

PRESENTED BY STARK SOCIAL MEDIA AGENCY

the Social Life Podcast

EPISODE 15

Common Yelp Mistakes Businesses Make

Deanna: Welcome to the Social Life podcast. We're back again. I'm Deanna Miller, Marketing Director of Stark Social Media Agency. With me, as always, the Creative Director.

Nate: Haha! She finally did it!

Deanna: Nate Imhoff is here, also with me, because I drag him with, you know, McDonald's breakfasts.

Nate: Yes, I like those burritos.

Deanna: Yes, those burritos are the bomb.com. Coffee, not so much though.

Nate: I would give them a good Yelp review for those burritos.

Deanna: Oh fun segway.

Nate: Bam!

Deanna: Yelp review. So last time, we talked about everything you wanted to know from a former Elite Yelper. Sort of the insides and outsides of being a Yelper and then also being a business owner. Being a business owner on Yelp... It's a pretty big responsibility to manage all of the different things that come in and out. They actually have really good tools and resources on their backend

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for Yelp Business. So if you haven't checked those out yet, and you have a business, you want to make sure you've claimed your page. That is really, really important because I do know that I interact with a lot of businesses who are like, "I have all of these reviews, and they're really bad." or "I have all of these reviews, and they're really good." And I say, "Ok, what's your login?" "For what? What do you mean?" So you can claim your page and manage your reviews and manage the information that people see when they're looking- searching for businesses that are in your little realm there on Yelp. And you want to make sure that you're doing that to the best of your ability. So last time we talked to our good buddy, Larry McKlemitz, former Elite Yelper and also owner of [SCV Fix It](#). He's back with us today!

Larry: Hi, thank you for having me back.

Deanna: Thank you! Thanks for coming back. So we covered a lot of things in the previous podcast, so if you didn't listen to that one, listen to it and make sure you take some notes 'cause there is some good stuff in there. But today we are talking about the common mistakes -- and I've got 6 of them that I want to talk about, we might come up with more as we go along -- that businesses make on Yelp. And it's really easy to do this because as a business owner, I'm pretty aware of how passionate you become about your product, about what you're putting out, and the goods and services that you're putting together for the people of the world. So you can get a little passionate and connected when it comes to the stuff that you're doing.

Nate: Well it is how you pay for where you live, and eat, and everything else.

Deanna: That's true, that's true. Larry doesn't know what it's like to have a negative review though, 'cause he's just awesome. And he's like [SCV Fix It](#) guy with all the good reviews.

Larry: I try.

Deanna: He tries.

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Nate: So the Fix It part isn't to fix your Yelp?

Deanna: No.

Nate: It's to fix your house or put on your screens.

Larry: We do home repairs, and just general fix it stuff. If it's something we don't do, we can refer you to somebody who does do it.

Deanna: There you go. So if you're in the Santa Clarita valley, and you need a home repair person or you need trusted referrals for certain types of things that maybe Larry doesn't do, he's got a lot of really good friends and partners that he works with.

Nate: He just gave Audio Guru a referral.

Deanna: What?

Nate: For concrete.

Deanna: Oh, yeah, yeah. I was like, "He gave an audio referral? What? Are we getting a new audio guy? Score!"

Nate: Maybe, we'll see. I would take his Guru tag away.

Deanna: We're talking Guru away. So we all know that--

Nate: He's giving me dirty looks. All of a sudden I sound like a chipmunk or something.

Deanna: We all know that Yelp is definitely a blessing and a curse when it comes to being a business owner. And fortunately for us, here at Stark Social, we don't have that problem because we refuse to be on Yelp in any way, shape or form. And it really doesn't apply to our business. But we do work with a lot of people who have Yelp presences and profiles. And you want everyone,

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obviously, to love what you're doing and to give you nothing but praise and awesomeness and tons of warm and fuzzies all over the world. But at the end of the day, not everyone is going to be happy, happy, joy, joy.

Nate: Happy, happy, joy, joy.

Deanna: Happy, happy, joy, joy. I was hoping you'd catch on.

Nate: Yes!

