



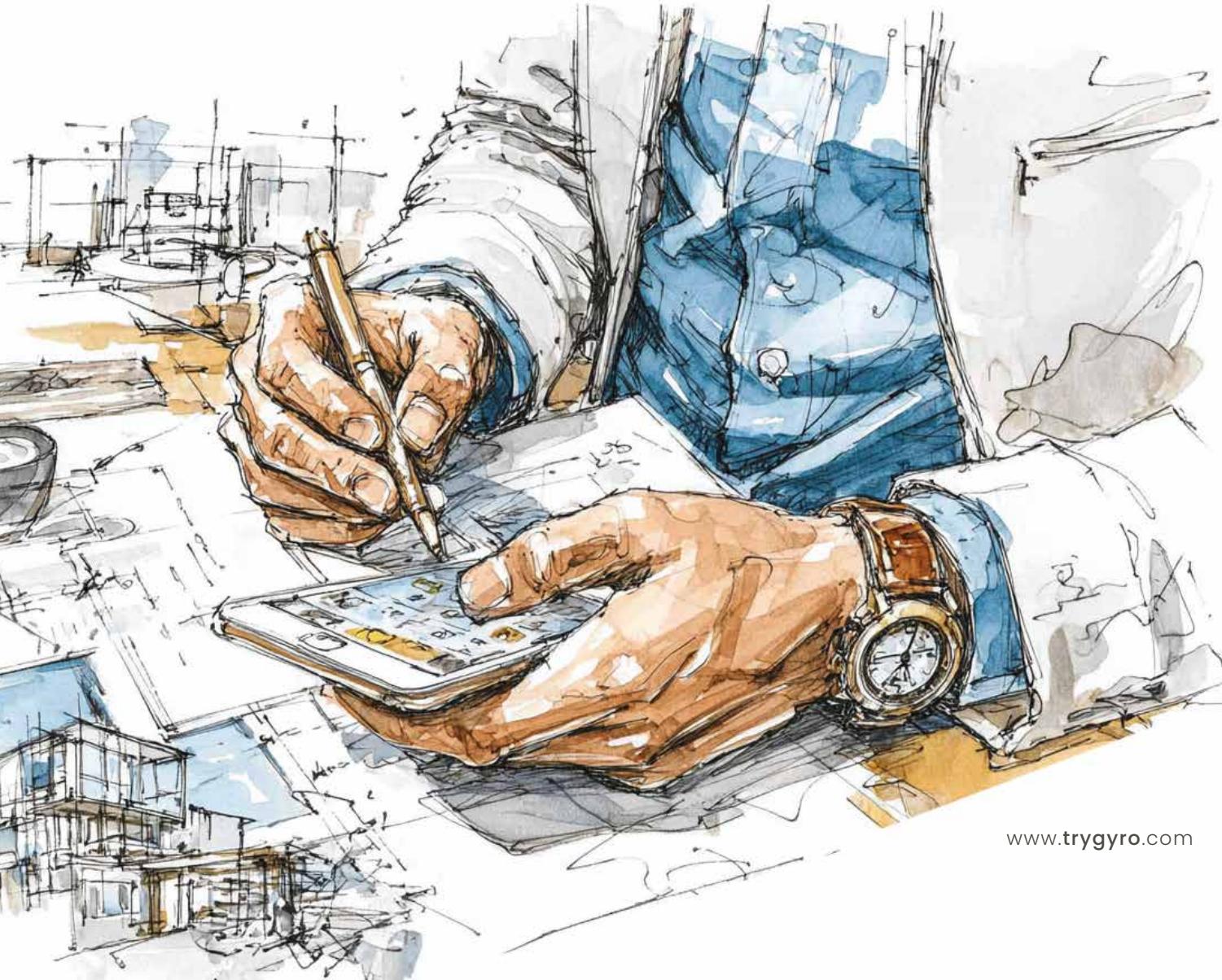
The 2026 Playbook for

Remodel Marketing

The definitive guide for contractors, designers, decorators, and architects who market to homeowners

Chapter 10

The Modern “Word-of-Mouth” Goes Digital



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This playbook was created by
TryGyro.com, a team dedicated to helping
remodelers grow smarter, stronger businesses without
wasting time or money. We designed it for leaders
and teams in the remodeling and design industry with
practical strategies that drive real results.



