



**GRUBHUB** FOR RESTAURANTS

# A guide to restaurant reviews



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# The impact of reviews

**Ratings and reviews can make or break a restaurant. Between customers, social media influencers, and critics, positive reviews can have diners lining up at your doors while negative reviews can drive potential customers away from your business. Whether positive or negative, reviews can help you better understand what you're doing right and key areas of improvement for your restaurant.**



## **Online reviews influence consumer dining decisions, especially among millennials**

More than half (53 percent) of all 18- to 34-year-olds reference online reviews before making a dining decision.<sup>1</sup>

## **A slight positive change in a restaurant's ratings can drive business**

A one-star improvement translates to anywhere from a five to nine percent increase in revenue.<sup>2</sup> While ratings and reviews are important for all restaurants, local and independent establishments can be affected more significantly by diner ratings

and reviews than chains. This is because diners typically have general knowledge about chain restaurants, but seek out reviews to learn more about local and independent restaurants.

## **One-third of diners will steer clear of restaurants with ratings below three and a half out of five stars**

A survey conducted by ReviewTrackers found that 35.3 percent of diners would never eat at a restaurant with an average star rating below three and a half on online review sites such as Yelp, TripAdvisor and Google.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> National Restaurant Association: 2016 Restaurant Industry Forecast

<sup>2</sup> Harvard Business School

<sup>3</sup> ReviewTrackers

# Reviews make a difference.

More than half (53 percent) of all 18- to 34-year-olds reference online reviews before making a dining decision.



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# Generating online reviews

## Restaurant critics and influencers

**News of a glowing recommendation from a top critic or influencer can spread like wildfire across social media and boost your business. Getting those critics or influencers to take notice of your restaurant, however, can be a challenge. These four tips will put your restaurant well on its way toward grabbing the attention of food connoisseurs and garnering positive reviews.**



### **Embrace change**

From renovating your restaurant's dining area to overhauling the menu, implementing a few changes can be enough to attract new critics and influencers while prompting others to give your restaurant a second look. You can even take it upon yourself to let food connoisseurs know why such changes are news for their readers.

### **Host an event**

Build awareness for your restaurant by hosting an event that will get diners talking. Whether it's a celebration of your restaurant's anniversary or a fundraising event for a local charity, the special occasion will have diners wondering what all the buzz is about. Be sure to send personalized invitations to your community's critics and influencers to ensure all the biggest names are in attendance.

### **Set up a media dinner**

Give critics and influencers a taste of what's to come by inviting them to try a potential new menu item or experience your newly-renovated restaurant before it's open to the public. Local food connoisseurs will appreciate getting the inside scoop on everything that's going on in your restaurant.

### **Stay in touch**

Make your presence known by reaching out to local food critics and influencers on more than one occasion. While they may not have time to squeeze in a review of your restaurant right away, they'll likely keep your restaurant in mind following a few emails or phone calls.

# Generating online reviews

## Restaurant diners

**In addition to driving more diners to your restaurant with positive customer reviews, grassroots buzz surrounding your restaurant can give reviewers and influencers the extra push they need to try your restaurant. Here are several ways to encourage diners to share feedback.**

### **Share a link for feedback**

Cater to our increasingly mobile society by featuring a link to your restaurant's online review form on table tents and receipts. A short URL or QR code will enable diners to post feedback from their phones just minutes after finishing a meal. For diners who would prefer to leave handwritten feedback, also consider including a review or comment card with the check.

**Online ratings and reviews matter in more ways than one. Nearly nine out of 10 consumers read reviews to determine the quality of a local business.<sup>4</sup> Not only do online ratings and reviews act as social proof, but they also improve SEO – making it easier for diners to find your restaurant online.**

### **Reward diners for their time**

Motivate diners to share their experience by offering small incentives as a thank you for their time such as a discount or free menu item on a future order. Any reviews you collect will lead to increased awareness of your restaurant, making complimentary discount codes well worth your while.

### **Encourage them to call in**

Include a flyer in each takeout order that asks diners to give you a call with any feedback they may have. A quick conversation over the phone will give you the opportunity to take care of any problems long before diners go to leave a negative review online.

### **Reach out through social media**

Diners who follow you on social media are already among your most engaged fans. Make the most of their appreciation for your business by launching a social media contest that rewards diners for sharing pictures of your restaurant's dishes along with a review. Dozens of new images will give potential diners peace of mind in knowing the reviews came from those who actually dined with your restaurant.

<sup>4</sup> BrightLocal Local Consumer Review Survey 2014

# How to monitor online ratings and reviews

Stay on top of what food critics and diners are saying about your restaurant by following these best practices for monitoring online ratings and reviews.



## Set up google alerts

Google can send you an email each time your restaurant is mentioned in almost any online publication. You can also opt to receive only the top results from the previous week or month.



## Manually search social media

Searching for your restaurant's name on social media sites, such as Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram, will give you the opportunity to chime in on real-time conversations about your brand.



## Follow the data

Google Analytics and Google Places can provide insight into who is posting reviews, including what they searched for to find your restaurant and what type of device they're using.

# Making the most of feedback

**Feedback from critics, influencers and diners can shed light on opportunities to improve your restaurant. By following these three steps, you can address every concern and suggestion your front- and back-of-house staff receives.**



## Get organized

Create a spreadsheet to help document and monitor feedback as it rolls in. Keeping track of the date feedback was submitted, the type of feedback it is and who submitted it will help you identify frequently cited concerns or suggestions.



## Create a discussion

Share and discuss common pieces of feedback with your front- and back-of-house staff. Meeting with employees will not only let them know how they're doing, but it will also give you greater insight into what steps you can take to make their job easier.



## Take action

Develop a plan of action that will address the feedback your restaurant receives. Whether it's adding a new menu item or bulking up on front-of-house staff, the changes you make should be geared toward one goal in particular — improving the dining experience.



**Did you know?** An extra half-star rating on a popular online review database makes it 30 to 49 percent more likely that a restaurant will sell out its tables during peak hours.<sup>6</sup>



**From increasing revenue to helping you identify ways to improve your restaurant, both positive and negative reviews can leave a lasting impact on your restaurant.**

**Contact our team at Grubhub to learn more about how you can leverage the power of qualified reviews to attract diners and drive sales.**

**Call 877-805-5081**

**Visit [get.grubhub.com](https://get.grubhub.com)**