We extoll the virtues of Social Media. It’s the way today’s youth engage with one another. When someone is looking to buy a house, they don’t look through the “houses for sale” in the local newspaper, they look online. Zillow, Redfin, and many other realtors post their listings online, in their own apps and through social media. Everyone has at least one friend who posts listings in their Facebook news feed. And one doesn’t look at Zagat’s anymore for good restaurants. They look to Yelp and Open Table to find someplace new or someplace that is reviewed well.

The same goes for home inspectors or any other service professional. If you are listed on a site, and are reviewed favorably, then you’ve got a good chance to get hired. It’s electronic word-of-mouth. And what people say is gospel. When was the last time you ate somewhere that had bad reviews, saw a movie with a one star rating, or stayed in a hotel that had less that 3-stars?

And if your business is online, then it is inevitable that you will receive a negative review. Maybe it’s true, maybe it’s not. And sometimes, something may be taken way out of context. Whatever the case may be, how you handle the nagtive comments determine how much or how little business you will lose because of the comment.

**Where Did the Negative Comment Appear?**

Building a successful website is hard work and you do not want to see it destroyed by a disgruntled customer. The effect the negative comment has on your business depends greatly on where the comment appeared and how many of your potential customers are likely to be influenced by the comment.
For example, if the negative comment was just a random tweet, you probably don’t need to worry. Tweets quickly fade away, and even viral tweets are usually forgotten in a week or two.

However, if your business is listed on Yelp or Angie’s List, a couple of negative reviews can seriously hurt your business.

So think for yourself: how much effect will this comment have on your long-term business? If the answer is “hardly any lost business,” then the only thing you need to do to handle negative feedback is try to avoid repeating the situation which led to the negative feedback.

**How to Handle Negative Comments on Facebook**

If the negative Facebook comment is on your own wall or page then you can easily delete the comment. You can also post a lot of updates on your page to make the comment move into nowhere land.

If the comment is on someone else’s Facebook page then the only option is to ask the page owner to remove it, report it to Facebook for defamation, or simple ignore it.

**How to Handle Negative Comments on Your Blog**

Handling negative comments on your own blog is easy: just do not publish them. But remember that if you do not give people their say they will probably go somewhere more public to spread the word.

We personally like to publish people’s comments and respond to them with something witty and intelligent if possible.

**How to Handle Negative Comments on Other People’s Blogs**

This is where you have to be careful because you have no control over the comment moderation process. This means that any harmful comments can be published and awaiting your response, publicly.
We find that the bigger the audience the worse the comments become. For example, a post was written called [Google Is Not God](#) and boy, did that get some mixed feedback!

**If You Need To Respond To Negative Feedback**

Most customers won’t write you off based on one negative comment. Many, however, will gain respect for your business if you respond to the comment in a pleasant and helpful way. Of course, that’s not easy to do when you pour your life into a business and someone bashes it online. Your immediate impulse is to return fire. Don’t do it. Back slowly away from the keyboard and collect your thoughts.

When you do get a negative review, the first thing you should do is take a breather. You don’t want to fly off the handle and do something to make yourself look bad. Especially if you think the customer complaint is false, your instinct is to react in the heat of the moment. But you’ll regret it.

Take some time and formulate a polite reply. Acknowledge the person who’s complaining and say you appreciate the input. Explain your side and add a human touch.

Handled correctly, a negative comment is a great opportunity to draw attention to your business’s many positive qualities. Turn the comment around by highlighting your strengths.

For instance: I’m sorry you had a bad experience. We’ve been in business 25 years, we’ve inspected hundreds of homes, and we strive to create the best possible outcome for any homebuyer or seller. Responses are a great way to frame your story while still making the person feel heard and acknowledged.

Never be defensive, even if a customer is clearly incorrect. Online, the customer is always right, even when they’re wrong.
Responding to Blogs And Campaigns

Sometimes people won’t just stop with a negative comment (especially if they feel wronged by your not so nice response)—they’ll start a blog or a campaign to convince other people you’re horrible. If someone gets out of hand and they start spreading lies, you may need to consider a lawsuit for slander, libel, or defamation of character.

A better strategy, one which requires putting your ego aside, is to use the negative publicity to your advantage. For example, you can ask your happy customers to respond to the feedback for you:

John Doe has started a blog claiming to reveal how bad my company is. How about everyone reading this write a post on their blog with a short description of their experience using my company—good or bad—and send both John and me a linkback (or a tweet)?

If you generally make your customers happy, they’ll often eagerly leap to defend your honor in public, giving you lots of great testimonials you can use for years to come.