

The Ultimate Guide to Google My Business for Entrepreneurs



Assuming lead generation is a priority for your business (why wouldn't it be?), a Google My Business (GMB) listing is an essential tool when leveraged to its full potential. Google My Business will quite literally put your business on the map!

If you're just getting started with GMB, it may seem like a daunting task amidst the many other demands on your time. The following guide is designed to break down the essentials — from getting properly set up (Part 1) to generating high quality reviews (Part 2) to dealing with the odd negative review (Part 3) — in order to make the most of this critical tool in growing your business.

Rated top growing Canadian company 4 years in a row, Intrigue is guided by the singular mission of empowering leaders to strengthen communities. We do this by helping business leaders and owners like you better market their services. If you're interested in going beyond the scope of this resource to bring your marketing to the next level, contact us today to book your consultation.

Without further ado, let's get started!

PART I

**HOW TO GUIDE TO CREATING YOUR
GOOGLE MY BUSINESS LISTING FOR
YOUR BUSINESS**

PART II

**8 HIGHLY EFFECTIVE TIPS TO
GENERATING MORE (AND BETTER)
GOOGLE REVIEWS**

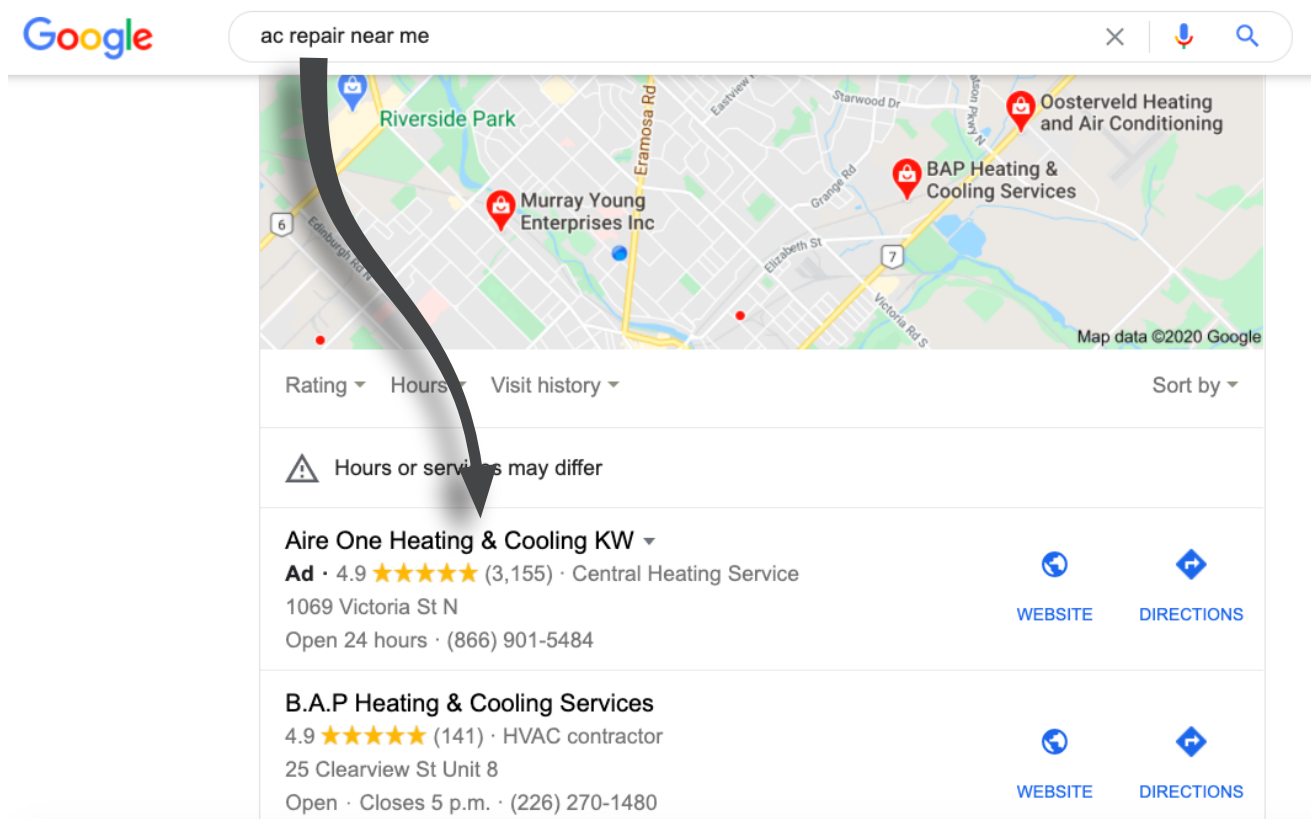
PART III

**GOT A NEGATIVE REVIEW?
HERE'S HOW TO RESPOND**

PART I

How To Guide to Creating Your Google My Business Listing for Your Business

Google My Business is a free service that gives your business a pinpoint location on Google Maps, Google's Local Pack, and Local Finder that helps potential local customers find your company, like this:



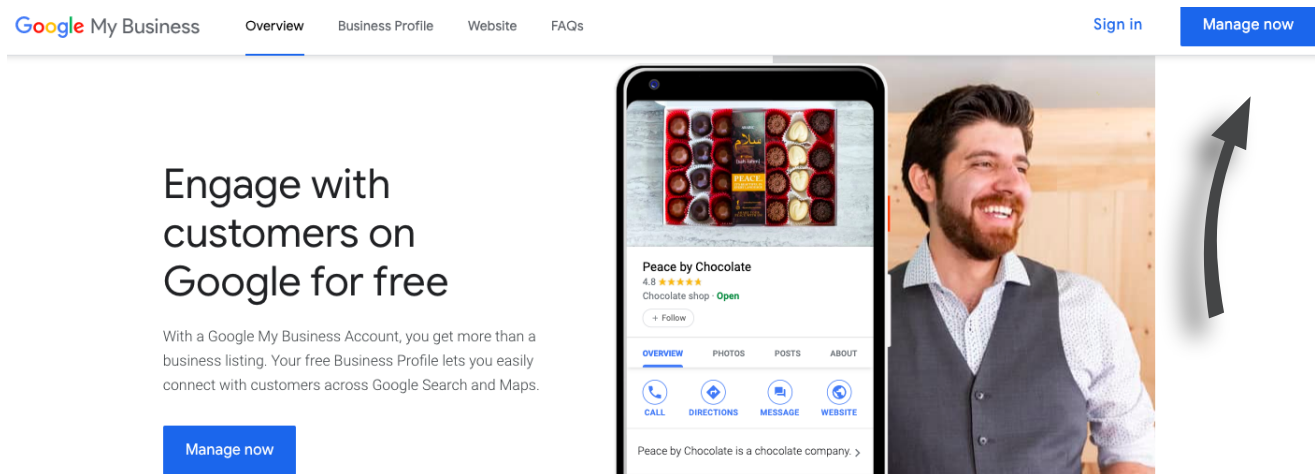
According to recent polls, 80% of all online searches are done through Google, and the vast majority of people only look through the first page of search results.

