

## Impact Of Apologetic Responses On Guest Complaints For Creating Loyal Customer Base And The Art Of Restoring Repeat Business In Star Rated Hotels

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### ABSTRACT:

Many organisation have realised today that by Encouraging their guests for posting their views and experiences online, is helping them to respond positively it also helps to build the reputation of the organisation in a positive way. Currently apologizing helps the organisation in taking the responsibility for their actions, and getting rid of the self-esteem guilt. This study tries to gauge the power of apology for online reviews as well as Physical complaints in the hotels. For this research Interviewing Senior managers, guest visiting three to five- star category hotels the data was analysed through the application of statistical tool, collected data through primary source and conclusions based on the findings of the study were drawn.

**Keywords:** Apology, Apologetic responses, Loyalty, Service recovery

### INTRODUCTION:

Today when every aspect of business is influenced through social media hospitality industry is not left behind in the present scenario customer are very nasty when it comes to posting comments on social media or in person if they are dissatisfied with the product and services, in order to avoid negative publicity and remain in the competition responding to such online or physical complaints immediately through apologetic response plays a crucial role in the organisation, results have shown that the hotels' future review volume has increased significantly when the clients received apologetic responses .Todays customers are well travelled they also compare one hotel to another when it comes to the product and service offerings and there are instances which happens in daily operations of the hotels that some minute flaw could occur related to product or services these negative reviews could be effectively handled by the management of the hotels by sending apologetic response along with contends of responses giving proper information and explanation to improve the reputation of the hotels.

## Impact of Apology

Whenever any Guest complains about any services of the hotels immediately a sincere apology should be extended a sincere apology always carry a huge power with it as it has the power to make the most arrogant person humble, It should be admitted that we are wrong when we make any mistake this helps the organization to develop deep sense of self-respect. A Sincere apology is always backed by empathy, genuineness, regret and remorse it should signify that there was a mistake done and you have learnt from it, the staff must also realise that they feel sorry for the inconvenience that has been caused to the guest.

The staff of the hotel must express their heartfelt regret for the inconvenience that has caused by them due to which the guests have suffered they should also be able to explain the problem and the situation because of which the inconvenience has happened.

## Challenges while making an apology

Apologies or saying sorry in a hotel have somewhat become a habitual way of communication when a challenge arises. Organisations should use this word more wisely Sometimes guests come with some obscure requests Sometimes guests also have some unexpected complaints usually which, creates awkwardness.

Hotels need to considered the consequences they might face by saying "Sorry" all the time There might be some negative impact of being over apologetic.

Guest can undermine the staff.

Saying sorry too frequently might make others think that the organisation is unworthy, unconfident, and compliant desensitised At times "Sorry" could be negative word; it means "feeling regret or distressed."

Therefore, if the employees say sorry too often, it automatically puts the staff in a "submissive position."

Apologising without actual reason implies that the staff is looking for approval and they don't have enough confidence.

Frequently listening to someone apologising for silly reasons is annoying and exhausting. It might diminish self-esteem of the employees.

Not only just what people might think about us, but it is also a concern for our betterment. If the staff say too much unnecessary "sorry" it might make them feel "Sorry" too. If people in the organisation apologise all the time at the workplace, people may get the impression that the company is having mistaken-prone, incompetent, and low self-esteemed individuals.

Sometimes, if employees say sorry in a circumstance where they don't need to be sorry, it indicates that the guests are valued more than the staff. It shows that the organisations self-esteem is low.

**APOLOGIZING TO OUR CUSTOMERS IS A  
POWERFUL ACT  
IT IS MAGICAL, RESTORATIVE, &  
HEALING.**

*"Goldsmith"*

### Theoretical Framework: -

Apologies are considered to be difficult in an organizational context. When it comes to a difficult situation even a well experienced leader become gripped by indecision. In hotel a mistake is often caused by an individual employee, and a bad situation is frequently made worse by events which are beyond control, when such events happen in the hotel no body is ready to take the responsibility of it. Management must stop thinking in this way because apology does not carry any cost but carries substantial value, it has the power to diffuse a tense situation. Mistakes are bound to happen and so hotel will have to make an apology to stay in the business.