Chapter **10**

The Modern “Word-of-Mouth” Goes Digital

In today's remodeling market, reputation lives online:

nine out of ten homeowners read reviews

before hiring, and 88% trust them as much as a friend's referral.

A strong profile with 5-star reviews boosts search visibility, gets you shortlisted, and can even justify charging up to 22% more, while weak or neglected profiles quietly disqualify you. Managing reviews isn't just damage control, it's a growth strategy

Deliver quality work, make it easy for clients to leave feedback, respond professionally to every review, and keep profiles accurate across platforms like Google, Yelp, Facebook, Angi, and Houzz.

Consistently doing so creates a compounding cycle of trust, leads, and pricing power making your online reputation one of your most valuable business assets.

What You Will Learn in Chapter Ten



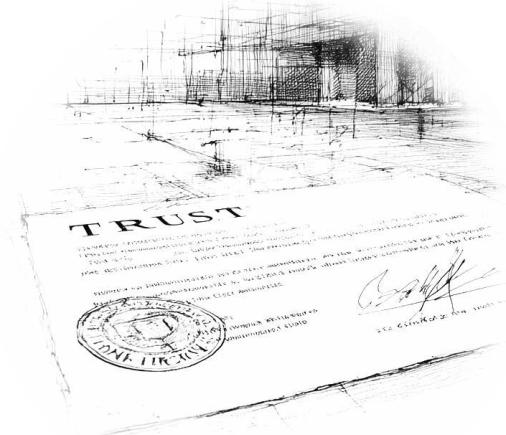
Trust Multiplies Revenue

A strong reputation not only attracts more leads but also higher-budget clients, research shows customers pay up to 22% more when a company has excellent reviews.



Google First, Then Everywhere

Google reviews are king, but prospects also check your website, Yelp, Facebook, Angi, and even Nextdoor. Consistency across platforms signals credibility.



Ask, Simplify & Respond

Happy clients often won't review unless asked. Provide direct links, encourage specifics, and reply to every review—good or bad. How you handle criticism builds trust.



Reputation is a Growth Engine

Positive reviews snowball into more visibility, warmer leads, and less price-sensitive clients. Manage it weekly like any campaign, it's your 24/7 salesforce.



Reputation Management and Online Reviews

The Modern “Word-of-Mouth” Goes Digital

A remodeler’s good reputation has always been gold – but today that reputation lives and spreads online. Homeowners still ask friends for referrals, but now they just as quickly turn to Google, Yelp, or Facebook to see what dozens of other people say about your business. In fact, more than nine out of ten homeowners read online reviews before choosing a contractor. These reviews are essentially digital word-of-mouth, amplified to a “world-of-mouth” scale. One happy client’s five-star comment on Google can influence countless future customers, acting as a permanent referral that new prospects discover at any hour. The flip side is that a neglected online reputation (or a string of bad reviews) can quietly scare away prospects you never even knew about. Managing your online reputation is thus not an optional marketing task – it’s a critical pillar of earning trust in the digital age. As one industry expert put it, “consumer trust is earned online... a contractor’s reputation isn’t just built on personal word-of-mouth anymore — it’s shaped by the digital footprints they leave across review platforms.”

Why does this matter so much? Because online reviews heavily influence consumer decisions. Studies show 67% of consumers’ purchase decisions are swayed by online reviews^{^2}, and 88% trust customer reviews as much as personal recommendations. In other words, people give as much weight to a stranger’s posted opinion as they do to advice from a neighbor. That might sound crazy, but it speaks to the psychology of social proof: if a company has earned dozens of glowing reviews, readers assume “this many people can’t be wrong.” For a remodeling business, a strong constellation of positive reviews can practically close the sale for you, establishing credibility before you even speak to the client. On the other hand, if prospects find no reviews (or only a few lukewarm ones), they may never even call, regardless of how great your work is. In today’s market, your online reputation is your reputation, and it directly impacts your bottom line.



