

The Review & Reputation Response Playbook

Ready-to-adapt response templates for every kind of review, plus the scripts and process behind actually getting more of the good ones.

How to use this playbook: never copy-paste a template word for word, always personalize it with a specific detail from the actual review. A response that feels generic reads as generic, even when the sentiment behind it is genuine.

What's inside

- Response Templates by Scenario
- Review Request Scripts
- Escalation Process

1. Response Templates by Scenario

Respond to every review, positive and negative. It signals to future customers, and to AI tools reading review data, that the business is actively managed and genuinely cares.

5-Star Review

Thank them specifically, and reinforce what they mentioned. A generic "thanks!" wastes the opportunity.

"Thank you so much, [Name]! We're really glad the [specific thing they mentioned] worked out well for you. We'll pass this along to [team member/team], and we hope to work with you again."

3-Star / Mixed Review

Acknowledge the specific gap without being defensive, and invite a direct conversation to make it right.

"Thanks for the honest feedback, [Name]. We're glad the [thing that went well] worked out, and sorry [specific issue] fell short of what it should have been. We'd like to make this right, please reach out to us directly at [phone/email] so we can follow up."

1-Star / Angry Review

Stay calm and specific. Never argue publicly. Acknowledge, briefly explain if needed, and move the conversation offline.

"We're sorry to hear this, [Name], this isn't the experience we want anyone to have. We'd like to understand exactly what happened and make it right. Please contact us directly at [phone/email] so we can look into this right away."

Unfair or Inaccurate Review

Stay factual and calm in public. Correct the record briefly without escalating, then take it offline. Never accuse the reviewer of lying in public, even if you're certain.

"We take feedback seriously and looked into this. Our records show [brief, factual clarification]. We'd welcome the chance to talk this through directly, please reach out at [phone/email]."

No Response Needed (rare)

A short, genuine "thank you" review with nothing specific to reference can get a brief, warm reply. It should never go completely unanswered.

"Thank you, [Name], we really appreciate you taking the time to leave this!"

2. Review Request Scripts

The best time to ask is right after a customer has expressed satisfaction, in person, by text, or by email, while the experience is still fresh.

In Person / By Text (right after the job)

"Glad we could take care of that for you! If you have a minute, a quick Google review really helps a small business like ours, here's the link: [link]."

Follow-Up Email (a day or two later)

"Hi [Name], thanks again for choosing us for [job/service]. If you were happy with how everything went, would you mind leaving us a quick review? It genuinely helps other Long Island [homeowners/businesses] find us: [link]. Thank you!"

What to Avoid

- Never offer a discount or incentive in exchange for a review, most platforms prohibit it and it undermines trust in the review itself.
- Don't only ask unhappy customers to "take it offline" while asking happy customers to post publicly, that pattern is easy for both customers and platforms to notice.
- Don't send the same generic request to everyone. A request that references the specific job gets a noticeably higher response rate.

Your Standard Process

Who asks:

When (e.g., day of job completion, 2 days later):

How (text, email, in person):

3. Escalation Process

Most reviews can be handled with a template response. A few need a real decision. Know the line in advance so nobody's guessing under pressure.

Respond Directly, No Escalation Needed

- Any 4- or 5-star review
- A 3-star review with a clear, fixable issue and no request for compensation

Escalate to a Manager or Owner

- Any 1-star review
- A review requesting a refund or compensation
- A review alleging something serious: safety, property damage, discrimination, or similar
- A review that appears to violate the platform's policies (fake, from a non-customer, contains threats)

Escalation Contacts

First point of contact:

Backup / owner:

Response time target for escalated reviews:

Soundview Marketing Group helps Long Island businesses build the review volume and response process that shows up in search, in AI recommendations, and in real customer trust. [Get Your Free Growth Plan →](https://soundviewmarketinggroup.com/free-growth-plan)
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