

REPORT SHOWS THAT HOTEL ONLINE REVIEWS ARE TRUSTED MORE



According to a Local Consumer Review Study published in June, 79 percent of the consumers accord as much trust to online reviews as they do to online recommendations. Out of these, 30 percent trust the reviews if they believe they are authentic, 25 percent accord credit only to multiple reviews and the other 24 percent trust only reviews of certain businesses.

The findings also suggest that more and more consumers prefer to read reviews as part of their pre-research plan in selecting a local business. Reviews help them to form an opinion faster, and they also need to read less reviews than they used to in the past, with only 22 percent reading 7 or more reviews to form an opinion (as compared to 44 percent in 2011).

This fact puts an increased strain on hotels, which need to carefully monitor their online reputation. Negative reviews can slide in very easily, and this creates a bad image to the hotel. As for the hoteliers' budget in 2014, it is quite clear that guest reviews need to become an integrating part of these institutions' marketing strategies.

The study also points out that internet reviews tend to be trusted more by the younger audience (18-34 years), who accords 90 percent legitimacy to them. By comparison, people aged between 35 and 54 trust the same reviews in 80 percent, while the elder audience (55+ years) gives them 72 percent credibility.

When it comes to genders' appeal, online reviews seem to be trusted more by the feminine audience, with 81 percent of the female customers according them credit. By comparison, 75 percent of the men surveyed accorded them the same credibility. What is interesting here is that females tend to pay more attention to the authenticity of reviews (35 percent of them deem this chapter as highly important), while men tend to be more interested in the number of reviews available on the site.

According to the study, customers are most interested in seeing what others think about certain cafes and restaurants, with 61 percent of the audience reading reviews for these types of businesses on a regular manner. At the same time, dentistry cabinets and hotels/guest houses are also on high demand, with 31, respectively 28 percent of the customers paying increased attention to what people are saying about them.

Customers are mainly looking for reliability, good value and expertise, but professionalism and accreditations are also important for them when taking a decision. However, friendliness, courtesy and localness are barely taken into account, with less than 10% of the audience paying attention to these chapters. The survey also highlights the fact that many people prefer to recommend a business via social networks, such as Facebook, but they prefer reading reviews from a variety of sources as long as they deem them to be reputable.

In conclusion, online reviews are becoming more critical for local businesses than ever, since many customers make their decision according to them. Although word-to-mouth recommendations are still valued the most, in the near future internet reviews are expected to outcome them in value. This is because the online community grows constantly, and everyone seems to prefer to take a decision based on others' past experiences.

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