



Why Your Law Firm's Online Reviews & Reputation Impact Your Bottom Line



SCORPION®

Introduction:

What Clients Say About Your Firm Online Matters

Attorneys have long depended on word of mouth and referrals as their bread and butter for attracting new cases. However, times have changed. While people are still relying on others to help guide their decisions of which attorney to hire, in this day and age, the process for finding a recommendation for a good lawyer has largely moved to the Internet.

Online reviews are the modern-day word of mouth.

Research shows that **92% of consumers check online reviews** when making a buying or hiring decision.¹ Additionally, with 85% of those consumers checking two or more online sources for reviews,² it's common for potential legal clients to visit a number of different review sites like Yelp, Google Reviews, Avvo, and Justia to aid in their selection of legal counsel.

So, it's not difficult to see why online reviews and reputation are critical to any attorney's client attraction efforts. The

problem is many attorneys are not paying attention to their online reputations (what people are saying about their firm on the Internet), nor are they actively working to improve their reputations — and as a result, they're missing out on potential clients and cases.

In other words, law firms that ignore their online reputations are forfeiting business.

When you have a strong online reputation, **your firm stands out from the competition, builds credibility with potential clients, and signs more cases.** To ensure your practice is best positioned to succeed, you must put processes and technology in place that will allow you to build up your online reputation over time. When you are intentional about these efforts, it is then and only then that you will be able to get more people to see your firm as a known leader in your local market.

1. Scorpion "Consumer Online Search Preference" Survey, May 2020

2. Scorpion "Consumer Online Search Preference" Survey, May 2020

In this ebook, we discuss:

- How online reviews are influencing your prospective clients' decisions
- Best practices for cultivating an online reputation that brings you more clients
- How fellow attorneys have put these best practices into action and grown their business as a result

The Powerful Role of Reviews in the Client Journey

To fully understand the immense impact that your online reputation has on your legal practice, you need to think about the client journey. Today, online reviews are an important part of the decision-making process... whether people check those reviews first or last.

Here's an example:

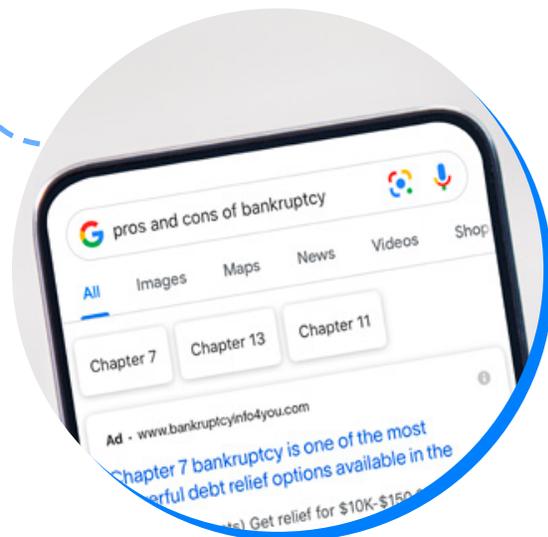
Tom is behind on his mortgage and late on all his bills, and he's running out of options. He knows he needs a solution, so he...



...pulls out his smartphone and starts looking for answers on Google.



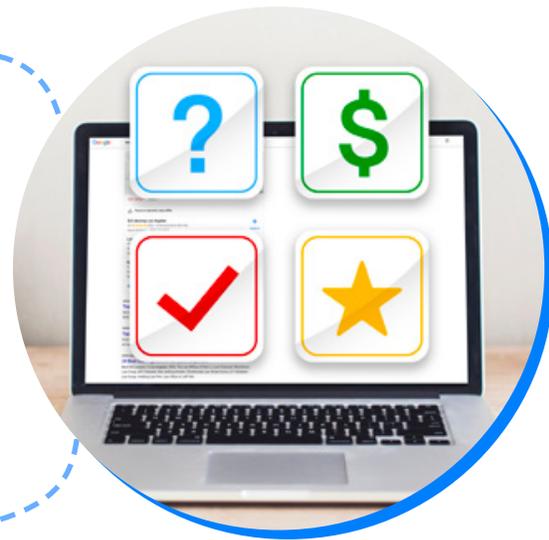
Tom comes across some helpful blog posts written by a bankruptcy law firm in his area, and he eventually decides to check out their website to see if they can help.



