

## Social Media

# How Should You React To Online Reviews?

Don't Overreact.

BY ADAM WHITE

Hotel and restaurant owners know the damage a bad review can cause. When visiting a new city some people wouldn't dare book a room without first looking up the property on TripAdvisor. Owners are understandably concerned when a scathing customer review sits atop their profile, as the voice of one individual could drive away countless others. How do they deal with this? I'm sorry to say their solutions are not always honest. Fake reviews abound, with some owners attempting to manipulate ratings and bury negative material. These tactics are not only dishonest, they create an arms race between hoteliers and the web developers who want to maintain the trust of their users. In that battle I would put my money on the developers every time.

By reacting in this way businesses risk having their accounts flagged as suspicious or banned altogether.

By overreacting they create the perception that they have something to hide, and that lends credibility to bad reviews. Furthermore people have become astonishingly adept at knowing when they're reading a fake write-up. Don't fall into that trap! People want to see a business that is receptive to feedback. It is more

Not in the hotel and restaurant industry? Your turn is coming. The big trend in 2010 will be location-aware real-time social networking. This means that your customers will be able to pull out their smart phone while standing in your storefront to review of your business instantly. The phone will

on geolocation features. Facebook's version is just around the corner. Funding is flowing to new startups, with names like FourSquare, Gowalla, SimpleGeo collectively raising over \$11 million last year alone. Existing review sites like Yelp and Citysearch are becoming more and more popular via their iPhone apps.

There is a generation of consumers coming that will never open a phone book. They will simply pull their phone out of their pocket and ask "What around me has been recommended by people I trust?" Don't fight these amateur reviewers, they have the power to make or break brands. You need to show them that you are listening. **■**

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important to see a human being humbly listening to their customers than it is to see a flawless record. The readers understand that you cannot please everyone every time, and they are fully aware that some people will complain about anything. They just want to see that those comments are not falling on deaf ears. It goes a long way to publicly respond "I'm sorry we didn't meet your expectations, how can we do better?"

know, via GPS, where they are and they will be able to publish their opinions online when they are still fresh. Furthermore they will be able to review absolutely everything, from their mechanic to their dry cleaner. Businesses that never before considered their online reputation will suddenly be faced with it.

There is no one service that leads this market yet, but everyone is jockeying for position. Twitter just turned

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As the Bigger & Better Journey Continues...

## Local Learning Centre Chosen For Federal Government Grant Program

### PRESS RELEASE

The Bigger & Better Journey Learning Centre continues.

Changing the Quality of Life with the support of the Federal Government's Southwest Ontario Community Adjustment Fund Brantford, ON, December 23, 2009: Bigger & Better Journey Learning Centre is honoured to announce that



■ Warren & Melanie Crawford

they were selected to receive a grant through the Southwest Ontario Community Adjustment Fund (SWCAF). The SWCAF has been created to support projects that enhance the community capacity for economic development within Brantford/Brant County. Effective December 16th, 2009 the grant funds will be used for the Bigger & Better Journey Development Initiative, a program designed by Melanie Crawford that will boost

economic growth in the community through the sale and delivery of Computer Software Training, Professional Development, Employment Readiness Skills, Keynotes, Seminars and Corporate Consulting.

With the support of the Federal Government along with Enterprise Brant, this funding has created a unique opportunity for the Learning Centre to offer employment to a recent business/marketing graduate. This intern position will play a key role in the Development Initiative that Bigger and Better Journey is undertaking and will promote exceptional standards of employability via Computer Training and Development/Revitalization Workshops. The Learning Centre is currently accepting applications for this Intern position.

Melanie Crawford & her husband Warren own and operate the Bigger & Better Journey Learning Centre with over 25 years of combined experience in educating & empowering others. Their commitment to fostering growth in the local community is made evi-



dent through their multiple volunteer engagements, relationships with local service agencies and through their Benevolence Training Program. For more information contact the Learning Centre or visit the website at [www.biggerandbetterjourney.ca](http://www.biggerandbetterjourney.ca) **■**

**BIGGER ideas...BETTER results...  
your JOURNEY begins here!**

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Journey*