

# 4 EVOLUTIONARY STAGES OF REPUTATION MARKETING

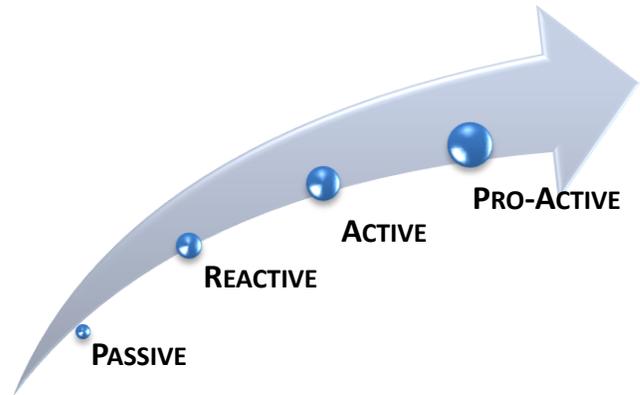


As with most things, the Best Practices for Reputation Marketing (also known as reputation management, social proof or review marketing) have significantly evolved over the last decade.



When your only marketing was Yellow pages, there was no need to

worry about your reputation, so you didn't need a plan to build and monitor it. Studies show online reviews are the single most effective way to build consumer trust and the difference between a business that succeeds and one that fails can be how well they harness the goodwill of their ongoing customer base.



From least to most effective, the stages are:

## PASSIVE, REACTIVE, ACTIVE AND PRO-ACTIVE

1. **PASSIVE** – This is a completely hands-off approach that ignores reputation entirely. Companies in this stage have no control of their reputation. Expect less than 1% of customers to enter a review of your business – most of which will be negative.



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|-----------------------------------|------------|
| • "Sweet 16" Review Site Profiles | None       |
| • Review Requesting – Who         | No contact |
| • Review Requesting – When        | Never      |
| • Review Monitoring               | None       |
| • How you Feel about Reputation   | Concern    |

2. **REACTIVE** – The most common stage for a local business to be in, even if they've retained marketing assistance. Here you've created and/or claimed some of the most important profiles at review sites but have no operational method of requesting reviews. Companies in this stage are still relying on outside forces to control their reputation. Because more profiles exist, expect about 5% of customers to enter a review of your business – most of which will still be negative.



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|-----------------------------------|---------------|
| • "Sweet 16" Review Site Profiles | Some Profiles |
| • Review Requesting – Who         | No contact    |
| • Review Requesting – When        | Never         |
| • Review Monitoring               | None          |
| • How you Feel about Reputation   | Frustration   |

3. **ACTIVE** – The second-most common stage, here the business typically makes a follow up phone call to customers or sends a postcard and may ask them to go to a specific website to fill out a review. With this method the business takes control and can expect about 10% of customers to enter a review of your business – most of which will now be positive.



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|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| • "Sweet 16" Review Site Profiles | Some Profiles         |
| • Review Requesting – Who         | Office staff contact  |
| • Review Requesting – When        | Follow up after visit |
| • Review Monitoring               | Some Profiles         |
| • How you Feel about Reputation   | Hope                  |

4. **PRO-ACTIVE** – This represents the cutting edge stage and was unavailable prior to 2012. New tools allow a business at this stage to request a review while still in the driveway. With this method the business takes control not only of the review process itself, but can also use the in-person confirmation process as a quality assurance mechanism to make sure they are providing the best possible service. Market leading businesses in this stage can expect up to 40% of customers to enter a review of your business – the vast majority of which will be positive. That level of review feedback almost always assures a continued market-dominating position.



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|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| • "Sweet 16" Review Site Profiles | All Profiles                 |
| • Review Requesting – Who         | Field & office staff contact |
| • Review Requesting – When        | Confirm during visit         |
| • Review Monitoring               | All Profiles                 |
| • How you Feel about Reputation   | Elation, Excitement          |

**BEWARE:** Incentivized review requesting is NEVER suggested. While asking a legitimate customer to go to a legitimate third-party website to enter their own review is acceptable at the conclusion of normal business interaction, offering anyone (staff, customers, etc) an incentive to provide a review on your behalf is dubious at best and outright dishonest at worst. It is also unacceptable to enter a review on behalf of a customer at a third-party website (subject to the guidelines of the individual website).

LeadsNearby is a marketing services agency that specializes in developing cost-effective lead generation plans for local service business clients. We offer low-cost foundation marketing subscriptions as well as fully-customized solutions using a unique blend of online marketing (be found), customer acquisition (be selected) and loyalty marketing (be remembered) services that help businesses reach and build relationships with customers.