Even so, only about 50% of businesses have a Google My Business account. Get ahead of your competition and set-up a Google My Business profile today with these 8 simple, step-by-step instructions.

1. SIGN UP FOR A GOOGLE MY BUSINESS ACCOUNT

Google My Business is connected through Gmail, so if you don't have a Gmail account, you'll need **to create one**.

Once your Gmail account is up and running, sign-in and head over to **<https://www.google.com/business/>**. Then, click on **“Manage Now”** in the upper right corner.



2. FIND YOUR BUSINESS

Manually input your business information. Take the time to ensure all details are accurate and up-to-date.

What's the name of your business?



Business name

By continuing you agree to the following [Terms of Service](#) and [Privacy Policy](#)

Next

3. ADD YOUR BUSINESS LOCATION

Next, add your business location. Note that Google will prompt you with the question below. Since your business relies on traveling to people's homes and businesses, select **Yes, I also serve them outside my location.**

← Do you also serve customers outside this location?

For example, if you visit or deliver to your customers, you can let them know where you are willing to go



Yes, I also serve them outside my location



No, I don't

Next

4. SELECT YOUR BUSINESS CATEGORY

You will then be prompted to choose a category for your business. We recommend using a high-ranking SEO keyword that's most relevant to your business, such as contractor or Furnace repair service.

← Choose the category that fits your business best

This helps customers find you if they are looking for a business like yours. [Learn more](#)



Business category

HVAC contractor

You can change and add more later

Next

5. ADD YOUR CONTACT DETAILS

Next, you'll need to input your business' phone number and your website URL. Though both are optional, we highly recommend adding both pieces of information.

