



Social Places

2024 Digital marketing and customer experience report





Social Places is pleased to present the third installment of its marketing intelligence report, diving deep into the minds of over 2,000 marketing decision-makers. Get ready to explore:

- Explore the hidden power of online searches and their impact on businesses, from influencing customer journeys to shaping brand perceptions.
- Explore the vital role of accurate online information in fueling business growth and enhancing customer experiences. See how transparency and data-driven strategies are shaping the future of success.
- Uncover the intricate relationship between online searches and business outcomes. Learn how marketers are leveraging search trends to attract and engage customers.



South Africa



USA

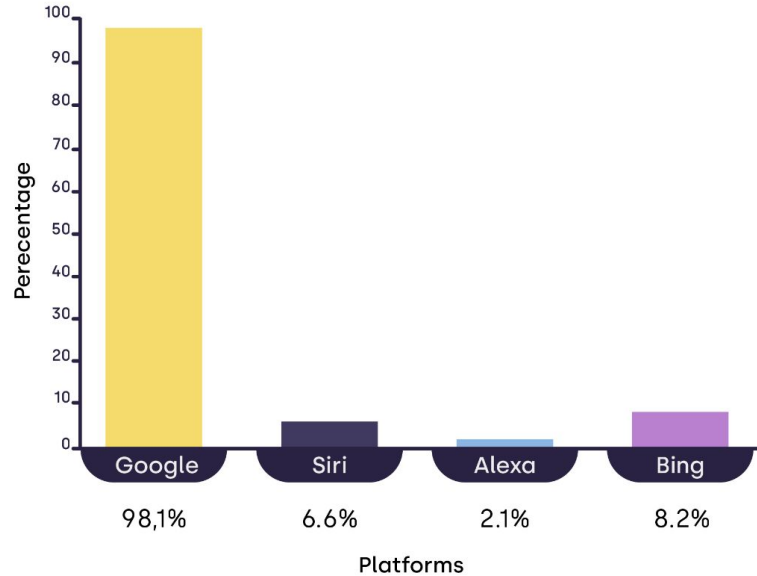


Australia

What is your preferred search method?

Multiple fields selected

Last year's data established Google as the major search preference, with 92.2% of consumers using it as their primary method. Fast forward to today, and that figure has undergone a meteoric rise to 98.1%. This dramatic jump not only speaks volumes about user preference, but also hints at the ever-evolving landscape of web behavior.



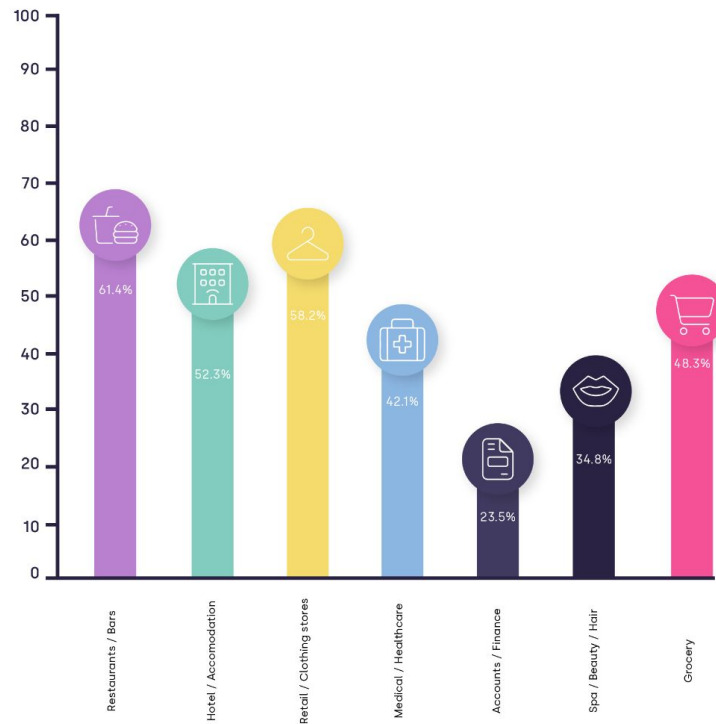
What type of businesses are you most likely to search for online?

Multiple fields selected

Restaurants/Bars: With a growth from 59.5% to 61.4%, food and drink is the most common online search category. This suggests a strong reliance on online resources for finding dining experiences.

