



Review Rule Sets a Baseline for Reputation Management

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The Federal Trade Commission's rule on consumer reviews has established, in one place, what businesses may and may not do when gathering and displaying customer feedback. The Reputation.org is highlighting the practical value of that clarity, which the firm argues has been the more useful half of the rule for legitimate operators.

Before the rule, businesses trying to do the right thing worked from a patchwork of platform terms, advertising guidance, and inference. Reasonable people disagreed about whether offering a discount for a review was acceptable if the review could be negative, whether a company could remove a critical review from its own website, and whether reposting a customer's positive comment required any disclosure. Those questions now have written answers.

The written answers land in familiar places. Reviews that are not based on genuine experience fall outside the rule, including ones written by people with an undisclosed material connection to the business.

Suppressing negative reviews on a platform the business controls is addressed directly. Incentivised reviews are not banned outright, but incentives conditioned on the sentiment of the review are treated differently from a neutral acknowledgement offered regardless of what the customer writes.

For a business with nothing to hide, the effect is a checklist rather than a threat. The Reputation.org describes the compliant end of that work at thereputation.org/reputation-management.

"The penalties get the headlines, and the clarity is what actually helps," said Joshua Albanese, spokesperson for The Reputation.org. "For years the honest question from a business owner was simply what am I allowed to do here, and the honest answer was that it depended who you asked. Now there is a document. Most of the operators we talk to are relieved rather than worried, because they were already trying to comply with something nobody had written down."

The enforcement side exists and is worth stating plainly rather than dramatising. Violations of trade regulation rules of this type carry civil penalties of up to \$53,088 per violation under the FTC Act, an amount that was not adjusted for 2026 after the Office of Management and Budget cancelled the annual inflation adjustment. The Commission and state attorneys general have both pursued matters involving fabricated and AI-generated reviews on consumer platforms.

The firm's position is that enforcement risk is not where most businesses should focus attention. The more common problem is a legitimate business with a genuine review profile that has been damaged by something outside its control: a competitor's fabricated entries, a review attached to the wrong listing, a coordinated posting campaign, or content that violates a platform's own policies. Those cases turn on documentation and process rather than on legal exposure, and they are addressed through platform removal procedures. The firm outlines that work at thereputation.org/google-review-removal.

The firm notes that outcomes in platform removal cases depend on the platform's assessment against its own policies, and that no provider controls that determination. What a business can control is the quality of the case it submits, which is why documentation of what was posted, when, and why it violates a stated policy does more than volume of complaints.

Businesses reviewing their own review practices against the rule can find information at thereputation.org.

About The Reputation.org The Reputation.org (operated by Aurawave Inc.) is a national brand and crisis reputation firm that works to remove damaging content, reviews, articles, and records before they become permanent in search and AI answers, then shapes what people and AI find instead. Services span reputation management, crisis management, review and content removal, and reputation monitoring for businesses and high-stakes individuals.

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