



How Zoës Kitchen Increased Google Reviews by 278% and Earn Over 30K Monthly Reviews With GatherUp

CASE STUDY



“GatherUp gives you first-party feedback, third-party feedback, and everything in between. If you’re just going to look at it and do nothing with it, then it’s not the platform for you. If you’re actually going to act on it and use it to strategize, then what you’re getting here is gold.”

“ **GEORGE DONAHUE,**
Sr. Director Operations Services, Zoës Kitchen

Zoës Kitchen is one of America's favorite go-to locations for Mediterranean-inspired cuisine. Despite having over 250 restaurants across 20 different states, they still fulfill their promise to deliver an amazing customer experience and sate hungry guests with fresh, delicious food.

HIGHLIGHTS

CHALLENGES

- Collecting tens of thousands of instances of customer feedback
- Responding to feedback in a timely fashion
- Implementing changes based on reviews at the market level

SOLUTIONS

- Integrated GatherUp's feedback locator into website for easy feedback acquisition
- Integrated digital ordering into both website and app to automate feedback requests
- Developed solutions to make data management easier, including auto-tagging

RESULTS

- Increase to overall review sites rating from 4.1 to 4.2
- Capturing & actively monitoring over 30,000 instances of feedback monthly
- 75,000 total online reviews across 5 sites (up from 31,000)
- 34,000 Google reviews (up from 9,000)

Challenges

COLLECTING CUSTOMER FEEDBACK & RESPONDING QUICKLY

"A brand is just a collection of your guest's experiences."

It's a saying that has been a guiding mantra for Zoës Kitchen for a long time, and it's a philosophy that George Donahue, Senior Director of Operations Services, takes to heart.

"We lean very hard on the feedback we get from our guests," George says. "We always start with people first because we think that's the most important thing—and the best and strongest indicator of the health of a business."

Zoës Kitchen had always made customer experience a priority but in early 2017, their method for collecting and acting on feedback wasn't keeping up with the needs of a growing business.

"We weren't getting feedback from our guests in the quantity or timeliness that we desired," George explains. "The feedback we would receive would come days later. At that point, it's difficult to recover guests or celebrate great wins with the team."

Another problem was organizing all of the information in a way that made it easy to act upon. George knew that the continued success of Zoës Kitchen depended on responsive communication and fast turnaround at the local level after receiving constructive feedback.

The bottom line: Zoës Kitchen needed a better way to request and manage customer reviews and implement meaningful changes.

“We needed to get to our guests quicker so that we could understand what was happening. That was the primary push for us to look for another vendor. That’s when we found GatherUp.”

“

“We weren’t getting feedback from our guests in the quantity or timeliness that we desired.”

Solution

COMPREHENSIVE CUSTOMER REPORTS INTEGRATED INTO THE MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

George and his team considered many different reputation management platforms before deciding to switch to GatherUp.

“GatherUp’s key differentiators were how quickly we could get feedback and how many different avenues we could pull reviews from,” he explains.

Getting set up was fast and seamless—and GatherUp made sure that Zoës Kitchen would be able to get the most out of their platform.

“From an integration standpoint, getting our restaurants set up and all of locations and data into the system was seamless, and it happened very quickly,” George says.

“GatherUp also hosted training calls to help us facilitate implementation. They gave us all the information we needed to build our own materials to get our team up to speed,” he adds.

Then GatherUp got to work. The first thing they did was make it as easy as possible for Zoës Kitchen customers to talk to the brand. To that end, they gathered reviews from multiple websites and added a feedback link to the footer of zoeskitchen.com.

“Not only were we pulling reviews from third-party sites like Facebook and TripAdvisor, but they also equipped us to get first-party reviews directly from our guests through multiple channels,” George says.

After a few months of collecting passive feedback, Zoës Kitchen also used GatherUp’s API to integrate feedback requests into their digital ordering system. This system asked customers using their website or app to leave a review after their experience.

The end result was a massive influx of data. Fortunately, GatherUp made it easy for George and his team to manage and report on customer feedback.

“GatherUp gives us the ability to look at how we’re performing both in a specific market and at the organizational level. The quantity of feedback we’re receiving through the platform is enormous, and it’s just fantastic,” he says.

“We use various reporting capabilities, so we can look at the things such as: How have we trended? How are we making moves? Where do we need to focus more? What are some decisions we need to make to move the needle in certain areas? And we can look at specific points in time or long periods,” he adds.

