Zabble
Insights from Customer Reviews

CUSTOMER REVIEW ANALYSIS

PetSmart

2800 E Millbrook Rd, Raleigh, NC 27604, USA

Reviews analyzed	207 (207 from Google), 114 with text
Window	October 2023 to October 2026, by date posted
Google rating	4.30 (1223 ratings, lifetime)
Industry reference group	Retail & Food/Beverage Stores
Prepared	October 16, 2026

Every number in this report is computed from the reviews listed above. Quotes are verbatim. Reviewer names are not used.

Executive summary

GOOGLE RATING, LIFETIME
4.30
1223 ratings

MEAN RATING IN THE WINDOW
4.22
207 reviews, October 2023 to October 2026

POSITIVE REVIEWS
60%
68 of 114 classified reviews

AGAINST THE INDUSTRY
Below the median
60 Retail & Food/ Beverage Stores businesses

The staff who earn PetSmart its warmest praise in Raleigh are also the source of its sharpest complaints, and the grooming salon is where that split turns into one-star reviews.

Across October 2023 to October 2026, Staff and service is both the leading reason for praise, at 68% of positive reviews, and the leading reason for complaint, at 70% (21 of 30) of negative ones. Reviewers do not describe an average store. They describe either a warm, helpful team or a curt, absent team, and which they met depended on the day and the department.

The salon carries the weight of the negative side. Botched cuts, unanswered calls and appointments cancelled without notice feed the Product or work quality and Communication pain points, and every review at the Problem and recovery stage is negative, with a positive share of 0% (0 of 9). Reviewers who had a bad groom say the response afterwards hurt more than the haircut.

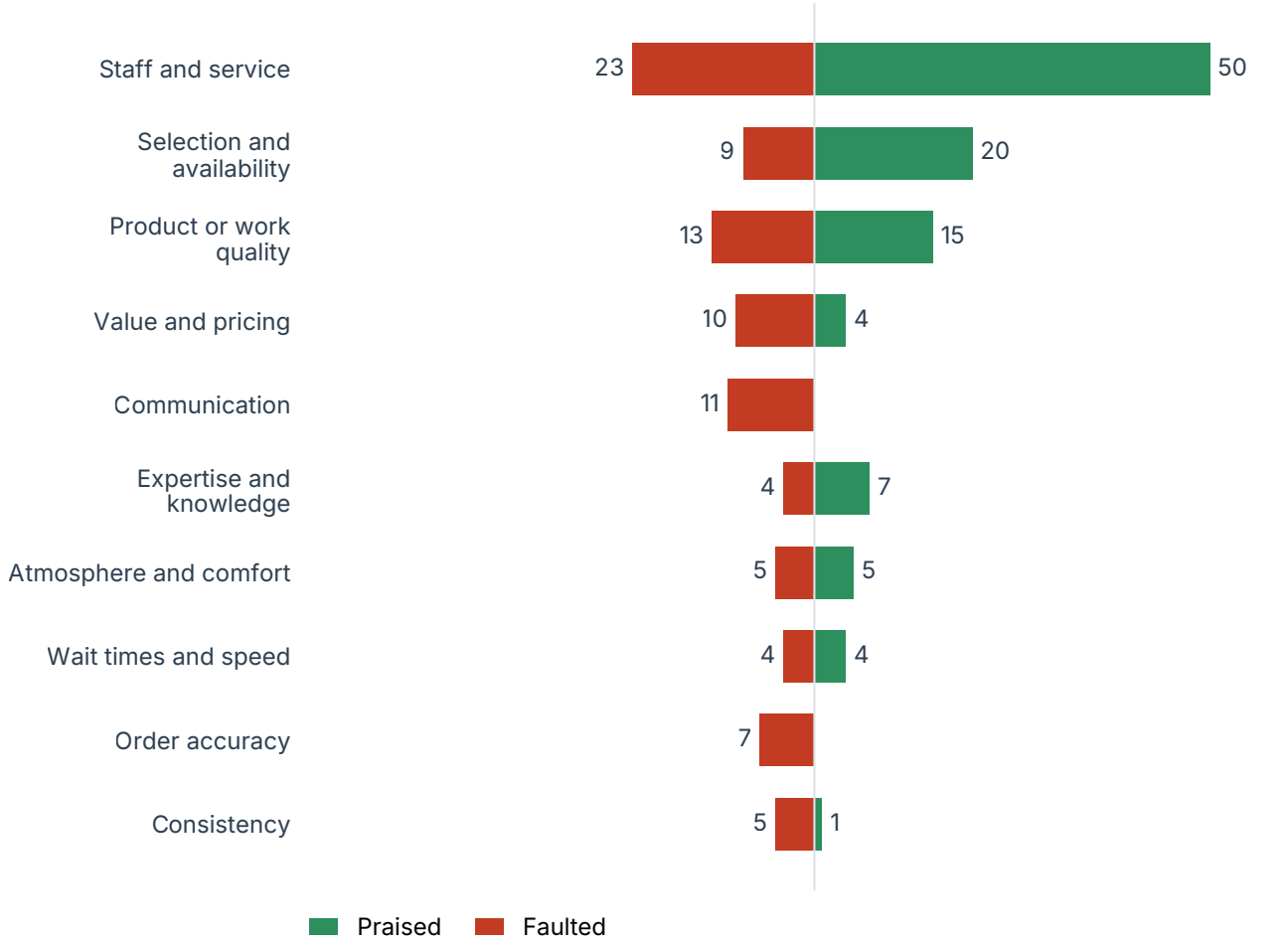
On the other side, Mark's training class, the aquarium desk, the vets and the day camp earn full-marks praise, and reviewers at the Repeat customer stage are positive at 86% (12 of 14). The owner reply rate on low-star Google reviews is 4% (1 of 27), so the unhappy reviewers are largely left unanswered in public as well as in the store.

