United States of America
FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION
Washington, D.C. 20580

January ___, 2022

<u>VIA EMAIL</u>
NAME
ADDRESS

Dear [RECIPIENT]:

The Federal Trade Commission is interested in how companies collect, moderate, and publish online customer reviews to ensure that they accurately reflect feedback received about products and services.

Consumers who rely on such reviews deserve to get a true and accurate picture of what other consumers think. Operators of websites or platforms that feature reviews should have processes in place to ensure that this happens and should be transparent about their practices. Doing so is important for establishing consumer trust and avoiding potentially deceptive conduct that would violate Section 5 of the FTC Act.

One of our concerns is when companies take improper steps to avoid collecting or publishing negative reviews. Examples may include asking for reviews only from those likely to leave positive ones, preventing or discouraging submission of negative reviews, subjecting negative reviews to greater scrutiny, refusing to publish negative reviews, or otherwise not treating positive and negative reviews equally.

[DESCRIPTION OF AND QUOTATION FROM RECIPIENT'S WEBSITE.] The provision or use of this functionality would violate the FTC Act if it results in a misleading impression about what consumers think about a product or service.

You should review your policies and practices to ensure that you are neither engaging in any improper step described above nor providing clients with the means to do so. Pursuant to this review, you should terminate any services that allow for or result in consumer deception.

Please acknowledge your receipt of this letter by sending an email to the following attorneys in my division, who are also available to answer any questions you may have: Michael Atleson at matleson@ftc.gov and Amber Lee at alee5@ftc.gov. Thank you.

Very truly yours,

Serena Viswanathan
Associate Director
Division of Advertising Practices