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10 Easy Ways to Supercharge Your Small Business' Yelp Presence

Posted by **Pamela Seiple**
Mon, Mar 01, 2010 @ 07:30 AM

 **Comments**

*This guest post is by **Leighann Farrelly**, community manager of Yelp Boston. In the following article, Leighann discusses 10 simple ways you can take advantage of your business's presence on Yelp, one of the top user review sites on the Web today.*

1. Join The Conversation

What conversation, you ask? The conversation taking place everyday on Yelp.com between businesses and consumers in your local community and beyond. Just last month, 29 million consumers came to Yelp to connect with great local businesses; since 2005, over 9 million reviews have been written. What does that mean for you? It's time to open a dialogue with these potential customers.

Yelp makes it really easy and cost-effective not only to start, but to maintain communication with these potential customers by using a free suite of business tools. [Create a Yelp Business Owner Account](#) to join (or start) the



conversation about your business today. By unlocking these free tools, you'll be able to update your business information, post special offers, announce upcoming events and, most importantly, communicate with your customers.

2. Tell your story

Inquiring minds want to know, and here's your chance to give 'em the scoop, right on your Yelp business page. Once logged into biz.yelp.com, build out a rich profile under the "Business Information" tab. You can share the history behind your business and what you do best. Also, add a little something about yourself and your managers so that Yelp users can get to know you.

3. Smile for the camera

Get photos of your establishment up on Yelp, pronto. If your business is a restaurant, add a picture of your menu. Own a boutique? Add a shot of your great new merchandise. It's a simple, fun and effective way to illustrate your story. Finally, ensure a photo of your storefront is included so people know what to look for when they decide to visit you offline.

4. Bring on the Bling

Got a website of your own? Why not add some Yelp badges to bring awareness to customers about your presence on Yelp? Check out the variety of buttons we've created just for business owners, which can be found on [Yelp's Flickr page](#) and downloaded for free. Once added to your site, hyperlink the image so visitors can jump directly to your Yelp reviews.

5. Make an announcement!

Let's say you've just created a great new dinner menu. Or, you're having a sale on all your summer merchandise. It's easy to let current and potential customers know about specials and offers through [the announcement tool](#). Simply create an announcement and publish it to your Yelp page. Not only will your message appear on your business page, but it will make you more discoverable within Yelp search results and on our popular mobile platforms. From promotions and discounts to unveiling a new location, announcements make it easy to get a simple and clear promotion out to Yelp users. To date, over 200,000 announcements have been created. What are you waiting for?

6. Do let people know you're on Yelp.

Is adding a fancy Yelp button going to be enough to let customers know about your new Yelp page? While it's a good start, there are a number of creative ways make sure your customers are in the know. One of our favorite methods was found at a coffee shop where the owners provide free wi-fi. When customers logged onto the Internet, they were immediately taken to the coffee shop's preferred homepage: their Yelp business listing! Other business owners have proudly displayed favorite reviews in their offices or even at their front desks.

7. Don't ask for reviews or spam your page.

While you might be eager to fill your page with positive reviews, we don't encourage you to solicit them from customers. Positive feedback is best, and most accepted, when it comes organically from customers who have had a genuinely great experience with your business. Consumers are turned off by a business with fake-looking reviews, and Yelp's review filter (a spam algorithm designed to maximize trustworthiness of Yelp content) weeds out most shills. Yelp users are a savvy bunch and come to Yelp for quality information to help them make purchasing decisions. While they often decide which opinions they trust on the site, our automated process helps filter out reviews from users that are less established on Yelp. It applies to both positive and negative reviews, and helps protect both consumers and business owners from malicious competitors, spam and generally less credible information.

Our advice? Take the above steps to let people know you're on Yelp and then just go with the flow. Remember, it's all about quality, not quantity. Success is measured by the number of folks who view your page, not your review quantity.

