

Is Your Credit Union Leveraging Yelp & Google? Start Now.

About a year ago now, I did [a post at opensourceecu.com](#) on some free online tools every credit union marketer should be using – Google Alerts, Twitter search, etc. The tools are still relevant because even if you aren't embarking on a full-scale social media campaign, your membership and potential members might be talking about you. And you need to listen and respond if necessary. Ten or fifteen years ago, if a member had a good or bad experience with your credit union, they simply called or wrote the branch to complain.

Not anymore.

Now they can blog about it, tweet about it, update their Facebook status about it, and so on. And that information is public and most likely could live on forever. And Google loves blogs – for a personal example, about two years ago I got my auto loan through Great Wisconsin Credit Union here in Madison (now Summit CU) and did a blog post about my experience – Google [“auto loan great Wisconsin credit union”](#) and my blog post is towards the top of the search results. Do you think a potential auto loan seeker will read that blog post? Heck yes. So be prepared.

Aside from assembling your rapid response social media team, one thing you can do is to invest some time into Search Engine Optimization (SEO) – getting your web pages higher in search results. For a primer, I recommend checking out a blog post I did for [CU Communicator a while back](#) and more importantly, Google's [free SEO starter guide](#) (who knows search better than Google?). Once you dig a little deeper into SEO, you'll find yourself forever changed on how you write copy for your web pages (example – stop using “CU” and write out “credit union”...are members searching “CU” or “credit union?”)

Another overlooked outlet for disgruntled or happy members is [Yelp](#). Yelp is a website where “real people write real reviews” of area businesses. Most likely your credit union is listed and has been reviewed. You might have only one review which might not mean that much to you. But remember two things:

1. **78%** of People Trust Recommendations of Other Consumers ([source](#))
2. Google likes Yelp – for example, Heartland Credit Union here in Madison has only one four-star (out of 5) review. When you Google [“Heartland Credit Union Madison.”](#) their Yelp page is on the first page of the search results. Will curious parties read that review? Again, heck yes.

So what can you do? First, visit [Yelp's business owner section](#) and edit/update your business information (remember – if it shows up on the first page of Google results, it's about as important as your credit union's website in terms of visibility...think of it as an “online branch” so to speak). Then read this great blog post by Samuel Axon – [“Yelp for Businesses: 4 Steps for Success”](#) and follow his tips. I like the idea of displaying a Yelp badge on your site for example.

I'd also recommend making the rest of your staff aware of both of these resources/strategies – Yelp and SEO. For example, you might find yourself editing content less and you don't want frontline staff caught off guard by a member who mentions your credit union's Yelp review.

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