6. VERIFY YOUR GOOGLE MY BUSINESS ACCOUNT

The last step is to verify your account. There are three different ways to verify your newly created Google My Business account: by text message, email or by postcard. Choose the method that's easiest for you. Keep in mind that if choosing the postcard method, you'll need to wait 3-5 days to get a postcard with a confirmation code.

How to Optimize Your Google My Business Account

Now that your account is properly set-up, prospective clients searching for services in your area will be able to find your business more easily. To get the most out of Google My Business, we suggest taking the extra step to optimize your account. Here are a few suggested best practices that can have a massive impact on your SEO.



7. ADD YOUR SERVICES

When completing your account, include as many details as possible. Under contact information, add your email address. Next, select all the services your business may offer. Lastly, add a few professional photos and/or videos that highlight your work. This is also a good way to showcase past and current projects.

← Add your services

Select the services your business provides and get matched with the right customers

✓ AC maintenance

+ Clean ducts & vents

+ Ductless heating and AC services

+ Heating maintenance

✓ HVAC maintenance

+ Install AC

+ Install ducts & vents

[Show more](#)

Don't see a service you offer? Create your own.

+ [Add custom service](#)

Next

8. ENABLE GOOGLE REVIEWS

Reviews are perhaps the most important feature of Google My Business. They will act as a powerful trust signal for your business in addition to incentivizing your employees to consistently deliver a high level of service. Plus, Google reviews increase your odds of being found online by boosting your SEO — a triple win (more on that below!).

Guelph ClimateCare

955 Woodlawn Rd W, Guelph, ON

4.4 ★★★★★ 25 reviews

Sort by: Most relevant

All furnace 6 clean 3 information 3 calling 4



Kat Kent
1 review

★★★★★ a week ago

Amazing customer service! They went above and beyond to try to fix our ac. When that wasn't an option we were given all the necessary information to make a wise choice on our new unit. No pressure to buy either. Installers were ... [More](#)

Like

Write a review

Congratulations! Now that you've completed and optimized your Google My Business, you've opened the gates for a whole new stream of leads looking for your services!

Next, we'll look at 8 strategies we at Intrigue have implemented to generate over 85 high-quality Google reviews.

PART II

8 Highly Effective Tips to Generating More (and Better) Google Reviews

Many businesses aren't prioritizing Google reviews, and it's costing them *big time*.

Why? Because 90 percent of consumers read online reviews before making a purchase. That's right: nine out of ten prospective customers are reading your online reviews before deciding to pick up the phone to call you.

If that number doesn't astound you, keep in mind that online reviews also hold a lot of weight in the all-important Google search algorithm — especially if they contain highly prized keywords like 'A/C repair', 'services', 'home air quality', etc.

In other words, getting people to post about their experience with your company not only serves to strengthen your brand and boost your credibility, it makes it easier for others to find you. **Put simply: Google reviews are free advertising!**

How To Generate High-Quality Reviews

Incorporate these strategies into **your long-term marketing plan** and you'll not only see the number of reviews for your business grow, your leads will too!



1. ASK FOR A REVIEW

This one may seem like a no-brainer, but we're always astounded by how few companies actually ask for reviews. Of course, we're operating under the assumption that you're committed to delivering great service. If that's the case, **you should take pride in asking for reviews!**

Oftentimes, a happy customer will tell you how satisfied they are with your service. It's the perfect opportunity to ask them to leave a review! Though it may seem slightly uncomfortable at first, you'll quickly get over this mental hurdle once you realize how easy it is and how eager your clients are to help you out!

The key is to mention how much you genuinely value their feedback, and that you ultimately want to help more people through your service.

Here's our co-founder Rob Murray going into more detail into the effectiveness of this strategy:



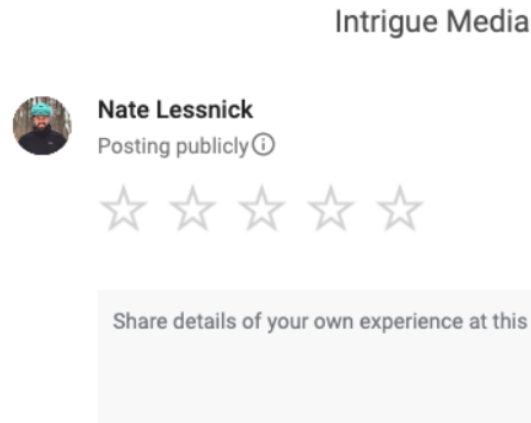
Remember the old Wayne Gretzky quote: *"You miss 100% of the shots you don't take"*.