Deanna: We wanted to talk today about the 6 things that we think that Yelp business owners should avoid. And this comes from a lot of experience with helping people manage their Yelp presence. It is something that we actually do, which is funny. 'Cause you would think that, you know... Business owners are busy.

Nate: Right.

Deanna: So we actually do. So let's start with the first one: If someone leaves you a negative review, you want to avoid throwing around accusations.

Nate: We touched on that last week.

Deanna: We did. So this is a fun one, Larry, 'cause you've actually probably had some experience with seeing this first hand, as a former Elite Yelper.

Larry: True.

Deanna: So it's not a secret that the customer isn't always right. We get that, but if somebody leaves you a bad review... I joke, I say perception is 9/10ths of the law because if you see name calling happening from a business owner...

Larry: Right.

Deanna: That leaves you feeling...?

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Nate: Not good.

Deanna: Not good.

Nate: I mean this guy doesn't handle it right.

Deanna: Right.

Nate: You're talking it personal.

Deanna: Right.

Nate: Maybe the person is a total jerk, but if I see two people arguing, I go, "You're both jerks."

Deanna: Right.

Nate: You know?

Larry: Right. You don't want to see... Log on to somebody's page, and you're looking for a dry cleaner's, let's say. And somebody says, "Gosh, they did a terrible job on my clothes." And the business owner responds by saying, "We've been doing this 20 years, no one's ever complained before." Which is...

Nate: Yeah, okay...

Deanna: Right, right.

Larry: Although that may be true, it just looks bad. And you know, keep it simple is my personal motto. If I were in their position, I would just respond back and say, you know, "Please give us a call so we can address this. We value your business." As a business owner, that's genuinely how I feel. I always tell my customers if it bothers you, it bothers me. Call me and let me know if you find anything that I need to come back and follow up on. Nobody can be perfect all

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the time. Certainly I try to achieve perfection. And you know, somebody calls me, I'm always happy to come out and relook at something.

Deanna: Absolutely, and I think when you log in to Yelp and you're looking for a business and you see the business owner throwing around accusations... You know, calling someone a liar, or you're a complete whatever. I think, speaking of dry cleaner's... I was looking at -- I was traveling at one point, and I was in San Francisco and I needed a dry cleaner. The hotel that I was staying at didn't offer cleaning services. So I actually looked at one, and it was really funny because it was close to Chinatown in San Francisco. And the person, the owner, whoever it was that was speaking for the owner, basically all of their responses to any negative reviews was, "You're a liar. That didn't happen! You know that didn't happen, you're a liar!" And it was over and over and over again. So you want to make sure that, if you're a business owner, and somebody leaves you a negative review whether it's just an honest to goodness they had a bad experience or it's that knee-jerk reaction vendetta style review... You want to make sure you avoid throwing around any kind of accusations, calling somebody a liar...

Nate: You mean, calling someone a liar, they're not just going to go, "Oh, you know what, I was totally lying. The whole thing."

Larry: Yeah.

Deanna: I made it up!

Nate: This is all a shake down.

Deanna: Absolutely.

Nate: They're going to admit this.

Deanna: So there's got to be a definite, 100% amount of professionalism when you're responding to any kind of reviews, especially when you know that it might get heated, you want to make sure you're not throwing accusations back at somebody. And to go hand-in-hand with that, we also throw in name calling

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of any kind. You don't want to call a former client, customer any kind of names, profane or otherwise. There's no morons, no idiots, no... When I was looking at a couple of different articles that I was looking at for info about this, they had some great screenshots. I go back to, over the summer, there was that really big news piece that was run about the lady who owned a diner.

Nate: Oh, with the kid?

Deanna: The kid. There was the 2-year-old little girl whose parents were in there, and she kept screaming and crying. And the lady went over and yelled at the little girl, or little boy, I forget which it was, but she yelled at them. And then online, they took it to Yelp, they took it to Facebook and she was dropping f-bombs, and calling them f-ing idiots, and f-ing bad parents. And you're f-ing this, and you're f-ing that, and you're a B-I-T-C-you know what.

Nate: This was in Boston?

Deanna: Probably was. I mean, Audio Guru would know better. I don't know... I think it was.

