



How enhanced customer insights drove higher ratings and revenue for O'Brien Auto Group





Company snapshot



The O'Brien Automotive Group aims to make the automotive buying and ownership experience as easy and as enjoyable as possible. The company has been assisting Pacific Northwest drivers since 1986.

LOCATIONS

14

BIRDEYE CUSTOMER SINCE

Nov 2016

BIRDEYE PRODUCTS USED

★ **Reviews**

💡 **Insights**

Background

In the highly competitive automotive market, retaining customers is as difficult as acquiring them. O'Brien Auto Group needed a deep understanding of their customers in order to keep them, as well as a strong online reputation to stand out to prospects in local search. The solution to both problems? Birdeye. O'Brien Auto Group had a customer review strategy in place already, but they weren't generating the results they needed to have a competitive advantage online. They also had no way to dig beneath reviews, ratings, customer feedback, and scores to discover what's working, what's not, and where.

O'Brien Auto Group had tried several solutions, including one within their CRM that proved to be extremely ineffective. "We've been fighting this battle for years. We went every which way and looked outside the lines to look at ways to generate customer feedback," said Mark Burshears, Digital Marketing Director at O'Brien Auto Group.

"Birdeye has given us a holistic platform to drive change and growth. The Insight tool helps us look at common themes and commonalities between locations, allowing us to take data-driven actions. The biggest benefit has been that we have been able to hear concerns and address those with solutions. Birdeye allows us to listen to the voice of customers and make changes at the dealership level to improve customer experiences."



MARIAM KETNER, DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL & DIGITAL MEDIA AT O'BRIEN AUTO GROUP



The challenge

The company was struggling to get its employees engaged enough to ask customers for reviews in-person. "In automotive, where we have a really terrific Toyota store that sells 400 cars a month, that's great -- that's 400 opportunities. But if you consider 75% of salespeople won't ask for reviews, the other 25% will, then only 10% of customers respond, you aren't getting anything," Burshears explains.

Car sales are just a small fraction of O'Brien Auto Group's customer interactions. Every month, thousands of customers service their cars at one of their service departments. Understanding these customers' experiences is critical to improving customer retention. If they could reach out to customers who had a less-than-great experience, who potentially could leave and never return, O'Brien Auto could increase retention and improve their processes. It was therefore crucial for O'Brien Auto Group to find a way to get this information.

"Automotive right now is hyper focused on service, service retention, and preventing service conquest from non OEM service providers," said Burshears. "If you can retain a customer, they are 3x more likely to buy another car from you or refer you to somebody else."



What I wanted to do was find a way to ask every customer for reviews, including our service customers." Burshears set out to find the easiest, most streamlined solution for soliciting a high volume of online reviews and feedback without disrupting the company's normal workflow. This is what led him to Birdeye.



Review generation, monitoring, and management in one dashboard

All digital marketing for all 14 regional dealerships was run by a team of three people. “We run very lean with a full plate” said Burshears.

To avoid adding any extra work to their hectic schedule, Birdeye setup a custom integration with O’Brien Auto Group’s existing CRM system that allowed O’Brien to send review requests to every customer automatically after a transaction or service. In the automotive market, Google, Facebook and Cars.com are the most crucial review sites, so these are the sites O’Brien Auto Group prioritizes. Birdeye also sends Burshears and his team automatic email alerts the instant a new review is posted for one of their locations on a third-party site. The team can monitor all reviews from all sites in one place.

“We have reviews come in every morning and the first thing our social media person does is respond to all of those reviews,” said Burshears.

The screenshot shows a Google review from Jodi Warren on Nov 20, 2020, with a 5-star rating. The review text is: "We were contacted by service team member by email to help set up a scheduled service. I arrived early, expectations on what would be done and how long it would take were very clear. I was done within the specified timeframe. Thanks you." Below the review is a response from Lexus of Bellevue dated May 04, 2020 at 09:27 AM (PST). The response text is: "Thank you so much for your kind words, Jodi! We really appreciate you taking the time out of your day to share your experience with us. We count ourselves lucky to have customers like you. We are so glad that Tom was able to answer all of your questions! Come back and see us soon! -Lexus of Bellevue". At the bottom right of the response box are buttons for "Actions" and "Edit reply".

Responding to reviews consistently not only helps strengthen customer relationships -- it also helps with search ranking. Sites like Google reward businesses with active review profiles; this includes both new reviews and new business responses posted.