It never hurts to ask...but it sure hurts not to!

2. USE A CUSTOM REVIEW LINK

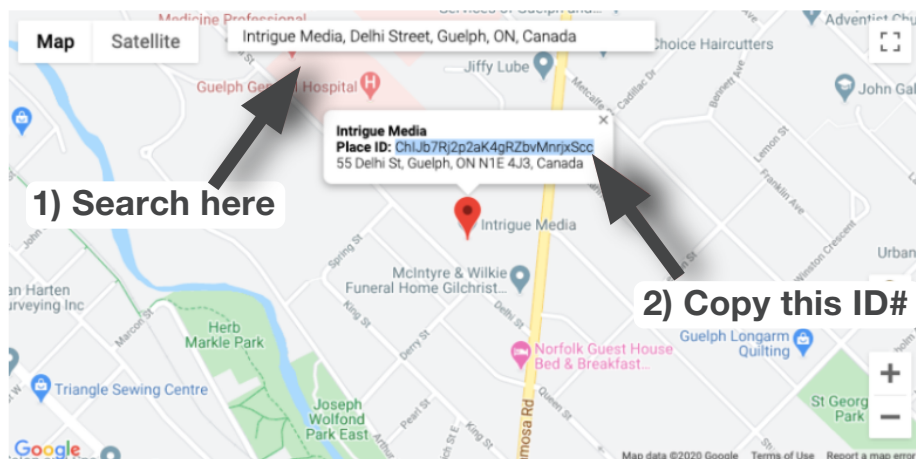
The key when asking for reviews is to make it **SUPER EASY** for whomever you're asking to leave a review.

You do that by using a custom review link that generates a link to your Google My Business page with a pop-up box:



Here's how to get a custom review link for your business:

a. Search for your company here: <https://developers.google.com/places/place-id>



b. Once you've found your business location, copy the place ID (a place ID is a unique identifier given to your local business address by Google. Place IDs are available for most locations, including businesses, landmarks, parks, and intersections).

c. Paste your Place ID onto the end of this link:
[http://search.google.com/local/writereview?placeid=\(paste your place ID here\)](http://search.google.com/local/writereview?placeid=(paste your place ID here))

d. In the end, it will look like this:
<http://search.google.com/local/writereview?placeid=ChIJb7Rj2p2aK4gRZbvMnrjxScc>

You can then insert that link on your website or in your email communication (more on that in the strategies below) to help make it as easy as possible for your customers to leave reviews.

3. SEND A FOLLOW-UP EMAIL

Once you've completed a successful job, promptly send your customer a follow-up email to thank them for their business and to ask them for a review.

Here's the exact email template Intrigue has used to generate over 85 Google reviews. Feel free to use it or adapt it to match your company's style and feel.

"Thank you so much for your business. I'm so glad we were able to help.

We wouldn't be here if it weren't for amazing customers like you. We'd love your help in getting the word out about our business (so that we can help more awesome folks like you!). Plus, your feedback allows us to learn, grow and continuously improve!

If you wouldn't mind taking a moment out of your day to leave an honest review about your experience with us, we would really appreciate it.

Here's the link to our Google review page (include your custom review link).

You rock,"

If you specialize in a particular niche (or if you're looking to rank for certain keywords), you can gently ask that they specify which service or product you offered them.

Something along the lines of:

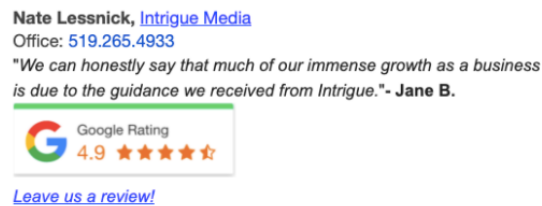
"If you could mention how we (fixed your furnace, installed your water heater, improved your air quality, etc.), we would be ever so grateful".

4. UPDATE YOUR SIGNATURE

Let's say you've committed to increasing the number of Google reviews for your business. Perhaps you've even made it a Key Performance Indicator (KPI) to gain 20 new 5-star reviews by the end of the next quarter — an amazing goal!