> THE ONE THING TO DO FIRST
> Put a confirmation call the day before and a written care report at pickup around every grooming appointment at the Millbrook Road salon, starting this week.

What customers praise

What reviewers praise at PetSmart is people and range: a team that knows pets, and a store where grooming, the hotel, training and the clinic sit beside the shelves.

What reviews praise and fault, mentions across 114 classified reviews



Mentions of each theme across the 114 reviews with text, split by whether the review praised or faulted it. A review can mention several themes.

Friendly, helpful staff drive the praise

Staff and service is praised in 68% of positive reviews and is the leading delight factor at 44% of classified reviews, with a mean rating of 4.74 when it is the reason for the praise. Reviewers describe a cashier who carried a cart out to the car for a shopper with an injured arm, day camp staff who have cared for the same dogs for years, and associates who walk shoppers to the right cage, toy or food. Ella is named for exactly this kind of help at the register and with a new pet's shopping list.

> The people in this place from the grooming to the pet day care to the front desk cashier are so fabulous!!!
> 5 stars, May 2025, Google

> WonderfulPeople who take good care of your pets.You can't ask for more.
> 5 stars, April 2025, Google

> I want to give a huge shout out to Ella, whom has been absolutely amazing, helpful, kind, and made my experiences awesome at PetSmart.
> 5 stars, January 2026, Google

Trainers, vets and the aquarium desk earn full marks for know-how

Expertise and knowledge appears in 10% of positive reviews, and when it is the reason for delight the mean rating is 5.00. The praise is concrete. Mark's puppy training class is credited with patient, week-by-week problem solving. The aquarium staff diagnosed a failed first tank, tested a water sample and sent a family home with the right fish. The reptile associate answered every question the kids had, and the clinic staff are thanked for calming a frightened rescue cat.

> Mark, the trainer, was so helpful and knowledgeable.
> 5 stars, March 2024, Google

> Dr. Perdue was amazing.
> 5 stars, December 2025, Google

> I was given amazing advice, product suggestions and knowledge about our new aquarium.
> 5 stars, July 2025, Google

> Brandi one of the vets was so supportive and kind with advice for my new fosters!
> 5 stars, May 2026, Google

Shoppers find what they came for, with grooming, hotel, training and the clinic under a single roof

Selection and availability is praised in 18% of positive reviews and carries a mean rating of 4.07 when mentioned, the highest of any theme. Reviewers find prescription food, aquarium supplies, a quality bird cage and items that other locations lacked, and they count grooming, the pet hotel, day camp, training and the in-store clinic as the reasons they choose this store over others.

