



Customer Review Sites Share Your Safety Efforts



business customers customer experience pandemic

Summary: Customer review sites are now being used to inform on businesses' safety efforts. This could be another channel for your institution to assure customers about safety measures during COVID-19.

The first online review site, Epinions, started in 1999 and was bought by DealTime (shopping.com) in 2003. Since then, sites such as Yelp, Angie's List, and Google have added customer reviews to their sites.

Due to COVID-19, customer review sites have expanded the information provided, from product quality and customer service, to include sanitation and safety efforts taken by businesses. Community financial institutions (CFIs) can use these sites too, to capture the steps they are taking in their branches and communicate with their customers.

Given consumers' heightened interest in the risks associated with venturing into publicly accessible spaces, Yelp has expanded the information available for the businesses it features. Some of those include: if a business is limiting the number of people it allows into its facility; whether or not a business is enforcing social distancing; if customers are required to wear masks; if staff is wearing masks and gloves; if hand sanitizer is available to customers; if there is sanitizing being done between customers; if temperature checks are done and if contactless payment is an option. This provides an additional channel for businesses to communicate with their customers and highlight that they are focused on safety and are making in-person visits as low risk as possible. Businesses can make updates easily (and these will be time-stamped) and even personalize a message on their site.

Additionally, ShopSafely.co a new website by retail owner and operator, b8ta started to gather sanitation best practices back in March internally. It then expanded its efforts to include over 100 other retailers, and grades them on 14 factors, with a final overall score. These factors include if traffic is limited, if a mask is required for customers and associates, and if there is contactless payment, among others. While this is only for retailers currently, it may be worthwhile to see what information is important to consumers.

As you reopen and make the same safety and sanitation efforts, you may want to consider including this information more broadly on websites such as Yelp, to **assure all customers** and potential customers. Not only that, it could also be a new way to **engage with your community** as updates are made. Things are happening quickly these days, so **getting information out rapidly** and keeping it up-to-date is important. Of course, this is done alongside your efforts to communicate through your own websites, social media pages, and apps.

As COVID-19 continues to dominate the way people are living their day-to-day lives, providing easy access to your safety measures will make customers and potential customers feel more confident and secure in visiting your branches. For more information on safely reopening, feel free to re-read our article, [Safely Reopening Your Branches](#).

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