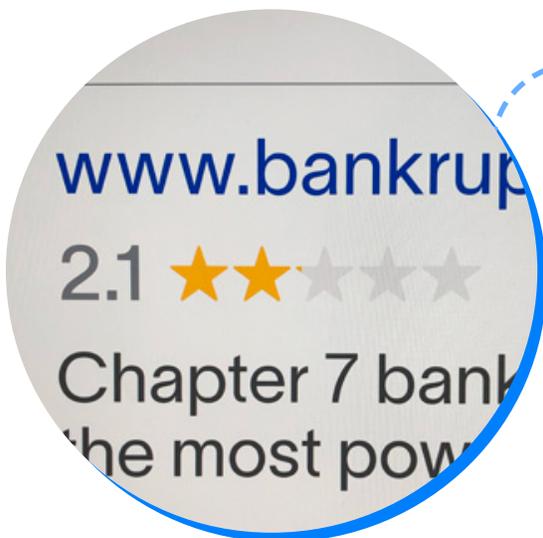


Tom likes what she sees — the firm's site looks professional, their attorneys appear to be experienced, and they have helpful information about what's involved in a bankruptcy.

However, Tom wants to be sure he's choosing an attorney he can really trust, so he Googles the firm's name with the word "reviews" and here's what he finds...



With his finances at stake, Tom doesn't want to risk choosing the wrong legal counsel. That's when he decides to start researching other firms.



Even the Most Well-Marketed Firms Can Be Hurt by Poor Reviews

As we can see from Tom's story, you can be doing all the right things online for your law firm — building a beautiful website, running ads that target the exact types of clients you want, engaging with audiences on social media, creating attention-grabbing videos, etc. — but even then, **a poor online reputation will stop a potential client cold in their tracks, causing them to choose your competitor over you.**

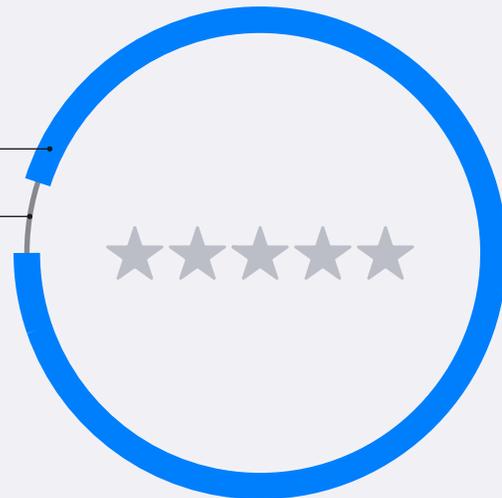
A Look at How Reviews Impact Client Decisions

Research shows that...

Almost all of your prospective clients are using online reviews to guide which attorney they hire.³

92% of consumers check reviews.

8% do not check reviews.

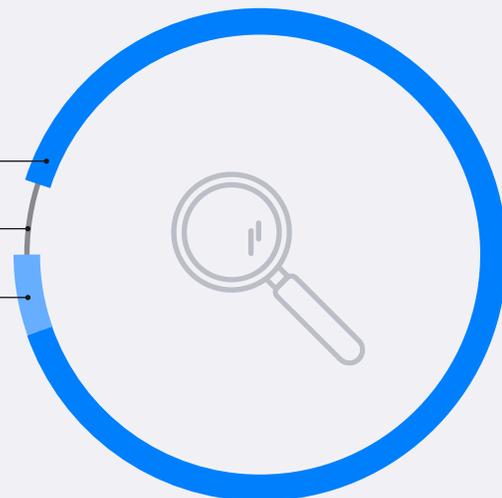


Of consumers who use online review sites to research attorneys, **83%** use these sites as a first step for finding a lawyer.⁴

83% Find new lawyer.

9% Evaluate existing attorney.

8% Validate tentative choice.