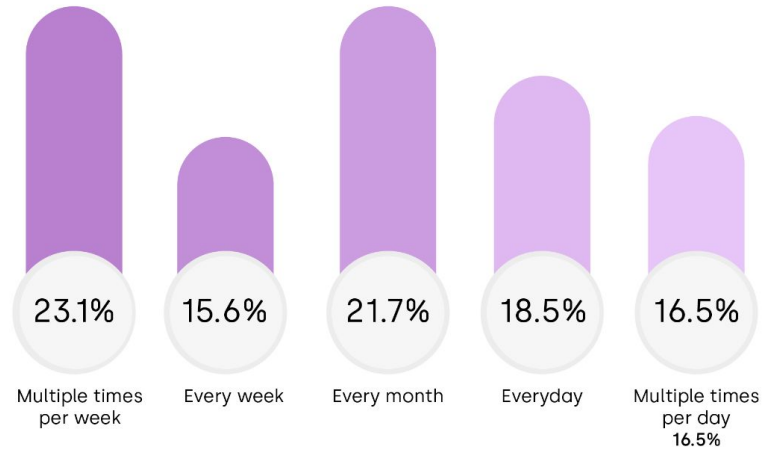
Retail/Clothing Stores: Also had a slight growth from 57.8% to 58.2%, online searches for clothing and shopping options remain significant.

This indicates a preference for browsing and comparing options online before making purchases



In the last year, how many times have you used the internet to search for a local business?

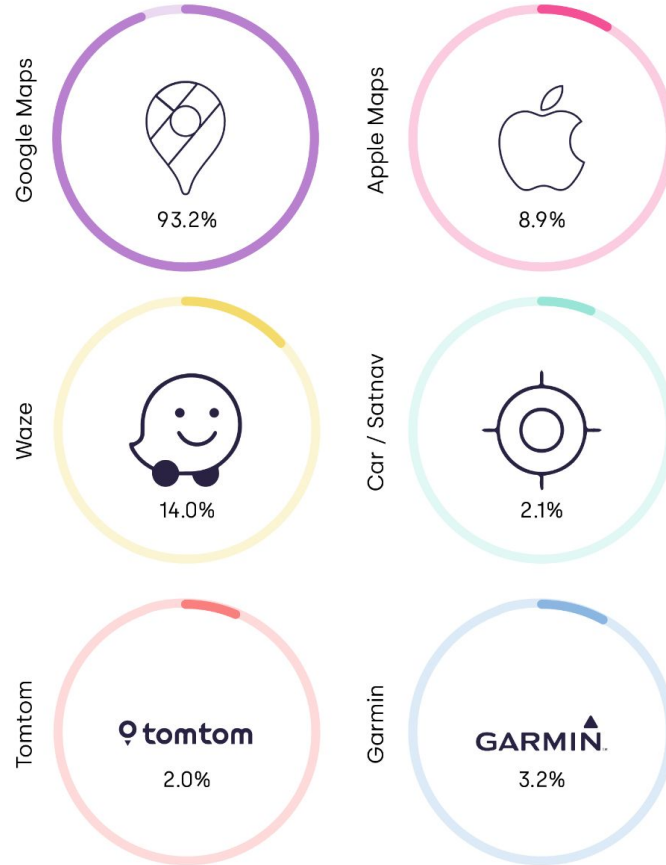
Local business search on the internet is booming! Nearly 80% of respondents (78.3%) search for local businesses online multiple times a week, every week, or even every day. This highlights the immense importance of online presence and effective local SEO for businesses in today's digital landscape.



What is your preferred navigational app or device?

The survey reveals a clear dominance of Google Maps as the preferred navigational app or device, increasing from last year 80.7% to 93.2%.

These findings highlight the widespread popularity and trust in Google Maps



Do you give online suggestions to update business listings. eg Operating hour changes, categories, moving pins on Facebook or Google Maps

Consumers are increasingly invested in keeping business information accurate online, with **56.6%** actively suggesting updates for listings across platforms. This means a majority of your potential customers are already engaged in shaping your online presence!

By empowering consumers to suggest updates, you can tap into their valuable insights and ensure your online presence reflects reality



When searching for a local business, do you read a **businesses' response** to their customers reviews?

Consumers read online reviews

94.4%

Consumers don't read online reviews

8.5%

Do you give online suggestions to **update business listings**. eg Operating hour changes, categories, moving pins on Facebook or Google Maps

Consumers who do make suggestions

56.6%

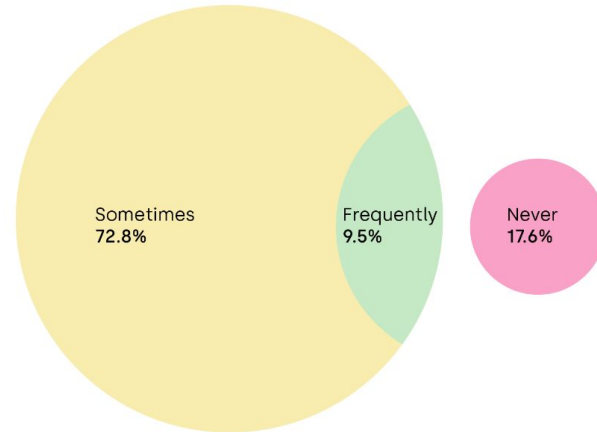
Consumers who don't make suggestions

43.1%

How often do you find incorrect information on a business listing?

82.3% of respondents encounter incorrect information on business listings "sometimes", highlighting a widespread issue impacting user experience.

