

# Complaints Management Strategy

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A practical framework for managing guest feedback with clarity, speed and professionalism.



Handle reviews like a pro, every time.



# Why Complaints Matter

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How you handle complaints defines how your brand is perceived, valued, and remembered. Managed well, they **strengthen credibility** and **prove your standards** hold under pressure.

The business impact is clear: a **1 % increase in online reputation delivers a 1.42 % rise in RevPAR**. *Positive reviews build admiration; negative ones define perception*. They **carry more weight in booking decisions**, but how you respond determines whether guests see reliability or risk.

Research from Cornell's Center for Hospitality Research shows that responding to reviews improves sales and ranking. When seen as **an insight opportunity**, not an inconvenience, complaints become **feedback loops** that drive loyalty, learning, and better service design.

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*The most meaningful way to differentiate your company from your competitors is to do an outstanding job with information.*– **Danny Meyer**

# Verify **Before** You Reply

Not all reviews are created equal. Before replying, **confirm the review is genuine.** Use the checklist below to assess the review.

## Review Validity Checklist

- ✓ Profile includes name or photo
- ✓ The reviewer has a history of leaving mixed feedback, not just negatives.
- ✓ The review mentions specific details such as a room, dish, staff name, or timing
- ✓ Language feels natural, not copy-pasted
- ✓ Dates match your opening hours or events
- ✓ No clear links to competitors

If in doubt, screenshot the review, flag it internally for a second opinion, then decide whether to **report or respond.**

# Is the Review Genuine?

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**Respond  
using TIP or  
EASE**



**Flag, report,  
and log  
internally**

Always screenshot reviews  
before taking action.  
Dates and usernames matter.




# Turning Praise into Proof with **TIP**

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Positive reviews are more than compliments. They are trust signals that influence guest decisions and search rankings.

**Use TIP to turn them into marketing fuel.**

-  **Thank** – Show genuine appreciation for their time and comments.
-  **Invite** – Encourage them to return or share more about what they enjoyed.
-  **Personalise** – Mention their name or a specific detail from their review.

## **Examples:**

★ "Thank you, Jessica. We are thrilled you enjoyed breakfast with us. Our team will love your feedback."

★ "Thanks, Alex. The truffle pizza is one of our favourites too. Next time, we would love to recommend our new seasonal special."

***Use TIP to structure your reply and tailor it to your brand's voice and the guest's profile.***

# Handle Negative Reviews with **EASE**

When feedback stings, structure saves you. EASE helps you stay calm, professional, and consistent, even under pressure.

## EMPATHISE

Understand their mood and context. Approach every complaint as a human moment.

## ACKNOWLEDGE

Apologise publicly and confirm that you will reach out privately. This shows transparency and care.

## SOLVE

Contact the guest directly, explain the solution, and follow up publicly if appropriate.

## EDUCATE

Review what caused the issue. Update procedures and training to prevent a repeat.

**Even when a complaint feels unfair, EASE keeps you professional and protects your credibility.**

**If a review is abusive or threatens staff, pause public dialogue and follow venue safeguarding policy.**

# Reporting & Records

If you suspect a review is fake or defamatory, use the official reporting process. Always reply first to show transparency, then report.

## ↘ Where to Report

- **Google Business: Support at Google**
- **TripAdvisor Report Issues**
- **Booking: Review Help**
- **Trustpilot: Flag Reviews**
- **Facebook: Review Help**
- **Yelp: Report a Review**
- **Just Eat: Partner Support**

Reporting every fake review will not always remove it, but it builds an evidence trail that protects you if rating disputes escalate.

**Recordkeeping Reminder:** Keep a private log of reported reviews with date, platform, and screenshot for compliance.

# Quick Action Checklist

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- [ ] Audit your last ten reviews for authenticity.
- [ ] Apply **TIP** to your next three positive reviews.
- [ ] Handle negative reviews with **EASE**
- [ ] Share this report with your Front of House or Marketing team.
- [ ] Bookmark the reporting links for future reference.

*Consistent review management can lift online ratings by up to half a star within one quarter.*



# Your Brand Reputation in Action

Every review is a public record of how your brand behaves under pressure. Responding with empathy, clarity, and consistency doesn't just fix problems — it proves your standards.



Access editable frameworks and team-ready tools to elevate every guest response.

[Visit HospitalityMarketingHub.com](https://HospitalityMarketingHub.com)

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*"A single positive interaction can outweigh ten neutral ones. Make every response count."*

*Dawn Gribble – Hospitality Marketing Hub*

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