



Case Study: Amy's Baking Company Puts Itself on Fire

1. STATUS

In 2010 the owners of Ami's Baking Company – Amy and Samy Bouzaglo, initiated a severe online dispute with their customers. The owners responded to negative reviews and comments in an emotional and rude way, resulting in an abundance of 1-star rating of their restaurant.

2. ISSUES

In 2010 the Bouzaglos' responded rudely to a negative customer review on Yelp, which listed that both the service and food was dissatisfying. Amy Bouzaglo responded in the following way:

"...it is summertime in ARIZONA MORON!!! Only TRAMPS and LOSERS want to sit outside ... Do US a favor and keep your ugly face and your ugly opinions to yourself."

This was unsurprisingly followed by many 1-star reviews from unsatisfied customers. The restaurant and its owners aggressive responses were featured on several popular blogs. As a way to possibly improve their business's reputation the owners agreed to appear on chef Gordon Ramsey's TV show Kitchen Nightmares. The couple however did not refrain from continuing their aggressive online disputes with reviewers and commentators on famous sites such as Reddit and Facebook.

3. ACTIONS

The Bouzaglos continued down a spiral of rude behavior and profanities. The couple agreed to be featured on Ramsey's famous TV show as a way to prove to that the accusations they were receiving online were not true. However, the cameras installed throughout their restaurant proved a different story. They showed the owners cursing at customers, collecting their waiters' tips, and firing staff without a good reason. In the spirit of the show Ramsey confronted the two owners, but they both denied the accusations, blaming everything on "Yelpers" and "Reddits". This resulted in a Kitchen Nightmare first – chef Ramsey walking out and refusing to help the struggling business.

The airing of the show resulted in another flood of negative comments and reviews from users online to which the owners continued to respond in an aggressive and unprofessional manner. The Bouzaglos attempted to remedy the situation by posting on their restaurant's Facebook wall that their accounts have been hacked. This turned to be a PR move, which proved ineffective.

The couple suffered further online ridicule and exposure, as information about their criminal record, as well as possible immigration issues for Samy Bouzaglo came to light.

4. LESSONS LEARNED

The case of the Bouzaglos is an extreme and very uncommon one. The obvious mistake they made was to attempt to deal with customer complaints online by dismissing them in an aggressive and very unprofessional way. It is apparent that the couple wanted their business to succeed but were not prepared for the fact that Amy's Baking Company would improve only if its owners were open to criticism and self-improvement.

If you, however, want to protect your business from a bad online reputation BEYOO ONLINE can help by:

- preparing for a potential social media crisis;
- analyzing your current online reputation status;
- monitoring online conversations relating to your business;
- creating and submitting press releases and articles;
- coaching employees of proper conduct online.

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