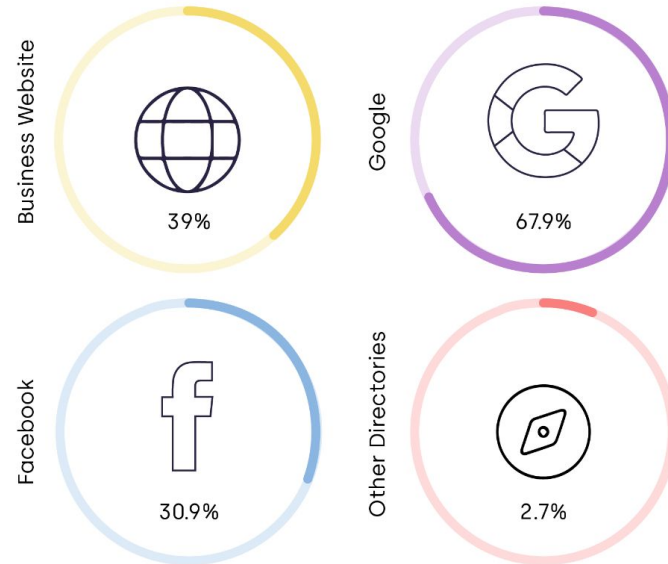
These findings underscore the importance of businesses maintaining accurate and updated information across online platforms. Building trust and avoiding user frustration requires proactive attention to online listings.



Which platform do you feel offers the most up to date information on a business

Users overwhelmingly rely on business websites (39%) and Google (67.9%) for the most up-to-date information about businesses.

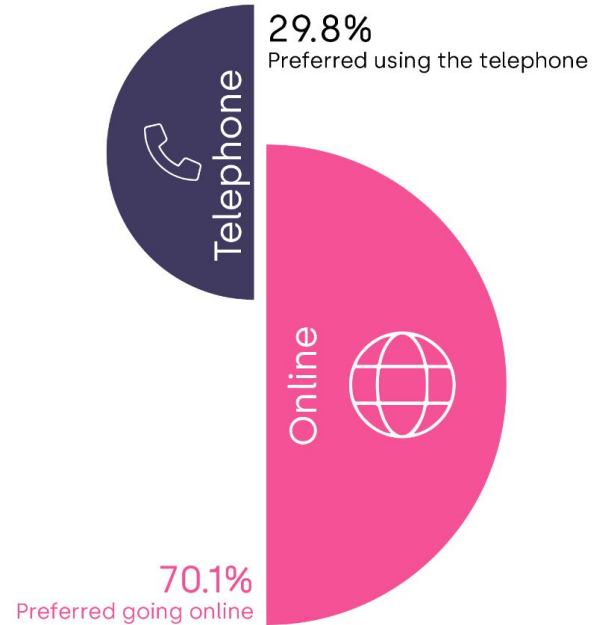
This highlights the importance of maintaining comprehensive and timely content on both your own website and online directories like Google My Business.



What is your preferred method of making a booking or reservation?

with **70.1%** of respondents favoring online methods compared to traditional phone calls (**29.8%**). This demonstrates a clear preference for digital convenience and accessibility when making reservations.

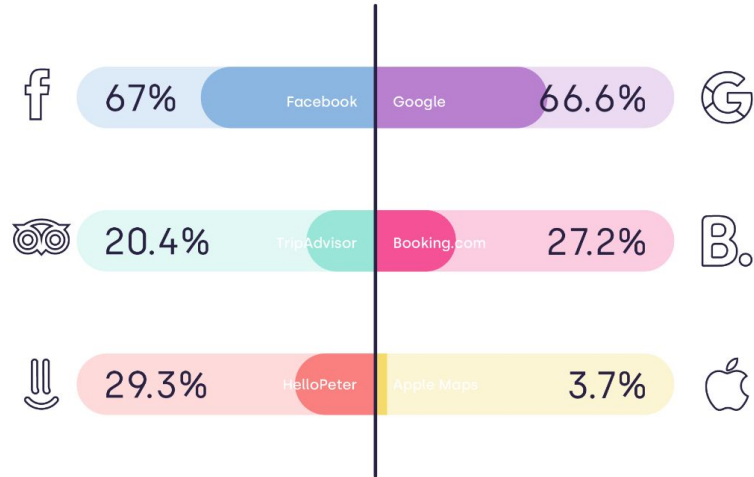
This highlights the importance of optimizing your online booking system for user-friendliness and seamless navigation.



Which of the following are **your preferred platform(s)** to read online reviews?

Facebook with 67%, closely followed by Google Business at 66.6%. These platforms offer users a familiar environment and integrate review sections seamlessly within their existing experiences.

This data emphasizes the importance of diversifying your review management strategy across prominent social media and specialist platforms, while tailoring your approach to cater to the specific strengths and user demographics of each.



What do you normally do **after** reading a positive review?

Positive reviews prompt action, with website visits leading the charge:

62.4% of respondents actively seek out the business's website after reading a positive review, suggesting strong digital conversion potential.

