

THE TATTOO SHOP LESSON

The tattoo shop on the corner of my street knows the virality of word of mouth. The tattoo industry, in general, thrives on referrals and repeat business, so it should go without saying that a welcoming, clean and unintimidating experience can go a long way.

With a variety of business rating and review websites out there like Yelp, the shop's owner Omar says, "There's no room in this world for a bad attitude (toward customers), especially when you're a small business owner."

When I checked out the shop's profile on Yelp, I was surprised to find a string of near flawless customer comments — "The staff was friendly and the place is clean with good music and a welcoming vibe. I will definitely return" and "The ideal place for a wary 53-year-old mom to go for her first tattoo."

I feel a little ignorant assuming that rough and tough tattoo artists couldn't care less about the feelings and opinions of visitors to their shop. But hey, if these guys know the importance of customer service, there's no reason you wouldn't.

How attuned are you to what people on the World Wide Web are saying about your business? Try Googling your garden center's name — you're bound to come across a comment or two from a customer. If they're positive words, congrats and keep up the good work. But if they happen to be less than desirable, the last thing you should do is blow it off as just "another crazy customer."

Back to Business

Speaking of Yelp, the press manager at Flora Grubb Gardens in San Francisco explained to me how they approach online customer reviews of their business:



Pete Mihalek, managing editor
Phone: (847) 391-1050
E-mail: pmihalek@sgcmail.com
Facebook: facebook.com/LGR.Pete.Mihalek & facebook.com/lawnandgardenretailer
Twitter: @lgrmag


"They provide important feedback that customers will generally not give you (in person). But, it is important to remember who the people are who put reviews on these kinds of sites. To make a broad generalization, they're young. Which means they are not our core customer, as our core customers are a little older. So certain kinds of feedback like complaints about poor service are valuable. Others, like complaints about our prices, are not as valuable."

"Generally, complaints about customer service are informative and useful. They can be really hard to read, and it is important to keep it all in context. There are few other ways to know how your customers feel about your staff."

From a Friend

My best friend Neil is the consumer insights analyst for greeting-card powerhouse American Greetings. A couple years ago, we were talking, to some extent, about customer service. He responded to something I said with, "The average person will tell three people if they had a good customer service experience, but will tell eight if the experience was bad."

That's something to keep in the front of your mind, and while you're at it, find the time to see what some of your (un)satisfied customers are saying about you virtually.

You might be surprised. 

LAWN & GARDEN Retailer

EDITORIAL

Editorial Office	847.391.1019
Tim Hodson	Editorial Director thodson@sgcmail.com
Pete Mihalek	Managing Editor pmihalek@sgcmail.com
Jasmina Radjevic	Green Goods Editor jradjevic@sgcmail.com
Jason Kenny	Designer jkenny@sgcmail.com

ADVERTISING

Sales Office	817.731.9352
Bob Bellew	Vice President, Group Publisher bbellew@sgcmail.com
Felix Schilling	Account Manager felixschilling@sbcglobal.net
Amanda McAdam	Integrated Media Consultant amcadam@sgcmail.com
Kim Sammartino	Integrated Media Consultant ksammartino@sgcmail.com
Jill Smith	Sales & Marketing Associate jsmith@sgcmail.com
Donna Aly	Classified Advertising Manager daly@sgcmail.com

STAFF

Circulation Office	847.391.1042
Doug Riemer	Director of Audience Development driemer@sgcmail.com

For list rental information, call John Ganis at 914.368.1024.

Sandi Stevenson	Director of Creative Services & Promotions sstevenson@sgcmail.com
Adam Terese	Director of Custom Media aterese@sgcmail.com
Erica Rivera	Print Media Supervisor erivera@sgcmail.com

EDITORIAL ADVISORY BOARD

Dale Bachman	Bachman's, Inc.
Kathleen Benken	H.J. Benken Florist and Greenhouse
Stan Pohmer	Pohmer Consulting Group

CORPORATE

Karla A. Gillette	Chairperson
Edward Gillette	President, CEO
David Shreiner	Senior Vice President, CFO
Ann O'Neill	Senior Vice President
Harry Urban	Vice President, Events
Diane Vojcanin	Vice President, Custom Publishing & Creative Services
Joel Hughes	Vice President, IT
Halbert S. Gillette	Chairman Emeritus (1922-2003)

Lawn & Garden Retailer accepts no responsibility or liability for the validity of information supplied by contributors, vendors, advertisers or advertising agencies.

Subscription Information

Lawn & Garden Retailer magazine (ISSN 1540-9023) is published ten times a year in January, February, March, April, May, June, July, August, September/October and November/December by

 **Scranton Gillette Communications, Inc.,**
 3030 W. Salt Creek Ln., Ste. 201
 Arlington Heights, IL 60005-5025
 Telephone: 847.391.1000 Fax: 847.390.0408.

Subscription rates in the U.S. are \$30 per year (Canada and Mexico are \$50 and all other countries are \$60 payable in U.S. currency). Periodical postage paid at Arlington Heights, IL 60005 and at additional mailing offices. Reproduction of contents is forbidden. Copyright 2011.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Circulation Department, Lawn & Garden Retailer, 3030 W. Salt Creek Ln., Ste. 201, Arlington Heights, IL 60005. PRINTED IN USA.



Audit Bureau of Circulations

Member of the Audit Bureau of Circulations