Why a Great Online Reputation Pays Off

Beyond just avoiding elimination, cultivating an excellent online reputation actively benefits your business. First, it boosts your visibility. Many review platforms double as discovery engines – for example, lots of good Google reviews can improve your rankings in local search results, leading more homeowners to find you. Also, homeowners are more likely to click on the remodeler with 50 five-star reviews than one with 5 reviews. There's a clear herd instinct: seeing that many others have had positive experiences makes new customers feel safer choosing you. Moreover, potential clients often filter out businesses with lower ratings.

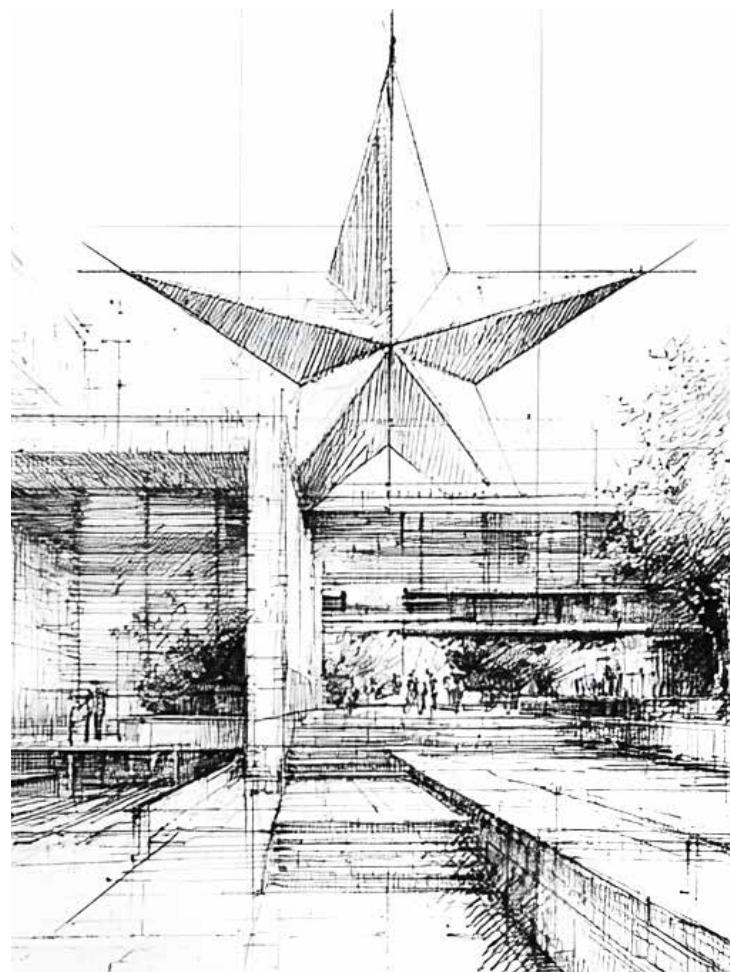
Surveys have found that 71% of consumers won't even consider a business whose average rating is below ~3 stars.

In practice, this means a low rating can take you out of the running before you've had a chance to bid a job. Conversely, maintaining a strong 4.5 or 5 profile helps ensure you stay on homeowners' shortlists.

Reputation doesn't just affect whether you get leads – it influences the quality of leads and even the prices you can charge. High-trust businesses attract more serious, higher-budget clients. In fact, research indicates people are willing to pay up to 22% more for the same service if a company has an excellent online reputation. Think about that: your stellar reviews can justify premium pricing because clients feel they're buying peace of mind along with workmanship. Home remodeling is a high-stakes purchase (their home and thousands of dollars are on the line), so homeowners are often happy to invest a bit more in the contractor with a proven track record of customer satisfaction. A remodeler with glowing reviews and responsive service signals "professional

and reliable," which reduces perceived risk. Trust, once established, is valuable currency. On the flip side, a poor reputation forces businesses to compete on price alone, since prospects see less reason to trust their quality or service.

Finally, a great online reputation tends to snowball positively. The more you impress customers, the more positive reviews you gather – which in turn brings you more customers who already feel confident in your business. It creates a virtuous cycle of trust and growth. And the effort you invest in reputation management keeps paying dividends long-term, since those 5-star reviews live on to influence new audiences. In summary, actively managing and improving your online reviews isn't just about damage control – it's one of the best investments in your marketing and brand.