50.8% engage in further research, seeking corroborating reviews before fully committing, indicating a cautious and information-driven consumer base.

This data reveals the diverse impact of positive reviews, making them crucial for driving both online and offline engagement. Businesses can leverage this by ensuring both a strong online presence and a positive in-store experience to capitalize on review-fueled interest.



31.1%

Visit The Business
Location



50.8%

Look For More Reviews
To Validate My Choice

62.2%

Visit The Website



How do online reviews influence your decision to use a local business?

83.8% of respondents are more likely to choose a business with positive reviews, highlighting their immense sway on consumer decisions. This means every positive review is a vote of confidence and a stepping stone towards acquiring new customers. Investing in cultivating positive online reviews is a high-impact strategy for attracting local customers.

Encourage happy customers to leave reviews, respond promptly to negative feedback, and maintain a strong online presence to further amplify your review influence.

Positive reviews make me more likely to select a business

83.8%

Negative reviews make me not want to use a business

31.1%

I prefer to select business based on other factors

14.0%

I read the reviews but they don't influence my decision

11.5%

Do you trust online reviews as much as personal recommendations or word of mouth?

The majority (90%) of respondents trust online reviews to some extent, with **54.7%** relying on them as much as personal recommendations when multiple reviews are present.

A substantial chunk, **35.2%**, consider online reviews a strong influence on their buying decisions. Only a small minority, **9.4%**, remains skeptical of online reviews.

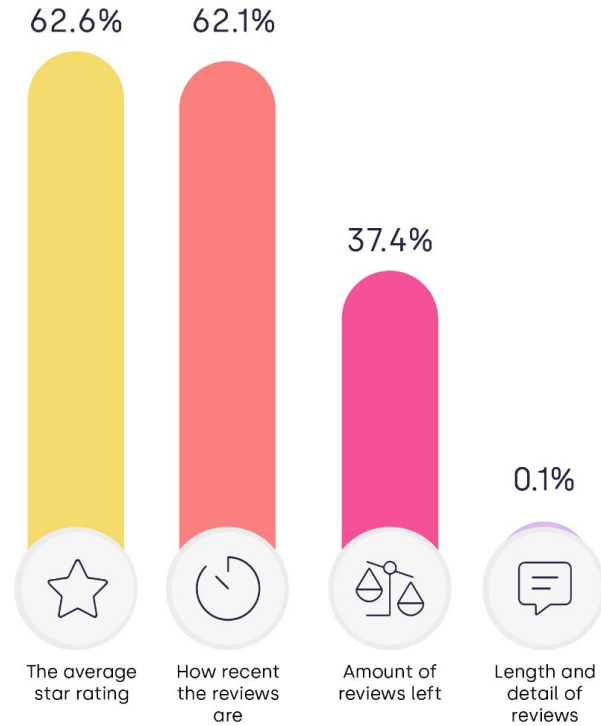
Businesses aiming to leverage online reviews should focus on building a strong review portfolio and fostering trust through transparency and responsiveness.



When judging a local business based on their reviews, what do you pay attention to?

This highlights the critical factors businesses should focus on when managing their online reviews.

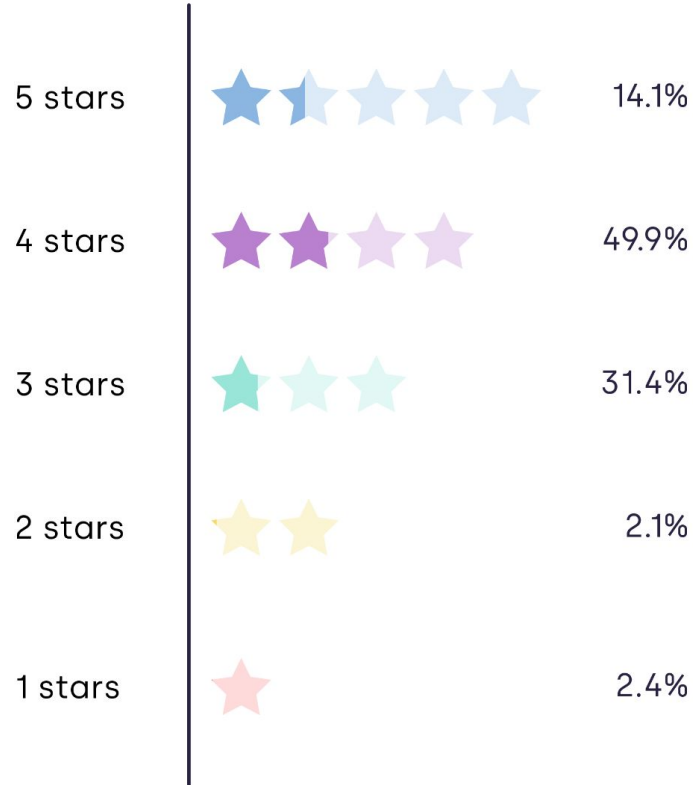
They should prioritize maintaining a high average star rating, encouraging recent reviews, and addressing customer concerns promptly. However, lengthy, detailed reviews hold little sway, so ensuring clear and concise feedback is sufficient.



