We Hear You! Guidelines for Responding to Guest Feedback

WEBINAR
July 28, 2015
Your host

Daniel E. Craig
Founder, Reknown
@drcraig
Questions & comments

Tweet your comments, questions & favourite tips using @ReviewPro & #SMWebinar hashtag

Resource Hub

http://resources.reviewpro.com

#SMWebinar
Poll 1 results

Which type of complaint do you think is hardest to respond to?

- In person
- By telephone
- In online review
- In guest survey
- None. Dealing with upset guests is easy.
Agenda

1. Why respond to guest feedback?
2. Types of feedback
3. Responding to guest surveys
4. Responding to online reviews
5. Q&A
Today’s panelists

Daniel E. Craig
Founder
Reknown
@dcrraig

Neil James
VP of Account Management
ReviewPro
@ReviewPro

Ruth Waiman
Digital Reputation Manager
Dan Hotels
@DanHotels

#SMWebinar
Panelist

Neil James
VP of Account Management
@ReviewPro
About ReviewPro: Our vision

Enable our clients to deliver better guest experiences and to profit from guest intelligence.
Clients & partners

+18,000 hotels and brands in +100 countries rely upon ReviewPro to improve guest satisfaction & increase revenue.
What we do

Guest Intelligence

- Reputation Management
- Guest Surveys
- Revenue Optimizer
- Data/API

- Hotels
- Management Companies
- Investment & Consulting
- Destinations & Star Ratings
- Associations & Representation Companies
- Restaurants
1. Why respond to guest feedback?
Dear Madame,

If we are so cheap, why don't you spend 500€ a night and stay at the Ritz next time?

Your comments are so unfounded that I would have to spend too much of my valuable time explaining the meaning of a four star beach Hotel to you. All I'm going to say is read the other comments below and grow up.

I seriously doubt that you even stayed at my Hotel you comments are so outrageously out of line.
Why respond to guest feedback?

• To show you’re listening and you care.
• To change perceptions.
• To explain and reassure.
• To clear up misinformation.
• To reinforce the positive.
• To be accountable.
• To say how you’re following up.
Higher rating & more booking inquiries

TripAdvisor Data – Review Responses

• Properties that don’t respond to reviews have an average rating of 3.81.
• Properties that respond to
  – at least 40% of reviews have average rating of 4.05.
  – at least 50% of reviews increase likelihood of a booking inquiry by 24%.

Source: (Sept 2014) tripadvisor.com/PressCenter-i6971-c1-Press_Releases.html
2. Types of guest feedback
Key steps to managing guest feedback

1. Listen carefully.
2. Ask questions to clarify.
3. Show empathy.
4. Apologize.
5. Offer options.
6. Follow up.
Types of Communication

IN PERSON
- Visual, Vocal & Verbal Communication
- Appearance, Voice & Words

ON PHONE
- Vocal & Verbal Communication
- Voice & Words

ELECTRONIC
- Verbal Communication
- Words
Managing feedback in person

VISUAL COMMUNICATION

Appearance: What the guest sees

Negative Cues - Triggers
Lack of eye contact, arms folded, messy appearance, loud environment.

Positive Cues
Eye contact, open arms, nodding, professional appearance, quiet environment.
Managing feedback on the phone

VOCAL COMMUNICATION

Voice: What the guest hears

Negative Cues - Triggers
Interrupting; sighing; speaking too fast or slow, too softly or loudly.

Positive Cues
Speaking clearly, with a soothing, confident voice.
Managing feedback electronically

VERBAL COMMUNICATION

Words: What the guest reads

Negative Cues - Triggers
Citing policy, not addressing issue, phrases like “We can’t”, “You shouldn’t have”.

Positive Cues
Saying “I’m sorry,” “I understand” and “I can” and “I’m here to help”.

#SMWebinar
Responding on electronic media

GUIDELINES

• Respond promptly.
• Prioritize feedback that calls for apology or clarification or that highlights the positive.
• Be brief: thank, apologize, address key issues and say how you’re following up.
• Be conversational and professional.
• Personalize.
3. Responding to Guest Surveys
Guest Satisfaction Surveys (GSS)

- Solicited feedback – focus on specific areas.
- Structured feedback – improve on metrics, and ask more information on response.
- Volume equal or greater than online reviews.
- Ability to react prior to guest sharing online.
- Hotel can respond directly to guest.
- Guest is speaking directly to hotel/brand rather than to travelers – will often divulge more information.
Marco Polo Hotels’ response guidelines

• Respond to all feedback within 48 hours.
• GM or Hotel Manager responds.
• Show appreciation.
• Make connection with guest.
• Gain insight into how to do better.
• Recognize employees.
• Use feedback to manage reputation.
• Ensure core values are fulfilled.