Where Homeowners Check Your Reputation

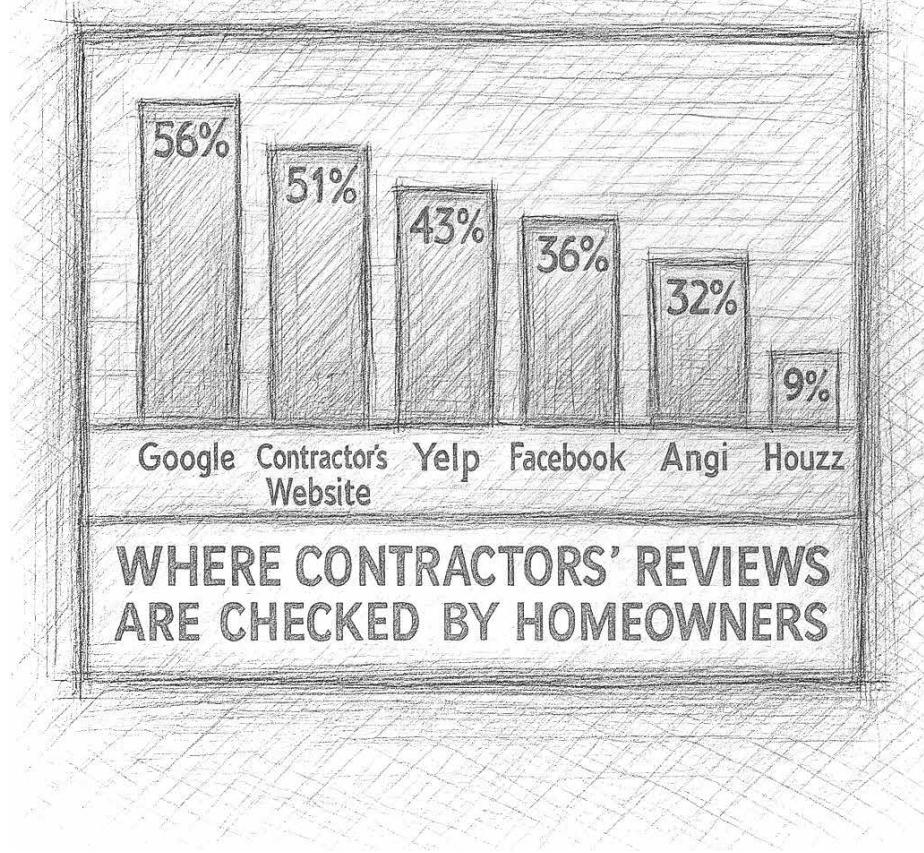
It's important to know which platforms homeowners actually use to gauge a remodeler's reputation. The short answer: Google is king, but it's not the only game in town. In a 2024 homeowner survey, 56% said they look at Google reviews when vetting contractors – not surprising, since Google reviews show up prominently in any search for "remodelers near me" or on Google Maps. If you do nothing else, claim and focus on your Google Business Profile (formerly Google My Business) and encourage clients to review you there. Google's ubiquity and credibility make its star ratings hugely influential.

That said, many people consult multiple sources before making a decision. In fact, about 74–77% of consumers read at least two different review platforms before choosing a local business. According to the same survey, after Google the next most common place homeowners check is the contractor's own website (51% of respondents). This means you should showcase testimonials or embedded reviews on your website, because half of prospects might click over to see if you have testimonials or project reviews highlighted there. Many remodelers create a dedicated "Reviews" or "Testimonials" page, or incorporate a live Google reviews feed on their site. Seeing those credible third-party reviews right on your homepage can reinforce trust and keep visitors from wandering off to find that info elsewhere.

Other key platforms include Yelp (checked by ~43% of homeowners), Facebook (36%), and Angi (formerly Angie's List, ~32%). Yelp is known for home services reviews in many areas (though it skews more to restaurants and retail, a significant chunk of homeowners still consult it for contractors). Facebook reviews or recommendations are also influential, given how many people are active on the platform – a company Facebook

page with lots of community interaction and reviews can impress prospects. Angi and Houzz are more specialized: Angi aggregates contractor reviews and sometimes provides its own ratings; Houzz is a design inspiration platform where remodelers often showcase portfolios and collect client reviews (about 9% of homeowners check Houzz reviews in that survey). Nextdoor is another place your reputation may surface: it's not a traditional "review site," but neighbors ask for recommendations there and past clients might mention your name.

