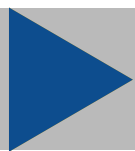


84% of people trust an online review as much as a personal recommendation ~ Bright Local



Review Guide

This guide has been created to empower you to respond to negative reviews with ease and grace.

You will no longer sit and question what to say and how to say it. You will take immediate action in responding and even turn negativity into a positive customer experience that convinces countless future visitors to become customers.

► **STEP ONE:** Verify

Be sure to verify that the reviewer is a real customer.

If you confirm they are not a customer respond with something like “As a small business we enjoy getting to know our customers, many we know by name. Unfortunately we don’t recognize your name and can’t find you in our sales records. Maybe you can help us? Would you kindly refresh our memory on when you came in and who you worked with? So we may find a solution to your problem.”

If you confirm they are a customer move to the next step.

► **STEP TWO:** Why

What is the reason people leave negative reviews in the first place?

Humans have a deep desire to feel important and appreciated. Someone who has left a negative review feels under appreciated, and so, to get their sense of importance they leave a negative review about your business. Your job now, is to acknowledge that they are indeed important and let them know that you are listening.

Why did this happen?

Are you self aware? Is there anything that could have been done better or different? Negative reviews are a great **opportunity** to take inventory of your **Brand Promise (BP)** and review your overall **customer experience (CX)**. Does your CX = your BP. If not there is a separate conversation that needs to be had around that. If you need help facilitating that conversation or want some action items on how to bring the two closer to equal, [setup an appointment with us](#).

You can’t afford to not have this conversation it will cost you many customers and thousands of dollars.

► **STEP THREE:** Emotional Response

Let ‘em have it!

Write a response to the review in an offline program first, really speak your mind. Get it all out. Curse up a storm if you must (make sure little ones aren’t around).

Now trash it

Abe Lincoln once wrote a scathing letter to one of his Generals for failing to crush the Confederate forces, that letter was never sent. Take a cue from President Lincoln. Your initial emotionally charged response is never the one you want to send.

68.3% of Consumers expect a reply within 1-3 days of leaving a review. ~ 2017 GetFiveStars



Review Guide

► STEP FOUR: Respond

Negative reviews are direct cries for help to your business

Make the reviewer feel heard. Acknowledge that you understand how they feel. You have most likely felt the same way in the past about a customer experience you had. Repeat their main complaint back to them, this makes them feel like you are listening. Then empathize. *"Mr. Joe Negative I am sorry to hear that you had a poor experience with our staff when you were in our store this last Tuesday. I had a similar experience once and felt much the same way."*

Let them know what you are doing to fix the problem moving forward. **Then actually fix the problem.** *"We recognize that the problem you had is an issue and assure you that we are taking swift action to fix it. We are working hard to create a better customer experience and your feedback will go a long way to make sure we don't have this problem again."*

► **Don't know what the problem is?** Sometimes you can't see the forest through the trees. I know I have felt that way in my business. Many times putting a simple system in place will help save time and heartache. We are excited to help businesses gain perspective and increase awareness. [Get a second opinion now](#)

Be Authentic. Was your kid up all night sick, then the car battery died when you went to start it after a snowstorm and you didn't get any coffee before this person walked through the door with a difficult issue. We are humans and people appreciate that. But also don't make excuses! "We are sorry about the experience you had with our sales rep. We all have off days and Jim admits he wasn't at his best."

Be Honest. You or your employee may have really screwed up. We sure have. **Take full responsibility.**

► BONUS HINTS: Be Proactive

Get Some Positive Reviews

We like to get 4 or 5 positive reviews for every bad review. Can you think of a few people you know that love your business? Reach out to them.

Get a second opinion

Ask a friend, family member or co-worker to double check your reply for message and tone to make sure it "reads" well to a third-party. If you feel you need more expert assistance [schedule a quick call](#) with us to look at your response and make suggestions.

Monitor Reviews Better

There are hundred, if not thousands of local review sites on the internet. Are you aware of all of them and keeping track, so you can respond swiftly? This can be a huge headache. We can set up a monitoring system for you that alerts us when a review is left about your business.

Put a System in Place

Every happy customer is an opportunity to get a positive review. We know a lot of local businesses are not setup to spend the time it take to generate regular positive reviews. [Roots Web Marketing specializes](#) in setting up ready to use systems that generate positive reviews for your local businesses.