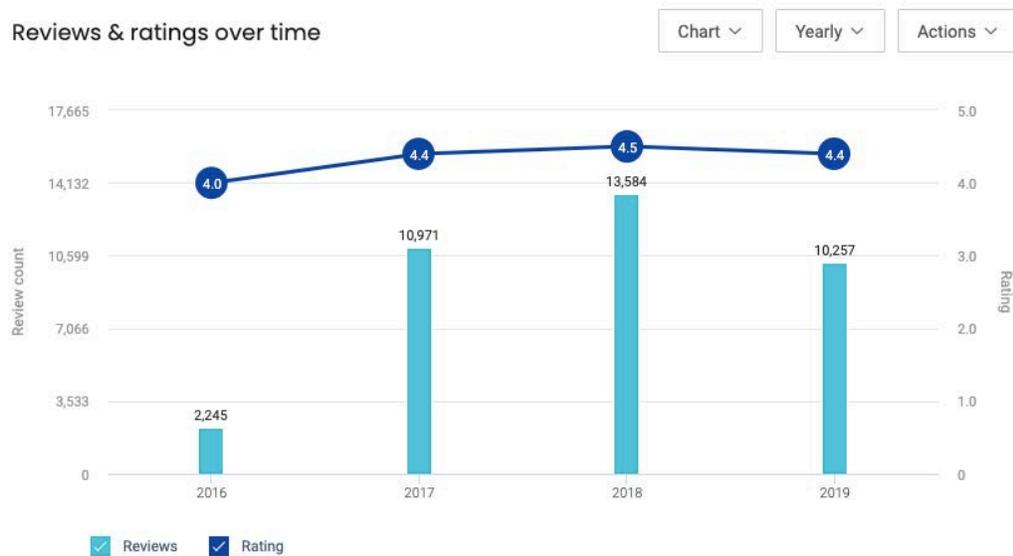
“For 5 years we had the practice of just addressing negative reviews, but we’ve changed that. Now we respond to everything,” said Burshears.



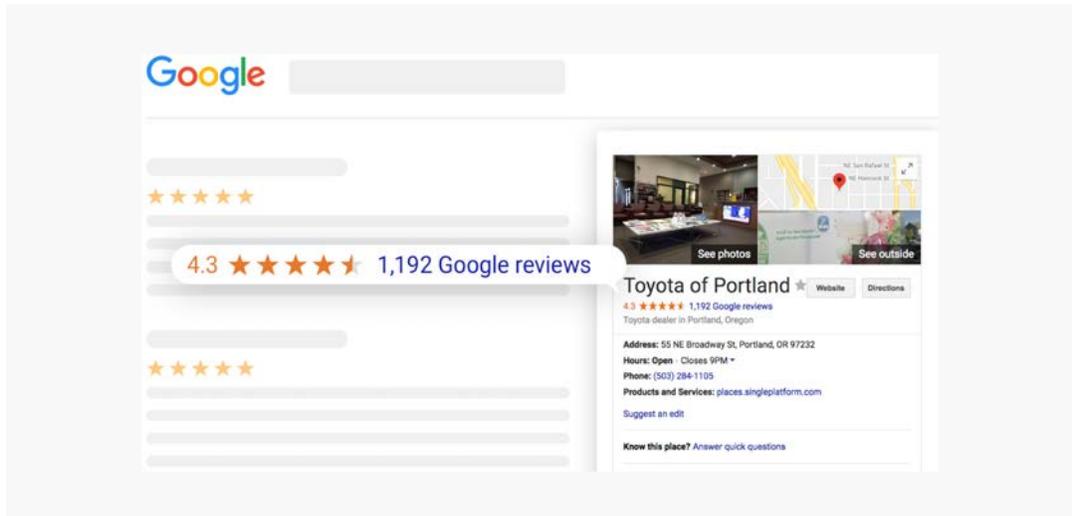
Their social media specialist hand-types “thank you’s” for every positive review, and sends off every negative one to appropriate management, along with a call-to-action and a timeframe to respond. This way no issue slips through the cracks.

Boosting satisfaction with the customer feedback loop

In just one year, O’Brien Auto Group received 4x more reviews on both Google and Cars.com, 2.9x more reviews on Facebook, tripled their overall review count on third-party sites, and due to their diligent efforts to address customer issues promptly, the company increased their average star rating across all sites and locations by 1.1 stars. Ratings drive revenue: a 1-star improvement in ratings can lead to a 5-9% increase in revenue, according to Harvard Business Review.



Star ratings from all these reviews are displayed prominently in organic search results, helping O’Brien’s dealerships stand out, increasing both click-through rates and foot traffic. The custom-branded review microsites built by Birdeye for each dealership received thousands of prospect visits; Toyota of Kirkland, for example, received over 57K prospect visits in less than a year and a half.



Although O'Brien Auto Group is hyper-focused on review generation, Burshears knows that this is just the first step of a comprehensive online reputation management strategy. "One part that we're really finding valuable is the negative feedback loop, and learning from customers who aren't 100% happy or times when things could have gone better."





