

How Negative Reviews Can Net Positive Results

No one likes receiving a negative review, and it's natural to worry that it could hurt your business. In the long run, though, the occasional critical review could actually help you win more customers.

Let's dig into how negative reviews may benefit your business – and how you might use them to your advantage.

1 They boost the credibility of your good reviews

A few unfavorable reviews mixed into a group of mostly positive ones can add authenticity to your glowing reports. In fact, [research from review service provider Reevo](#)¹ found that 95 percent of customers suspect censorship or faked reviews when they see nothing negative. The trust and credibility that negative reviews help to establish may even spur more purchases, the Reevo findings suggest.

Customers see critical reviews as helpful for decision-making. Eighty-two percent of consumers even seek them out, according to [research by PowerReviews](#)². Negative reviews can serve as “worst-case scenarios” by pointing out aspects of a service that others have found problematic. In some instances, the factors that prompted a critical review from one customer may not matter to another – particularly if they see many positive reviews that are more relevant to their situation and needs.

2 They let you show your commitment to service

Critical reviews give you the opportunity to demonstrate that you care about customers' experiences. Providing prompt, empathetic responses puts your good customer service on display for all to see. [Research](#)³ from the hotel industry suggests that responding constructively to negative reviews even helps to boost a business's overall ratings. Sincerely addressing complaints and showing a willingness to make amends could help prospects feel better about doing business with you.

Resist the urge to be defensive in your responses to criticism. Acknowledge the customer's frustration and apologize for their inconvenience. Briefly describe what you're doing to remedy the situation and to keep it from happening again.

3 They can spotlight opportunities for improvements

While some poor reviews truly may not be warranted, others can provide valuable feedback that helps you improve your service. For example, if customers report that their calls weren't followed up on promptly, it could lead you to revamp your system for handling inbound inquiries. Or, if a customer complains that the cost of a job was much higher than the estimate, you could rethink your process for providing estimates. Negative reviews can also inform you of issues that emerged after you provided a service, which could be helpful in future work.

4 They may help you communicate better

Customers who don't fully understand your company's policies may leave a negative review because their expectations weren't met. For example, a customer might have thought that a follow-up service was covered by a warranty, but the warranty had expired. Or, maybe a customer didn't expect to pay a diagnostic fee for your initial visit, even if this fee is clearly stated on your website or Angie's List profile. Understanding where customers can become confused illuminates where you may need to communicate more clearly. That could result in happier customers in future.

Respond to critical reviews that stem from misunderstandings by politely pointing out where those policies are outlined in your contract or website, and sincerely apologize for customers' disappointment.

Though negative reviews can be painful, they may sting less if you understand how they can benefit your business. Don't let fear of negative reviews stop you from asking for feedback from each of your customers.