One of the features that George has found particularly useful is the tagging feature, which automatically labels feedback based on keyword commonalities, such as quality, speed, and accuracy.

“We use tagging to zero in on specific types of feedback. This gives us a more holistic view of what we’re doing right and what we need to work on,” George explains.

Zoës Kitchen also grades its restaurants according to an internal report card system, which considers things like Net Promoter Score. They’ve now integrated GatherUp to power that feedback system, to gain more granular insights on how each location can improve.

“When guests choose to engage with us on NPS we ask follow-up questions that ask for more specific details about their experience. This allows us to make observations like, ‘Across the entire organization, we’re doing awesome on quality of food but we have some opportunities to focus on speed,’” George explains.

The intuitive interface also made it easy for leaders throughout the organization to monitor and respond to feedback at the local level.

“The platform’s set up in such a way that our team is able to directly engage with the guests in their city. They’re able to get all the positive and constructive feedback through the platform and respond to those,” George says. “Having someone in those cities respond to guests instead of someone from our home office in Dallas, Texas helps us maintain a local feel.”

George has already noticed the difference a simple ‘thank you’ to a positive review can make.

“One of the things we’ve seen is that responding to the positive feedback is just as important as responding to the constructive feedback,” he says. “We get lots of positive feedback, and just saying ‘thank you’ often gets us a tremendous response: ‘Hey, it was really great that someone reached out to me directly. I’m a fan, I’ll be back.’ We get that a lot.”

“

“GatherUp gives us the ability to look at how we’re performing both in a specific market and at the organizational level. The quantity of feedback we’re receiving through the platform is enormous, and it’s just fantastic.”

Results

THOUSANDS OF NEW REVIEWS AND A MORE AGILE REPUTATION MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

The ability to collect, understand, and act upon guest feedback has had a profound effect on Zoës Kitchen. Where they were once passively collecting only 1,000 instances of feedback each month, now they average over 30,000.

Not only that, but overall ratings across online review sites increased from 4.1 to 4.2 and the number of reviews increased 142% (from 31,000 to 75,000). Google reviews also grew by 278% (from 9,000 to 34,000)—all in just 16 months.

“The quantity [of reviews] has skyrocketed for us,” George says. “We’re seeing a very equal response rate across the whole organization, which tells me that we’re going after it the right way.”

More importantly, GatherUp’s platform has made it easy for decision-makers in each market to monitor reviews at the local level and respond promptly.

“We’re able to act a lot faster on feedback. We’ve made GatherUp an integral part of our business and how we go about our day to day, and as a result we’ve seen positive movement in every category: accuracy, cleanliness, friendliness, quality, and speed. Our team has responded very well to the system,” George explains.

While this keeps the Zoës Kitchen team agile at a local level, George notes that GatherUp’s actually had the biggest influence at the top of the organization.

“The feedback we receive from our guests drives our quarterly initiatives and we’ve been able to use the data to determine our strategic priorities as an organization, and how we measure success moving into 2019,” he says.

“Now, we ask ourselves: If what we say we’re going to improve isn’t going to move the needle in specific areas of guest feedback, then is it worth working on? It’s given us clarity in what we should be going after—and that’s the biggest impact,” he adds.

George is glad that he’s found a partner like GatherUp—a team he can rely on, and one that truly feels like an extension of his team.

“The level of support is incredibly high. I don’t even consider them to be a third-party vendor, I think of them as partners. There’s always two-way conversations occurring between our businesses, and I know that if I ever have a question, there’s someone at GatherUp that can help me solve it.” he says.

And, best of all, George sees daily evidence that GatherUp knows how to communicate with his organization’s customers and get results without inconveniencing them.

“GatherUp just understands the different entry points for guests and they’ve identified how guests want to be communicated with. The way they’ve integrated with our website and our online ordering system makes it easy for us to get guest feedback without overburdening them with multiple spam emails,” George says.

“GatherUp gives you first-party feedback, third-party feedback, and everything in between. If you’re just going to look at it and not do anything with it, then it’s not the platform for you. If you’re actually going to act on it and use it to strategize, then what you’re getting here is gold,” he concludes.

“

“We’re able to act a lot faster on feedback. We’ve made GatherUp an integral part of our business and how we go about our day to day, and as a result we’ve seen positive movement in every category: accuracy, cleanliness, friendliness, quality, and speed.”





Your customers are talking. We help you listen.

Get everything you need to gather, manage, and market customer experiences, and use the power of reviews to grow your business.

[GET STARTED](#)