The takeaway: claim your business profiles on all major platforms that homeowners might search. Ensure your information is accurate on each (name, phone, website, etc.) and try to gather at least a few reviews on each. You don't need 100 reviews on every site – focus on Google for volume – but don't let a potential customer find a glaring blank or unclaimed page for your business on Yelp, Angi, or Facebook. A consistent, positive presence across the web sends a strong signal that you're an established, trustworthy pro. It also prevents misinformation; for example, if you moved or changed your number, updating your profiles avoids frustrating a prospect with wrong info (which could lose you a lead). As a bonus, having multiple review profiles helps your SEO: Google's algorithm often treats consistent Name/Address/Phone info and positive mentions across the web as a trust factor in ranking local businesses.



Earning Glowing Reviews from Happy Clients^v

Great reviews start with great service. No amount of strategy can overcome poor workmanship or communication. The foundation of reputation management is to deliver an experience that makes clients genuinely happy to recommend you. This means not only doing quality remodeling work, but also being professional, courteous, staying on schedule, and addressing issues promptly during the project. When you exceed a client's expectations, they'll often be enthusiastic to give positive feedback. Make that your daily goal on the job: every delighted customer is a future 5-star review (and referral).

Beyond earning the goodwill, you often need to actively encourage clients to share their feedback online. Many happy customers simply forget or don't think to write a review unless prompted. Don't be shy about asking for reviews – studies show a sizable portion of people will write a review when asked, especially if they're satisfied. The key is timing

and ease. Ask at the right moment, typically soon after the project is completed and the homeowner is expressing excitement or gratitude for the work. For example, when you do a final walkthrough of their new kitchen and they're saying "Thank you, it looks amazing," that's a perfect opportunity to kindly say, "It's been a pleasure working on this with you. If you don't mind, we'd love if you could share a quick review of your experience online – it really helps our small business. I can send you a link to make it easy."

Make leaving a review as simple as possible for the client. Direct them to the platform that matters most (Google, in most cases). You can send a follow-up email or text with a direct link to your Google review form, so they don't have to search around. For example, Google provides a short URL for your business's review page – use that in your message. Something like: "Thanks again for choosing XYZ Remodeling! It would mean



a lot to us if you could take a minute to leave a review of your project: [Link]. Please let us know if there's anything else we can do for you!" Keep the tone appreciative, not pushy. Many contractors also mention reviews verbally and then follow up with an emailed link – a one-two reminder.

A few additional tips to maximize review collection:

Ask every truly satisfied client (don't just cherry-pick). Having a steady stream of reviews looks more authentic than a sudden burst. Aim to incorporate the review request into your standard project close-out process. Even if only a fraction follow through, it adds up over time.

Guide them on the importance (briefly). Some clients may not realize how much reviews help you. A gentle note like "We rely on word-of-mouth and online reviews for our business – future customers really trust what you share" can motivate someone who likes you to support you with a review.

Consider guiding the content subtly. If a client raves about something specific ("the team finished ahead of schedule" or "kept the workspace so clean!"), you might say, "Thank you! Feel free to mention that in the review; people love details." This isn't about scripting their words, but encouraging specifics, which make reviews more credible and useful to readers.

Use a personal touch. For small and mid-size remodelers especially, a sincere personal appeal can work. For instance, the business owner or lead carpenter might write the follow-up note thanking the client by name. Customers are more likely to do a favor (like writing a review) for someone they've built a relationship with.

Reminders help. Busy clients might intend to write a review but forget. It's okay to send one polite reminder if a week or two passes with no review – something like "Just a friendly reminder: if you're happy with our

work, we'd truly appreciate a short review. Here's that link again. Thanks so much!" Often, people appreciate the nudge. (Don't hound them beyond that; you don't want to annoy a client over a review.)

