

Giving a balanced picture: do's and don'ts for online review sites

Online reviews can play an important role in helping consumers make the right choices.

In order to maintain people's trust, review sites should check and present reviews in a way that avoids distorting the overall picture presented to people that read them.

If your business's website allows people to review products or services – whether they are yours, or someone else's – you should publish all genuine, relevant and lawful reviews. You should also make sure that your processes to collect, moderate and publish reviews don't hinder this.

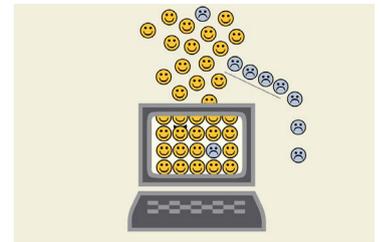
Do:

- explain to site users the difference between leaving a review intended for publication and making a complaint to you
- avoid unreasonable delays in publishing reviews once submitted
- subject both negative and positive reviews to checks of the appropriate rigour, and have procedures in place to remove fake reviews
- make it clear to site users how reviews have been collected and checked, what they need to do to get their review published, and why their review might not be published
- clearly and prominently disclose any commercial relationships you have with the businesses listed

Don't:

- collect reviews only from customers you know are satisfied, (unless these are clearly labelled as testimonials) or offer incentives for positive reviews
- try to dissuade customers from leaving a review on their experience – even if their initial problem has been resolved
- give businesses the right to block reviews they do not like
- try to persuade customers to submit a complaint to you, rather than a review for publishing
- treat a negative review intended for publication as a complaint and not publish it

Users of review sites expect your content to accurately reflect reviewers' feedback on their experiences. Your processes should ensure that users see the full picture.



Why is this important?

Our research estimates that more than half of UK adults use online reviews.

If the way you manage or present reviews misleads consumers, you could be in breach of the Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008.

Where can I find more information?

> [Consumer Protection Regulations](#)

> [Business Companion](#)

See the CMA's latest work on sites' practices at:

bit.ly/CmaOnlineReviews

These materials do not constitute legal advice and should not be relied upon as such.