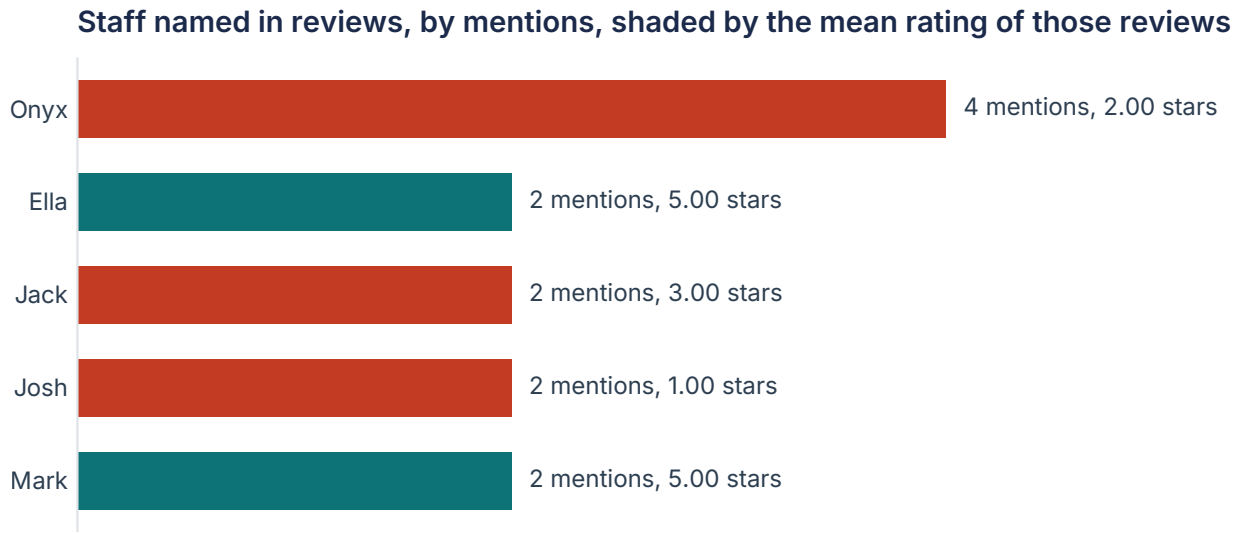
> Found items that I couldn't find at my PetSmart.
> 5 stars, November 2023, Google

> The dog training program is awesome.
> 5 stars, April 2024, Google

> Fully stocked and very clean.
> 5 stars, July 2026, Google

> I love this Petsmart.
> 5 stars, July 2025, Google

Staff named in reviews



Names as reviewers wrote them, merged across spellings. Mentions count reviews naming the person; the mean rating is of those reviews.

Onyx is the staff member named in the largest number of reviews, with 4 mentions, 1 positive and 2 negative, for a mean rating of 2.00. The praise is for patient nail work; the complaints are for a rushed groom and for a defensive response as manager on duty when a client called about a nicked dog. Ella draws 2 mentions, all positive, at a mean rating of 5.00, for help at the register and with a new pet's shopping. Mark, the trainer, likewise draws 2 mentions at a mean of 5.00. Jack is named in 2 reviews at a mean of 3.00, and Josh in 2 at 1.00, both in the context of grooming appointments that went wrong. Mention counts this small say more about which stories reviewers tell than about any individual's performance.

What customers complain about

The complaints concentrate in the salon and at the front counter, and they are about how people were treated as much as about what went wrong.

Complaint	Reviews	Share of negative reviews	Mean rating of those reviews
Staff and service	19	17%	1.47
Product or work quality	13	11%	1.62
Communication	9	8%	1.22
Value and pricing	9	8%	2.78
Selection and availability	7	6%	2.29

On bad days the floor staff are curt, absent, or refuse the sale

The same theme that drives the praise also leads the complaints. Staff and service appears in 70% (21 of 30) of negative reviews, and as a pain point it carries a mean rating of 1.47. The stories repeat: being ignored at the register near closing time, associates in a bad mood when a child comes in for crickets, an associate afraid to handle the rat she was selling, and the fish department refusing to sell fish over tank size or compatibility in a tone reviewers read as hostile. The gap between the best and worst visits is what reviewers notice, and the ones who had a bad visit say they drove to a different store the same day.

