

5 Important Tips For Dealing With Negative Online Reviews

by [Steve Houston](#)



The genie is definitely out of the bottle. Whether you like it or not, your company's professional reputation has now become a very public thing, and before doing business with you, consumers are researching you online more actively than ever before. Below are 5 important tips you should follow to minimize the damage that an occasional negative review does to your business.



1. Ask the review site for assistance.

Most review sites are reluctant to remove negative comments posted on them, some of them being more notorious than others in not wanting to help with these requests (in particular, Yelp). Your best justification for requesting a removal is that the review is factually incorrect, or if you can prove it was made by a competitor. In some cases, it's certainly worth a try.

2. Promptly and professionally present your side of the story.

As soon as you become aware that a negative review has been posted about your business, it's very important that you respond promptly to it. If you're truly at fault, take your lumps and acknowledge the error. Customers who have been wronged can be very forgiving, even occasionally removing the negative review themselves (or softening their criticism in it) if you show some sincere contrition. (And remember – don't be thin-skinned when receiving valid criticism. You should learn to welcome constructive criticism because your customer is going to the trouble of telling you how you can actually improve your business.)

If you believe you weren't at fault, then briefly present your side of the story in a factual and non-defensive manner. The goal here is to leave readers with the impression that you are big enough to "agree to disagree" about the situation and that there can be two legitimate perspectives to any story.

3. Try to steer the conversation offline.

In your response, avoid turning the situation into an on-going public discussion. If you're politely refuting their assertion, provide the complainant with a name and contact method for them to use to try to resolve the issue with you away from the review site. The last thing you want to do is to engage a disgruntled customer in a lengthy dialogue for the whole world – and new prospects - to see.



4. Bring the situation to an appropriate close.

Occasionally a resolution satisfactory to both parties just can't be reached. When irate customers simply cannot be reasoned with, shut the situation down with a simple statement confirming your commitment to working with current and future customers in a professional and mutually respectful manner. Always leave on a high note.

5. Encourage your clients to leave positive reviews.

The increasingly social nature of the internet is affording people more and more ways to voice their opinions publicly and be heard. The proliferation of online business directories and review sites that encourage leaving personal reviews is a prime example. Online customer reviews are what marketing professionals refer to as "social proof", a form of social validation ranking second (at 70%) only to word-of-mouth referrals (92%) in the areas of believability and trustworthiness. ([Nielsen's Global Trust in Advertising Survey, 2012](#))



Every company's reputation is now "out there" for everyone else to see – and shape – and you just can't leave the development of your online reputation to chance. Ask your satisfied clients to take a moment or two and post a positive review about you online. The steady accumulation of sincere, praiseworthy feedback about your company is what will set you apart from your competitors, who are either uninformed or unwisely choose to take a more passive approach to this critical marketing strategy.

Remember, the professional reputation of your business is your most valuable marketing asset, so you should be actively doing everything you can to develop that rock-solid 5-star online rating. Prospective clients want to do business with only the most trustworthy and reliable companies. Following these five important tips will help show them that your company is worthy of their business.

Do you know what your own company's online reputation looks like? Find out instantly - go to <http://HowGoodIsMyBusinessReputation.com> and get your free online reputation report.



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