SEO because Google uses NLP to understand the context of reviews. If that's the case, then it begs the question of how negative reviews impact SEO.

As the adage goes, you can't please everyone. Google is aware of this and understands that your company is going to get some negative reviews. What matters is that Google pays attention to **how you respond** and **how quickly you respond** to negative reviews. In fact, Google **directly recommends** that whether you get a positive or negative review, it's important to respond immediately.

In short, a couple of negative reviews won't harm your search ranking so long as you **treat them properly**.

However, it's important to note that if you get too many negative reviews, it will hurt your ranking. If a user is searching online for the "best dentist in New York", Google won't consider a dentist with mostly negative reviews as the best.

Despite the significant role responding to negative reviews plays in search ranking, **75%** of businesses don't respond to any of their reviews! We get it: taking the time to reply to every single review can be overwhelming. Consider leveraging **customer experience software** to automate your responses. It'll ease the strain of responding to reviews at scale, and help to grow your business.

A whopping **85%** of consumers look for negative reviews in order to make informed purchase decisions. Furthermore, this number skyrockets to 91% among consumers from the ages of 18-29. Responding to reviews is essential for growth. It not only builds trust with Google, but also with prospective customers.

**If:**

Review	Less than...	2
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**Send this template:**

Thank you for providing us feedback and letting us know about this issue, **Reviewer First Name**. Please get in touch with us at **Business Phone**, and we'd be happy to help.

# 08 Conclusion

By now it should be apparent the significant impact that reviews have on your company's search ranking. The insights we've shared with you in this guide will do a world of good for your SEO strategy going forward. Take the time to audit your review channels and identify opportunities to improve how your team generates and manages them at scale. If you need solutions to make the process more efficient, we'd be happy to help.

## How Birdeye can help

Birdeye helps companies seamlessly manage reviews at scale. Our all-in-one platform integrates with over 200 review sites, centralizes all customer reviews into one platform, and enables your team to manage them with tools like automated responses. These are just some of the many reasons why more than 60,000 businesses use Birdeye to drive growth and get new customers.

## Want to know more about how Birdeye can help your company?

Schedule a demo, call [1-800-561-3357](tel:1-800-561-3357) ext. 1, or send an email to [sales@birdeye.com](mailto:sales@birdeye.com).

