



# Google Vs. Caring.com -- An Epic Look

By Wendy D'Alessandro

A spattering of industry buzz lately about “Google My Business” and “Google Knowledge Panel,” may have you wondering if you should change your focus for consumer reviews online too, given that Google likewise hosts reviews influencing search rankings. Some of you may have already taken action – *such as those who heeded the advice from Kent Lewis of Anvil Media in [Caring.com’s Digital Marketing Academy feature on search engine optimization \(SEO\)](#) back in 2017* – or, you and your marketing team may be in catch-up mode after reading the [BrightLocal study on Google reviews](#) published last fall.

Either way: are you making “SMART” moves in response to this opportunity?

In goal setting parlance, SMART stands for: **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**ctionable (*can also be Attainable or Achievable*), **R**easonable (*can also be Relevant or Realistic*), and **T**imely. This is a useful framework in considering your online reviews strategy and whether you should invest your efforts in Google or Caring, or both and how.

## Set Some SMART Goals for Online Reviews

What specifically are you trying to achieve by investing your time and attention on generating customer reviews online? Will your online reviews strategy lead to increased referrals and move-ins for your community, or is your customers’ feedback in reviews on another website only helping them build up content rather than delivering any tangible results for your community?

In its directory reviews research, Caring.com found that [partner community listings with 15 or more reviews achieved 5 times more leads, 7 times more tours, and 8 times more move-ins](#) than partner community listings with only 1-2 reviews. The senior living organization, LiveWell shared that they [used Caring as part of their overall SEO strategy](#), effectively utilizing their reviews on Caring in their sales and marketing for local communities and realized recruiting outcomes from their reviews focus too. Pacifica Senior Living is another example of how to achieve significant outcomes from [an online reputation management focus with Caring](#).

Does your Caring.com listing have enough high quality and current reviews that you’re likewise achieving bottom-line results from the effort?

Now, before you’re misled into thinking that you can only focus on one reviews platform vs. another, consider this: Reviews on Caring.com frequently appear in the Google Knowledge Panel’s “Reviews from the web” module (so reviews you’re getting on Caring are being seen by folks on Google too). Specifically Google shares the number of reviews your community has on Caring with a link to those reviews – largely because Caring.com is a website with ‘domain authority’ in senior care, and a well-established trailblazer and [long-time leader in senior living reviews](#). In fact, Caring’s high-integrity reviews program is among the [most trusted by senior care searchers online](#) – with strict [review guidelines](#), including prohibiting your competitors and any disgruntled employees from posting fake reviews; the vast majority of reviews on their website were contributed by family caregivers and seniors using Caring’s free referral services. (*Learn more about the details of their program in [their last reviews webinar](#) within their [Digital Marketing Academy](#).*)

## Set 3 SMART Goals for Your Community

With a deeper understanding of the top sites for senior care searchers (the target audience/online readers of your community's reviews), and given the limited bandwidth many senior living sales and marketing professionals have for review generation, three **Specific** and **Measurable** goals for your community could be:

1. Get a minimum of 15 reviews on our community's [Caring.com listing](#) ASAP to drive inquiries and referral conversions;
2. Generate at least 3 new reviews on Caring per year thereafter to work toward [the Caring Stars award](#) (which likewise helps with prospective resident interest and conversions: two, 2-year studies have shown that Caring's partners with the award [achieve double the inquiries and move-ins](#) as their partners without the award); and
3. Try to achieve at least 3-4 reviews annually on Google to support SEO for your community's website.

Those example goals include **Timeliness** (a specific timeframe for when the goals can be achieved), but are they **Attainable** and **Reasonable**?

How many residents and resident family members are happy with your senior living services? If you're a small care home that's only existed for a short time, it may take longer than 1 year to get 15 reviews and it may not be possible for you to get 3 new reviews every year – you may need to adjust your reviews goal in terms of volume and timing according to your census and community tenure.

Is your staff focused on asking for reviews? To achieve the goals above you have to be taking action and not just hoping your customers go online to post their feedback as reviews.

To make this as easy as possible: Every listing on Caring.com has a unique review submission form with its own URL (dedicated web link) that can be shared with your customers via email (or added to your website, such as via "Review Us on Caring" promotional text). Unlike Google, Caring doesn't require the consumer to create an account on its website to participate in the reviews program – there's no password to remember, or Gmail account to log into before submitting a review on Caring. Caring also has [a tool in its Partner Portal](#) that helps senior living communities quickly do email campaigns to solicit reviews (using language that's worked well for Caring over the years in requesting reviews from Baby Boomers and seniors).

A major challenge, though, that senior living communities face in getting reviews is this: Some of senior living community's customers aren't comfortable online yet. In those cases, [Caring's referral partners get even more support](#) (at no additional cost), such as Caring collecting reviews by phone or postcard from that community's customers. (Contact [community@carinq.com](mailto:community@carinq.com) to learn more about those options.)

Unfortunately, Google doesn't yet offer postcard or phone reviews to senior living communities. So, when focused on that platform, your community will need to ask customers who have a Gmail account and are comfortable submitting reviews online (such as the adult grandchildren of residents). They may also [need to search Google Places](#) to find your business page to enter their review, unless you've taken Google's suggestion to [create a review form link](#) and shared that with them.

***Tip:** Avoid the newbie mistake of copying and pasting your reviews from your website or another reviews platform to Google (or vice versa). Reviews sites seek original reviews and are likely to take down any duplicated reviews or reviews posted by your staff on behalf of residents and their family members.*

## Need more help being SMART about online reviews?

Caring has one of the industry's top experts on senior care reviews: [Denise Graab](#) has been helping to manage their program since its inception and was the co-creator of the Caring Stars award program. She's offered to help answer Senior Housing Forum readers' questions about senior care reviews, SEO, and digital marketing, and you can submit your questions to her privately via the button below. Every question will receive an answer, and you don't have to worry about your question being attributed to you publicly (submit directly to Denise and she'll answer you directly too).



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