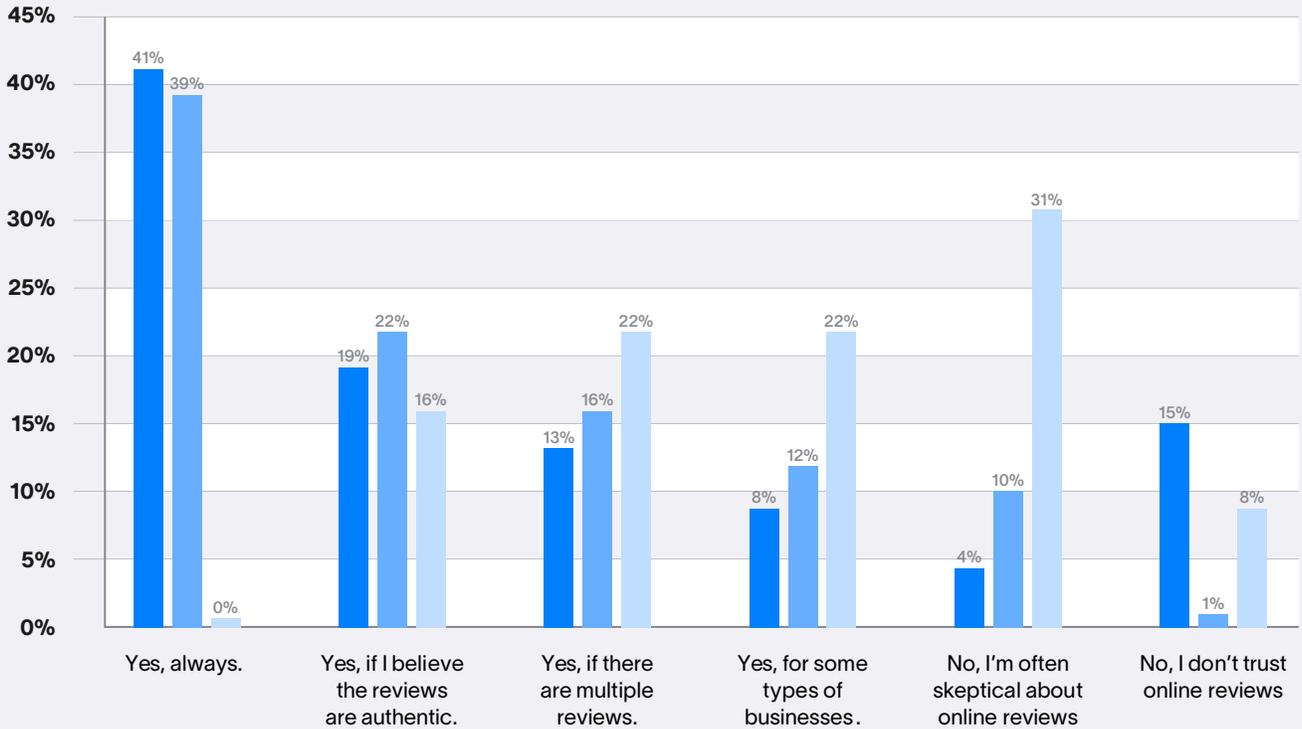


3. Scorpion "Consumer Online Search Preference" Survey, May 2020

4. <https://www.softwareadvice.com/legal/industryview/how-clients-use-legal-reviews-2014/>

76% of consumers overall trust online reviews as much as a personal recommendation, and trust is highest among consumers ages 35–54 at 89%.⁵

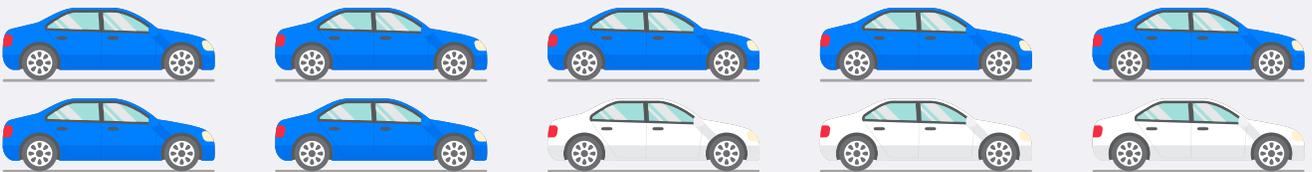
Do you trust online reviews as much as personal recommendations? ■ 18-34 ■ 35-54 ■ 55+



