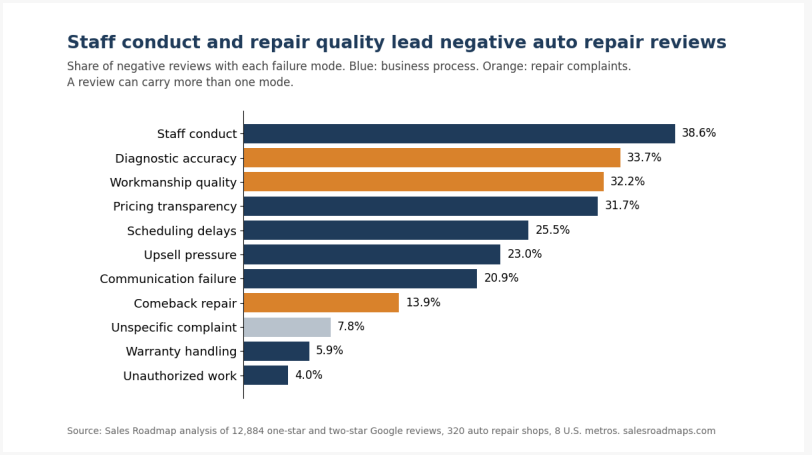
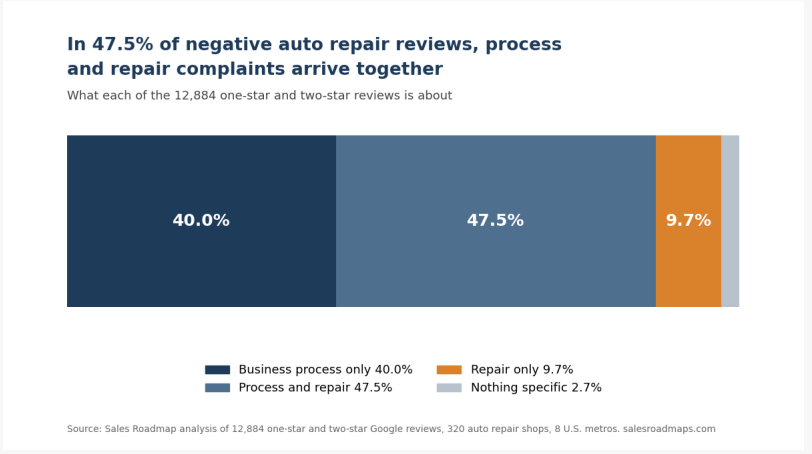
Study of 12,884 Negative Auto Repair Reviews Finds Process and Repair Complaints Arrive Together in 47.5 Percent

Across 320 auto repair shops in eight U.S. metros, 87.5 percent of negative reviews cite a process failure, and most also question the repair itself.



Auto repair reviews



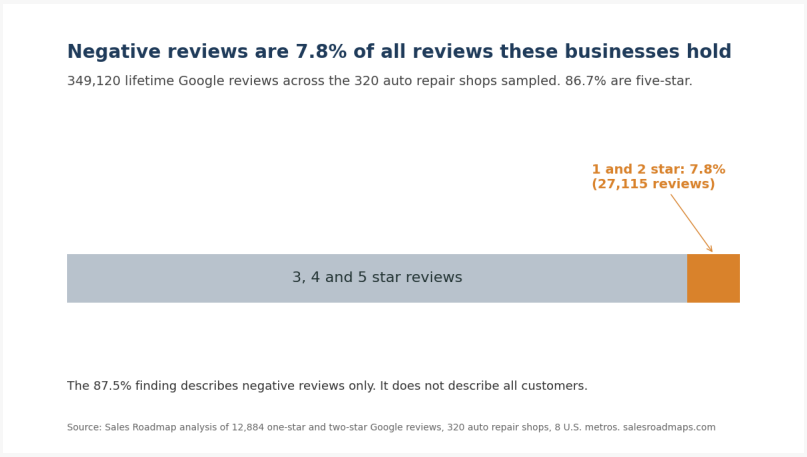
Auto repair shop reviews

TAMPA, FL, UNITED STATES, September 29, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- A new study of 12,884 one-star and two-star Google reviews across 320 auto repair shops finds that 87.5 percent of negative reviews describe a failure in how the shop was run. Unlike a simple process story, the repair work itself is also questioned in most of them. In 47.5 percent of negative reviews, a process failure and a repair-quality complaint arrive together in the same review.

The study was published by Sales Roadmap and conducted by Kamyar Shah, a fractional COO and founder of World Consulting Group. It covers auto repair shops in Phoenix, Dallas, Atlanta, Charlotte, Columbus, Denver, Tampa, and Kansas City, with review dates from July 2009 to September 2026.

The repair and the process arrive together. Of the 12,884 reviews, 40.0 percent described a process failure only, 47.5 percent described both a process failure and a problem with the repair, and 9.7 percent described a repair problem alone. Counted once per review, the three repair-quality modes together appear in 57.3 percent of negative reviews. For a shop owner, that means fixing the front counter without fixing the repair, or the reverse, leaves most of these reviews unchanged.

Staff conduct led to the single failure modes. Staff conduct appeared in 38.6 percent of negative reviews, followed by diagnostic accuracy at 33.7 percent, workmanship quality at 32.2 percent, and pricing transparency at 31.7 percent. Taken together, 48.9 percent of negative reviews raised at least one money complaint: an unclear price, an upsell, or work done without approval.



Auto repair shop review

The reviews describe both sides of the problem. One customer wrote, "It turned out they had failed to reinstall the crush washer on the drain plug". Another wrote, "They charged me over $450, which is way above market rate." A third described the clock: "They told me it would be ready in 3 hours, but 6 hours passed and they still didn’t do it."

"In auto repair, the customer is usually talking about the counter and the car in the same breath," said Kamyar Shah. "A shop that treats those as two separate problems will keep solving half of them."

The number that keeps this honest. The 87.5 percent figure describes negative reviews only. The 320 shops sampled hold 349,120 lifetime Google reviews between them, and 86.7 percent of those are five-star. One-star and two-star reviews together make up 7.8 percent of the total, or 27,115 reviews. Most customers are satisfied. The study describes what goes wrong when they are not.

How the study was done. Reviews were retrieved through the DataForSEO business data API. Each review with at least five words of text was labeled against seven business-process failure modes and three technical ones, and every label had to be supported by a phrase quoted from the review. A second, independently trained model relabeled a random sample of 200 reviews and agreed with the first on the process-versus-technical call 96 percent of the time.

The sample required a correction that changed the study, and the study states it in full. A category search for auto repair returns car dealerships, which hold very large review counts. An earlier version of this corpus was 68 percent dealerships, and one review in five in it was about buying a car rather than repairing one. The corpus was rebuilt by selecting on each listing's own primary business category, so the published study describes repair shops rather than dealerships.

"The customer who writes a one-star review about a brake job already handed over the keys," Shah said. "The shop had the work. What it lost was the customer's confidence that the car and

the promise would both come back right."

The full study, including the complete failure-mode breakdown, the method, and its limitations, is available at https://salesroadmaps.com/auto-repair-negative-reviews-study/

ABOUT Kamyar Shah is a Fractional COO, Fractional CMO, and Executive Coach, and the founder of World Consulting Group, with over 25 years of experience helping organizations achieve operational excellence and sustainable growth. He has led 650+ consulting engagements, producing more than $300M in measurable results. More at https://kamyarshah.com and https://www.worldconsultinggroup.com

CONTACT Kamyar Shah World Consulting Group https://kamyarshah.com/contact/

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kamyar Shah
World Consulting Group
+18135201687 ext.
email us here
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