



Beyond **5** Stars



**The Best Ways
to Obtain and
Leverage
Customer
Reviews**



PeerSpot



Captive Collective

The scramble.

The chase.

The five-star fire drill.



Call it what you want — repeatedly asking your customers for online reviews has become an all-consuming and slightly off-putting favor hustle for many customer marketers that begins and ends with the review “ask.” But it doesn’t have to be that way.

At its core, customer advocacy is about being part of the trusted conversations your customers have with their peers and your prospects. Especially today, as trust in brands continues to fall and potential buyers look to each other for advice on purchase decisions personally and professionally, online reviews are an increasingly business-critical metric found in most well-designed customer advocacy strategies.

But, as review-weary frontline practitioners will tell you, building and maintaining a steady drumbeat of online reviews is much more complex today than it has ever been. And, an almost myopic focus on gold stars at the top of the review funnel is leaving a gold mine of customer-generated goodness on the cutting room floor.

**Relevance.
Collaboration.
Syndication.**

What's a customer marketer to do?

Repeat after us:

An effective customer review strategy is powered by relevance, collaboration and syndication, not a never-ending cycle of last-minute review wrangling tactics.

In this ebook, customer advocacy experts Deena Zenyk and Liz Richardson from [Captive Collective](#), and their enterprise technology review friends at [PeerSpot](#), will show you:

- How to reach new review-ready customer audiences
- When to build upon opportune moments in the customer journey
- What it means to engage in place
- How to make the most of every review your customers give you

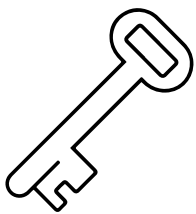
These fresh ideas are both practical and actionable to keep the reviews flowing and maximize the potential of every customer review interaction.

Filling the Review Funnel



Online reviews have quickly moved from the middle of the customer marketer's list of priorities straight to the top. This shift has many looking to cast a wider net because what worked before to generate a trickle of reviews isn't sufficient to now sustain a tsunami of peer sentiment that organizational leadership is demanding.

There are, however, **three key strategic priorities for online reviews** that, when implemented right, can help ease the burden placed on marketers — and their customers.



- 1 Find New, *Review-Ready* Audiences**
- 2 Leverage Moments on the Customer Journey**
- 3 Engage Customers, Wherever They Are**

Find New, Review-Ready Audiences

Formal customer programs, such as advocacy communities, are extremely effective in producing customer reviews. However, this audience tends to get tapped far too often — and, in some cases, becomes a sole source of reviews. This can lead to review fatigue and may eventually dilute the perceived value of the program. This is also true of your biggest enthusiasts: the NPS 9s and 10s. That's why it's important to not only find new audiences regularly, but also ensure those audiences are actually ready to write you a review.

IRL: Pop-Up Campaigns

Everyone loves a good pop-up campaign. A pop-up is an embeddable tool intended to capture audience attention and activate customers while they are interacting with your website or landing page by displaying your messaging over your content. You can apply targeting rules so that you can ask the right customers to write a review during your campaign period for a chance to earn bonus points.

Remember:

- Be transparent about why you need their participation.
- Since some reviews are anonymous, provide instructions for submitting review “proof” for qualification, such as a screen shot or link.

Where should I use them?

- Community
- Support portal
- Learning management system
- Event registration pages
- Your own software!

When should I use them?

Only open this avenue during specific time-based periods, and do not run for more than 1-3 weeks. The time limitation is a key action driver for this type of campaign.

Leverage Moments on the Customer Journey

Advocacy happens everywhere. This is a truth we live by. The key is being able to identify when and where the opportune moments to request a review are happening on your customer's journey. Aligning review "asks" to journey interactions that capitalize on positive emotional responses can create a steady, automated review flow when executed well. Once identified, it's important to automate those processes as much as possible to ensure consistency (and make less work for you in the long run).

IRL:

Automate Your Emails

Automated emails are a great way to leverage opportune moments. Who doesn't love a good email? Especially one that is personalized to the milestone moment. "We're so excited you've renewed! Tell us how we are doing." Boom. You've just identified an opportune moment to ask for a review without actually using the word "review"! If you look at reviews as a pulse check for your company, you may be surprised by how many opportunities and interactions there actually are to acquire the feedback you desire from your customers.