Nate: Had to be really bad if it was in Boston. That's probably what just happens, right? No?

Deanna: I would have to look. But I think that that's... I mean, that's the thing is you have to remember as a business owner is that when someone leaves you an online review, it's the internet, and the internet is forever.

Nate: Interwebs.

Larry: Mhm.

Deanna: And then you get featured on all kinds of cool stuff like HuffPo.

Nate: In a negative light.

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Deanna: In a negative light.

Nate: So what's the worst you've seen, Larry? Response from an owner? And it has to be out in public.

Larry: Out in public... Oy.

Nate: Or maybe it got made public.

Larry: You know... I don't know, nothing comes to mind but I've just seen so many stories, all over the news. And you know, you could be a small business just running in Valencia, or wherever, or a small town. Which is kind of what I think of Santa Clarita is still. And in a day, you could be national news by something you said or did.

Nate: This is true.

Larry: It could be portrayed good or bad but you know, unfortunately, the news doesn't always do a good job of covering the true story. The whole story. And you don't want to put your business and how it's portrayed in the hands of the national media. So you know, well you think, "Gosh, that would never happen." But you don't know how one remark or how one thing you say, you know, can blow up and become huge news.

Nate: On the way these articles go with the clickbait...

Larry: Yeah!

Nate: Half the time they're not even reading the article, it's just the headline.

Deanna: Right.

Nate: And they're like, "What! What! Urgh!!" 15 comments, and they didn't read the article.

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Deanna: And then you also have to remember that there's video. Video is so big right now.

Nate: Right.

Deanna: That-- You know, I think what happened eventually happened with this story is that she responded on the news, and then went back into her restaurant and was so unhappy with how, I guess, the newscaster that was interviewing her to get her side of the story had handled it, that she had started throwing things in her kitchen. And someone had their cellphone and caught her doing it, and then walked out to the newscaster, and was like, "Hey, this just happened inside." So then along with her, I apology of like, "I'm so sorry. It's my restaurant. I have to give the prerogative to serve who I want here." Then along with that, she's got this video of her throwing plates in the kitchen of her little diner and going like, "These f-ing idiots. Who the hell do they think they are?" And it's like... You just apologized like two seconds ago for handling it inappropriately.

Nate: Wow. Scream into a pillow. Something else. There was that restaurant that actually flipped it on the Yelper. Where they didn't want to wait, and they just sort of barged in and sat down at a seat, or a table.

Deanna: What? Details!

Nate: Yeah, remember this one?

Larry: There have been a couple of those. I think there was one, I think it was in Kansas City, that people tried to take food to do a to-go order. I think it was an attorney's office. Yeah, they tried to order in for having a late night meeting or a late night in the office. And the restaurant said that they wouldn't do to-go food. And this guy wrote them up on yelp, and blasted them. And the restaurant just responded and said, you know, we're sorry we don't do to-go food because we can't manage the quality when you're going to eat, you know, there's stuff that we care about, we don't want our food presented in such a manner. And that's a business's prerogative, and but it was the way in which

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they put it out there that it made the person who wrote the review look very bad. But there's a fine art to writing a response like that. I don't know that I'd want to... That's a gamble. I don't want to really gamble on trying to sarcastically and wittingly respond to somebody and not look like an idiot.

Deanna: I do remember seeing that, and I do remember thinking in my head like, I really want to high-five whoever wrote that response.

Larry: I loved it.

Deanna: That was classic. I don't know if I have the bandwidth to come up with something that fantastic.

Larry: Yeah.

Deanna: Because that was -- I mean, it was great press for the restaurant. And I do remember it was, I think it was even Valentine's weekend. And the person was like "oh, I just need... I'm eating in..." And you know, well, it's a very business weekend for us to boot. So you know, I really appreciate when a business owner, when I see that kind of stuff when it shows up, and it's like wow, that's some Jedi review stuff right there.

Larry: Right.

