

# BEST PRACTICES FOR RESPONDING TO REVIEWS

Turning negative feedback into a positive experience.

**Responding to negative reviews is imperative because:**

- Customers need to know **you care**.
- You can demonstrate your passion for **customer service**.
- It allows you to **manage expectations** and provide service knowledge to future prospects.

We know that the benefits of positive reviews far outweigh the risk of negative reviews. Negative reviews may still be a reality — but now with the

**Bazaarvoice Local Advocacy Program** you can now **respond** and even **improve** the perception of future customers.

Shopper intent to purchase **doubles** when seeing a company's response to a negative review versus a negative review by itself.

*Wakefield Research consumer survey, 2013*

## CONSUMERS ARE ALREADY TALKING ABOUT YOU

Local business reviews are read by **85%** of consumers\* as they're searching for service providers. This means that your prospects are finding reviews on sites like Yelp and Google + Local where your competitors are highlighted and your online reputation may be suffering. It's time to drown out the noise and capture the voice of your advocates.

With the Bazaarvoice Local Advocacy Program, you can now encourage customers to write reviews that can be displayed on your own site, where you can engage in the conversation and impact the perception of prospects by the way you handle feedback and interact with consumers today.

\*Search Engine Watch, 2013



## WHEN SHOULD YOU RESPOND TO A NEGATIVE REVIEW?

First ask, "Is this feedback actionable?"

A negative review that is **not actionable** often states an abstract grievance that is difficult to address. For example, "I hate all insurance companies."

An **actionable** negative review states a specific service issue that you can address. You can easily address, "My new dealer is unresponsive; I've called twice and still haven't heard back."

## WHERE SHOULD YOU RESPOND?

A **public response** is ideal for a negative review that will remain displayed online. You can respond publicly by simply responding to the alert email for that specific review.

## CRAFTING YOUR RESPONSE

Empathize with a consumer's frustration to demonstrate to future visitors that you are listening to their comments.

Provide a brief explanation of how to best remedy the grievance:

1. Thank the customer for his or her feedback.
2. Provide your phone number and email so the consumer and future visitors with a similar issue can reach out to you.
3. Explain any upcoming changes you will make to address the issue.

## RESPONDING TO AN UNJUSTIFIED NEGATIVE REVIEW

You may have handled a situation appropriately; however, the consumer has submitted negative feedback regardless. It is essential to build trust between you and your customers and remain authentic when it comes to the conversations online. So how should you respond to feedback that you feel is unjustified?

1. **Provide a public response:** Thank the customer for his or her feedback, provide your contact information, and ensure other consumers that you have taken the appropriate steps to avoid the issue in the future.
2. **Encourage more customers to write reviews:** When you interact with new customers, ask them to submit a review and point them to the correct page for submission. By making it a practice to encourage customers to leave a review, you will have greater review volume that will diminish the impact that one negative review may have.

**The presence of negative reviews can actually be a positive.**

*If potential customers see only perfect 5-star reviews, they will question their validity and consider them more testimonials than authentic feedback.*

www.forbes.com, 2009

# RESPONDING TO A NEGATIVE REVIEW

To...   
Cc...  
Subject: RE: 3 Star Review Alert: "Customer service isn't great"

Our sincere apologies for this frustrating situation—thank you for bringing it to our attention. Please contact me directly at [Tim Johnson@abcservice.com](mailto:Tim_Johnson@abcservice.com) or call 502-555-0000 and we will ensure that your service needs are met promptly.

Sincerely,  
Tim Johnson  
ABC Service Customer Care

**From:** Client [mailto:bv\_l\_rr@bazaarvoice.com]  
**Sent:** Friday, October 18, 2013 8:33 PM  
**To:** Tim Johnson  
**Subject:** 4 Star Review Alert: "Customer service isn't great"

Type above this line to post a response.

**3 Star Review Alert: "Customer service isn't great"**

★★★★☆ Customer service isn't great

My new dealer is unresponsive. I've called twice and still haven't heard back.

by kamlot912346 from New York, NY about Innovative Mechanical Inc

**Respond by Replying to this Email**  
Your response will post publicly with the original review.



## WHAT ABOUT POSITIVE REVIEWS?

You probably don't need to respond to every positive review of your business, but you might want to in some cases. It's a good way to put a face on your business, and it can instill goodwill as new prospects see how you interact with customers.

To...   
Cc...  
Subject: RE: 4 Star Review Alert: "Cool Service"

Thanks for the review! We typically provide 24-hour turnaround times for the most common repairs.

Tim Johnson  
ABC Service Customer Care

**From:** Briggs and Stratton [mailto:bv\_l\_rr@bazaarvoice.com]  
**Sent:** Thursday, October 17, 2013 10:04 PM  
**To:** Lindsay Denny  
**Subject:** 4 Star Review Alert: "Fast Service"

Type above this line to post a response.

**4 Star Review Alert: "Fast Service"**

★★★★☆ Fast Service

I was really impressed at how quick and responsive their repair services were.

by kamlot89 from San Francisco,CA about Innovative Mechanical Inc



**WHO IS BAZAARVOICE?** This advocacy program is hosted by Bazaarvoice, a company that reaches more than 400 million people every month as they view and share opinions about the products and services they buy and use. Bazaarvoice moderates all reviews within 24-72 hours to ensure feedback is appropriate (i.e. no inappropriate language) and authentic (i.e. no spam).