8. Respond, Engage & Communicate

With a Yelp Business Owner's Account, you have the opportunity to engage in a dialogue with consumers who have reviewed your business. While it's a great way to build goodwill, it's important to consider your approach and tone; your reviewers are your customers, more vocal than most, and though you may have good intentions, meaning can sometimes be misconstrued through the Internet. With your business owner account, you're able to respond privately and publicly to customers who have reviewed your business.

Private responses:

For positive reviews, a simple thank you works best. Avoid offering freebies as gratitude, as this may come across as an ex post facto bribe, and try keep your message short and sweet. For negative reviews, things can get a bit trickier. First, take a step back and deep breath. Though it may hurt to hear negative things about a business where you work so hard, it's important to consider your customer's viewpoint and experience. Avoid getting defensive, making excuses, attacking or blaming the customer -- this is your chance to establish a human relationship and make this situation better, even if it's just to **let them know you are listening** and appreciate their feedback. When you take the time to acknowledge their personal situation and address their issue, it shows and may even help to change the customer's perspective for good.

Public Responses:

Public responses are a simple way for business owners to add helpful commentary to any review of their business. It's an easy way to show customers that you are listening and that you're always looking for ways to improve upon their feedback. When it comes to positive reviews, a thank you is best communicated through our private messaging system. The public comments tool is best used to address how you've handled a specific concern raised by a reviewer, for example, to provide correct information if something is inaccurate or out of date, or to share your version of a difficult situation if you're unable to resolve the concern through private messaging. In any of these instances, it's important to remember that these comments will be viewable by everyone who comes to Yelp, including potential customers. That means you'll need to avoid using public comments to make personal attacks on a reviewer, advertise or offer incentives. This will only lead to a negative perception of your business and possibly drive away potential customers. You'll want to leave readers with a positive impression of your business, so take a diplomatic approach and stick to the facts. Customers appreciate it when business owners take the high road.

9. Measure your word of mouth

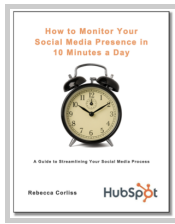
With your free Yelp Business Owner's Account, **measuring your word-of-mouth** is as simple as logging in to your account. You'll be able to check on the number of page views your business has each day and each month, an important indication of just how much buzz your business is generating. You can also opt-in to receive email alerts when new reviews are posted and track your review distribution and rating over time.

10. Lather, Rinse, Repeat

Once you've completed your business page, uploaded photos, co-branded **your online presence** with Yelp badges and posted an enticing announcement, stick with it! Keeping track of your Yelp business page and your reviews, along with responding in a timely manner to those who've taken the time to provide you with feedback, only takes a few minutes a week and doesn't cost you a dime. By keeping the lines of communication open and being receptive to customer feedback -- both positive and negative -- you're putting yourself and your business in a position of great visibility to the Yelp community and potential customers in your area. Be consistent, be positive and be engaging!

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successfully streamline your social media monitoring to save you time!

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COMMENTS

Very nice blog. I bookmarked this blog for future reference.

Another idea is, you have to show yourself as an expert in what ever business you are doing. You can do this by your website content and the blogs.

Hyder

posted on Monday, March 01, 2010 at 7:46 AM by [Syed Hyder Ali](#)

Awesome tips! I rely on Yelp for getting reviews on restaurants and other establishments. There's a great community feel to Yelp and even though most of the people are strangers to me, I rely heavily on their opinions.

For brick and mortar establishments, it feels great to open the door and see the Yelp sticker attached to it. I feel like they're recognizing me when they do that and that they really want to be part of my community.

posted on Monday, March 01, 2010 at 8:18 AM by [Jeff](#)

Great tip about Yelp...thanks for sharing. I've signed up for 3/10 webinar. Looking forward to receiving info about monitoring social presence in 10 mins. a day.

posted on Monday, March 01, 2010 at 10:22 AM by [Susan Redmon](#)

Finally, someone has taken action against Yelp. I always thought Yelp was a total scam and I was pleased to learn that I'm not the only one who has experienced the "Yelp extortion" tactics. If your a small business owner like me my advice is to stay away from Yelp. Here's more info...<http://techcrunch.com/2010/02/24/yelp-class-action-lawsuit/>

posted on Monday, March 01, 2010 at 11:58 PM by Thomas Wills

These tips would be helpful for any platform on which a business needs to manage their presence.