Deanna: That's fantastic. So we've already talked about avoiding throwing around accusations at anybody who gives you a potentially negative review and also avoiding any kind of name-calling. You want to keep everything above board and professional. And you want to make sure you respond, so that rolls into our next thing to avoid, I say, if you avoid it, it doesn't go away. We've had a lot of people that we've worked with who -- You know when you're starting out as a small business, you don't necessarily pay attention to all the different things that you have to manage and maintain when it comes to social media. And people forget about Yelp when they're small businesses. They don't even realize that it's there until they do get a bad review. And then they're trying to play catch-up and manage their profiles. So if you're getting started, make sure

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you don't avoid responding to reviews, and that's positive and negative reviews. If you have a good review from somebody, you want to make sure that you're thanking them publically for that. I'm not saying... I had one person who was like, I check this stuff like every minute of every day. And it's like, no, relax, it's okay. You don't have to on Yelp 24/7. But make sure that you're responding. So one of the things in my research and learning how to manage Yelp profiles is you want to make sure that, you know, those bad reviews, they don't go away, and you don't want to simply ignore it. So avoiding a response is basically showing your public, potential clients, future, former clients that you're not paying attention. And that those things don't matter. And while to you, that might seem like...eh... whatever, it's no big deal. If you respond even with the most generic response, even if it's like, "Thank you so much for drawing our attention to this. We'll take a look and get back to you." It shows potential clients that you care, and that you're taking the time to make sure that you want people to know that you've recognized their feelings. And I think that's really what it boils down to.

Nate: Alright, so I found the article. It was actually in Audio Guru's neighborhood in Boston, there was another one in San Francisco. They took pictures of these people, and it says, "Shout out to these two winners for seating themselves with no reservation, insulting and berating our staff, and refusing to leave. All while Yelping away in front of us as a means of threat."

Deanna: So they just sat down?

Nate: Yeah, they didn't want to wait so they sat themselves down. They were calling people names. And they were Yelping while they were doing this.

Deanna: That's phenomenal.

Nate: Sort of bullying the restaurant. So the restaurant turned it on them and said, "Hey, these guys... No good."

Deanna: Awesome.

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Nate: Sorry, I had to go find it. It bugged me.

Deanna: That's okay. Next time be prepared.

Nate: Oh.

Deanna: Oh...

Nate: I was prepared.

Deanna: Alright, so, Larry, how do you handle -- I know you don't have any negative reviews.

Larry: Right.

Deanna: Obviously.

Larry: Well, I think one of the things is it's important to-- As you run a business, it's really to have a philosophy of the customer's always right. That doesn't mean they are always right, but you know, anybody, if they come to you and say, "Gosh. I didn't like this," "I didn't like that." You know, you've got to, there's a restaurant in town and I'll name them 'cause it's my absolute favorite restaurant in Santa Clarita. It's called Newhall Refinery.

Deanna: We've mentioned them a bunch on here.

Larry: Oh, they are just... Nothing like it in Santa Clarita.

Deanna: That's true.

Larry: It's my absolute favorite restaurant. And I always love to read their Yelp reviews because I'm a big champion of their's. And at one point in time, people were complaining and saying, "It's so loud in there, it's so loud in there." And I've eaten there a lot, I mean a lot. And I don't like loud restaurants. I never thought it was too loud in there, and I run into the owner at Lowe's. And he's buying

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this sound insulation stuff. And I asked him what he was doing, and he goes, “People are complaining about that.” And I said, “They’re crazy. It’s not too loud in there.” But it didn’t matter what I thought, or what he thought as a business owner, he’s listening to his customers. And if you go in there today, they’ve done some real fancy stuff that maintained their decor and brought a little bit of change to the acoustics. But you’ve got to listen to your customers.

Deanna: That’s absolutely true. We will be back with more about Yelp and common mistakes that you want to make sure you avoid. Thanks for listening to the Social Life Podcast. Go grab yourself a beer, a glass of wine, pull over if you’re driving. I always carry something.

Nate: Get a ringding.

Deanna: Get a ringding. Drive to Dunkin’ Donuts. We’ll be back right after this with more of the Social Life Podcast. Bye.

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Deanna: Welcome back to the Social Life. We’re talking about Yelp still. I know, a lot of people are like, “Ugh. Yelp.” We are covering common Yelp mistakes today that businesses make and how to avoid them. We have a very special guest with us, again, Larry McKlemitz from [SCV Fix it](#).