> Every employee was in a bad mood.
> 1 star, August 2024, Google

> The staff was rude and unprofessional.
> 1 star, August 2024, Google

> Great service and prices.
> 5 stars, May 2026, Google

> The woman who works in fish department refuse to sell any fish to my parents.
> 1 star, July 2025, Google

Grooming is where the one-star reviews are made

Product or work quality is faulted in 37% (11 of 30) of negative reviews, and as a pain point it averages 1.62. Nearly every negative mention is the salon: dogs returned with nicks on the ear or neck, a doodle shaved when a trim was requested, paws and nails skipped, a ragged tail, and dogs that still smell as if they were never bathed. Onyx is named on both sides of this split, once for patient nail work and again for a cut that went wrong and a defensive response afterwards.

> Ryan always does an outstanding job of grooming Snoopy, he always takes his time and makes sure everything is satisfactory before we pick Snoopy up
> 5 stars, April 2025, Google

> Terrible grooming services.
> 1 star, February 2026, Google

> My Wife took our Doodle For a grooming appointment with Onyx and she botched my dog.
> 1 star, August 2026, Google

Calls go unanswered and appointments vanish without notice

Communication is never praised. It appears in 33% (10 of 30) of negative reviews and in 0% of positive ones, with a mean rating of 1.18 when mentioned, the lowest of any theme. Reviewers describe calling the store and being hung up on, a groomer who called out with no warning and no backup plan, a day camp booking cancelled at the door as overbooked, a dawn grooming slot cancelled because no other dogs were booked, and no care report after a groom that drew blood. Josh is named as the manager who offered no alternative when a confirmed appointment collapsed.

> I called them 3 times.
> 1 star, October 2024, Google

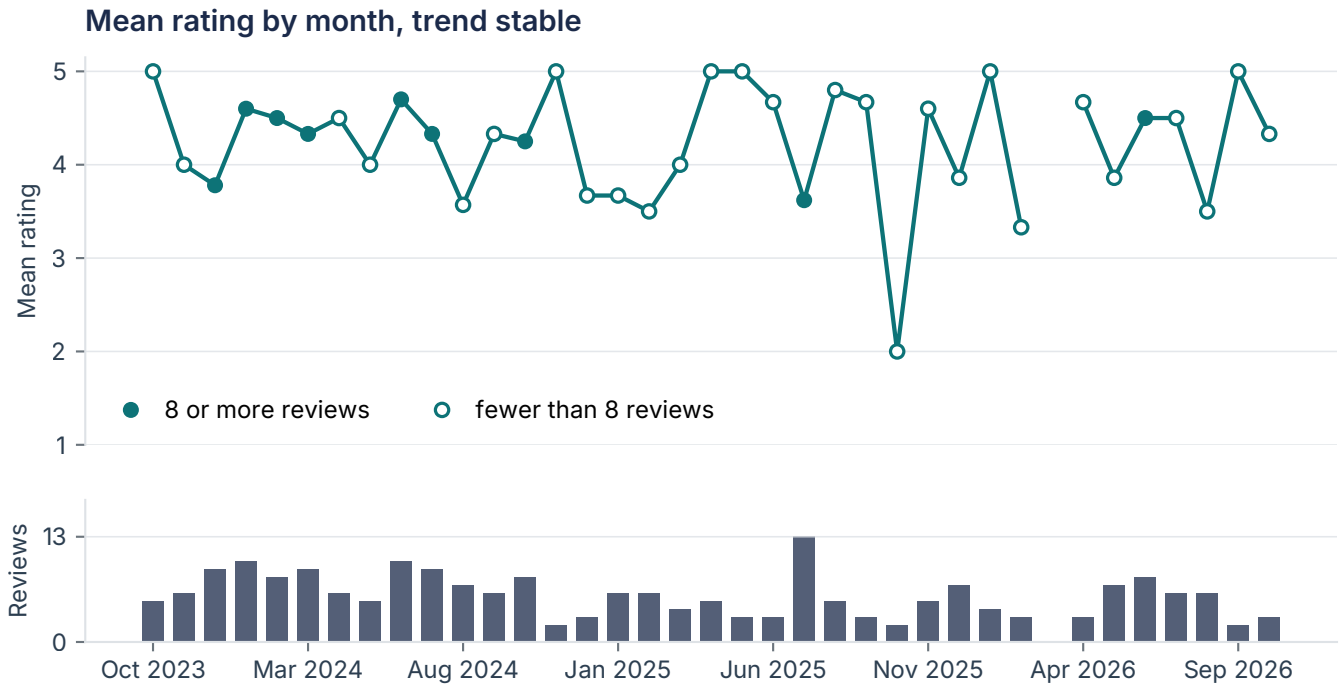
> We didn’t receive a sincere apology.
> 1 star, February 2025, Google

