BECOMING THE MOST TALKED ABOUT BRAND

Your Guide To

Includes survey results showing how BBB Accredited Businesses used trust to grow by 10% or more in 2015.
About This Guide

Why?
In the 2016 BBB Accredited Business Survey, BBB Accredited Businesses asked what they can do to stand out and attract new customers in today’s highly competitive marketplace.

What?
Traditional marketing and advertising is no longer the most effective way to promote your business. To stand out, you need people talking about you, especially online. You need positive word-of-mouth to grow your business.

How?
This guide offers industry insights and tips, backed by primary and secondary research, on how to build a more visible brand online by using Accreditation to increase trust with customers and leveraging digital marketing to spread positive word-of-mouth.

Who is it for?
All BBB Accredited Business owners, managers, marketers, and business development professionals.
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Introduction

In today’s marketplace, the success of your business is determined by popular opinion. Consumers trust other consumers to help them decide where to buy.

Here are the facts

92% OF CONSUMERS trust recommendations from friends and family over all forms of advertising.¹

91% OF B2B BUYERS are influenced by word-of-mouth when making their buying decisions.²

88% OF CONSUMERS trust online reviews as much as personal recommendations.³

74% OF CONSUMERS identify word-of-mouth as a key influencer in their purchasing decisions.⁴

What does this mean for you?

Build a business worth talking about, so your customers do the selling for you. Then, when new referrals come your way, your Accreditation will add that final stamp of approval needed to close the sale.

CHAPTER 1:
START WITH TRUST
The No. 1 Reason Businesses Choose BBB Accreditation

In the 2016 BBB Accredited Business Survey, BBB Accredited Businesses were asked, “What was the number one reason you decided to become BBB Accredited?”

With increased trust comes increased growth.

86% of BBB Accredited Businesses who grew by more than 10% in 2015, say BBB had a positive influence on their growth.¹

Trust precedes everything: attracting new customers, creating brand advocates, and growing a profitable business.

Starting with trust means you build it into your organization from the ground up (creating quality products, hiring good employees, etc.). You don’t have to convince consumers to buy. Your reputation does the selling for you.

1. 2016 BBB Accredited Business Survey
What It Takes To Be A Trusted Brand

- Establish and maintain a positive reputation.
- Honor all of your written and verbal promises.
- Respond quickly and professionally to consumer concerns.
- Always tell the truth, even if it costs you a sale.
- Be transparent and give your customers all the information they need to make a well informed buying decision.
- Protect consumer information and respect how they want you to use it.
- Communicate honestly about products and services.

“The No. 1 quality consumers demand of big brands.”

Review the list above. Can you check off everything? If not, put together a plan to get your business on the right track.
CHAPTER 2:
GIVE PEOPLE SOMETHING TO TALK ABOUT
The No. 1 Source Of New Customers

What is the most trusted form of advertising these days?

Word-of-mouth. It’s also the number one source of new customers for BBB Accredited Businesses, according to BBB research.

Today’s consumers prefer learning about your business from other customers – not you.

Remember, 92% of consumers trust the recommendations from friends and family over all forms of advertising.¹

How do you generate more word-of-mouth?

Observe what other successful businesses are doing. This guide also offers a wealth of useful information to help you to get people talking.

Otherwise, stick to the basics. Have integrity and provide each customer top-notch service. Then they won’t be able to stop themselves from telling their friends about you.

Word-of-mouth marketing:

“Turn routine touch points into remarkable talking points. It’s about being credible, respectful, relevant, social and engaged — online and offline.”²

¹. Nielsen  ². Marketing Atlas
Give Them Something To Talk About By “Being More”

How do you get people talking about you? Differentiate yourself by “being more.” What does being more mean? It means doing more to exceed customer expectations and deliver unforgettable customer experiences – the type of experiences that turn into raving reviews and increased referrals. See what sets other BBB Accredited Businesses apart by what they’re doing to Be More.

Southwest

BBB Accredited since 1971

Be More Friendly

This 45-year old company, Southwest Airlines, is known for its friendly and fun flight attendants as well as its top-notch customer service. The company believes this stems from putting their employees first, and it will have a trickle effect down to the customers.

H.E.B

BBB Accredited since 1963

Be More Charitable

H-E-B Grocers is known for providing a variety of food from all over the world, from their own international delis, European bakeries, cafes, and juice and ice cream bars. They are also a company that gives back to their communities and protects the environment.
Ways Other BBB Accredited Businesses Have Chosen To Be More

**Be More Reliable**
“We walk the walk. We work very hard on that every day in order to earn and keep the loyalty of our customers. BBB Accreditation helps drive new customers to our door, but it’s up to us to support that trust and not disappoint them,” Steve Bass, Owner, Bass Tire Company.

