

Handling a Negative Customer Review

How and When a Roofing Contractor Responds Could Turn it into a Positive



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about how it looks either.

This is not the type of [customer review](#) roofing companies want to read:

WARNING to homeowners: Do not use this roofing company. We are very unhappy with our new roof they installed. They left a mess, it took much longer to complete than they promised, and we're not too crazy

Responding to such reviews from homeowners — whether they are accurate, only partially truthful, or completely false — can be tricky business. The timing of the response and how the contractor responds can make all the difference, said Tom Picha, vice president of All in 1 Home Improvements in Owsego, Ill. And it begins with an in-person meeting whenever possible.

Face-to-Face

“We try to gather as much information about the situation as possible. We try contacting the homeowner if they’ll respond back. We always try to set up a face-to-face with the customer because in today’s day and age it’s easier to hide behind a text message or an email. So we like to be face-to-face,”

Picha said. "If there's something that we did wrong on that particular project we want to handle it, we want to take care of it because we want a satisfied customer."

If the negative comments are true, Picha sends service back to the project and the needed fixes are performed, whether that's a repair or replacement.

"We do not run away from the negative comments. We like to take them head-on and make sure we have a satisfied customer in the end," he said.

Sometimes customers can be difficult to work with. Picha is committed to work through those situations.

"We were all taught at an early age the customer is always right," he said. "Even if they're wrong, the customer is right. We still have to work with them. We still have to make sure we're doing things well. They're paying us good money to do a service for them. If they're not happy with the service, we have to take care of it to provide the service they expect."

24-Hour Cool Down

What if the negative review from the customer is flat out false or exaggerated? In those situations, Picha emphasizes timing is key.

"I like to take 24 hours to cool down before responding. That's my approach not only in business but in life in general," Picha said. "Often our natural reaction right away is to call the customer and argue and fight because the negative review is untrue. But that will only make matters worse.

"By taking 24 hours I'm able to think through an appropriate response instead of just firing off something that I likely will regret later," Picha said. "It also gives me time to see the customer's side of the story. And, because I prefer face-to-face meetings with customers who submit negative reviews, often the very upset customer is less upset the next day. Or, the problem the homeowner thought was significant is actually an easy fix our service department can make quickly."

By tracking the complaint from start to finish, Picha can often soften the negative sounding review. He tracks how his team handled the needed fixes, he assesses the homeowner's satisfaction level with the repairs and then he'll ask the homeowner to please consider changing the review.

"We ask the homeowner if they'll add to the review, 'We had a problem. They came out and fixed it. Now we are 100% satisfied with the end result.' It's beneficial for us to do this. We can take a negative and turn it into a positive," Picha said.

Bad Reviews Can Be Good

Picha believes having a track record of turning a few negative situations into positive outcomes is actually a good thing.

"I don't think you want your company to only have five-star positive reviews. That does not show that sometimes we all make mistakes. It's what you do after the mistake has happened that can really make the difference in the eyes of the customer and future customers," Picha said.

Sometimes Picha is unable to reach the customer or receive a response back from the customer in hopes of understanding what went wrong with the project. Fortunately, the referral platforms that customers use allow businesses to respond and offer a rebuttal. Picha has a team member who monitors incoming reviews so All in 1 Home Improvement can stay on top of them.

"Good or bad, we always reply to reviews. We thank the customers who give us good reviews. And we try to resolve the situations surrounding the negative reviews. We never ignore a review," Picha said. "If you're new to the roofing industry, my advice is to never skip a negative review and keep your ego

in check before responding to a negative review. If you feel yourself getting heated, take 24 hours to cool down.

“It boils down to customer service. If you’re focused on delivering good customer service and you have good, quality people who can deliver it, you’re going to win the game every time,” Picha said.

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