

Yelp and reviews... Can they be trusted?



Had to take the train to SF to visit the Passport Agency this morning; on my way back, walking through Sequoia Station, a sign in a store window caught my eye. Yikes. Hard to believe a major chain is openly soliciting for "positive" Yelp reviews! We've heard stories... even within the bike biz. But this? In a store window? [Yelp's pretty darned clear about what isn't allowed.](#)

"Please let us know if you stumble upon a business that is trying to boost its reputation by paying people (or offering freebies or discounts) to write positive reviews. You can help us spread the word that paying for positive reviews not only isn't ethical, but can also be illegal. We work hard to warn consumers about the businesses we catch paying for biased reviews."

What really surprises me is that a sign like this wouldn't cause some to wonder about claims they might be making for the products they sell about "natural ingredients" or quality in general. Once you put up a sign saying that you'll offer discounts for positive reviews, essentially buying them, what credibility do you have left?

Regarding our own reviews, with the exception of a few easy-to-spot "out there" negative reviews, for the most part, we've earned them. The good, and the bad. If we screwed up, we're going to do whatever we can to make it right. But, because a bad review can really rattle you, I make it a point to not even look at Yelp after 1pm or so, just to make sure I have a chance to really look into it and respond appropriately before going home. Otherwise, it can become something you literally lose sleep over.

It took a long time to get to the point where I didn't reflexively view Yelp as evil, and use it as part of the process for making Chain Reaction Bicycles a better place. That's why it's so disheartening to see that people are still engage in manipulating the results.