84.5% of those who check reviews visit at least two different review sites before making a decision.⁶



7 in 10 people are willing to drive farther to get to an attorney who has better online reviews.⁷



5. https://www.brightlocal.com/research/local-consumer-review-survey/?SSAID=314743&SSCID=71k4_76bda

6. Scorpion "Consumer Online Search Preference" Survey, May 2020

7. <https://www.softwareadvice.com/legal/industryview/how-clients-use-legal-reviews-2014/>

3 Steps For Improving Your Firm's Online Reputation

While delivering a great client experience is vital for building up your firm's reputation, the ultimate goal is for your happy clients to share their experience online. Even though you can't control what clients say about your practice on the Internet, you can establish a clear-cut system for managing what is in your power to influence.

The most successful law firms never leave their online reputations to chance. Instead, they have a methodical approach for ensuring their online ratings grow and improve on an ongoing basis.

Here's how to get started:

Step 01:

Be present on review sites & aware of client feedback.

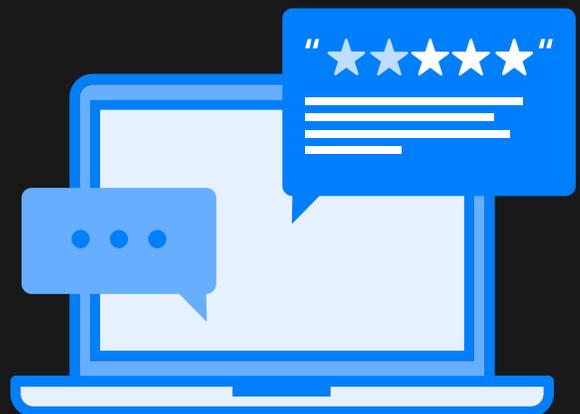
Ignoring your reviews doesn't make them go away, so you need to be proactive about monitoring and managing your online reputation. Start by setting up listings for your firm on popular review sites (e.g., Google My Business, Yelp, Justia, Avvo, Facebook, the Better Business Bureau, etc.), keeping those listings up-to-date with accurate information about your practice (name, address, phone number, hours, etc.), and monitoring new reviews on those sites. Keep in mind that for many prospective clients, seeing no reviews can be worse than seeing a few negative reviews, so simply giving clients a place where they can easily rate your practice is an excellent first step.



Step 02:

Engage with reviewers as appropriate.

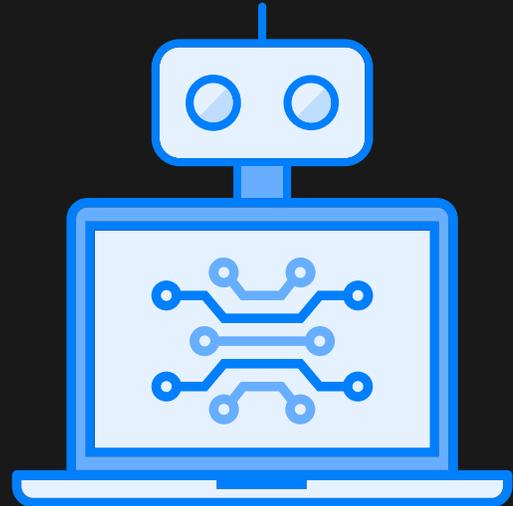
You need a process for responding to both positive and negative reviews. However, you should use your best judgment for whether to do it publicly or privately. Responding to negative reviews publicly shows others that your firm cares and is quick to address client concerns; however, this should be done in a way that does not violate client-attorney confidentiality. Some firms prefer to reach out privately to the reviewer. Doing so gives you an opportunity to resolve the issue directly with your client, and could even save the relationship.



Step 03:

Use technology to monitor your reputation more efficiently.

The more time you and your team can save, the better. That's why the savviest law firms leverage technology that allows them to monitor and quickly respond to all their reviews in one place. Additionally, they pair that technology with a clear action plan for improving their online reputations. The better tools you have, the more intentional you can be about creating a reputation clients can trust.



