

How to reply to  
negative  
customer reviews

THREE  
APPROACHES



# Option 1

## Apologising

includes phrases like

'Thank you'

'so sorry'

'take seriously'

'understand'

'appreciate'

'work to improve'

'rest assured'

'sincere'



# Apologising

The problem here is when you are as grateful for the feedback as you are apologetic.

You're partly falling over yourself in your eagerness to accept fault. You all but say "Yeh, we are a bit shit."

At the same time you become obsequious with false displays of gratitude.

Even if your service is awful, the chances are that you know this.

That doesn't mean you're grateful for the comment.



# Option 2 Defending

includes phrases like

'I should explain'

'surprised'

'very proud'

'shame'

'nonetheless'

'unfortunate'

'rare'

'on board'



# Defending

You're passionate about your business. It is understandable that you will defend its honour.

But there's a reason why calling someone defensive is never meant favourably.

Customers won't take away the plaudits you offer in rebuttal.

All they will hear is you shouting "Wrong! Wrong! Wrong! Wrong! Wrong! Wrong!"

Which sort of undermines the whole point of responding at all.



# Option 3

## Acknowledging

includes phrases like

'I've read'

'noted'

'most customers'

'your requirements'

'other venues'

'filed'

'taking the time'



# Acknowledging

This accepts the customer's right to an opinion. Without defensiveness. Or vehemence.

It puts the complaint into context. It does not accede or deny. It just hears.

It speaks, respectfully, as adult to adult.

(Of course this assumes your business is well-run and your customers happy.)





The key take out is to sound personal. But not take it personally.

To Write Business Human.

It's not easy to get the tone right.

If I can help by giving you templates - or just by looking over your words before you press 'send' - get in touch.

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