

At the forefront of customer feedback and online reputation management

 By [Cari Coetzee](#)

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The industry is increasingly being characterised by millennial travellers and their preferences. With the rise of the millennial traveller came an increase in online reviews - the importance of which cannot be understated as it can make or break an establishment's popularity and, therefore, its bottom line. Online reviews have come to fill a meaningful role in the industry: while travellers use online reviews as a measure that will determine a booking - or not - establishments have come to find value in these reviews as they can confirm great service or indicate where service needs attention, increase interaction with guests and consumers and, therefore, contribute significantly to guest retention.



Ashleigh McHaffie

How can establishments in the hospitality industry manage the masses of online reviews and reviewers out there? This is where Go Review, launched by Social Places, comes in - it allows restaurants, hotels, etc. to receive centralised social media reviews on one easy-to-understand platform, all while managing live customer feedback. This allows the establishment the opportunity to deal with negative reviews or feedback in a timely manner, deliver on great customer service and, in turn, a very happy customer.

We chat to Social Places co-founder, Ashleigh McHaffie to find out more.

What is Go Review's story, how did it all start?

We started off doing social media listings for our clients and each of the product suites, what followed were a natural progression from there. We started off answering the reviews and part of that were obviously answering negative reviews. A lot of the time customers were upset that no one had gotten back to them, so we thought what if there was a way to a) have a live time customer feedback tool and b) keep those negative reviews offline.

We looked for a company that could offer something like this, but there was no one locally. That was the start of the in-store customer feedback idea, but we were also very aware of how time-consuming it was becoming to do these services manually. We recognised the need for them to be automated and developed into something that we could use the data to give our clients proper insights into their businesses.

What is it and how does it work?

GoReview is proprietary software that Social Places has developed. It offers businesses with multiple locations a platform to manage their social media reviews in one place. Go Review aggregates reviews from Facebook, Google, TripAdvisor, Zomato, etc. and allows brands to respond to their reviews and pull insights and data on a store and brand level.

The product also offers a live customer feedback tool. Each location has a unique QR code and branded mobi site where customers can leave a review. If the review is negative the manager of the establishment receives an SMS instantly and can help resolve the issue while the client is in-store. If the review is positive, the store's social media icons will appear and the client can choose to share their positive experience online.

■ ***What is the goal of Go Review?***

Our goal is to become a staple in the hospitality and retail industry across Southern Africa. Our product offers business owners a chance to be in control of their online reputation and offer better customer service, so in these competitive arenas, the product will become a necessity. We are passionate about our software and we'd like to consider ourselves as the thought leaders in the location-based marketing space. We are always on the lookout for new trends in the tech industry that will keep Go Review at the forefront of customer feedback and online reputation management.

■ ***Any challenges in developing the platform? If so, how did you approach these challenges?***

In development, there are always times where you'll run into issues and we have had to learn how to adapt and evolve our concepts.

We have had to get the platform re-developed twice because it couldn't handle the amount of data that we needed it to hold. We have put a lot of work into scaling the platform so that it is capable of aggregating all the info we need.

We also work with multiple social media sites and some platforms are easier to integrate with as they have more sophisticated APIs and some are obviously a little bit more challenging due to their limitations. These companies are also constantly updating their API's and we have to stay up to date at all times.

The sites that we aggregate with are also largely based overseas so it can be tricky to communicate with them if we run into any difficulties. We now have dedicated contact people with most of them, which allows us to have less downtime if we have any issues.

■ ***What is the value of the platform to the hospitality industry?***

The product is invaluable to the industry. Consumers rely heavily on online reviews to make purchasing decisions. If you have a poor listing with a low review score and unmanaged reviews you will lose business.

Here is a breakdown of what the platform offers brands:

- Reduce the amount of time that it takes a business to manage their online reputation across multiple platforms
- To have a centralised dashboard where businesses can view their online reviews
- Give accurate stats and valuable, visual insights to businesses on a store and brand level
- Keep negative reviews offline and promote positive feedback online
- Help businesses improve their level of customer service
- Create a great, simple user experience for customers and store managers

■ ***What does the future hold for Go Review?***

We are very focused on new trends in the industry. We are constantly looking at ways to make the interaction and

management between a business and its customers a seamless and easy process.

Social Places also offers three other product suites: GoListings, GoAds and GoSocial. We are in the process of automating and developing each of these products so that businesses can manage all their location marketing aspects from one platform.

ABOUT CARI COETZEE

Cari Coetzee is a contributor to Bizcommunity Tourism, Agriculture and Lifestyle.

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