Remember:

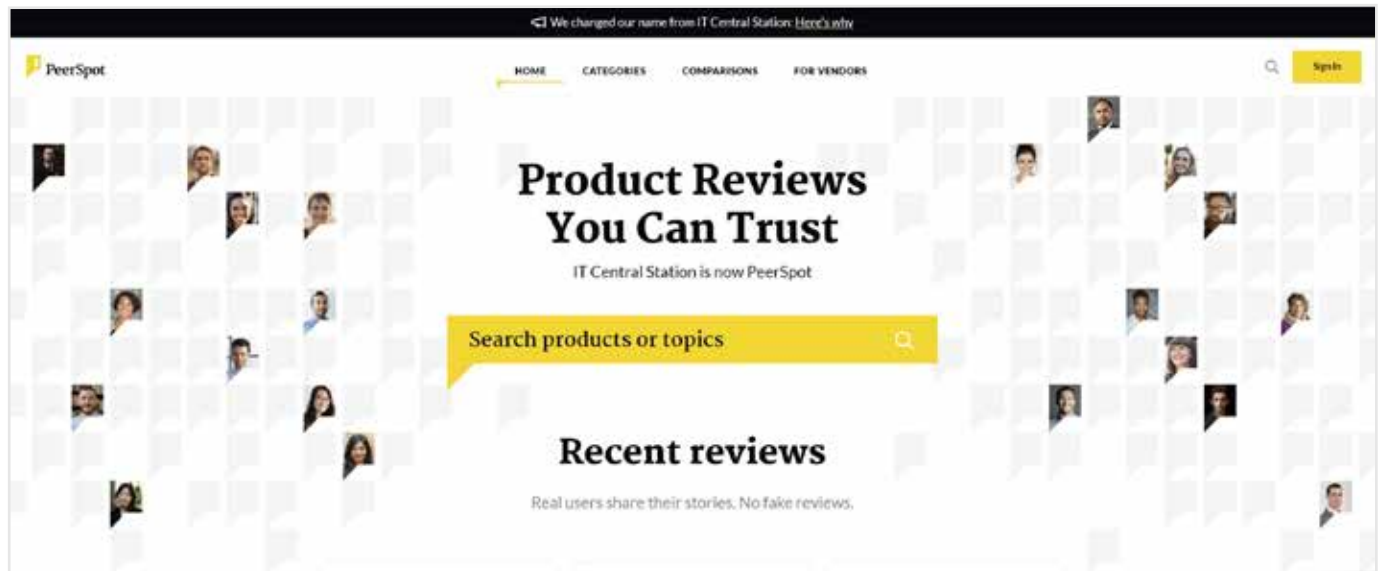
- You can provide an option to allow your customer to choose one of several review sites or specify the review site for each key moment.
- Enhance the ask by offering a small swag item (or something else) from your company.

Where could these opportune moments be hiding?

- Completion of implementation/onboarding
- Renewal contract signed
- Upsell completed
- Customer health score achieved
- Designated level attained in program
- Favorable CSAT rating at the conclusion of a support ticket
- Attends an event, such as user group or conference

When should I send the email?

The emails should be automatically triggered when an opportune moment or milestone is reached. Sometimes it may be prudent to wait a specified period of time before the email is sent. You know your customers best.



Showcase these reviews

You found the perfect time to capture the story of a happy customer, now make sure the world knows about it. Pointing your customer to PeerSpot to build their review will not only help you get the most comprehensive, multi-purpose review, but it'll also give you a shiny new story on your PeerSpot page to share with the world. With over 3.5 million enterprise IT professionals searching for comparison products on the site, you have squarely placed your happy customer in the path of someone who needs help finding the right solution for them. Together, you and your customer just helped that prospect and your sales team.

Boom.

Engage Customers, Wherever They Are

What do we mean when we say “engage in place”?

We mean meeting customers where they're at in their specific journey, rather than relying on them to interact in designated spaces or with specific assets. By doing so, you can remove review blockers encountered by your customers that are typically driven by your own internal processes or needs. One way to do this is to lean into your customer success and sales relationships to reach time-bound review goals.