CHRISTOPH HOEFLICH
Hotel Manager
Marco Polo Hotels
Hong Kong
A complaint about service

THANKS FOR THE FEEDBACK

SPEAKS TO SPECIFICS & SHOWS FOLLOW-UP

WARM, PERSONALIZED & FROM GM

Dear Ms Mak,

Greetings from the Marco Polo Hongkong Hotel.

Thank you for taking the time to share your experience with us during your recent stay.

We have made detailed notes of your many useful recommendations about improving our room facilities and will consider them when future refurbishment takes place. More importantly, we will continue to place utmost priority on training and developing our Front Desk associates to ensure that they are always able to deliver services to the satisfaction of our guests. Your comments and suggestions are much appreciated as they are indeed crucial in supporting our improvement efforts.

We are delighted that we had the opportunity to be at your service and we look forward to welcoming you back at the Marco Polo Hongkong Hotel.

With warm regards from the world’s most dramatic waterfront,

James M. Ong
General Manager
Marco Polo Hotels - Hong Kong

#SMWebinar
Cleanliness concerns

Management Response
Jul 8, 2015

Dear Mr Otake

Thank you for taking your time to complete our Guest Experience Survey.

Your comments are indeed valuable to us, as they help us in our committed effort to exceed guest expectations and create value at every encounter.

We were very concerned to hear your comment about cleanliness. Please rest assured that room cleanliness is a matter that we take very seriously and is of paramount importance to us and is something we follow very strict procedures about in the hotel. We have brought this incident to the immediate attention of the respective department head for improvement. In addition, we will continue with training and developing our associates to ensure that they are always able to deliver to the satisfaction of our guests.

We appreciate your invaluable feedback. As a hotel operator, we are very serious about the voice of every customer. A great deal of effort is put into establishing effective action steps for constant improvement.

We look forward to the pleasure of welcoming you back to the Prince Hotel soon.

Yours sincerely

Christoph Hoeflich
Hotel Manager

#SMWebinar
Dear Mr George,

First of all thanks a lot for having chosen Hotel Hospes Madrid and for sharing a positive comment with us.

I am happy to know that our hotel pleased you so much and that your stay went that well. We wish to welcome you back again for your next stay in Madrid.

Thank you again for sharing your experience and for recommending our hotel.

Miguel Ángel Molina Quirós
General Manager

- THANKS FOR THE FEEDBACK
- SHOWS APPRECIATION
- INVITES BACK
4. Responding to online reviews
Poll 2

How often does your hotel respond to online reviews?

- Always
- Frequently
- Occasionally
- Never
- What’s an online review?

Answer using the pop-up window on your screen.
Online reviews

- Indirect feedback: posted on third-party site.
- Written for travellers.
- Hotel responds via review site.
- Public.
Panelist

Ruth Waiman
Digital Brand Reputation Manager
Dan Hotels - Israel
@DanHotels @Roopunzel

#SMWebinar
Review management

• Use monitoring systems (like ReviewPro).
• Mention to any good/bad reviews in morning managerial meetings.
• Use reports and figures in training schedules.
• Regular chain-wide meetings with all representatives in hotels taking part in monitoring process.
Response: cleanliness & upkeep

“Fantastic Staff but dated building and poor cleanliness.”
Reviewed May 13, 2015 via mobile

The staff at the hotel especially in the bar and restaurant are very

DanHotelsIsrael, General Manager at Dan Hotels Caesaria, responded to this review, May 28, 2015

Dear BtravellerC,

Thank you for sharing your experiences of your stay with us. We’re happy that the team took good care of you ensuring an overall enjoyable time, and thank you for further constructive feedback.

It is always our aim to ensure the highest standards of cleanliness so we have been particularly sure to consult housekeeping for further attention where necessary, thank you for highlighting this necessity.