**Be More Attentive**
“We listen to our customers. By delivering what they want, first you need to understand what they want, so we pay attention to what they tell us. The consumer will always give you a roadmap to success if you just pay attention,” Jeff Warner, President & Owner, Warners’ Stellian Company, Inc.

**Be More Compassionate**
“We treat our customers like family. We want to be that place that everyone wants to go to after work or to bring their family, kind of like that old TV show, Cheers, where everyone knows your name. That’s the standard we live by,” Justin Grohne, Store Manager, Beggar’s Pizza.

Key Differentiators Of Businesses Who Choose To Be More

1. Offer fun and friendly service.
2. Put employees first.
4. Protect the environment.
5. Treat customers like family.
6. Honor every promise.
7. Listen to customers.
8. Go the extra mile.
Do Something Good

According to a study by Cone Communications and Echo Research,

82% of consumers choose businesses that have corporate social responsibility.

If you want to get and keep your customers’ attention (especially Millennials), do something that has meaning and helps others. Younger generations care about the environment, the cities they live in, and making the world a better place.

Whether you’re putting on an event in your community or taking on a good cause, ask people to participate and get involved. Make doing good part of your business strategy. In helping others, you’ll build more trust, loyalty, and awareness for your brand.

You already have a great start!

By being BBB Accredited you’re already contributing significantly to a great cause, BBB’s mission to promote more trust in the marketplace. By upholding higher standards of ethical business practices, you become an example to your industry peers as well as help customers recognize trustworthy businesses.
Make An Emotional Connection

Making a **good impression** with a customer doesn’t always stem from better features and lower prices. Most often, customers form attachments to businesses that make an **emotional connection** with them.
Brands who make emotional connections with customers

- Outperform competitors by 26% in gross margin
- Outperform competitors by 85% in sales growth

Their customers are

- At least 3 times likely to recommend a business
- At least 3 times likely to purchase again

People are influenced first by their emotions. Logic and reason are secondary when it comes to making purchase decisions. “These unconscious feelings can have a very concrete impact on your business. Emotional connections can determine the strength and length of a customer relationship. They drive passion, loyalty, and advocacy.”

Easy ways to emotionally connect with your clients

- Send handwritten thank you notes
- Have a fun and interactive environment
- Offer validation and empathy
- Take on a social cause
- Specialize in one area
- Appeal to customers’ values
- Solve a unique problem
- Form first name relationships
- Send handwritten thank you notes

Their customers are

- At least 3 times likely to recommend a business
- At least 3 times likely to purchase again

1. Gallup 2. Communico
Become An Industry Expert

Establish yourself as an expert or thought leader in your field. This will increase your brand’s credibility, recognition, and give you greater online exposure.

Answer questions on Quora
Quora, a question and answer social networking site, is a great online tool to showcase your expertise by answering questions and providing useful insight. You can also create a profile that links back to your website or blog.

Host an event
Hosting events allows you to have face time with potential customers and build more meaningful connections with them. Types of events you could host include: lunch and learns, charity events, open houses, block parties, grand openings, and more. Meetup and Cvent are great tools for creating and setting up events.

Speak at an event
This is a great way to show off your expertise and build trust with prospects. If your event goes well, people will want to talk to you. You may even generate more leads from people they know who are interested in what you sell. Use Prezi to help you create a memorable presentation.

Tools featured on this page are suggestions, not endorsements by BBB.
Write a blog

Writing a blog allows you to show your brand’s personality and provide additional value by offering useful and relevant content to your customers and prospects. It keeps your business on top of consumers' minds, so the next time they’re looking to hire a business like yours, they will think of you. WordPress is a free and open source tool used by many businesses to create their own blogs and websites.

WordPress

Tools featured on this page are suggestions, not endorsements by BBB.

Attend industry events

Get your name out there by attending networking and industry-related events. Check with your local BBB to see if they are holding any professional events or seminars. Attending one of these is a great opportunity to connect with other BBB Accredited experts in your area.

