



Policy Update on Review Quotas Shifts Reputation Management

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Google's contribution policy lists "merchants requesting that staff solicit a certain number of reviews" and "merchants requesting that staff solicit reviews that include specific content" among prohibited rating-manipulation practices. It also states that merchants should not require or pressure users to leave ratings or write reviews while on the premises. The Reputation.org is highlighting the language because it describes internal routines that spread widely as recommended practice.

The routines in question rarely originated in bad faith. A business is told reviews matter to visibility, converts that into a monthly target, and assigns the target to the staff with the most customer contact. A manager tracks who generated how many. Someone suggests that reviews mentioning a specific service are more useful, and the ask becomes more specific. Every step follows logically from the previous one, and the endpoint is described in the policy as prohibited.

The tablet at the counter belongs to the same category. Handing a customer a device and waiting while they

write is a common checkout routine, and the policy's language about not pressuring users to leave reviews while on the premises speaks to it directly.

What remains permitted is broad, and the distinction is worth stating precisely because the difference between compliant and prohibited practice here is narrow. A business may solicit or encourage content representing a genuine experience, so long as it offers no incentive for doing so and makes no attempt to influence the rating or the contents of the review. Asking every customer is fine. Asking staff to produce a number, or shaping what the review says, is not. The Reputation.org covers profile practice at thereputation.org/brand-reputation.

"Almost every business we audit has some version of this, and almost none of them think of it as manipulation," said Joshua Albanese, spokesperson for The Reputation.org. "It is usually a number on a whiteboard that somebody put there three years ago. The correction is not complicated. Stop counting it per employee, stop telling people what to say, and let customers write on their own time."

The practical exposure is less about a policy citation than about what pattern-based enforcement does to a business that runs a quota. Quota-driven asking tends to produce reviews in bursts near reporting deadlines, frequently from the same location, in similar phrasing and similar length. That shape resembles a coordinated campaign, and detection systems operate on shape. The reviews caught in such a sweep are often genuine ones that arrived in a suspicious pattern, which is a worse outcome than the quota was ever worth.

The firm recommends that businesses start by finding out what their own instruction actually is, since it is frequently verbal, inherited, and undocumented. A manager who joined two years ago may be enforcing a target nobody has revisited, and the owner may not know the specifics. Auditing the practice before changing it makes the change stick.

Where a business has already accumulated reviews under a quota system, the firm's guidance is not to attempt any cleanup of its own. Removing or attempting to alter existing reviews creates its own problems, and the appropriate response is to change the forward practice rather than to revisit the back catalogue. The firm's broader work is described at thereputation.org/reputation-management.

The firm's view is that the corrected approach also produces a better profile. Reviews accumulated steadily, in the customer's own words and at the customer's own pace, vary in length and language in ways a reader recognises as authentic, and that legibility matters more to a prospective customer than the raw count does.

Businesses reviewing their internal review practices 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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