

When Yelpers attack

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This past Friday (May 11) on Yelp:

Blossom in Astoria got a lovely 4-star review. **Butcher Bar** got *two* lovely 4-stars reviews, one of them saying that the only reason it didn't get five was that it was her first time there (*"I'm sure this will get bumped up with our next visit 😊"*).

AT&T on Steinway got a 5-star review, as did **Green Curry Thai Cuisine**, which included this from BamBam B in Brooklyn: *"Whoever's reading my review, ignore the hater's, the food here is great and worth coming back."*

Unfortunately, not everyone felt the "People Love Us On Yelp!" love. Three businesses received scathing 1-star reviews, although only one got through Yelp's enigmatic auto-filter. Key phrases in Jordan D's review of **Broadway Vacuum** include *"Dude was just straight up shady looking," "Tons of busy signals (call waiting, anyone?)"* and the dread *"Who trained this guy?"*

I've never been to Broadway Vacuum and I don't know Jordan D, so I'm not agreeing or disagreeing with her comments. But from a digital reputation standpoint... OUCH!



WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU GET A BAD YELP REVIEW

- **First, you have to know you got one.** Have you "unlocked your business account"? I spent several hours poking around on Yelp yesterday and there is an astounding number of Astoria businesses that are not monitored by the owners. If you haven't done it yet, you should. It's free, and it only takes a few minutes to do the initial set up. Go to Yelp> Help> Business support> Unlocking a business account.
- **OK, you've unlocked your account.** You now have the power to dress that Yelper *down* with the powerful "Add owner comment" button. But of course you should not. *Ever*. First you should ask yourself, "Is it true?" If the Yelper says she saw sweaty rats dancing with dust bunnies on the floor of your restaurant and in fact you know that's a problem... Fix the problem.
- **If the claim in the review was true** and you've addressed the issue, say so in an "owner comment." Let the Yelper (and everyone else) know that the AC's fixed, or you've switched tequilas—whatever the problem was—and invite him to try you again. You can also sweeten the apology by offering a discount next time (and provide the details privately in a DM). The only exceptions to this are problems of a sketchier nature. For example: If the complaints were about your Uncle Joe leering at girls from the back, give Joe a talking to and continue to monitor future comments. If he took your lecture to heart, comments on "creepy staring guy" will peter out.

• **Sometimes reviews aren't true or false;** they're a matter of opinion, and the Yelper's opinion of what you're offering is low. For the most part, you have to leave these people to their own musings. (Not that it makes you feel any better, but some mediocre to poor reviews are actually necessary to the credibility of the site. No one can please everyone 100% of the time, so it's a given you'll probably get your share.)

That said, if you think an opinion veers towards the unfair (and you've given yourself time to consider your words), you can certainly speak up. This is what Kathy K. of Butcher Bar did back in February, in response to [a nasty review](#) by Darlene W. from New York, NY.

BfffOverall it's a fair and measured reply. She says she's sorry Darlene didn't enjoy her experience, that they're working on the online ordering system, and that Butcher Bar's primary passion is ethical meat—a standard they're proud to uphold. She didn't attack the Yelper; she focused on what is good and special about Butcher Bar.

• **Keep in mind Yelp will not mediate disputes.** The only way they'll remove a review is if 1) the person is describing a second-hand experience (i.e., *"They were rude to my mom at this place, she came home crying!"*) or if 2) racial slurs were made. In either case, go directly to Yelp> Contact Yelp> choose "Questionable content" from the drop-down menu, and let them know what's happening.

Final thoughts: Yelp isn't a one-way conversation. More often than not, customers (even disgruntled customers) want to hear from you. As for the trolls, well.... People have a way of sniffing them out and disregarding their opinions. Remember:

"Consumers look at the big picture. No business is made or broken in one review, they're looking at the overall rating." —Jazmin Hupp, Director of Awesome for Tekserv and an expert in social media and responding to customer complaints. {Read the full article [here](#).}

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