One thing to avoid is incentivizing reviews in a way that violates platform policies. Google and others prohibit offering money or discounts specifically for a positive review. It's fine to say "Leave us a review" but not "Leave a 5-star review and get a \$50 gift card." Apart from being against terms, readers can often sniff out bribed reviews, which hurts trust. The goal is to get authentic, honest praise from clients who truly had a great experience. Fortunately, if you're consistently providing good service, most reviews will naturally be positive.

Also, don't panic if a client doesn't have a Google account or is reluctant with technology – you can offer alternatives. They might be more comfortable leaving a recommendation on your Facebook page, or writing a testimonial you can quote on your website. The idea is to capture their satisfaction in some format. For instance, older clients might not use Google reviews; in that case you could politely ask if they'd be willing to write a short statement about their experience that you can feature on your site or in marketing materials. Any positive feedback is valuable, though the public platforms are ideal because they reach the most new eyeballs.

Lastly, make sure to thank customers who do review you. A quick personalized email or even a mailed thank-you card for their time can leave a great final impression. Plus, if that client ever sees you again (or needs another project), they'll remember that you valued their effort. It's all about reinforcing the relationship – a happy reviewer can turn into a repeat customer or someone who refers friends to you.

Handling Negative Reviews Like a Pro

No matter how conscientious you are, eventually a negative review will happen. Maybe it's a difficult client you could not satisfy, a miscommunication that spiraled, or even something that wasn't your fault (occasionally people mix up businesses or vent unfairly). How you respond is critical – not just to possibly winning back that one client, but to showing all future readers that you are professional, caring, and trustworthy even under criticism. In fact, a negative review can become an opportunity to boost your reputation if handled gracefully.

Here's a playbook for responding to a bad review:

- Don't panic or react impulsively. Take a deep breath before replying. Never respond in anger or defensiveness; that will only make you look worse. Remember, the response isn't just for the upset reviewer – it's for everyone who sees the review later. Keep your tone calm, courteous, and solution-oriented.
- Respond promptly (ideally within a day or two). This shows you monitor feedback and care. Acknowledge the issue without getting into an online shouting match. For example: "Hi [Name], I'm sorry to hear you were disappointed with [aspect]. We strive to do our best on every project." Express empathy that they had a less-than-ideal experience. Often, people mainly want to be heard.
- Take the conversation offline for resolution. It's wise to then say something like, "We'd like to make this right. We'll reach out to you personally to discuss a solution." Provide a phone number or email and encourage them to contact you, or indicate that you will contact them (and be sure to follow through!). This shows others reading that you don't ignore issues – you address them

professionally. It also moves the detailed conflict out of the public eye.

- Avoid excuses or blame. Even if you feel the client was wrong or unreasonable, keep the response cordial: "We apologize that our service didn't meet your expectations" is better than "Well, if you had cleared the work area like we asked...". The latter will only turn off onlookers. If there was a specific misunderstanding, you can allude to clarifying it later in private. Publicly, the focus should be on apologizing that they're unhappy and fixing it if possible.

- Be factual and professional. In some cases, you might need to correct a blatantly false claim in a review, but do it very carefully and politely. For example: "We understand you're frustrated. Just to clarify for others reading: the project did take longer than expected, and we take responsibility for that delay, but we did return to address the paint issue at no additional cost. Nonetheless, we regret the inconvenience caused." Stick to facts, avoid emotional language. This way, readers get your side of the story without seeing an argument.

- Learn and improve. Internally, treat every negative review as valuable feedback. Was there anything you could have done differently to prevent that complaint? Discuss with your team and adjust if needed. For example, if a couple reviews mention "poor communication," maybe it's time to implement more frequent client updates. Showing that you adapt and care about getting better will ultimately lead to fewer negatives down the road.

One reassuring point: a few negative reviews among many positives can actually increase credibility. People generally don't expect any business to be absolutely perfect. In fact,

67% of consumers say they trust a business more when they see a mix of positive and negative reviews, because it feels authentic. If all 50 of your reviews were 5 stars with no complaints, skeptics might wonder if they're too good to be true. So don't despair if you get a 1-star outlier – as long as the vast majority are great and you professionally address the occasional bad one, your reputation can emerge stronger. Readers often pay more attention to how you handle a complaint than the complaint itself. A thoughtful owner response like, "We're sorry you had this issue, we fixed the leaky sink as soon as we could and offered a discount, but we understand your frustration," can leave a positive impression. It shows you care and engage, whereas a contractor with no responses might appear indifferent.