Chapter Challenge

1. Send a handwritten **thank you note** to 5 customers.
2. Participate in one of your local BBB’s upcoming community or networking events.
3. Create a **Quora profile** and answer one question relating to your business.
4. Have your team **volunteer** at a local event or cause.
CHAPTER 3:
INCREASE WORD-OF-MOUTH VIA SOCIAL MEDIA
The Power Of Social Media

Social media can be a great tool for generating real conversations about your brand and building trust with customers and prospects. Instead of using social media as just another channel to promote your business, use it to build a community that believes in what you stand for.

“Social Media gave a voice to consumers. It helped them take control of the way brands communicate and promote their products to them. Nowadays, opinion leaders are called influencers and they, more often than not, share their influence on social media.”

If you’ve got all your ducks in a row, influential voices will be singing your praises.

57% of consumers use social media networks for recommendations.¹

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1. Business 2 Community  2. WeRSM
Which Social Networks Should You Be On?

It depends on the type of business you run and where your customers are gathering to talk and find consumer information. These are the channels most used by almost 3,000 BBB Accredited Businesses from 35 different industries.

Most Commonly Used Social Networks By BBB Accredited Businesses

- Facebook: 44%
- LinkedIn: 24%
- Twitter: 18%
- Instagram: 7%
- Pinterest: 7%
Largest BBB Industry Groups And Their Networks

1. 2016 BBB Accredited Business Survey

**Construction & Remodeling**
Facebook 72%
LinkedIn 38%
Twitter 20%

**HVAC, Electrical & Plumbing**
Facebook 77%
LinkedIn 38%
Twitter 28%

**Healthcare**
Facebook 76%
LinkedIn 53%
Twitter 33%

**Retail**
Facebook 88%
LinkedIn 31%
Twitter 44%

**Auto Repair/Body**
Facebook 84%
LinkedIn 22%
Twitter 27%

**Financial Services**
Facebook 69%
LinkedIn 62%
Twitter 36%

**Hospitality & Travel**
Facebook 93%
Twitter 43%
Instagram 43%

**Legal**
Facebook 78%
LinkedIn 71%
Twitter 35%

**Real Estate & Property Management**
Facebook 81%
LinkedIn 54%
Twitter 35%

**Professional Cleaning**
Facebook 73%
LinkedIn 45%
Twitter 23%
Master The Three E’s Of Word-Of-Mouth

Engage
There are no short-cuts to building trusted relationships with your customers. Many businesses don’t use social media the way it is intended, to engage and connect with people and be part of a two-way conversation.

Before you can expect thousands of followers, likes, and shares, you must consistently engage and interact with your audience. Answering their questions and providing useful information is a great place to start.

Equip
Give your fans something to talk about. What content would be interesting enough for them to want to share with others? It could be amazing new products that solve problems in a unique way, insider knowledge, funny behind-the-scenes stories, community events, shocking or little known facts, or inspiring videos or stories.

Empower
Ask people to share. A call-to-action button saying, “please share” or “reTweet” generates between 50-80% more shares than businesses who never invite their followers to share.1

1. Practical Ecommerce

To build a strong and loyal following, you must engage with your audience by being helpful and having two-way conversations.
### Create Shareworthy Content

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPES</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
<th>WAYS TO SHARE</th>
<th>EXAMPLE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“How-to” Posts</td>
<td>Introduces a problem and then offers a solution</td>
<td>Articles, Videos, Infographics, Webinars</td>
<td>“How To French-Braid Your Hair In 30 Seconds”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“List” Posts</td>
<td>Focuses on one topic</td>
<td>Articles, Infographics, Slideshares</td>
<td>“10 Surefire Ways To Get Your Kids To Stop Complaining”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“What” Posts</td>
<td>Detailed information on a specific topic, may include comparisons</td>
<td>Articles, Infographics, Slideshares, Videos, Podcasts, Webinars</td>
<td>“What Your Utility Bill Will Look Like This Year”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Why” Posts</td>
<td>Gives a reason or purpose for something, often supported by research and evidence</td>
<td>Articles, Infographics, Videos, Slideshares</td>
<td>“Why You Shouldn’t Wait Until Black Friday To Do Your Holiday Shopping”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Chapter Challenge**

1. Share a piece of **BBB content** on your social networks.
2. Engage with at least **10 people** on social media this week (comment, share, or like their posts).
3. **Share at least one post** that is meaningful to your customers and see if they comment, like, or share it.
CHAPTER 4:
HARNESS THE POWER OF CONSUMER REVIEWS
Best Tools For Tracking Customer Reviews

Most consumers check out a business’s rating and reviews before making a decision to buy.

Besides bbb.org, consumers can post reviews on local listings, other independent review sites, and social media. However, **BBB reviews and ratings are more trusted by consumers** because they are third-party validated.