> The people at the Six Forks store called at least two or three times.
> 1 star, August 2026, Google

Owner replies

The owner replied to 16% of Google reviews in the window, and to 4% (1 of 27) of the one- and two-star reviews there.

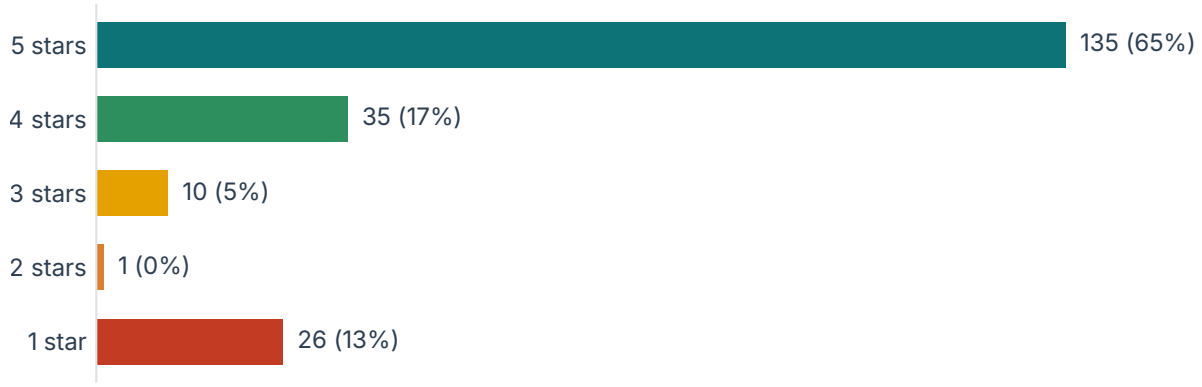
Ratings over time



Mean star rating per period with the number of reviews beneath it, by the date each review was posted. The trend compares the older half of the reviews with the newer half.

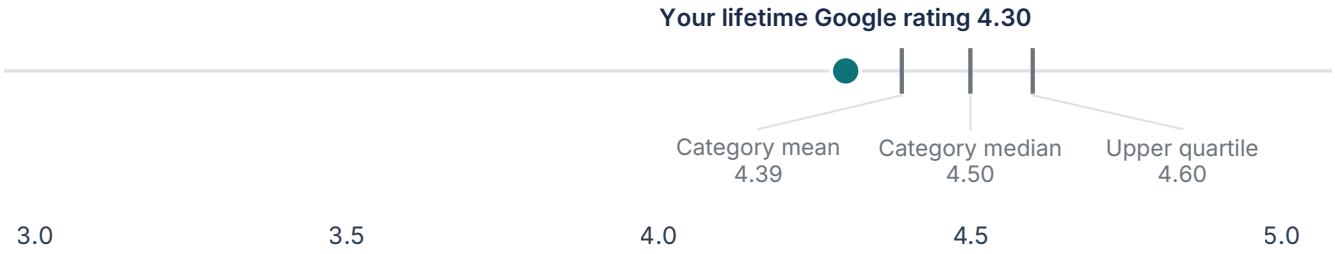
Across 37 months the ratings are stable. Reviews posted between October 18, 2023 and December 29, 2024 average 4.30 across 103 ratings, and reviews from January 6, 2025 to October 14, 2026 average 4.13 across 104, a difference of -0.17. The window mean is 4.22 with a median of 5.00, and the distribution is polarised: 65% of ratings are five-star and 13% are one-star, with little in between. Monthly review counts are thin, so a single bad grooming week can move a month's average on its own.