What is the preferred **minimum star rating** a business must have for you to use them?

Nearly half (**64%**) of respondents expect a business to have at least a 4-star rating before using them.

Furthermore, a significant portion (**31.4%**) are comfortable with 3-star businesses, while fewer are open to lower ratings (**2.1% for 2 stars** and **2.4% for 1 star**). This data clearly indicates that a strong majority prioritizes good online review performance when choosing a business.

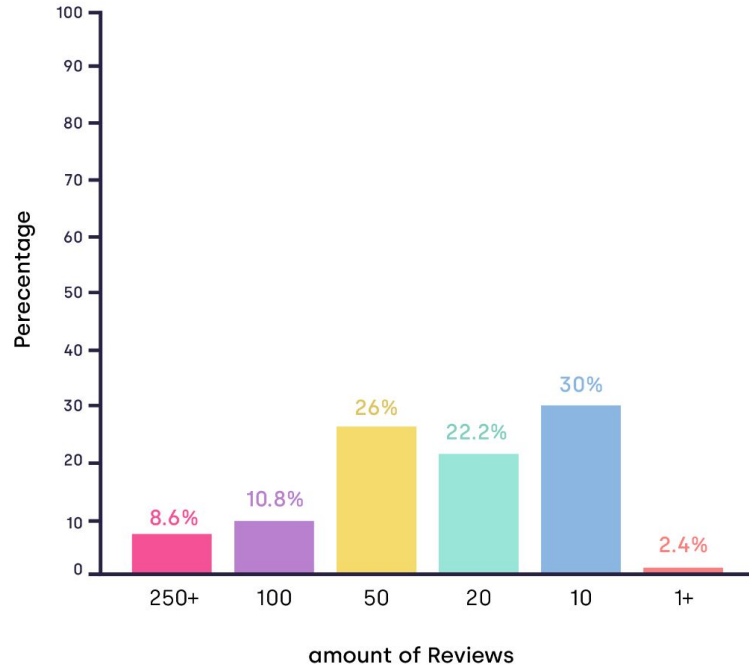


How many reviews does a business need before you believe its average star rating?

The survey suggests a wide range of comfort levels with review quantity, highlighting the importance of accumulating a substantial number to build trust with diverse customers.

While some may trust a star rating with fewer reviews, it's clear that the majority value a larger sample size for reliable judgment.

By understanding how consumers perceive review volume and star ratings, businesses can optimize their online reputation and attract more customers.

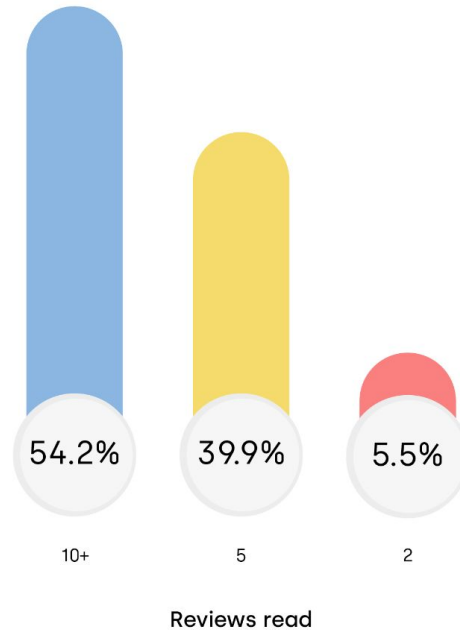


How many reviews do you read before you consider a business to be trustworthy?

Reviews carry significant weight in building trust: **94.1%** of respondents require at least 2 reviews before trusting a business.

More reviews are better: While 5 reviews suffice for nearly **40%**, 10+ reviews clearly provide a stronger trust signal.

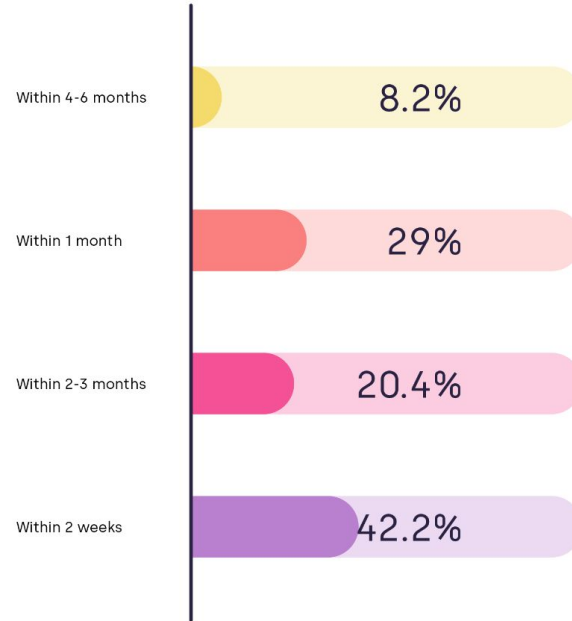
Focus on building a robust review portfolio: Businesses should prioritize encouraging customers to leave reviews to boost their trustworthiness and attract potential customers.