Almost 70% of consumers are influenced by [independent online review sites](https://1.moz) before making purchases.¹

It’s important to stay on top of your reviews, so you can build and maintain the type of reputation that sells your brand. Check out the next page for tools to help you track your online reviews.
5 Handy Tools To Track Your Customer Reviews

- **Google alerts** (FREE)
  - easy to use tool that notifies you by email any time your brand is mentioned online

- **brandwatch** (PAID)
  - social listening tool that tracks real time conversations about your brand and competitors all over the web in 44 languages

- **trackur** (PAID)
  - social media monitoring tool that helps analyze trends and marketing results

- **Buzzsumo** (FREE & PAID)
  - has a feature called, “content alerts,” that allows you to monitor mentions, competitors, keywords, and more

- **socialmention** (FREE)
  - easy to use and monitors 100+ social media channels in real time
Handle Negative Reviews Like A Pro

Getting a bad review isn’t the end of the world.

57% of consumers are suspicious of brands that only have positive reviews.¹

Having an occasional bad review mixed in with good ones makes you more human – more authentic – more trustworthy.

¹ Mintel
Don’t let bad reviews ruin your day. Use them as opportunities to strengthen your hard earned reputation.

1. Automate the process
Use tools like Yext, Google Alerts, or Socialmention to notify you when new reviews or mentions about your business appear online.

2. Respond in a calm state
It’s natural to feel defensive and even angry when getting a negative review. But, before you hit send put your emotions in check, so you can respond from a place that is professional and helpful.

3. See criticism as an opportunity
Sometimes negative feedback can be really good for your business. It can shed light on problems and help you improve your business.

4. Say, “I’m sorry”
Saying a genuine "I’m sorry" has the power to defuse the situation, allowing for open and honest communication.

5. Don’t make excuses
Own your mistakes and find a way to make things right. If you do nothing or fail to repair the relationship, the average wronged customer will tell 8 to 16 people about it.¹

6. Educate your customers
Sometimes your customers don’t have all the information. Correct any inaccuracies and help them understand why your prices may be higher or why certain features aren’t included.

¹ Guide to Building Your Business With Trust
Positive Reviews Drive Leads

83% OF MARKETERS believe positive reviews deliver a good return on investment.¹

72% OF CONSUMERS say positive customer reviews make them trust a business more.²

90% OF CONSUMERS researched a referral before making contact with that business.³

Your customers are your mouthpieces. They can influence hundreds (if not thousands) of strangers to buy from you. Having positive reviews, especially on authoritative sites like bbb.org, also elevates your position in search engines where customers are looking for businesses like yours.

How To Get Positive Reviews

1. Just Ask

Most of your satisfied customers would be happy to give you one. Sometimes all people need is a friendly nudge.

That nudge can come in the form of a handwritten note or an invitation by email to the tune of "Thank you for choosing us. We’d like to invite you to share your experience with us. Your feedback is important to us and also helps other potential customers."

2. When To Ask

The point of sale is the ideal time, because it’s the “height of customer euphoria.” Don’t miss this golden window of opportunity.

Asking at the time of service increases the odds that your customer will follow through with a review. If you wait too long to ask, they may have less initiative to leave a review for a business they vaguely remember.

3. Give Printed Invites

For face-to-face transactions, present your customers with a small takeaway card, inviting them to share their experience.

Some companies have added QR codes to these cards, making it quick and easy for customers to write reviews on the spot, using their mobile devices. These printed invites can also be used as tangible reminders for customers to submit reviews later.

4. Submit A Trusted Review

Add a call-to-action button on your website or social media page where consumers can click to leave a review.

Use a “submit a trusted review” button as your CTA and place it in a location that is easy to spot on your website or social media page. Have it set up, so that your reviews, once validated, appear on your BBB Business Review page. The more positive reviews, the better.
Best Places To Collect Reviews

BBB.org
Hubspot recommends that every business should use bbb.org, "a wicked legit review site," to collect consumer reviews. Consumer reviews are more trusted on BBB, because they are third-party validated. This ensures that the individual leaving the review is a real person who had a real interaction with a business.

Social Media
Although social media platforms weren't primarily built for consumer reviews, they can be additional hubs for collecting reviews and increasing your exposure even more. Facebook has more than 1 billion active users worldwide. Its business pages allow for ratings, reviews, updates, stories, maps, tagging, and other features that help you connect and reach thousands of potential customers.