Star ratings in the window, 207 reviews, mean 4.22



How you compare

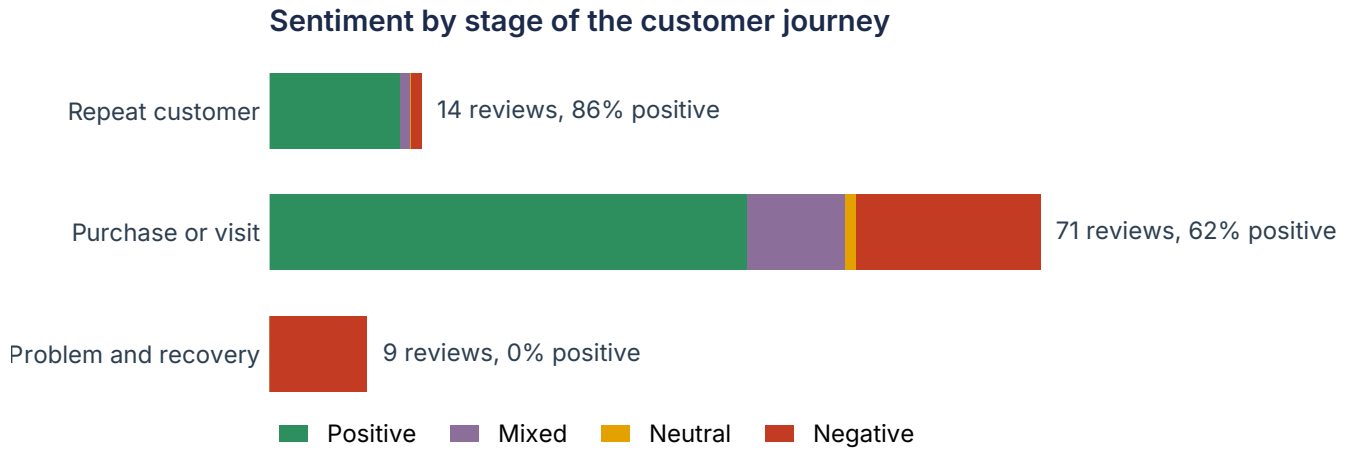
Against 60 Retail & Food/Beverage Stores businesses, sampled 2025-11-01



Industry reference: Google star ratings of 60 businesses in Retail & Food/Beverage Stores, each with 50 or more reviews, sampled from top Google Maps results for common search terms in large US cities on November 1, 2025.

Measured against 60 businesses in Retail & Food/Beverage Stores, the lifetime Google rating of 4.30 from 1223 ratings sits below the median for its category. The category midpoint is 4.50, the category mean is 4.39, and the gap to the midpoint is -0.20. The top band of the category starts at 4.60. The comparison set is general retail and food stores rather than pet retailers, and the category was assigned with medium confidence, so treat it as a rough yardstick rather than a league table.

Customer journey



Each review with text is assigned the stage of the customer's path it describes. Stages with fewer than five reviews are not shown.

Reviews at the Purchase or visit stage number 71 and are positive at 62%, with 17 negative and 9 mixed. Repeat customer reviews, 14 in all, are positive at 86% (12 of 14); long-standing day camp and grooming clients write them. The Problem and recovery stage is the problem: of 9 reviews, 9 are negative and the positive share is 0% (0 of 9). These are the reviewers who had a groom go wrong, a booking cancelled, or an order stuck, and then met a refusal, an excuse, or silence. A single refund for a training class is the only act of recovery any reviewer credits.

Recommendations

1. Wrap every grooming appointment at the Millbrook Road salon in a confirmation call the day before and a written care report at pickup that names the groomer, what was done, what was skipped and why.

Grooming drives the Product or work quality pain point, faulted in 37% (11 of 30) of negative reviews with a mean rating of 1.62, and the reviews that mention no notice and no care sheet are the harshest in the set.