### Golden Apological Reply's at the hotel

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*"I would be just as frustrated if I was in your place."*

*"This is really unacceptable and we have let you down we realize it."*

*"We are deeply sorry for keeping you waiting for so long"*

### Golden Rules of Apology

#### 1. Empathise does the situation really demands an apology

The first thing an individual can do in a tense situation is to breathe and listen. Every employee should Listen to the guests with concern and empathy. Showing genuine interest towards the guest can be emotional as they just need to be heard. Showing guest personal attention to their issue helps to make the situation less complicated. Staff must take a pause, calmly evaluate the circumstances and be sure that they understand the complaints, concerns, or requests. Thinking about the case, the staff can draw the line between when they should and shouldn't apologise. If the circumstance is out of the control, and hotel is not at fault, or the situation doesn't demand to be sorry, then hotel shouldn't apologise. However, to show respect what hotel can do is, turn the apologies into gratitude. Apart from saying "Sorry" hotel can find other ways to be gentle that they could simply replace the word sorry with "thank you" in situations where an apology is not necessary.

#### 2. Giving Proper Explanation

The golden rule to any complaint is that whatever be the scenario is putting blame should always be avoided at the same time any unreasonable complaint or issue should be understood

by the staff and they should not hesitate to explain the facts to the guests and never put the blame. All of this should be done confidently and carefully in fact if required the staff can ask for some more time to see deeper into the issue or problem.

### 3. Evaluating the facts

In the hospitality Industry there are many unreasonable demands posed by the guests and being a service industry the employees must be very careful especially when giving them choice also care should be taken that false promises should not be made to the guest. It is always advised staff to give an abstract solution and at times admit very gently to them that they cannot provide them what they are looking for without offending them. In the hospitality industry every day is a challenging day and to accept these challenges your self-confidence helps in a long way it is very important for the staff to know when to apologise and when not to apologise. Whenever any guest has encountered any bad facility try to show the real facts and explain about the unforeseen circumstances because of which right facilities or comfort could not be provided to them and always greet them by saying that “We are extremely sorry for the inconvenience” and extend them discounts or price offs on their next stay or visit also assure them that they will get best services on their next visit.

### The Process of Apologising

#### Step 1: Find out the root cause of the Problem

When a guest complaint comes the employees they must listen to the problem carefully and try to get the complete understanding of what has gone wrong by gathering all the facts the staff should not hesitate to ask questions if something is unclear never reply to the guest without understanding the full reality of the problem as this can annoy the guest.

The following phrases could be used:

*Am I understanding the problem correctly*

*I'm getting it right. Kindly let me know*

#### Step 2: Acknowledge the Mistakes

Whatever the issue is with the extension of apology, staff should make the guest realise that the discomfort of the guest is being acknowledged, this will make them feel that their issue is not being taken lightly

Following phrases can be used:

*“We are extremely sorry for the poor service. We are going to make sure that this will not be repeated and will be taken care of today”*

*“We understand how much discomfort this problem has affected you”.*

*“As an esteemed guest of this hotel we can definitely understand how frustrating this issue would be”.*

**Step 3: Empathizing and putting yourself in the Customer's Shoes**

Many times the guests get furious since they might have faced some discomfort and there could be no fault of the staff, in these situations, it is very important for the employees not to get panic in such situations keeping calm and Listening to their problems patiently and speaking only when the guest is done is very important. The guest will appreciate this that how calmly staff has handled the conversation this will also help in building the trust.