Larry: Hello hello.

Deanna: Also a former Elite Yelper. But we are talking about common mistakes to avoid. We’ve already talked about throwing around accusations. If someone leaves you a negative yelp review, you want to make sure you avoid throwing around accusations, calling peoples liars. So avoid name-calling of any kind. You just want to keep it all above board and positive and professional. And then the last thing we were talking about, and we can just sort of round it out in this segment is: if you avoid it, it doesn’t go away. So a lot of business owners that I’ve come across in managing social media tend to feel that... well if I just don’t deal with it then its no big deal. It’s just on Yelp and nobody cares. I don’t care,

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why should they care? And it's really important to make sure you're managing and maintaining any kind of review that you get. We were talking about a very fabulous, fabulous location here in Santa Clarita. Nate and I talk about it all the time on this podcast.

Nate: It's true.

Deanna: Newhall Refinery. They are actually amazing, and if you ever get a chance, you get to the Santa Clarita valley, you have to make time to go to Newhall Refinery. They are amazing at listening to their clients and customers and doing what they can to change or update. They do amazing things with their menu.

Nate: Correct.

Deanna: They're flexible and fantastic. And we've had several parties and special occasion events there. They're fantastic. Can't say enough good things about them. But you want to make sure that you don't avoid those negative and/or positive reviews, take the time to respond.

Nate: Right.

Deanna: Right.

Nate: Well, it looks like you don't care.

Deanna: Right.

Nate: I mean, it's the same principle of like having a twitter account and, you know, I ask a business a question or something. And they, you know, respond like 2-3 weeks later, or never. I think, like, I'm being ignored.

Deanna: Right.

Nate: Which is the last thing you want people...They just gave you a negative

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review and now you're ignoring them. You're not building your case.

Deanna: Absolutely. I think even with the positive reviews, though. Cause like what I like to do with the accounts that we manage is if somebody leaves a good review and is like, "I was recently here at X, and it was fabulous, and wonderful. I really enjoyed this, this, this, and this." You know, you can take the time to respond and say, "Thanks for taking the time to leave a nice review." And that's fine, you don't have to write like a huge in-depth, thank you. It doesn't have to be paragraph after paragraph after paragraph.

Nate: Right.

Deanna: But just even a nice, "Thanks so much for taking the time to leave the review."

Nate: Right.

Larry: Mhm.

Deanna: And I think that makes people feel happy.

Nate: Some people.

Deanna: And acknowledged.

Nate: Some people.

Deanna: Well, the good reviews. I mean if we're talking about bad reviews...

Nate: The thing with Yelp, like we had the same thing, when Newhall Refinery first started... For the most part, people were just really blown away by it and really positive reviews, all 4's and 5's. And then you'd have somebody come in and be like, "I don't see what the big deal is." And they would put a 2. It seems like it was almost fueled by their ego.

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Deanna: Clearly a Neanderthal.

Nate: Like I have better standards than you. You know?

Deanna: Well, I think that's the thing too. If you're reviewing a business that's just opened, like they're in the first few weeks of opening or if it's their first few weeks of offering the service that they're offering... You kind of have to take those first initial moments of business with a grain of salt. I personally don't like to review a business that's just opened.

Nate: Yeah.

Deanna: I try to avoid it.

Nate: Yeah.

Deanna: Because I just, I feel like they're getting the kinks out, especially if it's a restaurant.

Nate: Well, they have a vision, they know what they want, and they have a quality, but a lot of times you can't reach that right off the bat. It's almost like a soft opening, you know, you got to work out the kinks. So if you judge them right off the bat, it's just sort of unfair.

Deanna: Right. What are your thoughts on that, Larry? If a restaurant is just opening, or if a business is new to the scene, how do you, if you go someplace, and you're like, "ugh..."

Larry: Right. I just actually worked with a business. They approached me and needed a bunch of things done to open, and this was a restaurant. This was all of a month ago. And I was there for their grand opening, they invited me, they did a soft opening. And they were so overwhelmed because there were so many people there. Just a lot of things that fell through the cracks, and they knew that, and everybody knew that. And you know, it's taken them some time to kind of work that out. So you have to be aware of that. For business, you've

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got to plan for that. If somebody's going to write this up, it's never fair to kind of write a business up for their just opening.