> My Wife took our Doodle For a grooming appointment with Onyx and she botched my dog.
> 1 star, August 2026, Google

Metric to watch: share of negative reviews faulting Product or work quality, now 11%; the aim is to lower it.

2. Assign the salon's incoming calls to a named person on every shift, and set a rule that a cancelled appointment is called back and rebooked before the slot is closed.

Communication is never praised and carries the lowest mean rating of any theme at 1.18. Reviewers who could not reach the store or were turned away at the door wrote the one-star reviews at the Problem and recovery stage, where the positive share is 0% (0 of 9).

> I called them 3 times.
> 1 star, October 2024, Google

Metric to watch: Communication, share of negative reviews mentioning it, now 33% (10 of 30); the aim is to lower it.

3. Give the fish department a written sale policy: advise on tank size and compatibility, note the advice given, and complete the sale unless a stated company rule forbids it, with the manager on duty making the final call in the customer's hearing.

Refused fish sales and curt floor staff make up a visible share of the Staff and service complaints, which appear in 70% (21 of 30) of negative reviews at a pain-point mean rating of 1.47, and these reviewers say they bought the same fish elsewhere the same day.

> The guy who is working on fish area needs to get a better attitude with customer Service.
> 1 star, February 2025, Google

> The staff was rude and unprofessional.
> 1 star, August 2024, Google

Metric to watch: Staff and service, share of negative reviews mentioning it, now 70% (21 of 30); the aim is to lower it.

4. Reply publicly to every one-star and two-star Google review within a week, naming the department involved and offering a direct contact for the store manager.

Owner replies reach 16% of Google reviews but only 4% (1 of 27) of low-star ones, and the reviewers who complain loudest say the lack of acknowledgement, not the mistake itself, is what they cannot forgive.

> We didn’t receive a sincere apology.
> 1 star, February 2025, Google

> The manager, Josh, was especially unhelpful.
> 1 star, December 2025, Google

Metric to watch: owner reply rate on Google reviews, now 16%; the aim is to raise it.

Methodology and data notes

Reviews. 207 reviews (207 from Google) posted between October 2023 and October 2026, the newest reviews available up to three years back; 114 carry text and 114 of those were classified. Dates are the date each review was posted; an edited review keeps its original date.

How to read the numbers. "Share of positive reviews" and "share of negative reviews" use the reviews a classifier judged positive or negative from their text, which is not the same as their star rating; "share of classified reviews" uses every review with text. Ratings are means of the star ratings over the reviews named. Shares under 50 reviews are printed with their counts.

Classification. Each review with text was labelled once, by a language model, against a fixed list of themes for Retail & Food/Beverage Stores, with its overall sentiment, the stage of the customer's path it describes, any employee or other business it names, and sentences worth quoting. Quotes are reproduced verbatim. A theme is reported when at least three reviews mention it and it reaches five percent of classified reviews; a named person when two or more reviews name them.

Benchmark. Industry reference: Google star ratings of 60 businesses in Retail & Food/Beverage Stores, each with 50 or more reviews, sampled from top Google Maps results for common search terms in large US cities on November 1, 2025. Your lifetime Google rating is compared with that group's median; "near" means within a tenth of a star.

Data notes.

- 10 of 207 reviews were edited after posting; the original post date is used

Limitations.

- Every review in this analysis comes from Google; no other platform is represented, so the picture reflects Google's reviewer base and Google's owner-reply behaviour only.
- Only the reviews with text could be classified by theme, and they are a smaller share of all ratings; star-only ratings count toward the averages but say nothing about why.
- The window is long and the monthly review counts are small, so a single review can swing a month's average and the periods compared for the trend are broad.
- Staff mention counts are tiny and reflect which reviewers chose to name a staff member, not a fair performance review of any individual.
- The benchmark places this store among general retail and food stores rather than pet retailers, and the category was assigned with medium confidence, so the comparison is approximate.
- A share of the reviews are in Spanish or are a single word or line; the classifier handled them, but very short reviews carry little theme detail.
- Grooming, the hotel, day camp, training and the clinic all sit under a single listing, so a complaint about the salon lowers the rating of the whole store and the retail floor cannot be judged on its own.