How recent does an online review need to be to impact your decision?

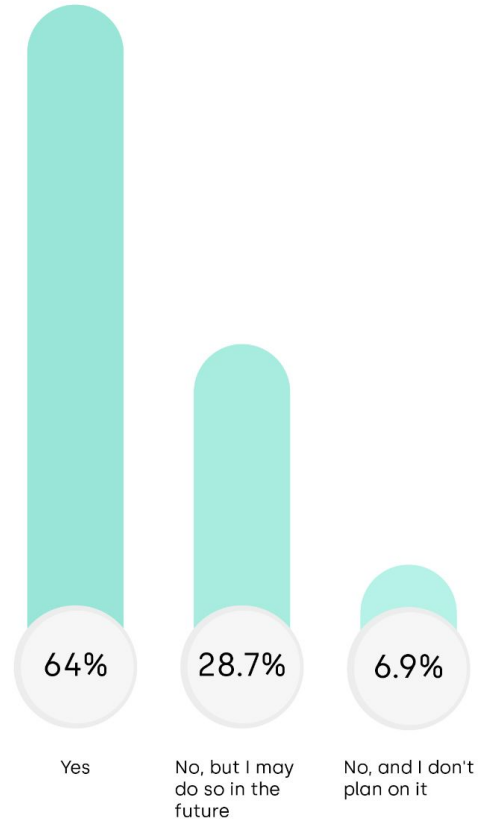
Overwhelmingly, online reviews within the past 2 weeks have the biggest impact on decision-making, with **42.2%** of respondents citing them as the most influential factor. This is followed by reviews within 1 month (**29.0%**) and 2-3 months (**20.4%**). Only a small portion (**8.2%**) prioritize reviews older than 4-6 months.

This suggests that freshness is key when it comes to online reviews. Businesses should prioritize prompt responses and engagement with recent reviews to maximize their impact on potential customers.



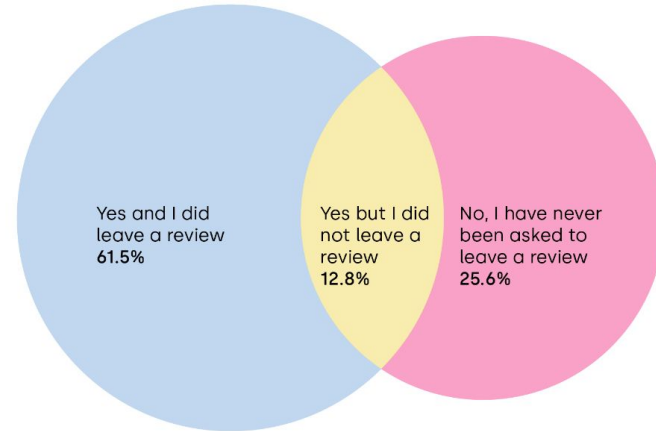
Have you ever left an online review for a local business?

The majority (64%) of respondents have left an online review for a local business. This highlights the importance of online reviews for local businesses, as they can be a major factor in influencing customer decisions.



Have you ever been asked (by a business or an employee of the business) to leave an online review?

Review requests are effective, with **84%** of people who were asked leaving a review. The majority of respondents (**61.5%**) have been asked to leave an online review, and of those, **84%** (**61.5% / 74.3%**) actually followed through and left a review.



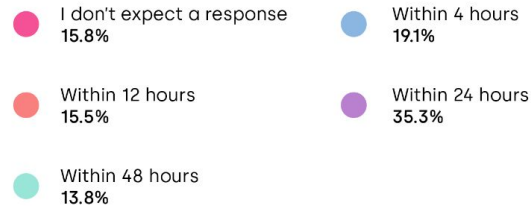
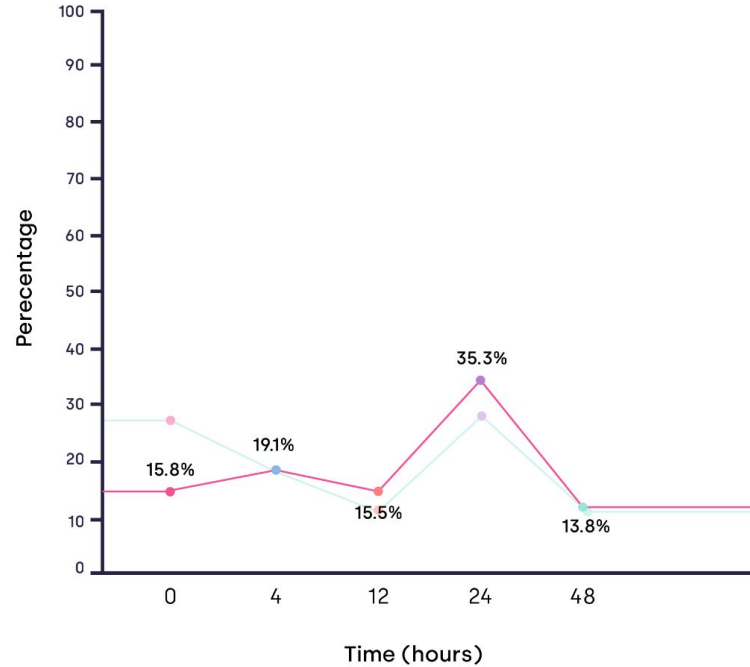
When leaving a negative review online, how soon do you expect a response from the business?