Deanna: Absolutely. No, I think you got to... We've been to a couple places, recently, that have opened. We went to one place, and it was just, like, this is really good, but it took forever, but I can't be mad at them because they're clearly trying.

Larry: Right. It's just, you know, if it's something that they've been open, and you've gone there 6 times over the course of a half year, and every time it's an issue...

Deanna: Right.

Larry: That's one thing, but you know, in this case, I sat there and we waited 20 minutes for our food. And this is a fast casual restaurant. And you know, everybody kind of said, that I was with, well, I'm not surprised. They literally just opened. But you could always have that one person who is going to walk up and say, "They should have had my food to me immediately." It's just not realistic.

Nate: Well, they should have worked these kinks out before they opened.

Deanna: Horrible service! Ah!

Nate: And that's just not realistic, you know?

Larry: And again, I think last week I mentioned, you've got to help manage your expectations accordingly and some people just aren't good at doing that.

Nate: Right.

Deanna: Absolutely. Moving on to the next point, you want to avoid responding in the heat of the moment to a negative review that's been given to you on Yelp if you're a business. And I've come across this several times, and it's easy to get caught up in the emotion. You get defensive about the product you're offering.

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If you're a business owner, I mean... This, Stark Social, is kind of like our second child. It's like our baby.

Nate: It is my child.

Deanna: Oh. Ok. Take that somewhere else... But you get, you know, you get defensive. This is your baby, this is your thing. And you want to avoid responding in the heat of the moment. Take a minute to step back, take a deep breath, log off Yelp, walk away, and think about your response. Don't respond right away, if you're sitting there typing and you're 4 paragraphs in, it's probably too long of a response. And there's probably a lot of things in there that you don't want to click publish on.

Nate: Well, I think Larry talked about that last week. Where he said, you know, keep it short, say, "Hey, sorry you had a bad experience. Would love to talk about this, and see what we can do."

Larry: Right, I think one thing that's important to remember is that the internet is forever, as you were saying. And you know, you could put something up there, a response, and then take it down later but that doesn't mean that that person hasn't taken a screenshot of it, and we can think of so many things in national news where somebody has taken a screenshot of something. And now it's out there, and you're like gosh. That's forever.

Deanna: And it goes viral. Those things go viral.

Larry: And it could go viral.

Deanna: And somebody is emailing it to somebody, and they're like, "Oh, I'm totally going to post that!" And next thing you know, it's like twenty different places and your Yelp account has gotten 20,000 visits in an hour. And you're like, "How did this happen? I don't get it."

Larry: And you're like, "Oh boy..."

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Deanna: For one of the companies that I work with, it's a property management organization, and we have put together, with the help of the owner, scripts and dialogues for specific types of responses. Cause we started to see the same kind of things over and over and over again. And unfortunately, when you're working with a specific type of business, for example property management, so if someone decides to not show up for a showing and then they're upset you won't wait for them an extra 20 minutes as a showing agent...

Nate: Wow.

Deanna: For you to get there cause you're in traffic. It's okay, just reschedule. Those are the types of things that, if something is completely out of your control as a business owner, you want to make sure that if somebody then turns around and gives you a bad review on Yelp or any other form for that matter. You want to make sure that you have go-to responses for certain types of things that you know are going to happen over and over and over again. And those are just the types of things that it's completely out of your control. You're like, "I'm sorry? But I can't help the traffic that you were stuck in, and I want you to see the house, I promise." But you want to make sure you're not responding in the heat of the moment. Maybe you sit down and you type out the types of things that you notice that are just glitches in your system that you can't overcome. Maybe there's certain types of reviews that you're getting over and over again because there are certain things that are out of your control, it's like acts of gods and there's nothing you can do about it. And then you've got those responses already written out and you can tweak them appropriately, and just copy and paste them.