To make that happen, reviews will need to become ingrained in every aspect of your business. You likely correspond with customers via email multiple times a day. Why not turn every one of those emails into a subtle (and automatic) review request by including a client testimonial and embedding your Google review page into your signature?

You'll want to pick a fairly recent review that speaks to your value proposition in a concise yet powerful way. Be sure to include your custom review link to make it easy for others to follow suit. Here's an example:



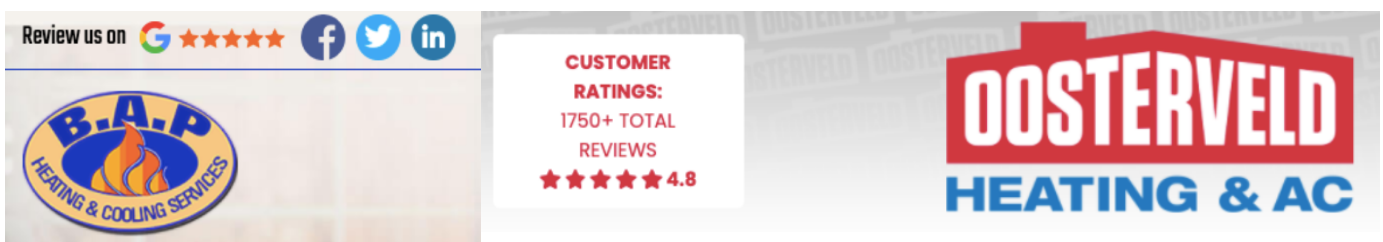
Doing so communicates that you are serious about your online reputation and that you welcome client reviews. Plus, once it's set-up, you can set it and forget it!

5. ADD A GOOGLE REVIEW BUTTON ON YOUR WEBSITE

People trust Google reviews because they know they're authentic. Any business can post a list of glowing testimonials on their website — indeed, most do — but these are rarely effective. Your visitors know these are carefully selected and curated (and perhaps even crafted) to only showcase the best and censor the rest.

People want honesty, and having a Google review button or badge on your website — whether on your homepage, contact page or thank-you page — boldly communicates that you stand behind your business and welcome honest feedback.

Look at these two examples featuring links to access Google reviews from a homepage:



6. RESPOND TO ALL REVIEWS

Responding to all reviews shows that you care about your customers and are committed to the quality of their experience. It also communicates that it is worth their time to leave you a review.

It's important to recognize that negative reviews will happen. You can't please everyone, every time. Most people understand this and can discern whether the situation truly reflects poorly on your business or was simply a one-off. At the end of the day, it's how you respond that truly matters. In fact, your response often weighs more heavily in people's minds when assessing whether they wish to do business with you.

Ideally, you should choose someone from your team who's tactful, prompt, and diplomatic to handle most or all responses.

Here's how we recommend handling responses:

- ✕ **Positive reviews:** Be grateful when responding to a positive review and it will beget more positive reviews. Mention that you look forward to being of service again and, if appropriate, include a call to action for future business.
- ✕ **Negative reviews:** Responding politely and diligently to negative reviews — even if they are unreasonable — is critical. It shows that you take their concerns seriously; that you are committed to resolving the issue and to making things right. Understand that this is often an opportunity to turn a negative experience into a positive one.

Lastly, Google acknowledges companies that take the time to respond to Google reviews (in fact, here's Google official response). Make the effort to respond to all reviews and it will pay off in the long run.

7. HIGHLIGHT REVIEWS ON SOCIAL MEDIA

If you want to encourage more reviews, one of the most effective ways is to highlight recent reviews on your social media channels. Everyone loves a little recognition!

You can even kick it up a notch by awarding a customer with a 'reviewer of the month (or quarter)' award. By selecting reviews that speak to your values, your unique selling proposition or your brand promise, you're effectively communicating what sets you apart without being overbearing (e.g. by letting others do the praising for you!).

People who take the extra step to post an online review because they're pleased with the level of service you've offered them are your raving fans. They are the ones doing your marketing for you. You should do everything in your power to elevate their voices and amplify their message to encourage similar behaviour.

In this example, Oosterveld Heating & AC has done a great job of leveraging social media to highlight a particularly glowing review. They also add clout and social proof by mentioning their impressive number of total reviews.