We’d hope to have another opportunity to welcome you back for a more overall enjoyable stay so please be in touch with me directly should I be able to offer personal assistance,

with thanks and regards,

Ronit Ronen
General Manager
Response: disappointed with room

"Off to a bad start"

Reviewed 5 weeks ago via mobile

Just checked into the hotel, having requested a room on a high floor and away from the airport.
Upon arrival, we were given a room on the fourth floor and with an airport view.
We paid for a luxury room with a jacuzzi.

DanHotelsIsrael, Guest Relations Manager at Dan Panorama Eilat, responded to this review, 3 weeks ago

Dear NicoleH1990,
Thank you for sharing your thoughts following your recent stay with us.
We must simply apologize for what seems to be some mis-communication during the reservation and check in process.
We hope to have another opportunity to welcome you back for a more all round enjoyable experience more in-line with the standards we strive to achieve.
Please do be in touch with me directly prior to any other reservation so I may be of personal assistance,

with best regards,
Ilana Livne
Guest Relations Manager
“One of the best in the World”

Reviewed 1 week ago

This is one of the finest hotels we’ve ever stayed in. Top to bottom, in every aspect, everything was top quality. The staff, the rooms, the linens and finish out of this world. Those seem to be the norm here.

Floors. Those seem to be the norm here. The service, the staff, the food, the price. It’s all equivalent to high end European or American establishments. I can’t say enough about the breakfast buffet. The selection. The taste. That just can not be beat.

In terms of the rooms and the service, it was top notch. I would recommend this hotel to anyone who wants to experience the best that Tel Aviv has to offer.

KingDavidHotel, Public Relations Manager at The King David, responded to this review, yesterday

Dear jeff3545,

Thank you for choosing to stay with us at the King David for your recent visit to Jerusalem. It was our pleasure to host you and thank you for taking the time to share your experience with other travelers. It is always a sincere honor to hear from guests who thoroughly enjoyed every aspect of their stay and we’ll be sure to share your kind comments with the whole team; thank you for enabling us to give credit where it is due.

We will all look forward to having the opportunity of welcoming you back soon.

Kind regards,

Jeremy Sheldon
Ruth’s review response tips

• We hear it time and time again but DON’T TAKE IT PERSONALLY!
• Always see the good with the “not-so” good.
• We can learn from all feedback.
• Sentence structure and length – keep short and concise.
• Use a tone and vocabulary that match the personality of your hotel/brand.
Responding in other languages

- Multi-lingual team members where possible.
- Templates help to some extent; make sure team know how to adapt where necessary.
- Non-English speaking team members are thirsty to learn so put time into helping them develop their writing too, will save time in the long run.
- Don’t rely on Google Translate for responses.
- If you can’t respond professionally in same language, better not to respond.
- ReviewPro ticketing system and central admin.
Special challenges

What if the guest is wrong?

• If minor, let it go.
• Clear up the misinformation.
• Be diplomatic. Never accuse reviewer of being dishonest.
• For example, “To clarify, the pool is open from 6:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. from Monday to Saturday and from 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. on Sunday”.
Special challenges

What if you think the review is fake or false?

• Dispute it with the host site.
• Post a response.
• For example, “We’re surprised and concerned by your comments. We have no recollection of this incident and it is certainly not how we treat our guests. Kindly contact me directly to discuss.”
Prevent negative feedback

• Manage expectations.
• Perform temperature checks.
• Be on the alert for signs of trouble.
• Train & empower staff to resolve issues.
• Beware of triggers.
ReviewPro’s Guest Intelligence dashboard
ReviewPro dashboard

- Respond to online reviews and GSS reviews from ReviewPro.
- Measure Response Ratio.
- Set goals for Positive, Neutral & Negative Responses.

#SMWebinar
In-stay surveys

- Carry out temperature checks while guest is onsite.
- Ideal for long stay hotels & resorts.
- Turn bad experiences around before guest leaves.
- Important to have strategy for responding while guest is onsite.
- Improve your online reputation.
For more information

The Leading Source of Guest Intelligence Best Practices for the Hospitality Industry

Featured Resource of the Month

In this free webinar we will bring you the latest news, research and tips from TripAdvisor and will show you ways to earn more positive reviews, more website referrals and more revenue.

Watch Webinar

http://resources.reviewpro.com

#SMWebinar
5. Q&A
Q&A with our panelists

Daniel E. Craig
Founder
Reknown
@dcraig

Neil James
VP of Account Management
ReviewPro
@ReviewPro

Ruth Waiman
Digital Reputation Manager
Dan Hotels
@DanHotels