I wonder how Yelp plans to manage its own presence in the headlines and in the courtroom. How Ms. Farrelly responds to our comments here might be telling in itself.

posted on Tuesday, March 02, 2010 at 12:32 PM by [Sara Fitzpatrick Comito](#)

Yelp is terrible. I'd avoid it like the plague. Start getting good reviews? They'll start calling you to advertise, and if you don't the good reviews will start to appear on the bottom and bad reviews start showing up. Get a bad review, possibly from a disgruntled ex-employee? They'll call you to offer to remove or demote the bad reviews if you buy advertising.

Any business needs to make money, this is how Yelp does it and really has to based on their model. Further, reviews from people who's credibility is based on how many reviews they write is also bad. Just because someone writes a bunch of reviews doesn't mean they know what they are talking about. It just means they have more than enough time to write a ton of reviews.

posted on Tuesday, March 02, 2010 at 12:36 PM by Peter Smitts

This is a great run-down of advice for small businesses using Yelp or similar sites. For those looking for a Yelp alternative that is more community-focused with shared ownership and flexibility, check out <http://GoHuman.com>.

posted on Tuesday, March 02, 2010 at 1:18 PM by [Andy Swindler](#)

Like Andy mentioned this is a ton of great advice for businesses to adhere to and engage with their customers. For those that would like to see another company that offers business social media visit www.PlanetBuzz.com and check out the Buzz Page

posted on Tuesday, March 02, 2010 at 2:29 PM by Deno

Thank you, Hyder, Jeff, Susan, Sara and Andy! So glad you found the post useful. If I can provide additional insight on our free business tools or Yelp in general, you can always find me here: http://www.yelp.com/user_details?userid=hBic152tMVSTecdZSVL-lQ

Peter and Thomas: I wanted to make sure you saw these two, in-depth blog posts by our CEO addressing the claims here: <http://officialblog.yelp.com/2010/02/lady-justice-needs-a-lawsuit-filter.html> and most recently, from yesterday: <http://officialblog.yelp.com/2010/03/additional-thoughts-on-last-weeks-lawsuit-or-how-a-conspiracy-theory-is-born-.html>.

Most notably: "Yelp does not remove or hide negative reviews in exchange for money and Yelp salespeople do not offer to do so. Additionally, Yelp treats review content equally for advertisers and non-advertisers alike: advertisers pay for advertising and enhanced listings, nothing more; and businesses are not penalized for declining to advertise."

These blogs by 3rd party lawyer, Josh King (<http://avvoblog.com/2010/02/26/yelp-sued-over-client-reviews/>) and leading industry analyst, Greg Sterling (<http://gesterling.wordpress.com/2010/03/01/a-look-at-the-claims-and-facts-in-yelp-case/>), respectively, represent an interesting take on current events, as well.

posted on Tuesday, March 02, 2010 at 2:47 PM by [Leighann Farrelly](#)

Great post! Localizing your social media efforts are a great idea for small biz. Yelp is especially powerful as it often can have a large local influence on consumers choosing who to do business with.

posted on Tuesday, March 02, 2010 at 3:02 PM by [Zack](#)

Unfortunately, the website does not recognise a country called UAE :) I work in the UAE and would like to register our company on Yelp. Seems like there's no way to do that!

posted on Thursday, March 04, 2010 at 1:29 AM by Chris Fernando

Good List! Thanks for sharing...

posted on Tuesday, March 09, 2010 at 5:01 PM by [Bob Levin](#)

Comments have been closed for this article.

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