

Key findings from the SA Annual Online Review Survey 2020

Issued by [Social Places](#)

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Social Places has released its first Annual Online Review Survey results, which show that South African consumers are well up to speed with their international counterparts regarding online reviews and local messaging.



The report underscores how increasingly important it is for local businesses to engage effectively with the rapidly-growing number of consumers who leave online reviews on multiple social media platforms

The inaugural report garnered 3338 respondents from the most economically representative parts of South Africa between 1 November 2019 and 10 January 2020. The new local benchmark will be issued annually.

Says Social Places director, Ashleigh Wainstein: “International surveys about online reviews have existed for some time but we wanted to get confirmation on how things were progressing locally.

“ *The findings show that online reviews are growing exponentially but, more importantly, that consumers expect a more personal interaction from brands online. It is critical, therefore, that they refine their strategies and respond appropriately to online reviews which can seriously influence their business.* ”

Some of the top-level findings from the Social Places SA Annual Online Review Survey 2020 are:

- Local is relevant – 75% of people prefer to interact online with local businesses rather than brand head offices. Big brands have discovered that local messaging is key to engaging with consumers whose needs and expectations can vary between branches even in the same suburb;
- 87% of people trust online reviews as much as personal or word-of-mouth recommendations.
- Online reviews carry clout - 82% of respondents said positive reviews make them more likely to engage with a local business while 30% indicated that negative reviews would steer them away from using that company;
- The more stars and reviews, the better – More than 90% of people simply won't consider engaging with a business if the star rating is under 3 stars, while 49% of consumers won't consider a business with less than 4 stars. 40% of people said they require at least ten reviews before they trust a star rating;

- Reviews mean business - about 46% of people will leave a review if asked to by a business. 74% of negative reviewers expect a response within 24 hours – and 21% of those within four hours, so companies have to be aware of and prepared for this – people want to know they’ve been heard. Responses don’t have to be as prompt if the review is positive, but 64% still said they would expect a response to their positive review within a 24 hour period;
- Online trumps telephonic reservations and bookings – 78% of respondents indicated that they prefer to make online reservations.

Read the full survey [here](#).

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Social Places

Social Places is a MarTech company that specialises in location-based marketing and reputation management for multi-location and/or franchised brands.

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