Larry: I think one thing you brought up that I think is crucial is you've got to listen to the feedback that you are getting. And you know you talk about getting responses over and over again, you know... In the case, I bought up Newhall Refinery, there have been more than one person that had said, "It's too loud." And although I thought they were crazy, they listened. You got to listen to what your customers are saying even if you think they are wrong. I had somebody, several years ago, who said no complaints about the services but she was mad because, again, the number of mad customers I've ever had I

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can count on one hand but she was put out because she said I didn't offer her a receipt. She sent me an email, and she goes, "You didn't offer me a receipt." And I thought why didn't you just ask? And then I sat and I thought about it, and said yeah, maybe she's got a point. And I went out over the next few months, I got new and upgraded software that allowed me to do it in the field. And now, when I perform service for all my customers, I say do you want a receipt. And it's just part of my business now, and it's all because one person said something. She didn't say something to me on Yelp, but she just mentioned it to me. And I thought, hey just ask if you want it, but hey, listen to your customers.

Deanna: Yeah, absolutely, all feedback is good feedback. It just depends on whether or not you can do anything about it, to tweak what you're doing and make things better so that you're avoiding any kind of issues.

Nate: Right. I think, you know, one tip that I've seen that is very helpful -- It goes back to my retail days -- was you have your policies. You have to have policies. You have this policy, like the 24 hour thing, or you were talking about scheduling a showing or something like that.

Deanna: Right.

Nate: Yeah, you have your policies and then you've got people that are upset. Unfortunate things happen to clients and customers and stuff. You present it in such a way, hey, this is our policy. I understand that this happened, I'm going to go ahead and make an exception for you. Almost like I'm hooking you up, but you don't want to have that sort of you owe me one type thing. Like, yeah, no problem we'll go ahead and make an exception for that. Unfortunate things happen. Boom, now the person, you might have just flipped somebody from a 1 star or a 2 star up to man, these guys are cool, they worked with me, they made me feel special. I guess. But then you have the person that they're not going to respond. You get a 1 star and they're happy with their 1 star.

Deanna: Well there's those people who just log-in to put negative reviews up and then there, like, gone until the next time they're unhappy.

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Nate: Well, we had the person who had a 1 star review, and I went and saw they had 20 reviews and most of them were 1 star. But I went and looked up the places they were putting those, and they had been filtered out quick. Because the algorithm.

Deanna: Well, because they're not actually participating in the community. They're just using it for backlash.

Nate: Revenge.

Deanna: Anger. Also when you're responding to a review, and you're... I had somebody who did this, and I felt so bad because they immediately regretted it. Avoid giving out your personal contact information. By personal contact information, I mean your cell phone. If you have a business number, whether you're a brick and mortar or not. So for us, we're not in a brick and mortar location. We don't have an office, we're like on the go. We're mobile, we're like all over the place. We use Google Voice for our phone number so we don't have to give out our cell phones numbers.

Nate: Yeah.

Deanna: I think it's important to remember that if you're responding to a review, make sure that you have a business number and that's separate from your personal contact information. Because I had somebody and this was a long long time ago, that they said if you really want to talk about it, just give me a call and they put their personal cell phone number in there. And then, that person called them all the time.

Nate: Oh man.

Deanna: Like 11:30 at night they would get a call, and then it was like 1:00 in the morning, and that person just started harassing them via cell phone. And then they went to delete it, and then other people were calling.

Nate: What?

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Deanna: Yeah, it was just... Yeah...

Nate: This is insane.

Deanna: That was when I was working for the party planner. And then all of a sudden it was, like, random phone calls. Like, "Hi. I got your phone number off of Yelp. You're a jerk."

Nate: Wow.

Deanna: Wow. Okay, so it's time to change the cell phone number unfortunately. You want to make sure that you avoid doing that because there can be some pretty nasty people in the world who will take advantage of that and use it for evil rather than good.

Nate: Wow, man, Yelp is serious business...

Deanna: It's pretty scary. I just remember the phone calls, it was hilarious. Cause he would play the voicemails, and he'd be like listen to this, this is scary.

Nate: Wow.

Larry: I have actually gone around and got to contacts off of the internet, off of Yelp, off of other websites and be able to get around and get in touch with people. Sometimes big companies.

Deanna: Wow.