IRL: Internal Campaigns

You have multiple relationships inside your organization that you could tap into, but we know that other teams or departments aren't always motivated to help you with your “asks.” So, what can you do? Consider conducting an internal campaign where stakeholders are rewarded for asking and motivating customers to submit a review. A little incentive can go a long way. Here are a couple ways you can do this:

Option 1:

Every customer managed by the CSM/Rep who submits a review earns the CSM/Rep one raffle entry.

Option 2:

Every customer managed by the CSM/Rep who submits a review earns the CSM/Rep a SPIF. You could also have quantity milestones that trigger a SPIF (e.g., 5 reviews gets you \$100 dollars).

And remember, make it easy for CSMs/Reps to participate by creating templated email copy. The less work they feel they need to do for the ask the more likely you are to get better participation.

How could I launch these campaigns?

Announce campaign details and timeline in appropriate internal channels such as:

- Slack channels
- Departmental meetings
- Dedicated email
- SFDC daily task during campaign time period
- Calendar invite during campaign time period

When should the campaigns run?

Have CSMs/Reps send emails or conduct phone calls to all qualified customers during time-based qualification periods. You can also suggest to CSMs/Reps to add the ask to their email signatures during the campaign period. Get creative!

Give sales what they want, without the headache of giving them what they want

We know the angst of having sales ask for more case studies and referenceable customers. It's a never-ending list of wants. With your PeerSpot Review as a Service subscription, your sales reps can send the customers they want reviewed directly to PeerSpot to capture the story. PeerSpot will conduct a phone or online interview and create a 500+ word review in story format, making it easy for you to repurpose the content back to your sales teams without lifting a finger.



Make it easier on yourself to deliver on requests that don't align to your original plan (we all know it happens).

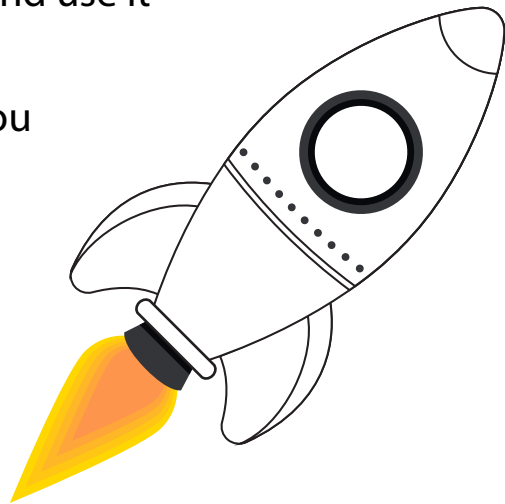
For example, requests from regions you don't have the bandwidth to cover, or reps that cover a vertical that you don't have time to build out a vertical focus for. Review as a Service relieves the headache for you. Good for sales, even better for you.

From Strategy to Practice: Liftoff!

The examples we provided for each strategy are just one way to help you generate more customer reviews. They may even qualify under a mixture of the strategic priorities. Some of them may not be possible in your current environment. Others should be modified for your unique audience, resources or circumstances. But all should give you ideas for how to bring theory to practice.

Remember, the goal shouldn't be just getting 5 stars, but rather looking for ways to make your reviews as robust as possible and highly leveraged. They should tell a story that prospects can empathize and connect with, and they should be distributed everywhere, not just on your social media. Don't stop at one distribution method — write once and use it again and again.

And let's be honest, if you have 5 stars you might want to check the quality of the review site and your reviews. Many people just don't trust a perfect score and despite what you may think, that can discount your credibility if they only see 5-star reviews.





Here are a few ideas on how to repurpose a comprehensive review:

- Create a case study to post on the website.
- Share with the demand gen team.
- Give to sales for enablement and reuse with prospects.
- Share snippets on social media.
- Post to review sites.
- Showcase wins to management.
- Use soundbytes in presentations and assets throughout the company.
- Share with PR and Analyst relations to showcase wins.
- Share common themes with the corporate and brand teams to showcase what customers value about your brand or company.

Once you get the story, your options are unending. So do your customers (and yourself) a favor and get a great story, once. It's good for you and for them. Everyone wins.

Tapping your customers for reviews can feel daunting, but don't let it discourage you from finding new and **fresh ways to do it and leverage the work in innovative ways, not just stars.** And be sure that you're tapping the right audience every time. As we like to say, *share the love!*