After resolving an unhappy customer's issue offline, it's acceptable to ask (gently) if they would consider updating their review. Don't pressure – some will edit a negative review to reflect a resolved outcome, or even delete it, if they feel you truly made amends. Even if they don't, your public response still demonstrates your commitment to service. Meanwhile, continue piling up positive reviews to dilute the impact of the rare negative. If you have 2 bad reviews but 40 excellent ones, most viewers will mentally dismiss the outliers (especially if the complaints seem minor or the complainer seems overly angry relative to your polite response).

One more note: beware of fake or malicious reviews. Occasionally businesses encounter reviews from people they've never worked for or from competitors. Most platforms allow you to flag reviews that violate guidelines (e.g. profanity, hate speech, or demonstrably false information). However, it's often hard to get a review removed just because you suspect it's fake. The best approach is usually to respond kindly anyway (e.g. "We don't have record of a project matching your name, but we take feedback seriously. Please reach out so we can address any concerns."). This way, anyone reading sees that even if the review

was suspect, you as the owner acted in good faith and were willing to help. In many cases, a measured response to a nasty, obviously unreasonable review will cause readers to discount that review as an anomaly or unfair attack, while your professionalism shines through.



Building Trust Through Consistent Engagement

Managing your online reputation isn't a one-and-done task – it requires ongoing attention, but the rewards are well worth it. Consistency is key. Here are some habits and strategies for long-term reputation success:

- Monitor your reviews regularly. Set up alerts if possible. Google can email you when you get a new review. There are also reputation management tools (some CRMs include this) that consolidate reviews from multiple sites into one dashboard. By keeping tabs, you can respond quickly. A swift, thoughtful response to any review (good or bad) shows that you're active and you care. Remember,

89% of consumers expect businesses to respond to all reviews – positive or negative.

Make it a goal to acknowledge every reviewer with a comment. Even a simple “Thank you for your kind words, it was a pleasure working with you!” on a 5-star review makes customers feel appreciated and signals to others that you're attentive.

- Showcase your positive reputation in your marketing. Don't be shy about leveraging those hard-earned 5 stars. Feature a few of the best review quotes on your website's home page or in a sidebar (“Hear from Our Happy Clients”). Include recent testimonials in your email newsletters or brochures. If you've earned any local awards or badges (like “Best of Houzz” or an Angie's List Super Service Award), display them proudly – they are third-party validations of your quality. Some remodelers even frame printed thank-you letters or testimonials in their office or showroom. When prospects see evidence of many satisfied customers at every turn, it builds their confidence in contacting you.

- Involve your team in the reputation mission. If you have multiple employees, make sure everyone understands the importance of

online reviews and great customer service. Sometimes small gestures by crew members – like being polite to neighbors, cleaning up thoroughly, or helping a client carry groceries – end up mentioned in reviews. Foster a company culture that values customer happiness. You might even create an internal goal or friendly competition for number of 5-star mentions of crew names! The idea is to get buy-in that delivering a stellar experience leads to positive public feedback, which leads to more jobs for everyone.

- Learn from feedback. Pay attention to what reviews are saying over time. You might discover trends. For instance, if multiple people praise your “constant communication and updates,” that's a strength to keep emphasizing. If a couple reviews note something like “wish the project had finished on original schedule,” you may need to tighten up timelines or set better expectations. Reviews are a free source of customer insight – use them to improve. Also, share particularly glowing reviews with your staff to boost morale, and address any legitimate critiques to show you're always improving. Clients will often notice when their feedback results in changes, which further boosts your credibility.

- Maintain ethical practices. It should go without saying, but never fake your own reviews or trash competitors. Aside from being unethical, fake reviews are increasingly being detected by algorithms and can get your profile penalized or deleted. Plus, savvy consumers can often tell when a review doesn't sound genuine. It's simply not worth the risk. The honest, steady approach to building real reviews will serve you far better in the long run.