Larry: You know, I don't know what I'm calling. I'm not calling and harassing somebody, but if I'm not getting the results I need to get... Next thing you know, I'm talking to the vice president of company and he goes, how did you get this number? And I go, "Well, somebody put it up there."

Deanna: It's the internet!

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Larry: Yeah, it's the internet. Just these things can be found.

Deanna: We will find you. But in the same realm, you want to avoid, the last thing we're going to talk about and we've got a minutes left, is giving in to outrageous demands. So we've talked about this a couple different times. We talked about it, I think, in another podcast. And we were talking about it with Larry before. You want to avoid giving into any kind of demands. So, I think, recently we had a client who they had someone who was unhappy with a cancellation policy and they ending up doing their best to make it right. You want to make sure that when you're making things right though is that it's maybe in a personal email back and forth, or on the phone hashing out the details. Don't hash out the details of how you're making it right in the review comments.

Nate: Right.

Deanna: Because then you're opening the door for people to try and abuse...

Nate: Extortion, man!

Larry: It does go on.

Deanna: It happens! I mean, that's the thing. Then the next person who goes, "I'm unhappy." Well it's like you gave that person a free thing, or you comped them a free dinner or you did this. And then it's like, "Ugh...Oh..."

Nate: Scandalous people out there.

Deanna: Oh dear. And then you're stuck, cause like what do you do? Well, they did this for them but they wouldn't do it for me. So you really have to be careful about that stuff. I know Larry hasn't had any negative experiences yet, so I can't be like hey Larry did somebody do this... and you're like no.

Nate: Well, I'm sure he's seen it.

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Deanna: But you would if somebody's been unhappy.

Larry: Yeah, if somebody's not happy, I mean, I had, again, the lady who sent me... She was mad over two things. One because I didn't give her an invoice, I didn't ask her if she wanted one. The other one was...and this is the odd one, and her husband was the client, not her, I was interacting with him. She said I talked to him too much, I let him talk to me too much. And I let him distract me. I'm like, he's my client, and he's the one that called me. If he's talking to me, he wasn't talking about... He was talking about food and stuff. I'm trying to work as he's talking to me, and she goes, well you let him talk to you too much. And I'm like, I can't tell my customer to stop talking to me

Deanna: Get away!

Nate: So wait, wait, I'm confused, who's the customer?

Larry: A gentleman calls me. I go out there to start doing a bunch of work for him. And she-- I have the email somewhere. She sent me an email, and she's the wife and she sent me an email afterwards and she said, "You didn't offer us a receipt." And I typed one up and I immediately sent it to her. I said, well here you go. And then she said also you let my husband talk to you too much. And I'm like, I can't tell him, who is my customer, to stop talking to me.

Nate: You weren't a jerk to my husband!

Larry: I offered her, I said I'm sorry, and I offered her like an hour of free service...

Deanna: I'm sorry I'm so awesome.

Larry: I tried to make it right but I thought it was crazy, but at the end of the day, I try to make everybody happy.

Nate: You're a saint, Larry. I would have been like, "Really?!"

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Larry: Yeah.

Deanna: So it's really important when you're managing your Yelp account to make sure that you're avoiding some of the common mistakes. I'm sure that there is a lot more, but you want to avoid throwing around accusations, name-calling, avoiding responding to it, responding in the heat of the moment, sharing any personal contact information, and giving in to outrageous demands. It's really important to manage your Yelp account as a business with thought and care, and don't just jump into things. We have been talking about a lot of things Yelp today, and we want to thank Larry McKlemnitz, former Elite Yelper for joining us today and last time as well.

Larry: Thank you for having me.

Deanna: If you have any needs in the Santa Clarita valley for home repair, handyman style stuff, or you need referrals for really cool things like HVAC and stuff like that, give him a call. He's a cool guy.

Larry: Thank you!

Deanna: We like him a lot.

Larry: Thanks.

Deanna: And we'll be back next time with the social life podcast. Make sure you go to the sociallifepodcast.com to subscribe. Follow us on social media. If you have any questions, make sure you email me: hello@starksocial.com, and put "Podcast" in the subject line and I'll get back to you. We'll see you next time on the social life.

Nate: Adios!