

# Dealer Reviews

## Best Practice Guide

## What do I do if I get a negative review?

Well, the first thing is, don't panic. Negative reviews aren't the end of the world, they actually help build trust and credibility – **68% of consumers** trust reviews more when they see a mixture of good and bad scores and are looking to see how retailers react to bad reviews\*.

The next thing to do, is reply to the review – the most important bit. The Reply feature is your opportunity to show your professionalism, highlight any misunderstanding or false accusation and to put things right with the customer.

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Almost every negative review can be resolved with a professional reply, therefore we will not remove a negative review just because it is negative or factually incorrect. However, we will remove a review if it breaks our **moderation rules**.

We have strict moderation rules in place which means it's unlikely a malicious review will go live, though we have provided you with a 'Challenge' option in Portal. This allows you to notify us if you believe the review breaks our moderation rules although we'll need you to clarify why you believe this is the case.

It's important to note as soon as the review is challenged it will go into a suspended state and will therefore come off our site. Our moderation team will then investigate and either republish or reject the review, keeping yourself and the consumer updated throughout. In the meantime, we strongly advise to draft a professional response using our top tips below.

Please remember, the Challenge option should only be used to flag a review that you believe break our **moderation rules**.

You can find out more about the steps we take to protect our customers by watching this **video**. Otherwise, we recommend that you draft a professional response using the following top tips:

### 1. Reply to all of them – the good and the bad

Of course it's really important to reply to the bad reviews but always remember to thank your customers who have left you a positive review too. You may have offered them a free service or MOT – remind them in your response so everyone can see.

### 2. Reply in a timely manner

You don't need to be sat by your computer waiting for the reviews to come in, but maybe think about scheduling in some time first thing in a morning and/or evening to reply to your reviews. And always aim to reply within 24 hours.



### **3. Don't let your reviews go unmanaged just because you're not around**

We all deserve a break every now and again, which means you're not always in the office and available to reply. So always ensure that there's somebody around to reply to the reviews. Make sure it's somebody who you trust and who can write in your tone/style for you.

### **4. Before replying, take a minute to try and understand who has left the review and why it was a negative experience for them**

Think about who the customer is – did they buy a car off you or did they just visit / call your dealership? Try to get an idea of who it is you're replying to and empathise with them – try and put yourself in their shoes.

### **5. Draft a personalised, professional response**

Remember, consumers also look out for the bad reviews to see how the business handled them and whether comments were justified. Put yourself in your consumers' shoes and think about the response you'd want back.

- Start off with a standard greeting and an apology (yep! even if you're feeling frustrated and don't feel you should apologise!)
- Detail what happened and why. Remember, it's OK to call out if the customer isn't telling the full truth but the key is to keep it professional throughout
- Don't be dismissive or argumentative

- Show empathy and commitment to reaching an amicable decision offline
- Suggest taking the conversation offline, perhaps you can call the customer or send a more detailed email reply?
- Finish with a personalised signature. This may be your own name and position or something like 'from everybody at John Smith motors'

*Remember, your reply could influence a potential customer to do business with you.*

#### **6. Double check your response before posting it – sense check it and if needed, edit your response before submitting**

It's easy to have overlooked spelling mistakes or to get the tone wrong the first time round. It only takes a minute or so to check over your response. It's even worth getting somebody else to read it so you can get another opinion, but failing this, you can always come back and edit your reply at a later date.

#### **7. Stick to the promises you have made**

There's a good chance the customer will get back in touch after reading your response. Keep your promise and also make sure everybody else in your dealership is aware of what you have promised.

#### **8. Edit your response if you've been able to resolve the problem**

There's nothing better when you've been able to resolve an issue

with your customer. That's why we allow you to edit your replies in Portal. Don't go into every bit of detail around what you did but let everybody see that you sorted the problem.

#### **9. Learn from the review**

Customer feedback is gold dust, even if it isn't great to hear the negative stuff at first. Think about how you can tweak some of your current processes or offerings to improve your customer experience. Then be transparent in telling your customers about these changes both online and offline.

## Take a look at these brilliant examples of dealers replying to negative reviews:

### ★★★★★ Waste of my time

By **Shaun H** on 7 December 2016 | PURCHASE NOT VERIFIED

Told me the car was in "fabulous condition"! Drove 40 mile to find it had a dent on every panel! Complete waste of my time and money!

#### Reply from Abbey Court Car Sales Ltd on 07/12/16

Hi Shaun, Please accept my sincere apologies, Which car was it you viewed? We have a professional dent removal company that is on site with us everyday as used cars do arrive with the odd bit of damage. All our cars are prepared to the highest standard in a compound before making it to the showroom for anybody to view & the odd one may slip through with one ding being missed but not every panel. Please let us know asap which vehicle it is as we take great pride in the preparation of all my cars. Did you inform a member of staff ? Also contact me direct & i will reimburse your fuel cost for travelling. Regards Ross ( Owner of Abbey Court Car Sales )

### ★★★★★ synergy load car centre

By **david a** on 26 November 2016 | PURCHASE NOT VERIFIED

found a car from this dealer which i was hoping to buy rang up to find out if i could pop round to view the car but was told the car was out as a loan car hmmm keep your car mate see ya

