A 1.5 star company doesn't get referrals. It gets bad reviews. So we reached out to every customer and built a high ROI referral program.

PosiGen, PBC · Solar & Home Services

THE NUMBERS

1.5 → 4.0+

Average monthly customer rating, across all 10 review platforms tracked

12 months

Time to move the rating, held through the following 24+ months

10

Review platforms moved (Google, BBB, Angie's List, Yelp, Solar Reviews), not just one flagship site

5x growth

of our referral program paying out $30,000 per month boosting close rates to 30%+

01 The Situation

PosiGen's average customer rating sat at 1.5 across ten different review platforms we were able to track. Not one bad review site was dragging down an otherwise fine reputation. Ten of them, all telling the same story. My first day on the job I found 1,100+ Google Reviews that had gone unanswered. Long term customers, particularly those in the five to ten years of tenure, showed lower satisfaction levels. Not only was our ability to sell into new customer segments threatened, but the recurring revenue in our current customer base was clearly failing.

In renewable energy, that number is a business problem before it's a reputation problem. The product gets installed, but the relationship doesn't end at the sale, it continues on through installation and years of maintenance after. A company with a 1.5 rating isn't just losing the next sale. It's telling every future customer, in public, not to trust it. We were embarrassed.

Our customers needed to save with solar and earn in the meantime to afford double digit increases in monthly utility bills.

If this sounds like a problem you're facing, get help now! I have a proven approach, let's talk.

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02 The Stakes

Word of mouth and reputation carry more weight in home services than in almost any other category, because the purchase is high consideration, high cost, and delivered face to face across a dining room table. A damaged rating doesn't just sit quietly on a review site. It shows up in every sales conversation a rep has, whether the rep mentions it or not. Left alone, a 1.5 becomes a tax on every future deal, every civic partnership and can catch the attention of Attorneys General as it should.

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03 What I Did

We quickly found where trust was actually being won or lost.

The two moments that mattered most weren't marketing moments at all. They were the permitting and installation process itself, and the maintenance visits that followed over a ten year span. Whatever happened in those two windows determined what a customer would say publicly about the brand, months later. “Offers ongoing support after installation” was the #1 decision factor for new signed customers (45% top 3 results) and PosiGen only got credit from only 27%. We were hitting our internal measurements, but not telling that story to current and potential customers.

We built remarketing strategies specifically around those moments. We dug ourselves out of “The Pit”.

Instead of generic post sale messaging, the remarketing work was built to reach customers at the points in their experience most likely to shape how they felt about the company. We owed them a commitment to simplify a complex 28 step process until they started saving $$. How long? How soon? How quickly? Who's responsible for the next step? While waiting for permission to operate, 41% of our surveyed customers worried about when production would begin. (The Paragraph Project, "State of the Brand," November 2023)

We made customer engagement proactive instead of reactive.

Rather than waiting for a complaint or a bad review to trigger a response, the team engaged customers around sales, installs and maintenance visits at every step before problems had a chance to calcify into public reviews. In two months we contacted every single customer in the portfolio and logged their responses. We established a bi-weekly Customer Escalation Committee who reviewed customer inquiries and incidents. We hired staff specifically to manage an escalated ABM process with customers. Why? From this customer interview…"I gained trust having Susan as my point of contact. It makes me confident that someone is here who listens."

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04 The Result

The average rating moved from 1.5 and remained above 4.0 in less than 12 months, across all ten platforms being tracked, not a single cherry picked one. That's not a marginal improvement, and it wasn't a fluke either. The company held that 4.0+ average through the following year. It's the difference between a company customers warn each other about and a company customers vouch for. We resolved all 1,100 responses plus 100s of new reviews each month in addition to responding to all social media posts and reviews within 24 hours. The Board of Directors and our investors tracked our brand health as a key performance metric.

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05 Why It Matters

Most companies treat customer experience and marketing as separate departments with separate budgets. A CMO mind set will not. PosiGen's reputation problem proved they're the same problem wearing two different hats. The install and the maintenance visit are marketing moments whether anyone treats them that way or not. Every homeowner who has one is about to go tell ten more people how it went. Consistency was the fix.

Fixing a 1.5 doesn't start with a PR campaign or a review gating tool. It starts with figuring out where trust is actually built or broken inside the operation, and building the customer experience around that truth first. **That's the diagnostic instinct behind everything I run under JDR Growth Advisory: find the real moment of impact before you spend a dollar trying to talk your way around it.** Our rallying cry was to use the brand pillar that we would "Simplify Solar" in every way we could across the organization. The YoY sales growth proved that out.



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