Consumers overwhelmingly crave prompt responses to negative reviews. Over 80% (68.7%) expect a reply within 48 hours, with nearly half (48.4%) desiring a response within 24 hours.

This highlights the importance of swift action in addressing online grievances.

This survey reveals a clear consumer preference for prompt responses to negative online reviews. Businesses should prioritize review management and implement strategies for timely communication.

Negative vs Positive Review



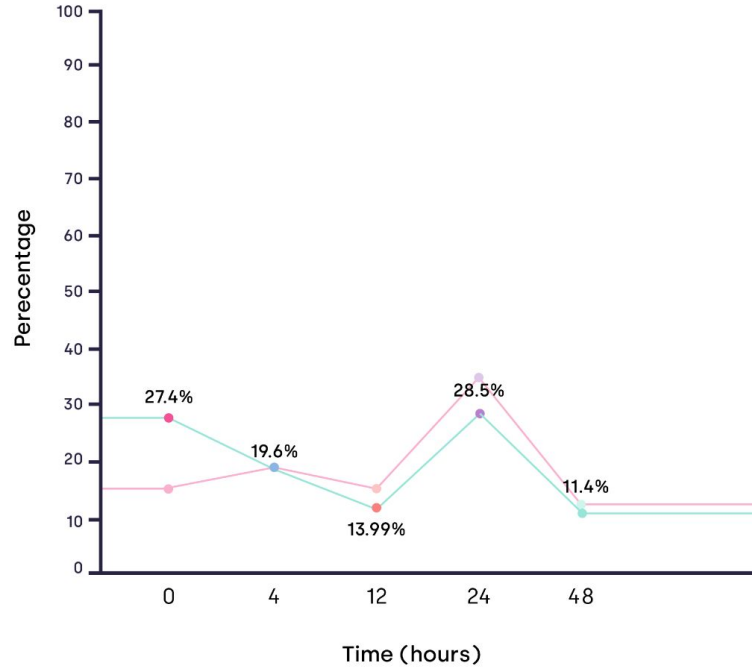
When leaving a positive review online, how soon do you expect a response from the business?

Nearly half (48.9%) of respondents expect a response to their positive online review within 24 hours. 19.6% expect a response even faster, within 4 hours.

While some don't expect a response (27.4%), the majority value prompt engagement from businesses.

These findings emphasize the need for businesses to prioritize timely responses to positive reviews, especially within the first 24 hours, to maximize customer satisfaction and potential brand loyalty.

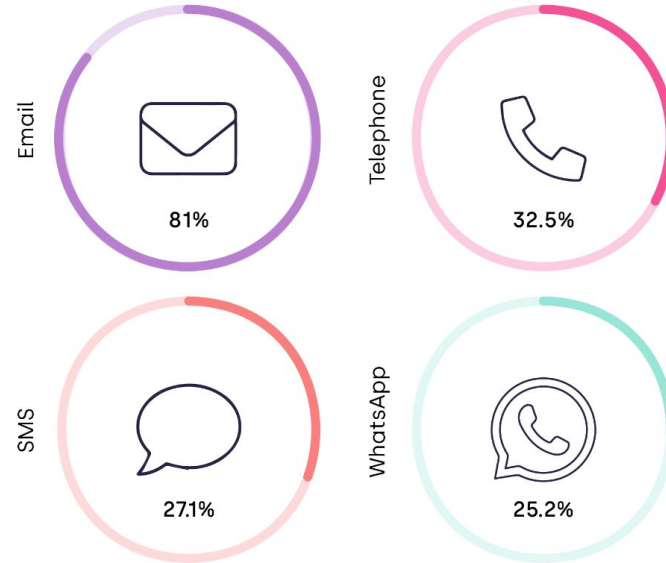
Positive vs Negative Review



- I don't expect a response 27.4%
- Within 4 hours 19.6%
- Within 12 hours 13.99%
- Within 24 hours 28.5%
- Within 48 hours 11.4%

How do you prefer getting feedback on your complaint?

The survey paints a clear picture of consumers' preference for fast, convenient, and accessible digital channels when receiving feedback on their complaints. Email, SMS, and WhatsApp lead the pack, highlighting the need for businesses to cater to these changing communication preferences.



