

MODULE SEVEN

CRITERIA 1: CONSISTENT DELIVERY OF AN EXCEPTIONAL EXPERIENCE BASED ON POSITIVE CUSTOMER REVIEWS

Criteria 1 of the BoQE Program assesses how well you are meeting the needs of your customers, based on the feedback they provide on review sites. This module explores the practical value of customer reviews and takes you through:

- How to interpret the BoQE Consumer Insights Report, step by step
- Ways you can encourage reviews
- Responding to reviews
- Ways to handle any negative reviews

Why are customer reviews important for your business?

The number of reviews you receive online can directly affect conversion rates and revenue. Gaining a higher volume of ratings will improve your competitive online position and visibility by boosting your position and ranking on both search engines, third party distribution websites and review sites.

A high number of reviews will encourage potential customers to spend their money with you because your business comes across as reliable and delivering on expectations. People talking about you (positively) online is the most important seal of approval you can achieve.



Case Study

FLOATING IMAGES, IPSWICH

Floating Images offers the opportunity to combine a city and country balloon flight over the heritage city of Ipswich and the Scenic Rim and Somerset countryside with its spectacular views of the Great Dividing Range.

1. Why are customer reviews important to your business?

Customer reviews are so important to our business. Customers are doing their research and when spending their hard-earned dollars, they want to know they will have a really good experience. As owner of the business and in charge of flying the hot air balloons, the decision on whether or not we fly (due to safety reasons) is in my hands. Through reviews, my customers are assured their safety is my number one priority.

2. What platforms are your customers using to share their reviews of your business?

TripAdvisor, Facebook, Instagram, Google My Business and email.

3. What practical impact are customer reviews having on your business?

Guests are making their bookings as a result of positive reviews. Reviews are critical! We find this out directly when we speak with guests over the phone and conversations over breakfast after the flight.

4. How are you encouraging customers to leave reviews?

We send an email to guests following their experience and include links should they wish to share any feedback or a review of their experience with us. We encourage guests to leave us a review as part of the conversation towards the end of their experience. We use the TripAdvisor Review Express email system to encourage reviews on TripAdvisor.

5. How are you promoting/sharing the reviews you receive?

We upload reviews onto our website and occasionally share on social media.

6. Tips for encouraging reviews

Attend any workshops on the topic through your local tourism organisation or RTO (BEDA) and learn from other businesses. Take the time to set up your email mailings and follow up with every guest booking your experience. Make use of the TripAdvisor Review Express email system if your customers are using TripAdvisor. It saves you time as it allows you to send review requests to guests within 72 hours of their experience, via TripAdvisor.

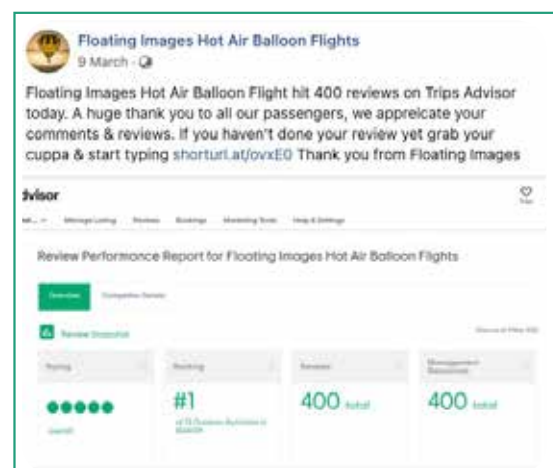
7. What is your process for responding to reviews?

We try to stay on top of this by checking and responding to reviews and feedback daily. We want to be highly responsive to our customers, and it only takes a few minutes each day.

8. Tips on handling negative reviews

Always respond. Grab a cup of tea and walk away from the computer for a while if you must. Try to not to take it personally as 99% of your visitors are most likely very happy. Take the feedback on board and thank the customer.

The following is an illustration of Floating Images encouraging TripAdvisor reviews through their social media and highlights the importance of reviews to their customers.



Case Study

BRISBANE WHALE WATCHING, MORETON BAY



Brisbane Whale Watching provides cruises of Moreton Bay on board a purpose-built whale watching vessel to encounter the southern humpback whales.

1. Why are customer reviews important to your business?

You can get tunnel vision with your product, so reviews provide great customer feedback on areas for the business to consider and improve.

2. What platforms are your customers using to share their reviews of your business?

TripAdvisor and Facebook, and we also encourage people to share their experience on Instagram.

3. What practical impact are customer reviews having on your business?

The feedback we receive through reviews guides our ongoing business improvement and drives referrals and bookings.

4. How are you encouraging customers to leave reviews?

After each tour we email every guest with review links. These emails are automatically generated and built into the booking system.

5. How are you promoting/sharing the reviews you receive?

We use the reviews as a sales tool on our website and social media. They highlight the different whales seen. We could have a quiet day on the water in terms of the number of whale sightings but people still think the whales were incredible and will say so in their reviews.