#### Reply from Synergy Car Centre on 06/12/16

Thanks for the feedback. We pride ourselves on providing high levels of customer service. This I believe was a part exchange Honda Jazz which was out on loan to a customer as a courtesy car. So unfortunately it was not available to view. Sorry you missed out on that one but we have up to 80 cars available in our large indoor showroom. If you need to contact me feel free to at [carl@synergycarcentre.co.uk](mailto:carl@synergycarcentre.co.uk). Thanks, Carl Customer service manager Synergy Car Centre

★★★★★ Pleased with car - not with the service

By **Peter P** on 27 October 2016 | VERIFIED PURCHASE

Very helpful when you are looking for a car to purchase. However, once you have bought a car, the customer service is quite slow. We had to wait for phone calls to be returned, had to keep checking up on the progress of the car being serviced and then had to wait when we went to collect the car as it still wasn't ready. Also, the £99.00 you pay for various things was a rip off. They say they will do the tax - this took a minute. They say they will service the car - the service warning light was on, therefore we would have expected it to be serviced. They say they will put your personal plates on - this was not true as you have to wait for a new document from the DVLA before this can happen. They say they will valet gage car - surely this is standard and to be expected. And they put a small amount of fuel in - again this should be standard. Don't buy this!!

[Hide full review](#)

Reply from Motor Range on 28/10/16

Hello Peter, thanks for taking the time to leave a review. Customer feedback is very important to us. I'm very sorry to hear that you have had a disappointing experience at Motor Range - this is the exact opposite of what we strive to achieve. I have passed your comments on to a member of our customer liaison team who will give you a call to rectify any issues you have. Kind regards, from all the Motor Range team.

★★★★★ Typical sneaky salesman/owner

By **Susan L** on 29 November 2016 | VERIFIED PURCHASE

The owner tried to cover up the fact that one of the wheel trims was not the correct one for the vehicle. He stood in front of it all the time, but I'd picked up on it. I really liked and wanted the car and when I went the following week to pick it up, I mentioned it and he lied and said he hadn't noticed and said 'well, it was like it when you looked at it'. It was only a minor issue and I bought one from e bay for £8. Just a very sneaky thing to do I think. I'm very happy with the car though.

Reply from Hyams Autos Limited on 01/12/16

Many thanks for taking the time to write a review for Hyams Autos. We were surprised at your 1\* star rating as your comments left at the time of purchase were, 'very efficient service, not kept waiting, courteous staff, very happy with the service I've received.' We would not intentionally cover up an issue with any car and full photographs on all cars are available to view on the website. Sorry that on this occasion you couldn't rate us more highly, however, we are extremely pleased that you are very happy with your car!

★★★★★ Embarrassingly low warranty offered..!

By **Tony s** on 21 November 2016 | PURCHASE NOT VERIFIED

i was all set to spend around £16,000 on a car from Peter Reeves until they said they only give ONE months warranty!. I think that's a disgrace when parting with such alot of cash, i was expecting 3 months at the very least, just like every other dealer ive spoken too, some even offer 6 or 12 months with good companies, ill spend my hard earned cash with someone that has faith in the cars they are selling.

**Reply from Peter Reeves Ltd on 22/11/16**

We do offer a one month warranty which we underwrite ourselves and we also offer the option of an RAC Warranty for 3, 6, 12 or 24 months to suit our customers requirements. Apologies if we did not give you the correct information and for any misunderstanding. We always endeavour to offer a warranty that meets our customers needs.

## Best practice on gaining positive reviews

There's a couple of different ways you can pro-actively seek positive reviews.

You can invite your customers to leave a review when they have purchased a vehicle from you – these reviews will be displayed as 'purchase verified' reviews.

To send an invite to your customer, all you need to do is find the vehicle they have purchased in Portal. From here, click the request a review button and enter the customer's information – remember you must have permission from the customer to do this.

The best time to send your customers an invite to leave a review is between 24 and 72 hours after completing the transaction. It is not considered best practice for your customers to leave reviews whilst at the dealership.

In addition to the above, another option is to generate 'non-verified reviews' from people who may not have purchased a vehicle from you. If you feel you've offered a great experience, encourage them to leave a review directly through Auto Trader. You may even want to follow it up with an email that includes a link to your reviews page on Auto Trader. Promote it where you can!

## FAQs

### **I haven't got the time to reply to reviews, what shall I do?**

We know how busy it can get, but, the reality is, this is the way the world is changing and it's so important to reply to your reviews – especially the negative ones. Today, consumers rely heavily on reviews to make a purchase decision. You don't have to reply to them all immediately. Maybe set yourself 30 minutes each day to reply. Once you've replied to a few, you can store some as templates and then all you'll need to do is tailor them to the nature of the review – that's what we do here at Auto Trader. It's about deciding what's important for your business. If you're not replying to them but your competition down the road is, who is the consumer likely to go to?

### **I can prove the review is inaccurate, will you remove it?**

We won't remove a review if it is negative or may not be factually correct. That's not because we don't believe you – it's because we will not directly get involved and cannot prove the facts. This is where your reply plays a huge part. Our best practice tips can help you to reply in this situation. If the review breaks our moderation rules, we will of course remove the review.

### **How do I invite my customers to leave a review once they've purchased a vehicle from me?**

You can invite your customers to leave a review in Portal. Once you click into a vehicle, you'll see a 'Request review' button within each tab, at the bottom of the page – just enter your customers contact details and they'll receive an invite in their mailbox. These reviews will show as 'verified' reviews which highlights that they actually purchased a vehicle from you.