Local Listings
Google Places (or Google Reviews) and Google Local are great places to list your business. They're free to join and easy to manage. Yahoo! local listings is similar to Google, which also lets users post reviews and star ratings.

Chapter Challenge

1. Sign up on at least one previously recommended site to track your online brand mentions.
2. Ask 5 happy customers for either a referral or a customer review this week.
3. Make sure all your listings are up-to-date, especially your BBB Business Review Page.
CHAPTER 5:
ACCREDITATION IS THE FINAL STAMP OF APPROVAL
Word-of-mouth marketing delivers the customer leads, but it doesn’t always close the sale. Most consumers do additional research on referrals before deciding to buy.

At this point, they turn to BBB to verify. This is the stamp of approval they are looking for in order to finally ink the deal.

In the 2016 BBB Accredited Business Survey, BBB Accredited Businesses were asked to share how their Accreditation brought them new customers. Most of these sales came as a result of customers verifying a referral through BBB.

Top ways BBB Accreditation closes sales¹

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<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BBB Accreditation Creates Consumer Trust</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BBB Rating</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BBB Accredited Business Directory</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BBB Seal</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Review Page</td>
<td>15%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

¹ 2016 BBB Accredited Business Survey
Responses From Fellow BBB Accredited Businesses

“We love getting the monthly reports that show how many people have viewed our page, seen our BBB rating and then signed up because of it!”

Dollar Shave Club, San Jose, CA

“People see my ad and BBB’s Accreditation Seal and know it is legitimate.”

A Step Beyond & Associates, Winnipeg, MB

“BBB’s Seal counts for a lot. Most of my business is word-of-mouth, but I think seeing the Seal gives an extra level of trust.”

Riverway Recording Studio, LLC, Hartford, CT

“Clients viewed our BBB profile and trusted our BBB Accredited A+ rating, and this was enough for them to order from our website, and we are talking 10K orders!”

Temco Distributors, LLC, Oklahoma City, OK

“We do over $6M in revenue annually. Seventy percent of our business is out of state. Customers are looking for assurance we are a dependable and honest organization. They routinely look to BBB for verification. Probably every day.”

Mancuso Motorsports, Chicago, IL
Use BBB’s Seal To Close The Deal!

Favorite BBB tools used by BBB Accredited Businesses

BBB research also shows what tools have helped BBB Accredited Businesses the most.¹

- BBB Accredited Business Directory (50%)
- BBB Accredited Business Seal (56%)
- Request A Quote (12%)
- Monthly Report (11%)
- Networking Opportunities (7%)
- Other (10%)

It’s no surprise that BBB Accredited Businesses place the highest value on BBB’s Accreditation Seal. Why? The Seal
1. Sets you apart from competitors.
2. Builds trust with prospects who find your business online.
3. Boosts your credibility when customers verify your business after receiving a referral.

“When a customer has a choice between a compounding pharmacy with the seal on their website or without, they normally choose ours.”

— The Compounding Pharmacy, Aurora, IL

¹ 2016 BBB Accredited Business Survey (more than one response allowed)
Don’t Conceal the Seal! Put it everywhere!

If you’re not using BBB’s Accreditation Seal now, you could be missing out on customer leads and business opportunities. When people are researching you online, show them who you are. Show them that they can trust you.

Put the Seal on every customer touch point

- Vehicles
- Doors and windows
- Email signatures
- Website
- Ads
- Landing pages
- Social media pages
- Business cards
- Direct Mail
- Blog
- Client proposals
- Products

1. Make sure your BBB Accreditation Seal is on all your digital assets: your social media pages, web pages, email signature line, etc.
2. Call your local BBB to make sure you understand all the benefits available to help you build trust and connect with your customers.
For over 100 years BBB’s mission has been to be a leader in promoting trust in the marketplace.

In the year 2015 we were able to do great things with the help and support of our BBB Accredited Businesses.

BBB provided 250 Million instances of service to businesses, charities, and the general public.

Some of these services include:
- Business Review Inquiries
- Handled Complaints
- Scam Reports
- Published Customer Reviews
- Mediations And Arbitrations
- Auto Line Cases
- Investigations
- Advertising Reviews
- General Assistance, Counseling, And Industry Information
- Charity Reports And Tips On bbb.org
We Are Growing

In 2015, media coverage for BBB increased by 62% from the previous year.

BBB was also mentioned 243,000 times online.

BBB’s influence in the marketplace is strengthening and becoming more relevant to both businesses and consumers.

With BBB you can Be More.