Before Birdeye, even at locations awarded the prestigious “Elite” title for their high CSI survey scores, some O'Brien's customers were complaining about having to wait too long for services. “We’re getting all kinds of information to upper level management that we would have never ever gotten before, and we’re finding places where maybe things aren’t going exactly the way we thought,” said Burshears. “We’re building trust and we’re building relationships that we wouldn’t have had - those people might have turned around and walked away and we’d never have seen them again.”

Maintaining a constant line of communication with customers allowed O'Brien Auto to resolve issues promptly and turn frustrating experiences into positive ones. Higher customer satisfaction let all dealerships collect positive testimonials on sites prospective customers care about most. Now, O'Brien Auto Group is doing more than just selling cars: it's acquiring lifetime customers.

“We’ve dramatically improved our online reputation. We have a direct conduit from our customers to us that we’ve never had before letting us know where we can improve our process to boost customer retention and customer experience.”

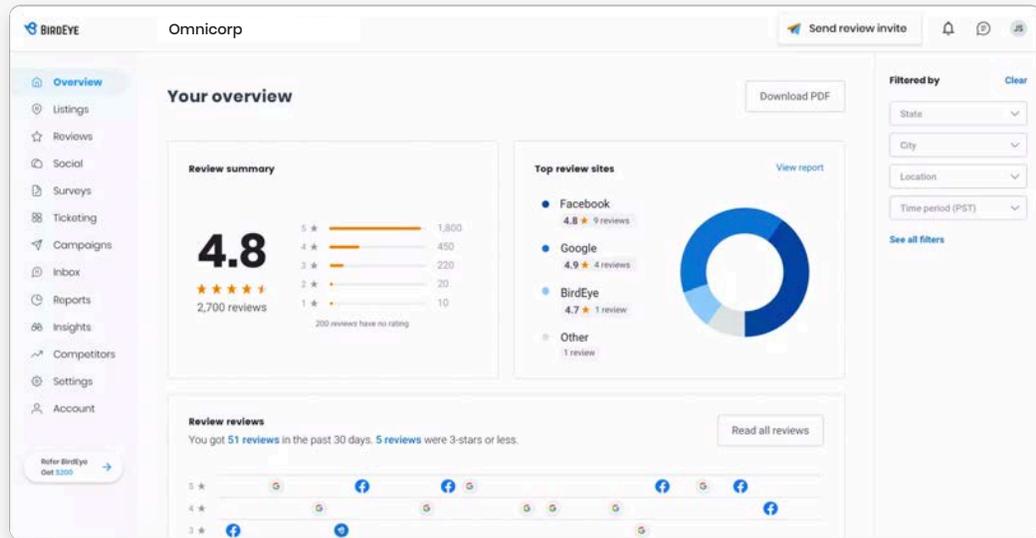


MARK BURSHEARS, DIGITAL MARKETING DIRECTOR AT O'BRIEN AUTO GROUP



About Birdeye

The all-in-one customer experience platform that provides businesses with the tools to deliver great experiences at every step of the customer journey.



Birdeye is an all-in-one customer experience platform that provides businesses with the tools to deliver great experiences at every step of the customer journey.

More than 60,000 businesses of all sizes use Birdeye every day to be found online and chosen through listings and reviews, be connected with existing customers using text messaging, and deliver the best end-to-end customer experience with survey, ticketing and insights tools.

Want to learn more? Head to our website and see why over 60,000 businesses trust Birdeye to help them be found, be chosen, be connected and be the best.



Birdeye products

Birdeye is the only comprehensive platform for customer experience that offers a range of products that scale with your business.

Listings

Manage your business listings on 50+ sites to rank higher everywhere online. Dominate local SEO with your custom Birdeye profile.

Reviews

Get customer reviews on sites that matter to your business and boost customer happiness by leveraging feedback from 150+ review sites.

Referrals

Let your customers refer your business to their family and friends and get new customers through word of mouth.

Interactions

The single customer interactions software for your team to connect with leads and customers through text, live chat, video and bulk messaging.

Surveys

Connect with your customers at any point in their journey by engaging at the right time, in the right channel, with simple and effective surveys.

Ticketing

Convert reviews, social mentions and survey responses into support tickets and solve issues before they escalate.

Insights

Dig beneath reviews, ratings, customer feedback, and survey scores to discover what's working, what's not, and where.

Benchmarking

Analyze your competition through customer feedback to understand where you rank in your industry and leverage competitive insights to get ahead.

See how Birdeye can help you grow your business!

Call us at [1-800-561-3357](tel:1-800-561-3357), [schedule a demo](#) or visit www.birdeye.com for more information.