For small and mid-size remodelers in particular, your online reputation can be a great equalizer. You might not have the



advertising budget of a big firm, but you can absolutely outshine them in reviews by delivering top-notch personal service. Homeowners often prefer a contractor who feels trustworthy and attentive over a big name that treats them like just another job. Your interaction with each client and the story they tell afterwards in a review is a powerful marketing asset that money can't easily buy. In fact, many smaller companies we work with at GYRO have leapt ahead of larger competitors locally simply by accumulating superb reviews and engaging actively online. It creates an image of reliability and customer care that people value highly.

Managing it all may sound daunting, but there are tools and help available. If you find it overwhelming to keep up with multiple review sites and responses, consider using a reputation management service or software. For example, our team at GYRO often uses specialized platforms (blending a bit of AI assistance with human oversight) to help remodelers track all their reviews in one

place and even get AI-suggested response drafts to save time. Whether you handle it in-house or with a partner, the important thing is that it is handled. The worst strategy is ignoring your online reviews – because silence itself speaks volumes (and not in a good way). Remember that earlier stat:

43% of contractors still don't respond to any reviews, even though responding is what 88% of consumers prefer to see.

By simply engaging, you're setting yourself apart from nearly half your competition who remain silent. It's a missed opportunity on their part, and you can seize it.

Turning Reputation into Revenue

When you tie all these pieces together – delivering quality work, accumulating positive reviews, and gracefully managing the occasional negative – you create a feedback loop that continuously brings in business. Your online reputation becomes a 24/7 salesforce, convincing potential clients of your value before you ever speak to them. When a homeowner sees dozens of five-star reviews praising your kitchen remodels and noting things like “on time and on budget” or “left the place spotless,” they begin to trust you instinctively. By the time they pick up the phone or fill out your contact form, they’re already inclined to choose you over others. In marketing terms, your conversion rate for inbound leads will improve – more of those inquiries will turn into actual projects,

because the clients feel reassured they’re making a safe choice.

A strong reputation also gives you more leverage in the sales process. Clients who come through your “review funnel” are often less price-sensitive (thanks to that trust premium) and more respectful of your expertise. They’ve seen your accolades from other customers, so they approach with confidence rather than skepticism. This makes for smoother consultations and negotiations. In essence, your best customers tend to be those who were influenced by positive reviews, because they start out with a positive mindset about your company. They’re predisposed to a good relationship, which in turn often leads to them becoming

the next five-star reviewer – and the cycle continues.

To ensure this cycle keeps working for you, integrate reputation management into your overall marketing strategy. Treat it as an ongoing campaign: just like you schedule social media posts or update your portfolio, schedule time each week to check reviews, request new ones, and respond where needed. Some remodelers even set goals like “X new Google reviews this quarter” as a KPI, which is smart because it focuses the team on what brings in leads. You can also tie reputation efforts with other marketing – for example, after finishing a project for a client who came from a Facebook ad, follow up to ask them to review you on Facebook and Google. This bridges your paid marketing with earned marketing (reviews). Over time, as your reputation strengthens, you might find you can spend less on advertising because your organic referrals and leads from search increase.

In conclusion, protecting and propelling your online reputation is one of the most “bang for your buck” marketing activities you can do as a remodeler. It doesn’t require huge budgets – mostly just dedication, responsiveness, and excellent customer service – but it yields enormous returns in customer trust and lead generation. Each review is a building block

of your brand’s credibility. Think of them collectively as your digital portfolio of happy customers. Prospects read those stories and imagine themselves having a similar happy result. It builds an emotional connection and confidence that no simple ad or brochure could achieve.

By actively managing your reviews and overall reputation, you’re not leaving that critical first impression to chance. You’re shaping the narrative about your business: responsive, reliable, quality-focused, and cares about clients. That narrative, told through the voices of your customers, will do more to grow your remodeling business than almost anything else. So take control of it – engage with your clients online, celebrate the positive, address the negative, and continually strive for those 5-star experiences. Over time, you’ll create a fortress of trust around your brand that competitors will struggle to break. In the digital age, that is the ultimate competitive advantage.

Endnotes:

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