

# HOW TO MANAGE BAD REVIEWS

from Google Local, Facebook and Yelp



 Housecall Pro

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## SECTION ONE

# Managing bad reviews — an overview

It's hard to dispute the fact that reviews are playing a bigger and bigger role in attracting and winning new business. Over [80% of customers](#) report reading reviews for local companies before making a decision, which is why those negative reviews really matter. One drop in your star rating can have a serious effect on your revenue.

### SO WHAT DO YOU DO ABOUT THEM?

While platforms like Yelp, Google, and Facebook won't generally delete a negative review for you, there are ways to offset their impact. In fact, negative reviews don't need to have an entirely negative effect!

In a [consumer survey](#), review platform Revoo found that 68% of those surveyed were more likely to trust what they read when they found both good and bad reviews. And 95% of customers suspected censorship when there were only positive reviews. In other words, **having one or two negative reviews among a mass of positives can help your business seem real.**

Negative reviews also offer you a chance to show how professional you can be in the face of criticism. We'll get into how to respond to reviews and reach out to customers. Finally, there are certain cases where there are grounds to ask for a review to be taken down. **If you can prove a review is phony, defamatory, or has blatantly inaccurate information, you might have some luck getting the review taken down.** Before we get into managing negative reviews that are unlikely to go away, let's walk through the best way to report phony reviews.



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# Reporting false or abusive reviews

Phony reviews can happen because a disgruntled former employee wants to make you look bad, a competitor is trying to give themselves an advantage, or because an unhappy customer decides to exaggerate to the point of being dishonest.

## HOW TO SPOT A FAKE REVIEW

- 1 Mention of a competitor**

If the conclusion of someone's bad review of your carpet cleaning company is to tell people to go to a competitor... something might be fishy. Especially if they mention a discount (i.e. "This company sucks! Use ABC Carpet Cleaning with code CARPET20 for 20% off your first service instead!").
- 2 No matching job orders**

Yelp only offers the first name and last initial of users. Still, between that and the type of service described in the review, you should be able to piece together which customer it is. If nothing shows up in your system, the review may not be real.
- 3 The reviewer is shady**

If someone is going around Yelp leaving tons of bad reviews on Atlanta plumbing companies, they're not using Yelp fairly.

In addition to phony reviews, content that is offensive or derogatory, such as threats, prejudices, or slanderous statements are all good reasons to flag a review.

## BEST PRACTICES FOR REPORTING FAKE REVIEWS

- 1 Start by reporting them yourself**

The admin sections of Yelp, Google My Business, and your Facebook page each have a way of managing reviews and flagging them. A moderator will let you know if they are removing the content or not. In some cases, they may also ask for follow-up documentation or proof that the reviewer has violated the community guidelines.
- 2 Ask community members to flag the review as well**

Community members are also able to report reviews. If the content is obviously malicious or phony, ask a few employees or friends to report the review. Having multiple people flag the review can encourage moderators to take it seriously. Facebook also differs from Yelp and Google in that you can disable reviews altogether. If you'd rather not deal with a particularly aggressive troll—you can just shut down your Facebook reviews and allow people to communicate on your page's feed instead (where you have more deleting power).

# Responding to negative reviews

Negative reviews give you the opportunity to show just how professional you can be. Both Yelp and Google allow you to respond to negative reviews, and it's very important to do so. [Nearly 90%](#) of customers read business's responses to reviews.

## BEST PRACTICES FOR RESPONDING TO NEGATIVE REVIEWS

- 1 Start by contacting the customer**

You never want to threaten or intimidate a customer, of course. But if you write them and offer to resolve their complaint, they may decide to remove their negative comments or post an update letting people know you reached out to fix the problem.
- 2 Respond quickly**

Waiting a month or two to respond sends the message that you didn't care enough to reply promptly or make it right. [Over half of customers](#) expect a business to respond to negative reviews within a week. Once you've tried to get ahold of the customer, follow-up online as soon as you can.
- 3 Keep your responses short and gracious**

The key to a good company response is to be empathetic, professional, and address the specific complaint. If your company was truly at fault, issuing a sincere apology can show potential customers you're willing to recognize your shortcomings and work on them. If the complaint was based on a misunderstanding, you can still apologize for the confusion or the less-than-stellar experience.

You should never be combative or defensive—potential customers want to know that you resolve complaints with respect. Overly long responses can come across as argumentative.
- 4 Include contact info**

It's good practice to provide contact information in your response. By offering a phone number or email address, you're showing not just the unhappy customer, but also anyone else who reads it, just how much you care about providing good customer service.
- 5 Respond to positive reviews as well**

Taking the time to respond to positive reviews shows your company is listening and cares about customer feedback. This can also offset the impact of one negative review.

## REAL RESPONSES TO NEGATIVE REVIEWS

Here are some real examples of ways that our pros have responded to unhappy customers and shown their quality:

### HANDYMAN BUSINESS

*We would like to apologize for your recent experience and are sorry to hear you were less than satisfied with the answer we gave you. Based on our insurance policy, we do not work in RV mobile homes. We pride ourselves on our services and the high quality standards we maintain and would like to make things right. You can expect a call from me, the owner, soon to discuss what occurred and how we might make it up to you by referring you to the proper channel.*



### CLEANING COMPANY

*Thank you for the feedback. We don't typically quote over the phone. I apologize for any miscommunication. We would love the opportunity to clean for you. If you want to reschedule the consultation you cancelled, we would be more than happy to meet with you in your home and give you a unique quote based on your home. Thanks again!*



### HVAC COMPANY

*I'm very sorry for this experience you've had, unfortunately my tech is still researching to find a unit that will fit with your existing system. Your unit is not a standard unit and unfortunately sometimes it does take a little bit of research for my tech to be able to find this information. As far as not receiving any calls back, I definitely apologize for this and will check in with my office to see what is going on. Being that it is the weekend, we are unable to call around to parts places, but rest assured Monday morning, [tech name] is back on the hunt to find a unit that will work for you.*



Customers who read these reviews can often tell when there's been an understandable misunderstanding or when the business is doing what they can to provide quality customer service. Reaching out to a customer and responding to reviews can do more than just repair the damage of a negative review, it can turn it into an opportunity to build trust with a new customer.

# How to up your review game

Of course the best way to balance a negative review is to earn more positive ones.

## 1 Reward your techs

Encourage technicians to ask for a review before leaving the customer's home, or let customers know that they'll be receiving a request via email. This also provides customers one last opportunity to express any issue before they make it public. Reward technicians when they receive good reviews through bonuses or other incentives.

## 2 Promote your referral program in your review responses

When a customer sings your praises online, this is a golden opportunity to encourage referrals. Offer fans a discount on future services for every friend they send your way. By promoting your referral program in your responses to positive reviews, you're publicly reinforcing your company values while fostering customer retention and brand building — all at the same time!

## 3 Systematize your review requests

Have a system in place to send and follow-up on review requests to encourage more reviews. You can use Housecall Pro to automatically send emails that request a Google review after each service call. [Start getting more 5-star reviews today](#), and you'll earn new business starting tomorrow.



**Over 60,000 pros get an average rating of 4.88 while using Housecall Pro**

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