Do you prefer to interact online with **local businesses** or **brand head offices**?

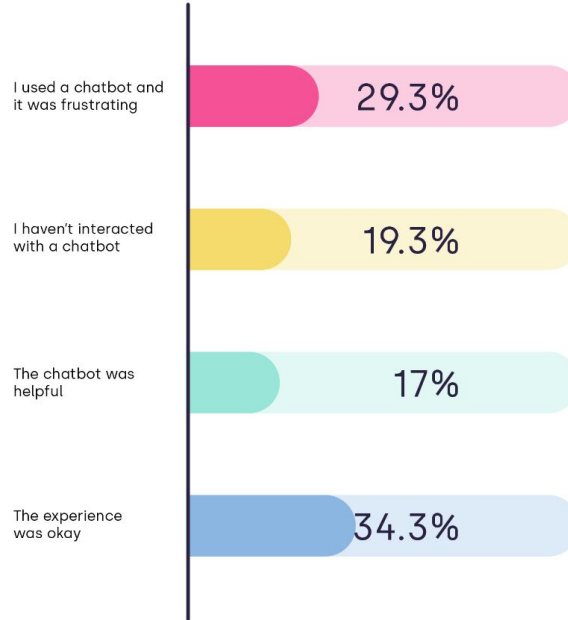
This data suggests that local businesses have a crucial advantage in the online space. By focusing on building strong online communities, providing personalized interactions, and showcasing their unique offerings, they can further solidify their preference among consumers.



Have you interacted with a chatbot before, if so what was your experience?

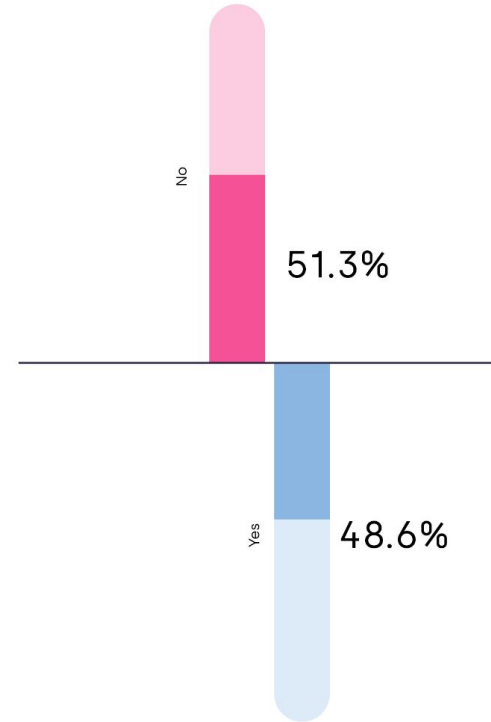
Overall, the survey findings reveal a mixed bag of user experiences with chatbots. While some find them helpful, a significant portion remains frustrated or indifferent.

This underscores the importance of continuous improvement in chatbot technology to enhance user satisfaction and unlock the full potential of this technology.



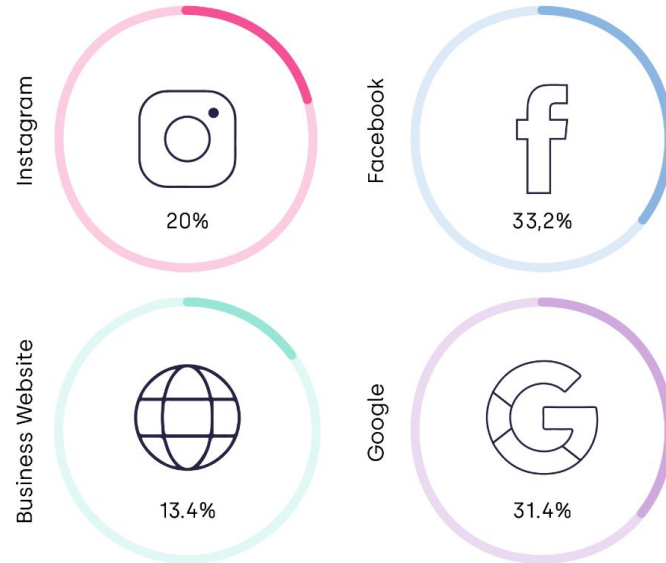
Would you prefer to interact with a chatbot over a human/call centre agent, if the chatbot gave helpful immediate feedback?

Chatbots 48.6% growth suggest a growing openness to technology in customer service. As chatbot technology evolves, the balance between human and machine in customer service may shift dramatically. Chatbots can improve overall efficiency and offer convenient self-service options for routine tasks.



Where do you go to find the **latest content** or promotions for a business?

This diverse landscape underscores the need for businesses to be multi-channel in their marketing efforts, engaging audiences on their preferred platforms while maintaining a strong online presence through their own website.





Thank you for partaking in
the 2024 Social Places
Digital Marketing Customer
Experience Report

[Book a Demo](#)