8. GET EVERYONE ON BOARD

In order for any of the above strategies to work, you'll need to get every member of your team on board. Increasing the number of Google reviews for your business is a team effort and will require everyone's participation.

In order to garner some excitement, you can incentivize your team to get more Google reviews. Everyone loves a healthy dose of friendly competition, so why not turn it into a bit of a game? Here are a few ideas:

- ✂ **Create a leaderboard in your break room to encourage staff to seek reviews.**
- ✂ **Offer a gift card to the team member who gets the most reviews in a month.**
- ✂ **Offer an award or a trophy to the top review recipient by the end of the quarter.**

By keeping your employees invested in your company's success, you're creating a system of trust and loyalty that recognizes positive behavior. You'll be surprised at how effective this strategy is in motivating your team to get on the hunt for more awesome reviews!

Once you have a few reviews, let everyone on your team know about Google's free marketing kit, available to any business with a Google My Business account. It's where you can download beautiful, professionally-designed (and did we mention: **FREE!**) stickers, badges, social media images, and more.

Simply enter your business name, select it and click on 'Get my free materials'. It will automatically pull some of your best testimonials and create downloadable, printable and shareable materials custom-made for your business. Pretty awesome, right?

Made just for Intrigue Media

Your Business Profile on Google helps customers see what's unique about your business. Now, you can instantly turn the best of your profile into flyers, social posts, and more. All for free.

[Get my free materials](#) 



Studies have shown that businesses that proactively ask for reviews enjoy higher ratings (average of 4.34 stars out of 5) than those that simply wait for unprompted reviews (3.89 stars).

In other words, by making it a regular practice to ask for reviews, you'll not only get more reviews, you'll get better ones!

Though it won't happen overnight, with consistent effort — and by applying these 8 strategies — you'll see your number of Google reviews grow...as will your leads!

PART III

Got A Negative Review? Here's How To Respond

It's the bane of any entrepreneur's existence — the business you've built from the ground up and work tirelessly to improve suddenly gets a bad Google review. All because one grumpy customer decided to take out their frustrations on your company in an online and public place.

The. Worst. Thing. Ever.

Well...actually...worse things have happened and are likely to happen in the future. So relax. Don't freak out. Understand that negative reviews are part and parcel of running a growing business. In fact, if handled tactfully, negative Google reviews provide an opportunity to showcase just how reliable and professional your company is. Research suggests that in some instances, it can even boost sales.

That said, Google's search algorithm favours positive reviews, so several negative reviews can affect your rankings and damage your company's hard-earned reputation. It's definitely NOT the kind of thing you want to leave unchecked or ignored.

Follow these 5 simple steps to mitigate the situation, and you'll be ahead of the curve.



Responding To Negative Google Reviews In 5 Steps

✕ 1. Take a deep breath

Though it can be tempting to give an ungrateful critic a piece of your mind, never, EVER lash out when responding to a negative review. There are countless examples of poorly-handled responses to bad reviews (Google “Amy’s Baking Company” for a few cringe-worthy examples), which inevitably makes things a thousand times worse.

Take a deep breath after reading the review, stay calm, and refrain from impulsively responding. Even if the review is unreasonable, unfounded or even fake, the last thing you want to do is vent your frustrations for everyone to see.

✕ 2. Assess the situation

You’ll want to find out if the review is legitimate (i.e. from an actual customer). Start digging for as much background information as you can — check your records, your recent transactions, your inbox, and check in with your team. The more context you have about the situation, the better equipped you’ll be to handle it.

Sometimes poor reviews — or worse, 1-star reviews with no comments — can be left by bots, random people or even competitors with an axe to grind. If you have no history of ever doing business with the reviewer, make that clear in a polite and professional manner. Here’s the standard approach we’ve taken in such instances:



Responding To Negative Google Reviews In 5 Steps

✕ 3. Craft your response

If the review is from a former customer, you'll want to tactfully answer with these points in mind:

- ✦ **Keep your response brief and to the point.**
- ✦ **Own up to the issue and don't make any excuses.**
- ✦ **Apologize. Even if it wasn't your fault, offer a sincere apology.**
- ✦ **Commit to finding a solution and to ensuring the problem isn't repeated.**
- ✦ **Mention you'll be following up privately to make things right (and do follow up).**

Remember: your response will be public and will be seen by future prospects assessing whether or not they want to do business with you. How you respond is critical. We recommend getting a second set of eyes to review your response before moving ahead to step #4.