6. Tips for encouraging reviews

Guests notice the little things such as a cold glass of water on arrival or a thank you chocolate at the end of the day. Encouraging your staff to be attentive with the little things goes a long way to delivering an exceptional experience. The reviews from our guests tell us we're successful.

7. What is your process for responding to reviews?

We try to respond to most reviews. We always respond on social media as there is often banter in a public space. We want our customer relationships to be more of a personalised experience so our engagement in these reviews is important.

8. Tips on handling negative reviews

We have procedures in place where negative reviews go to the manager. We always respond in a positive way with a follow up email direct to the guests. Communicating with the guests on board the boat will often smooth over situations beforehand if guests are disappointed or unhappy about anything. Our team are watchful to pick up on cues from our guests.

POPULAR REVIEW SITES

Encourage customers to leave reviews across all relevant online review platforms.

Here are some of the most popular platforms, with links directly to the pages to set up your account.

GOOD TO KNOW

Facebook recommendations are an important part of influencing the consumer experience and consumer travel decisions. Due to changes in its user review system, however, Facebook review ratings do not contribute to the ReviewPro GRI calculations. Comments that accompany Facebook recommendations will continue to contribute to the ReviewPro summary information, including the Customer Review Word Cloud (see Word Cloud example on page 40) and the list of review sources.

	Booking.com
	Google
	TripAdvisor
	Expedia
	Hotels.com
	Aqoda
	Ctrip
	Wotif
	Yelp
	True Local
	Holidaycheck
	Facebook



Quick exercise to track your 'bookings to review' conversion rate

Take your monthly review volume, divide by the number of bookings during this period, and calculate the score. Monitor this over time and also the impact on your revenue.

Interpreting the Consumer Insights Report

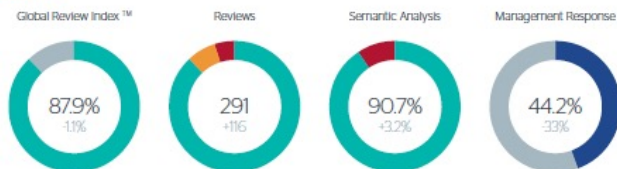
Results summary

Your online reviews demonstrate how well your business is consistently delivering an exceptional experience – as determined by customers. Your business requires at least 25 reviews over a 12-month period in order to create a ReviewPro Global Review Index™(GRI). Businesses who receive a GRI™ of 80 or more will receive 60 points.

The GRI™ is determined by ReviewPro, the global company that aggregates online reviews from over 175 global platforms. The GRI™ is calculated by an algorithm that generates a score from 0 to 100 and seeks to give you the most objective picture of your online reputations.

In the Review Pro summary section you can see:

Summary



Global Review Index is your overall GRI™ score and the change compared to the previous period.

Reviews refers to the number of reviews you have received compared to the same date range of the previous period.

Semantic Analysis provides a summary of reviews broken down into mentions and shows you the distribution of your percentage of either positive consumer sentiment (green) and negative sentiment (red) and how this has changed since the previous period.

Management Response identifies the percentage of reviews that you have responded to compared to the previous period.

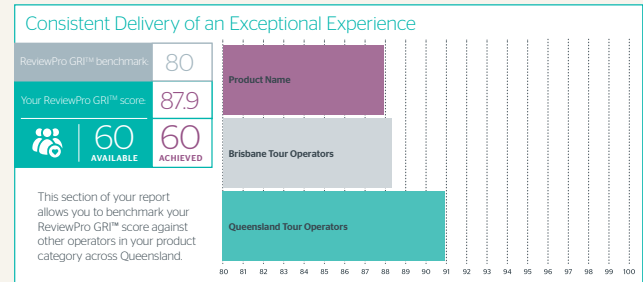


TIP: Recent reviews are weighted more heavily in the GRI™ calculation compared to older reviews. So it's important to continuously encourage consumers to leave reviews of their experience.

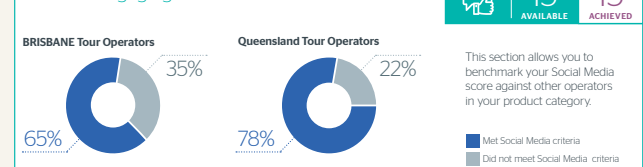
Best of Queensland Experiences

Example Operator Report

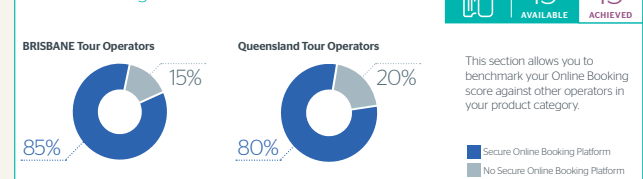
Your results compared to other Tour Operators



Active & Engaging Social Media Presence



Online Booking



North Stradbroke Island

Your ReviewPro GRI™ score is benchmarked against the average of others in the region and Queensland wide to see how you are competing.

