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| http://www.profitablehospitality.com/members/images/1556.jpg | http://www.profitablehospitality.com/members/images/space.gif |

# Sample Responses to Online Feedback and Negative Reviews

**These days, everyone's a critic and there's no escaping online comments on review sites and social media.**

Use these sample responses to give firm and prompt replies to criticism and feedback. You probably won't change the opinion of the critic, but you WILL influence everyone else who reads the comments with your reply. You will be seen as concerned, responsive and keen to improve - what customers want...

**When not to react:**

* When it will just add fuel to the fire
* When the person is angry with the world, not just you
* When you are still shaking with rage

**When you should react:**

* You really did make a mess
* Someone is not telling the truth
* Someone is being defamed
* The drums keep getting louder
* You can save the situation

### Types of Comments and Suggested Responses:

**The Pricing Complaint** - remember, these are usually about the guest's perception of *value*.   
'Our prices are similar to other comparable business in the area, and we always strive to offer good value and quality service. We regret that was not your impression and offer our apologies'   
'Our prices are a little higher than some of our competitors, based on the quality of ingredients and a greater number of staff employed. We strive to offer good value, and regret that we did not meet your expectations'.

**A Personal Attack** - 'I was surprised to read your comments about one of our staff, who has worked here for three years and is one of our best workers.'   
'We have management staff who monitor service with great care, however we have no record of this incident occurring. Please contact us at xxx with more details so we can investigate'

**Circumstances Beyond Your Control** - eg parking - 'As you know this is a very popular area, and street parking is limited at peak times. Our website has advice on other parking facilities'.

**Circumstances You Can Control** - 'We take pride in our cleanliness and attention to detail, but clearly we were not up to standard on your recent visit. We offer our apologies and hope that you will have another opportunity to visit in the future.'   
'There was a longer than expected wait on Saturday night and we apologise for the delays. We hope you will visit us again and give us the opportunity to show you the efficient and friendly service that is our standard.'

**Wrong Information** - 'We regret you were misinformed about our service hours. The kitchen closes each night at 10pm and last orders are taken at 9.45pm. We offer our apologies and hope that you will have another opportunity to visit in the future.'

**The Angry Rant** - don't respond in kind - these people are often unhappy with the whole world! You won't satisfy them, but others who read the rant will notice your dignity and professionalism. 'This feedback is very surprising and disappointing. We serve hundreds of customers each week and as you can see from other reviews, the feedback is usually very complimentary. We are proud of our team and the great job they do.'

**The Raving Fan** - rave reviews will definitely attract more customers. Don't get so annoyed by negative comments that you forget to thank the people who share their love. Whether public or private, share a simple statement: 'We are so happy you enjoyed your stay and look forward to welcoming you back. I will pass on your comments to the team.'   
Keep your response varied by mentioning specific details eg 'I was particularly happy to read your comments about…'

*Important items for your management and marketing toolbox:*

* [Guidelines for Staff on the Use of Social Media](http://www.profitablehospitality.com/members/Sample_Guidelines_for_Staff_on_Use_of_Social_Media.cfm?sd=44)
* [Sample Guidelines for Staff to Prevent Cyberbullying](http://www.profitablehospitality.com/members/Cyberbullying_Prevention_Policy_and_Guidelines_for_Staff.cfm)
* Daily monitoring system - shared with key staff
* Simple feedback form on your website, plus feedback slips in your restaurant
* Regular updates with 'good news' about your business - genuine and interesting, not hype. See examples of [Cafe and Restaurant Blogs](http://www.profitablehospitality.com/members/218.cfm).

**House Rules**

One way to control comments is to have a set of 'house rules', particularly where you have more control over comments you will allow or delete eg on Facebook. Here's an example from a well known burger chain in Australia:

**Example of 'House Rules for a Facebook Page'** - courtesy of Grill'd Burgers

Thanks for liking Grill'd! This is our social home on the information super highway, so check in regularly for updates from Grill'd Burger Base on restaurant openings, promotions, job opportunities and pictures of mouth-watering burgers.

Kimbra once sang that love is a two-way street and we couldn't agree more. This page is also a destination for you, our much-loved customers to share your thoughts and feedback on the Grill'd experience. We're here to listen and will endeavour to respond to all genuine comments promptly and informatively.

But the Internet isn't all cats and South Korean pop stars -- there's a serious side. While we respect and commend individuals who express their opinions, we have a few guidelines in place to protect our social community from bullying, harassment, illegal activity and general bad juju.

We reserve the right to remove/delete posts (and/or report users to Facebook in serious cases) if you engage in any of the below behaviours on this page. Please don't be offended -- we're just an email away if you feel you have been misrepresented or unfairly treated: feedback@grilld.com.au

1. Don't post personal information about yourself or others to the Grill'd Timeline or in post comment threads (such as private addresses or phone numbers).

2. Don't impersonate or falsely represent any other person.

3. Don't be abusive, threatening or discriminatory against other members of the community. Grill'd has no time for bigots and trolls. Threats towards others will be immediately reported to Facebook

4. Don't make defamatory or libellous comments about anyone -- be they related to Grill'd, or simply in the public eye. Celebrities have it bad enough already.

5. Don't use insulting, obscene or offensive language. We hear some pretty fruity words over the grills sometimes so we're not prudes, but please try to keep it clean!

6. Don't post material or links to sites that infringe the intellectual property rights of others.

7. Don't come here to promote your own commercial interests. If you have an idea for sponsorship or endorsement, go through the correct channels -- we're happy to hear from you: marketing@grilld.com.au

8. Don't post multiple versions of the same view - we heard you loud and clear the first time!

9. Spam is one thing you'll never see in our restaurants, so we don't want it on our Facebook page either. Do not post chain letters, phishing and other harmful junk links, blatant plugs for products and services unrelated to Grill'd and/or content that could be considered advertising.