Phrases that suggest empathy are:

*"If I would be in your position I would be just as frustrated as you are"*

*"we have realized that we have let you down and this is not unacceptable"*

*"we are deeply sorry for keeping you waiting for such a long time"*

**Conceptual Framework:** - Why should an organisation apologize for their mistakes and missteps when it occurs, it is because this is the first and the right thing to do. Organisation gains greater loyalty and develop a stronger relationship by genuinely apologising to their clients. It is very surprising that many well cultured organizations fail to apologies. A good apology has the power to restore balance and improve relationships and on the other hand a bad apology makes the things worse. This study tries to find out the effect of apologetic responses and identify its value on hotels' subsequent review volume.

**: An Angry Apology Lacks HONESTY & SINCERITY:**

*I'VE BEEN A FAN OF APOLOGY FOR A LONG TIME, - Dave*

practice it is

possible to study, practice and be better at the art of apologizing.

The following are some traits required for extending a good apology

**Courage to apologize**

When it comes to apology it comes with a feeling of vulnerability, extending an apology is not at all about being comfortable, by rising above the insecurities the employees must be able to be open enough to address the mistakes.

**Sincerity and Forgiveness**

In order to create a lasting effect and be perceived whole-heartedly, An apology should be made sincerely evoking forgiveness and empathy.

**Heartfelt and earnest response**

The hospitality professionals must be encouraged to exhibit empathy and they should be exhilarated for offering sincere, genuine, emotional responses towards the problems, concerns, issues of the guests.

**Accountability**

Commitment and Ownership plays a very vital role when it comes to extending an apology, when the Manager demonstrate his commitment to resolve any problem it has a great impact on the guests.

**Extending a Personal touch**

In any business sometimes the management goes outside the norms by adding a personal touch, by writing a note in a creative way and handing it over to the guests during their

departure could help in creating a significant difference in the experience of the guests, this also indicates the importance of the apology.

**Research Methods:** - Primary data for this study was collected through Interviewing Senior managers and guest visiting three to five-star category hotels of star category hotels of Mumbai Region and the secondary data was collected through the books, journals, research articles and websites

**Practical Implication of the study:** - This study will help the management of the hospitality industry to understand the importance of apology and how to handle the guest complaints effectively

**Findings:** -

- 83% of respondents indicated that reviews help them pick the right hotel.
- 80% read at least 6, 12 reviews prior to booking a hotel.
- 53% will not commit to a booking until they read reviews.
- 63% of the people said that they will not prefer to book hotels that have regular negative review about the hotel
- 55% of them were ready to cancel the hotel bookings after going through negative reviews

This study noted how apologetic responses affect hotels' subsequent review volume.

Applying apologetic response strategy boosts the subsequent review volume.

Apologetic response benefits hotels targeting experienced and leisure customers.

Apologetic response, including explanation and commitment, prompts apology efficacy.

**Conclusion:** -Negative Feedback should always be seen as a powerful tool as it showcases the consumer trends. These feedbacks also have the power to bring change in the industry and so these reviews should not be seen as pain or discomfort it should be looked as a means for maintenance and repairs. These reviews have the power to transform the business through innovations and creative solutions to the problems which could give birth to some great, revenue-generating ideas. In today's competitive world hotels must understand that you are not the only one providing product and services in the market there are other hotels offering the same or even better product and services, if you neglect your customers they will find another hotel which may be better than your organisation. Whenever the hotel receives any negative feedback or complaints always be thankful and extend your sincere apology and then try to resolve their problems by fulfilling their expectations this needs to be done as soon as possible. All this will help the organisation to gain loyal customers, retain existing customers so that they can also publicize your product and services through word of mouth and help to flourish the business of your hotel. Mistakes, Errors and Missteps cannot be avoided and are bound to happen in our day to day operations, it is how the organisation make use of effective apology to handle the bad situation and rise to the occasion this is what matters in the end. Every company makes a mistake that requires an apology to an individual a group of customer's and if the staff fails to apologize effectively, it can severely damage the reputation of the organization, especially if the incidents become public.

We can conclude by saying that Apologizing to our clients free our spirit. It is always good to apologize.

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