Word Cloud summary

The Word Cloud provides a visual summary of what customers are saying about your business in reviews; with positive sentiments in green and negative in red. The larger the word, the higher the volume of reviews.

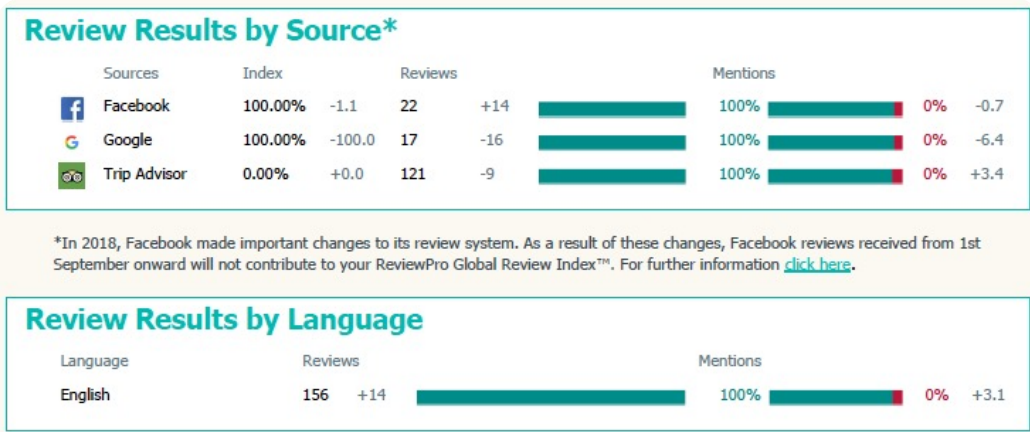
Customer Review Word Cloud



Source of your reviews

The Review Results by Source provide you with a quick snapshot of where the majority of your customer reviews are coming from and how that may have changed from the previous period.

The Consumer Insights Report identifies the key sources for your ReviewPro GRI™, your total number of reviews per source and the percentage of positive and negative mentions in the reviews received from each source and the review results by language.



Summary of your response rate to reviews

You can also use the Report to monitor the total number of responsible reviews, the percentage that have been responded to and the average time of your responses.

Management Responses



Note:

The average time is only calculated based on channels that provide a date/time. A response time of less than 3 days is considered by ReviewPro as positive, 4 to 5 days as neutral shown in orange, and anything responded to in more than 5 days as negative, shown in red.

SOME METHODS TO ENCOURAGE REVIEWS:

- At the end of the experience, thank your customers for choosing your business and invite them to share their experience on their preferred review site.
- During the check-out process ask your customers if they enjoyed their experience. If they did, encourage them to share this with others online.
- Provide a small momento or thank you card at the end of the experience, with an invitation to comment about their experience on their preferred review site.
- Send a follow up email to your customers, thanking them for choosing your business, repeating any messages you shared while they were with you, and inviting them to comment on their experience on their preferred review site (see Module 8 for using booking systems to automate follow up emails).
- Ensure your team are aware you want to encourage reviews. Providing suggested words and highlighting the opportunities may be helpful for new staff.



Responding to reviews

Responding to all reviews, negative and positive is important for many reasons. It enables you to actively engage with your customers and take control of your business' reputation, rather than leaving it to reviewers. The way you are seen to handle difficulties can speak volumes about your business. People will recognise your efforts if you react efficiently and professionally and may even be impressed by your team's responsiveness and commitment to delivering exceptional experiences.

Did you know?

77% of travellers are more likely to book when business owners respond to reviews.

(TripAdvisor, 2019)

Handling negative reviews

Dealing with negative reviews can be upsetting. Some suggested steps for responding in a professional manner include:

- Address the person by name wherever possible.
- Thank them for their review, e.g., "Thank you for your review. I'm sorry to hear you had a frustrating experience, but I really appreciate you bringing this issue to my attention."
- Even if it's not your fault, say sorry, as this builds trust in your business, e.g., "We apologise that our service did not satisfy your expectations."
- Take responsibility for what happened as this acknowledges the customer's experience, e.g. "I'm so sorry. We're normally known for our exceptional attention to detail. Thanks for taking the time to bring this to our attention. We will use the feedback to ensure this doesn't happen again."
- Take the conversation offline and talk to your customer directly if needed.
- Thank them again and leave on a positive note, e.g., "Thank you for bringing this matter to our attention. Please call or ask for me when you next visit."

Key Messages:

- Encourage your customers to leave reviews on their favourite platform.
- Schedule time to respond to your reviews e.g. 1 hour every Monday morning.
- Seek feedback from your customers during their time with you.
- Look for patterns in the reviews you are receiving to identify your strengths and where improvements may be needed.

Wamuran Strawberry Farm



FIND OUT MORE

Further [tips](#) to increase reviews and [responding](#) to reviews.

Make use of the [TripAdvisor Review Express](#) service to send customised review request emails.

More details on responding to [negative reviews](#) from Review Trackers.