

Reviewing the situation

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Rosemary Roger explains the importance of reviews

Do you collect feedback from your clients? Some 61% of customers read online reviews before making a purchase, according to [Graham Charlton's article about ecommerce consumer reviews](#) .

Such reviews are here to stay and are a strategic element in Google's organic and sponsored listings. Your organisation cannot therefore afford to ignore customers' growing reliance on crowd-sourced feedback.

It is worth taking care to ensure that only validated clients can leave reviews; some larger review-led product websites have run into trouble by not verifying the user's identity beforehand. More rigorous sites include [Trustpilot](#) , [feefo](#) and [reallymoving.com](#) ; some of them charge a fee for acting on your behalf.

Table 1: Comparative ratings for home-moving services

Service	Average out of five stars
Surveyors	4.75
Removals	4.72
Conveyancers	4.47

Is it worth the cost?

Yes: the best surveyors know they need the best reputation.

Potential clients will search for reviews of your service regardless of whether or not you have a formal system in place. Without such a system, Google or Bing search results will include random reviews or even details of your competitors, meaning that you have less control of your own reputation.

Once a customer has found your firm online, they can use reviews as well as price to select the appropriate service for their needs. Looking at reviews helps to gain their trust, and you should

not underestimate the power of crowd-sourced reviews: [an article in the Financial Times](#) states that no fewer than 90% of consumers trust peer recommendations online.

Although home-moving service [reallymoving.com](#) does not always know which of its leads are converted into sales, analysis of those of which it is aware show that most people do not choose the lowest-priced quote.

Strong reviews are a vital way to prove service quality.

Bad reviews

What happens when a bad review creeps through? It is difficult to regain trust once it is lost. Because customers are more likely to leave a bad review after unsatisfactory service than to comment favourably on good service, it is vital to foster their happiness at every opportunity. Send a review link to all your customers and remind them how important feedback is to your business.

Top tips

- Remember that a great service sells itself.
- Follow up client reviews; either ask your lead generator to send a link or do so yourself.
- Never leave a bad review unanswered or the reviewer always has the last word.
- Be authoritative in your responses.
- Include links to your reviews as a footer in your emails or on your website and share them regularly on social media.

If you have a system that allows you to respond, you are demonstrating that you are serious about customer service and can explain any confusion or extenuating circumstances that may have led to questionable feedback. A surveyor at [reallymoving.com](#) received a very unfavourable review and was most unhappy that it was published. He wrote a considered response, in which he said he really did not feel he could have done any more for his customer.

The reaction was astounding; sympathy was expressed by new and existing clients alike. The surveyor's heartfelt response demonstrated a passion for his work, which served to increase his client conversion rate. This corroborates [statistics from social commerce company Reevoo](#), whose research suggests that bad reviews can nevertheless be good for business.

Its survey showed that 68% of consumers trusted reviews more when they saw both good and bad scores, while 30% suspected censorship or fabricated comments when they did not see anything negative. Additionally, those who make a point of reading bad reviews are 67% more likely to take up services than the average consumer.

It takes time

Gathering reviews does not happen overnight and requires some effort on your part.

Ensure that you record the source of the referral; some lead generators automatically send out feedback links, or you may need to send the client a link directly to your reviews provider.

Always keep up to date, and ensure that reviews are consistent.

Finally, how do surveyors compare to other moving services? Reallymoving.com has analysed the thousands of comments it has collected over the past 12 months and the results show surveyors narrowly take the lead over other professions.

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Further information

This feature is taken from the RICS *Property journal* (July/August 2016).