Here's how **NOT** to respond (by starting an argument):

The screenshot shows a Google Business profile for "Protech Inc." located at "2 Portside St b, Stoney Creek, ON". It has a 3.8-star rating from 11 reviews. A filter bar shows "All", "clean 3", and "furnace 3". A review by Kevin Le, dated 4 years ago, is shown with a 1-star rating. The review text is: "Owner pretty much ripped us off. Makes you leave a hefty deposit before even starting anything. For some reason each part they did fixed another one issue would come up 'unfortunately'. They tell you what the problem is by using complex ... More". Below the review is a "Like" button. The owner's response, dated 4 years ago, is: "You were never ask for a deposit. the entire job was paid with one cheque after the job was completed. You had 2 issues both were fixed at the same time, a week later you had a new issue, we looked at it for free and told you what part need to be replaced, you had a friend fix it, My diagnostic free is \$60, not \$70."

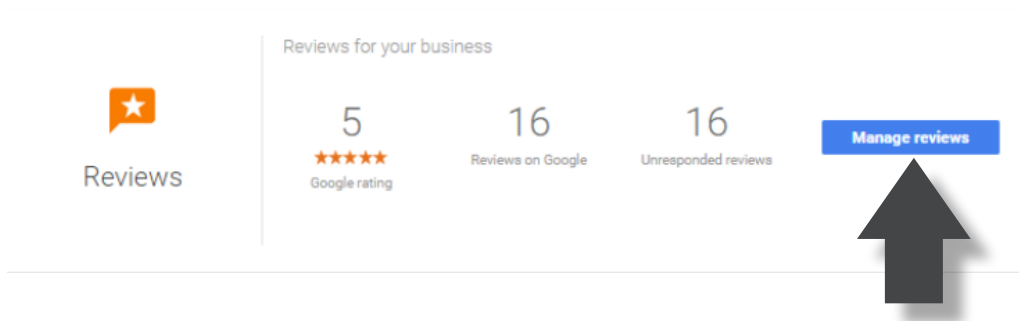
Responding To Negative Google Reviews In 5 Steps

✕ 4. Post your response (promptly)

Time is of the essence when dealing with unhappy customers. You don't want to let negative feelings about your business fester, and you certainly don't want to give the impression that you're not paying attention or that you don't care. Ideally, you should respond within 24 hours of the review being posted (useful tip: to receive notifications whenever a new customer review is posted, you can easily set up Google My Business notifications).

Once you're satisfied with your response, follow these steps to post it publicly:

1. Sign in to your Google My Business account.
2. Click on the three horizontal bars in the top left-hand corner and click "All Locations." If you have multiple locations, click on the one you'd like to manage, then click "Manage reviews."
3. Click on "View and reply" when you find a review you want to respond to.
4. Once you click on "View and reply," a pop-up box will open for you to write your response.



If you are able to resolve the issue for your customer, it is not unreasonable to ask them if they'd consider modifying or updating their review to reflect their new level of satisfaction. In fact, we've seen instances in which customers were so satisfied with how their concerns were addressed that they deleted their review entirely, posted a glowing one instead, and became repeat clients!

Responding To Negative Google Reviews In 5 Steps

✕ 5. Adopt a growth mindset

Handling negative feedback can be challenging. No one likes being told their business is not performing to an acceptable level. It's much easier to discount negative feedback; to write it off as inconsequential, meaningless, or as coming from a disgruntled person. It's much harder (but incredibly more powerful) to take it in the criticism, accept that there may be areas in your business that need improvement, and look for the underlying cause of the problem.

If you've heard more than once about a particular issue — that one of your employees isn't punctual, that the level of service is disappointing or that customers are feeling ripped off — it may be time to consider a change in your processes, training, transparency, or customer service.

Ultimately, negative Google reviews present an opportunity for your business to become even better than it is. Adopt a growth mindset and you'll no longer dread and loathe feedback, but accept it for what it is: tiny adjustments in righting the course of your ship, with you at the helm.



We hope this resource has been helpful in setting off on your Google My Business journey, and that you're well on your way to leveraging this powerful tool to grow your business.

At Intrigue, we've been helping businesses like yours get noticed and found since 2006. If we can help in any other way, or if you're looking to go beyond the scope of this resource and bring your marketing to the next level, contact us today to book your consultation.