Bonus Tip:

Create a better client experience.

Quality client service is KEY to attracting great reviews, so you need to make sure your clients have a seamless experience with your firm from beginning to end. Focus on fine-tuning your intake and client engagement practices to improve the client experience (responding to calls and emails faster, showing empathy to clients on the phone, improving issues with billing, etc.). If there is a bad review that surfaces a shortcoming of your practice, fix it. You can improve the quality of the client experience by listening to what your actual clients have to say.



One Estate Planning Law Firm's Story

Creating a Reputation That Reflects What Clients Love About the Firm

Every great estate planning attorney knows that the job entails more than just helping clients get their affairs in order — it also requires taking the time to listen to their concerns, walking them step-by-step through a confusing process, and helping them feel more secure about the future. For one of the clients we serve, this approach had always led to many happy and loyal clients.

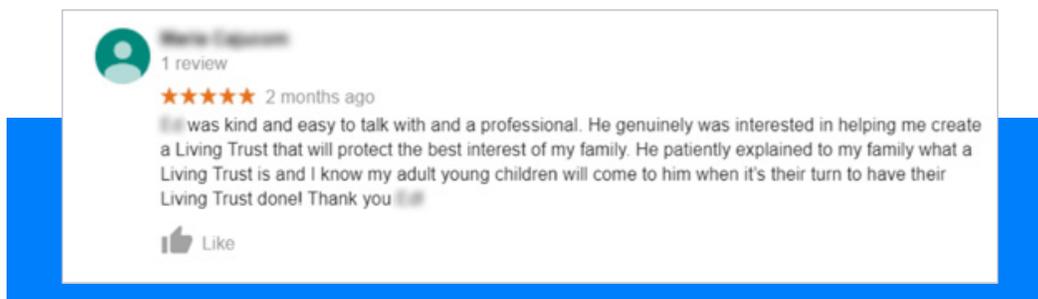
However, even with their excellent client service, the firm was dealing with a problem — not many of their clients were sharing their experiences on the Internet, leaving the practice with very few online reviews compared to their competition. Knowing there was greater potential to showcase the quality service their clients receive, the firm's founding attorney worked with Scorpion to improve their online reputation. We helped them develop a strategy and a mindset that allowed the firm to attract more positive feedback from clients and draw greater attention to their positive reviews.

With the help of Scorpion, this firm:

- **Increased their visibility on popular review sites** with better management of their profiles
- **Responded to reviews** — both positive and negative — in a timely manner
- **Worked in advance to identify the best verbiage for responding to reviews** in order to stay aligned with the founding attorney's high standards of how he speaks with his clients
- **Used Scorpion's platform to keep his reviews top-of-mind**, allowing the firm to see constant updates about their new reviews from various review sites
- **Showcased their reviews on their website** to leave a more powerful impression on visitors

The Result?

Once the firm's founder put a clear plan in place for growing the firm's online reputation, the impact was significant. After working with Scorpion, they went from 7 reviews to **63 — all of them positive**. Additionally, the firm has an average rating of **5 stars on Google My Business, Avvo, and Yelp**.



Now that the practice has an online reputation that better reflects their top-notch, client-focused approach to estate planning, they're better equipped to stand out from their competitors and bring in more new clients.

Conclusion: The Worst Thing You Can Do Is Not Take Action

Building an impressive online reputation doesn't happen by coincidence — it takes intentionality, the best tools, and a carefully crafted process that you continue to prioritize over the long term.

When it comes to proactively improving your online reputation, the potential financial returns are great. With a higher average star rating and stories of how your practice impacted clients' lives for the better, your firm is more attractive to new prospective clients, which means you're ultimately able to sign more cases. In turn, the opportunity cost of not managing your online reputation is substantial — you'll end up losing potential cases to competitors who have better online reputations than you (even if you're the better attorney), which equates to substantial lost revenue for your firm.

If you are looking for advice on how to take your reviews to the next level, talk to the legal marketing experts at Scorpion. We'll give you ideas and guidance on how to protect and grow your online reputation.

Contact Scorpion Today

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