



HOW TO

respond to those less-than-glowing
comments? **NEGATIVE REVIEWS**



Negative reviews of your business can be painful, both emotionally and financially. How to Handle Negative Online Reviews?

When a businesses get negative reviews, their first course of action is to try and get the review removed.

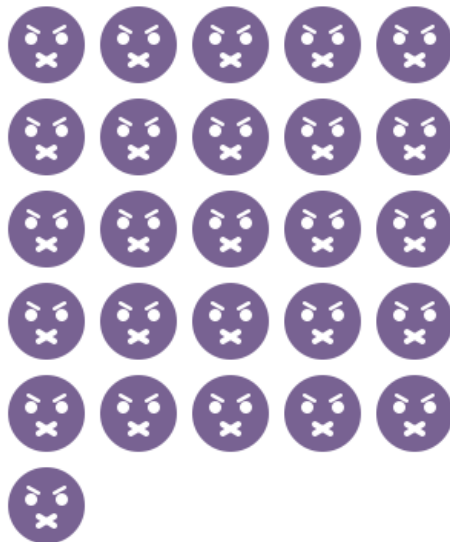
This is a **TERRIBLE** approach.

A bad review isn't the problem. A bad review is the **RESULT** of a problem. The real problem lies in what happened between your customer and your businesses that created that result.

According to a study by **Lee Resource Int'l**, for every customer who complains, 26 others remain silent.



1 complaint



26 angry customers



So if we flip that around, this means that a GOOD review from a good customer is a generous gift, an opportunity for you to make changes in your business that will ultimately make a lot more customers happy.



DO'S & DON'TS

DO`S

RESPONDING TO BAD ONLINE REVIEWS

Responding quickly – within 24 hours
(ideally with 4 hours)

Keep your response brief.

Own up to whatever the complaint is about.

Apologise. Even if it wasn't your fault, Apologise.

Offer to fix the problem.

Follow up to check the solution was to satisfaction

DON`TS

Ignore it.

Write a lengthy monologue full of excuses.

Deny your company did anything wrong.

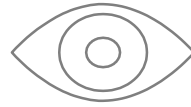
Write a defensive response or blame the reviewer.

Threaten to sue or take action.

Leave fake good reviews

A person in a dark suit and tie is holding a large purple sign with the word "CAUTION" written in bold, black, uppercase letters. The sign is tilted slightly to the right. The person's face is not visible, as the sign covers it.

CAUTION



80% of consumers changed their minds before purchasing a product due to a bad review, costing businesses their reputation.



BEST PRACTICES

1. BE PREPARED!

Sometimes, no matter how sincere you respond to reviews, negativity will continue to drag down your online reputation.

GET A POLICY IN PLACE

You can drastically cut down the chance of an online review meltdown by having a policy in place for how to respond to negative comments or criticism online. If you have a predetermined method for responding to customers in person, it's easy enough to extend that same rule set to the Internet.



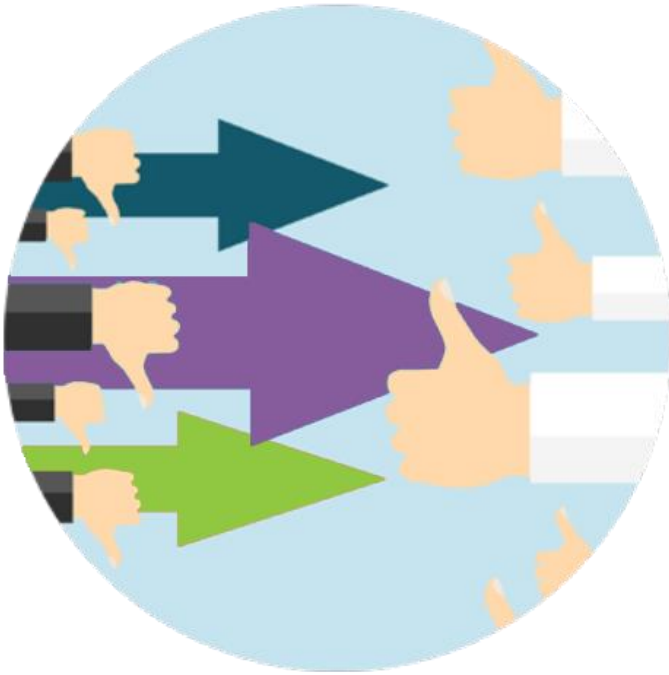
2. NEVER REPLY WITH A HOT HEAD

Instead, take the time to cool down, assess the negative review and do some research. If possible, view the customer's purchase history, so you are familiar with the situation. Don't get defensive.



No one is immune from criticism so we suggest sitting down and mapping a process for how you as a company will approach your negative reviews and ensure that every customer-facing person is across it.

Identify the scenarios where it is possible to obtain negative reviews and design possible answers.



3. IDENTIFY THE GENUINE BAD REVIEWS

It is advisable to respond to all authentic negative reviews, as long as they actually serve a purpose. On the odd occasions some reviews are best left unanswered. Those are the ones that are clearly “trolling,” i.e. leaving reviews or comments that are intentional attempts to incite anger or frustration.

4. DEVELOP A GAME PLAN

It’s important to keep your answer short and simple, explaining to the customer in clear terms your plan of action to set things right.



GAME PLAN



DON'T IGNORE IT

If the review is genuine, be sure to apologise. **The internet never forgets!** NEVER ignore a bad review. Even though it's tough to engage with negative reviewers, but absolutely vital.

Start off by apologising that the customer experienced bad service or a faulty product. Acknowledge that his or her feelings are valid and show that you care about the relationship.

MAKE IT RIGHT

It is not always expected that a negative reviewer receives something from the company to appease their disappointment. A response is sometimes enough, especially if there is truly nothing to be done to "fix" the situation—but that doesn't mean you should not try.



An offer could come in the form of free return shipping and a new product discounted service or a personalised alternative.



PROMISE A BETTER FUTURE

Once you have the core reason for their negative review, you can make plans to address the issues for the future. Was the service too slow? Did they experience a shipping delay?

Tell the customer how you will implement a strategy to ensure that they do not have the same experience again.

THANK THE CUSTOMER

for leaving feedback even though it's negative. To ensure that they don't come back to write yet another bad review, follow through on your promises.



5. FOCUS ON MAIN PLATFORMS

Which reviews should you focus on first? We think Amazon, Google and Yelp are a good starting point.



- ✧ Amazon is a huge marketplace and leading resource for shoppers and reviews of consumable goods.



- ✧ Google is often the first set of reviews seen by a potential client. Stars do matter, you want to be over 2.5



- ✧ Google+, like Yelp and Amazon, allows businesses to respond to reviews.
- ✧ Customers can edit, delete and update their reviews and reply to your comments.



Remember that reviews on these platforms are not owned by you the business owner, thus it is very rare you will be able to convince them to take a bad review down.



6. SOCIAL MEDIA REVIEWS

Surprisingly, only a small number of consumers (35%) say that social media had any influence purchasing decisions.

Regardless of social media's impact on buying behaviour, the response should be the same short and sweet message that offers to correct the situation. Facebook allows you to delete posts from your business page, but this is inadvisable.

Once an angry commenter notices his or her complaint has gone missing, it opens the floodgates for more



WE HOPE YOU FOUND THIS HELPFUL

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QUESTIONS OR FEEDBACK.**

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