

Get More Reviews — Without Breaking the Rules

Asking is allowed on Google. Almost everything people do around the ask is not.

TIME	COST	DIFFICULTY	AUDIT SIGNAL
1 hour to set up, 5 min/week after	Free	Easy	review_volume_recency

WHAT WE MEASURED

We looked at how many reviews you have and how recent they are.

WHY IT MATTERS

Recency is the part that surprises people. In a 2026 consumer survey, **74% of consumers look for reviews written in the last three months**, 32% look for reviews from the **last two weeks** — up from 20% the year before — and **18%** consider only the last week.

Meanwhile **31%** will only use a business rated 4.5 or higher, up from 17% a year earlier.

The trend matters more than the numbers: the recency window is tightening and the rating bar is rising. A 4.7-star profile whose newest review is from last October now reads, to a third of shoppers, as a business that may not be operating well any more.

FIX IT YOURSELF

1 Get your Google review link

1. Sign in at **business.google.com** with the account that manages the profile.
2. Open your profile → **Read Reviews** → **Get more reviews**.
3. Click the **Share** icon, then **Copy**. You'll get a short link like `g.page/r/...`
4. For the QR code, right-click the image → **Save image as...**

Note: **QR code generation only works on a computer**, not on a phone.

Pro move: set up a redirect on your own site — `yourbusiness.com/review` → that Google link. It's speakable over the phone, it survives Google changing the URL, and you can count clicks.

2 Know exactly what Google bans

Google **allows** you to ask. What it prohibits:

- **Incentives of any kind** — no discounts, no free items, no raffle entries, no "\$5 off for a review." Google's policy is stricter than the FTC's here.
- **Review gating** — sending customers to a private "how did we do?" screen first and only routing the happy ones to your public link. This is the "selectively solicit positive reviews" prohibition, and it catches a lot of off-the-shelf reputation software. If a vendor advertises "filter out bad reviews before they go public," that product violates Google policy.
- **Asking on the premises** — no review kiosk or tablet at the counter.
- **Reviews from employees, contractors, family** — conflict of interest.

- **As of April 2026:** asking staff to hit a **review quota**, and asking customers to include **specific content** — most notably **asking them to name the employee who served them**. That was standard practice in home services, auto and dental for years. It is now out.

3 Never ask for reviews on Yelp

This one catches almost everybody, because Yelp's rule is the **opposite** of Google's, not a softer version.

Yelp's stated policy: *"Don't ask anyone to review your business, be it customers, mailing list subscribers, friends, family, etc."* And: *"Proactively asking for reviews may hurt your Yelp rating because our automated software may not recommend reviews that seem to be prompted."*

Two enforcement mechanisms. Solicited reviews get quietly filed under "not currently recommended," where they don't count toward your rating — so a campaign can produce ten glowing reviews and zero movement. And Yelp can place a **Consumer Alert** on your page for ~90 days, which is far more damaging than any single one-star review.

Rule: ask on Google. Be findable on Yelp. Never mention Yelp in an outbound request.

4 Ask at the right moment

Ask at the moment of demonstrated satisfaction, not the moment of payment.

- **Trades / home services:** at the completion walkthrough, while the result is visible and the tech is still there. Follow with a text within 1–2 hours.
- **Salon / retail / restaurant:** when a customer gives you a genuine compliment. Or on the receipt.
- **Professional services:** after a delivered outcome — the return is filed, the deal closed.
- **Medical / dental:** at checkout after a good visit. Never tied to treatment or billing.
- **E-commerce:** 3–7 days after *delivery*, not shipment.

Text beats email substantially — the link is one tap from a phone already signed into Google.

5 Use wording that's compliant and still works

Hi [Name] — thanks for choosing [Business]. If you have a minute, an honest review helps other [neighbors/homeowners] find us. Good or bad, we read all of them: [link] — [Your name]

Why it's compliant: it asks everyone (no gating), says "honest," explicitly invites negative feedback, offers nothing in exchange, and doesn't request specific content or name an employee.

Delete these from any old template you have:

- *"If you were happy, would you leave us 5 stars?"* — gating and steering
- *"Mention [tech's name]!"* — violates the April 2026 rule
- *"Leave a review, get 10% off"* — incentive ban
- Any pre-survey that routes people by score — gating

6 Aim for a trickle, not a burst

Target 2–4 new reviews per month, every month.

A burst of 40 reviews in one week followed by eleven months of silence is the failure mode. Google's policy flags "unusual volumes or patterns of review contributions" — a spike can get the whole batch filtered, and you're stale again by month three.

Working backwards: a well-timed text with a direct link converts at roughly 10–25%. To land 3 reviews a month, ask **12–30 customers**. That's a handful of asks per week, not a campaign.

Ask once, follow up once 3–4 days later, then stop. A third ask damages the relationship and yields almost nothing.

CHECK YOUR WORK

- ☐ You have your short Google review link saved and easy to send.
- ☐ Your ask is by text, at the right moment, with neutral wording.
- ☐ You are not offering any incentive.
- ☐ You are not gating, and not asking for specific content or staff names.
- ☐ You never ask on Yelp.
- ☐ You're getting 2–4 new reviews a month, consistently.

COMMON MISTAKES

- **Reputation software that filters negative reviews.** Violates Google policy. Ask any vendor directly.
- **Staff review quotas.** Prohibited as of April 2026.
- **Asking on Yelp.** Actively harms you.
- **A review kiosk at the counter.** Prohibited.

This fix is free. You can earn and keep any Agenarys Seal tier — including Platinum — without paying Agenarys anything beyond the audit itself. If you would rather have help doing it, we sell that. We never sell passage.

SOURCES & FURTHER READING

Google Prohibited & Restricted Content policy: support.google.com/contributionpolicy/answer/7400114

Google — Create a review link: support.google.com/business/answer/16816815

Yelp — Don't Ask for Reviews: biz.yelp.com/support-center/Reviews/Best_Practices/Don-t-Ask-for-Reviews/en-US

BrightLocal Local Consumer Review Survey 2026 (n=1,002 US adults) — commercial survey, directional