

Use a bad review to get the customers you wish you had

Hold your ground and don't let the 20 percent of haters hold you back

Do you want to have a mediocre 4-star or a mind-blowing 4.8-star average review rating? Will you put in the work to make that happen, or will you be mediocre like the shops out there that are fighting to stay alive? To get something you've never had, you must do something you've never done, so what will that be? Let's listen to ATI Instructor Nick Peyton explain how you can get the customers you really want.

Anyone can get a 4-star average review rating. It's easy — just show up, do things the same way they have been done for 20 years, and never push yourself to be the best. As the industry changes, most won't understand why they are getting left in the dust. Why are they dealing with the bottom 20 percent of

the customers who fight over price, bring in their mud-covered used parts, and complain about you online? Are they attracting these people? Starbucks, which receives \$22 billion in revenue annually, is the most expensive cup of coffee on the street, and they are never slow. It's not that they have the most amazing cup of coffee. What are they doing right?

5-star service comes first

To get an average 4.8 out of 5 or higher, you need to get a high volume of 5-star reviews. You will have to increase the quality of your service in the customers' eyes. A few examples: thank-you calls, courtesy checks and all the stuff most have heard before. However, the part that is usually missing is the customer's perception of your shop's value. Do your customers see the value in the products and services you offer? Bottled water is a \$16 billion industry annually, and it's free out of the tap. People buy bottled water because they see value in it. What are you missing?

Some customers are not going to like the positive changes you make because they are not willing to pay for your quality. It is usually about 20 percent of your client base who cause 80 percent of your problems. And YES, they are going to complain when you make your service better, but these are the 20 percent who are already complaining, so what does it matter?

You have to believe in your shop, your team and yourself. If you listen to your bad customers, they will put you out of business. If you're going to be around in the future, it must be a profitable business first.

When you start making changes to your shop, you are going to see negative reviews first. This is a good thing. The bottom 20 percent will immediately post a 1-star or 2-star review to whichever review page they spread their negativity through. Haters say exactly what they need to say to keep the other customers like them away. A few examples: "These guys wanted to look over my whole car, and I just need brakes," "I could not bring my own part," "They would not sell me the part at the same price as I found on eBay." Remember, it is important to respond to all negative reviews in a positive way. Make sure you list how you prefer to be contacted. This shows the customers you want that you care, and you are trying to

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make them happy.

You have to hold your ground on offering the best, most amazing customer service in your area, and don't let the 20 percent of haters hold you back. If you do, this can backfire. Let me explain: you need to get 5-star reviews in the beginning to overcome the few hater reviews you will get while trying to make it better. When you have 20 5-star reviews about how you took the time, answered questions and took care of their car and their family — these reviews are the ones that attract the customer you want.

WHEN YOU START MAKING CHANGES TO YOUR SHOP, YOU ARE GOING TO SEE NEGATIVE REVIEWS FIRST.

Simply stay the best

As you get through this change, hold your line on your quality, pricing and culture. You will keep getting 5-star reviews and the 1-star customers will start finding a cheap shop with bad service. You must set the standard.

When I teach class, I tell every student that I want honest feedback. If we need to improve on something, let us know; please comment on anything we can do better. This is the only way for us to be the best. I will never get all five out of five stars because in the process of pushing the class to be the best, I will rub someone the wrong way. I would rather change 19 lives and have one student who just does not agree with me, than have 20 people who feel the class was ordinary. Trust me, it's hard to have someone walk out and take that in a positive way. But again, do you want to be the best or mediocre?


Look at your shop through the customer's eyes. In today's world, even if they are referred to you they will use

Google to find your website and phone number — and check your reviews. The average consumer will click on the shop that has the highest reviews, and then click to read that shop's lowest reviews. Think about when you look at reviews online for a product you want to buy; you do this, don't you? You want potential customers to read "They would not put my used part on," "they wanted to look over everything and build a plan for my car, such bad people." This will do a few GREAT things. The quality customer will laugh at those and say to themselves "We all know those people." Then they will check your 5-star reviews to see why people are coming to you. Your great customers will sell your services for you. Better yet, the customers who want to bring in their own part will read that and call someone else. If you keep dealing with customers who don't want to play by your rules, recommend a shop that will install their part, and let them put that shop out of business.

The best thing you can do is come at this from the other direction. Instead of arguing over customer-supplied parts, put up a sign that says: "In an effort to give our customers the best service, we do not install customer-supplied parts." Let them ask you why, and be able to explain. Remember when a customer gives you a great comment, ask them to post that in the review they give you online.

Get your good customers to help you.

It's really simple. Treat people the way they want to be treated. Start by setting a good impression every time a customer comes in. Make sure the shop, bathrooms and customer waiting areas are clean. Everyone can fix a car. Talk to them about the repair like a neighbor. Show them what is wrong so they can start trusting you, and we can turn the perception of this industry around. Some consulting companies want to make this process sound complicated so you have to pay them to get the knowledge. It's not rocket science, and all of us at ATI want you to be the best shop in your area!

If you want to find out how the best shops consistently get Google reviews and need more help, then go to www.automationtraining.com/2018-03 for a limited time. We will send you more quick tips on how to ask for reviews and get them. It takes around 90 seconds or less to get your customers to tell others how much they love you in a Google review. 



CHRIS "CHUBBY" FREDERICK is the CEO and founder of the Automotive Training Institute. ATI's 115 associates train and coach more than 1,400 shop owners every week

across North America to drive profits and dreams home to their families. This month's article was written with the help of Coach Nick Peyton. chubby@autotraining.net

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