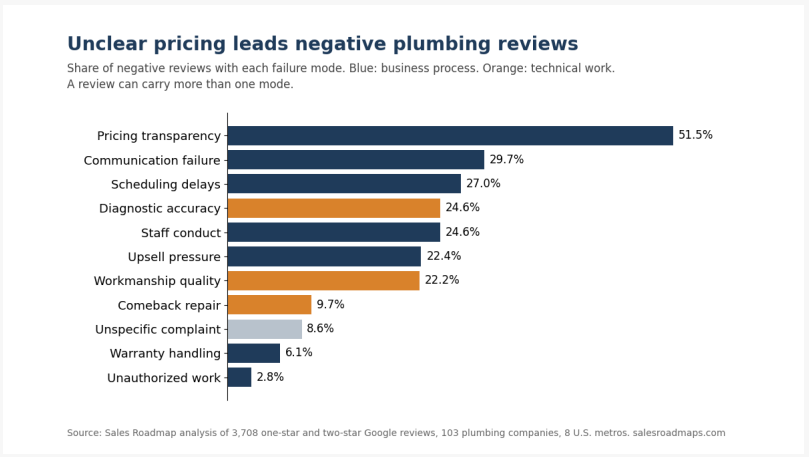
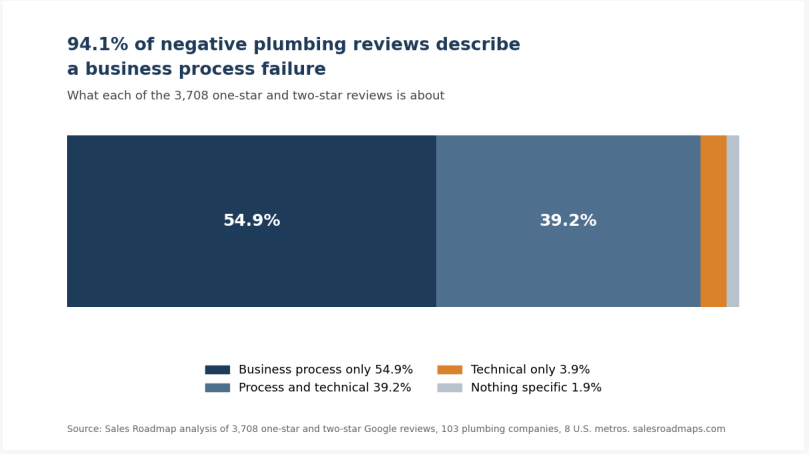
Study of 3,708 Negative Plumbing Reviews Finds 94.1 Percent Describe a Business Process Failure, Not the Plumbing Work

Across 103 plumbing companies in eight U.S. metros, pricing clarity led the complaints at 51.5 percent. Only 1.3 percent were about the work and nothing else.



Plumbing Research



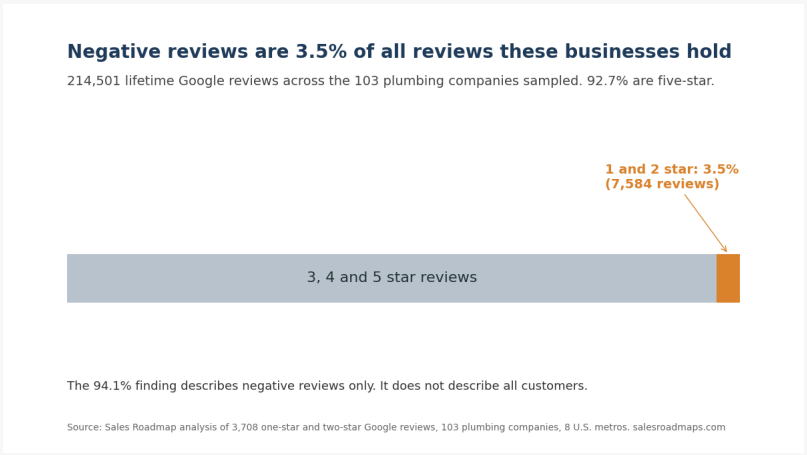
Plumbing Business Research

SPRING HILL, FL, UNITED STATES, September 25, 2026 / EINPresswire.com/ -- A new study of 3,708 one-star and two-star Google reviews across 103 plumbing companies finds that 94.1 percent of negative reviews describe a failure in how the business was run rather than a failure of the plumbing itself. The customer was rarely angry about the pipe. The customer was angry about the price, the estimate, the appointment window, or the person who answered the phone.

The study was published by Sales Roadmap and conducted by Kamyar Shah, a fractional COO and founder of World Consulting Group. It covers plumbing companies in Phoenix, Dallas, Atlanta, Charlotte, Columbus, Denver, Tampa, and Kansas City, with review dates from June 2011 to September 2026.

Pricing led every other complaint. Pricing transparency appeared in 51.5 percent of negative reviews, followed by communication failures at 29.7 percent and scheduling delays at 27.0 percent. Staff conduct and diagnostic accuracy each appeared in 24.6 percent. Taken together, 62.3 percent of negative reviews raised at least one money complaint: an unclear price, an upsell, or work done without approval.

The reviews describe the pattern in plain terms. One customer wrote that an "Ad says free estimate, what is really meant is they will come out for you to tell them the shower is leaking." Another wrote, "to pay $500.00 for 10 minutes' work to unplug the main sewer line is highway robbery !!" A third described the calendar: "Never showed up. They gave me windows to be home, and I was. It was always some excuse."



Plumbing Business Research Details

The work itself was rarely the whole story. Of the 3,708 reviews, 54.9 percent described a process failure only, and 39.2 percent described both a process failure and a problem with the work. Just 3.9 percent described a technical problem only, and 1.3 percent named a technical failure with no other complaint of any kind.

"When a plumbing company reads a one-star review, the reflex is to defend the technician," said Kamyar Shah. "These reviews point somewhere else. The complaint is usually about what happened before the truck arrived and after the invoice was written. That is an office and pricing system, and it can be fixed without touching the tools."

The number that keeps this honest. The 94.1 percent figure describes negative reviews only. The 103 companies in the study hold 214,501 lifetime Google reviews between them, and 92.7 percent of those are five-star. One-star and two-star reviews together make up 3.5 percent of the total, or 7,584 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 the study states in full. A category search for plumbers returns many combined home-services companies that also sell heating, cooling, or electrical work, and their reviews cannot be separated by trade. The study, therefore, kept only businesses whose names identify them as plumbing companies and not any other trade. That reduced the sample from 320 businesses and 12,542 reviews to 103 businesses and 3,708 reviews. The headline finding moved by one-tenth of a point.

The study arrives during a period of elevated search interest in plumbing. Google Trends data for the U.S. plumbing category averaged about a quarter higher in 2025 and 2026 than in 2021 through 2023, and recorded its highest weekly level of the past five years in the week of July 5, 2026.

"Every one of these reviews was written by someone who had already decided to hire the company," Shah said. "Nobody lost that customer to a competitor's ad. They lost the customer between the quote and the invoice."

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

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