

## Reputation Management Part 2: Responding to Negative Reviews

Posted By: WSI Corporate

Congratulations! Now your business is on [Google Places](#), Yahoo! or [Bing Local](#), or [Yelp](#). You just became more visible...and more vulnerable.

Local business listings are becoming more and more popular, and more and more important to your **digital marketing** plan. Your customers now have the ability to leave flattering comments about their experience with you. They also have the ability to leave scathing reviews about their experience.

Of course the optimal situation is to run your business so perfectly that you will never feel the wrath of a dissatisfied customer. Assuming that you and the people who work for you are just a few degrees short of perfect, you might want to have a policy as to how you respond to negative criticism. Here are a few pointers:

**Take the High Road:** Think about it, you aren't going to win a public argument with a frustrated customer. Their experience was bad enough that they took the time to lash out. It isn't as much about what they said, but **how** you respond that makes the difference.

**Don't Ignore it:** No it's not going away by itself. Ignoring an obvious problem only compounds the situation and declares that you just don't care.

**Don't make it Personal:** This is about an experience that your customer had, not about a direct attack on you. Remember there is a real person with real emotions on the other end. Address the problem...not the person. Most of these sites have posting guidelines, so if you believe the review violates those guidelines; you may be able to flag it as inappropriate.

**Feedback is a Gift:** Even if the customer was off-base with their comments, something set them off. Here is an opportunity to analyze the situation and make a long-term adjustment. You might find that the actual root-cause was a secondary event that wasn't directly related to their complaint.

### Rules of the Road

You can be as creative and innovative as you like in your response, but there are a few rules of the road you should follow:

**1. Be Courteous and Professional:** You may think you are responding directly to one person, but in practice you are making a public statement.

**2. Less is More:** Keep it short and sweet. Readers aren't looking for a Tolstoy novel. They want to scan and move on. It's your turn to deliver the message, make sure it's easy to read.

**3. Be Grateful:** This is an opportunity to show how you handle customer service issues, and to take legitimate customer concerns and make actual improvements in your business.

**At the end of the day, even negative reviews are an opportunity to bring a disgruntled customer back into the fold and mold public opinion. Don't hide from it... embrace it!**

Read more about all the WSI Digital Marketing services that can help maintain a positive online reputation for your business – [www.wsimywebguide.com](http://www.wsimywebguide.com)