

3.5.10: Short Responses to Criticism

Learning Objectives

- Write a short message responding to internal or external criticism.

In today's business world, your professional demeanor is not limited to your physical workplace. Your online presence is an extension of you and also must convey all of the characteristics we have discussed in the last section. Given the amount of cyber-bullying and just plain rudeness we all see online, it is even more challenging to maintain your professionalism when responding to an external critical message on social media.

Here are seven tips from Caron Beesley in her article "7 Tips for Dealing With Criticism of Your Business on Social Media":^[1]

1. Get Listening
2. Should You Respond?
3. Don't Let Negative Comments Linger
4. Always Acknowledge, Never Deny
5. How to Apologize
6. Take the Conversation Offline
7. The Bottom Line

Using these guidelines, you can easily craft a short response like the following examples:

Thanks for your feedback! We'll take a look at the issue and get back to you within a week. We are so sorry for your negative experience with our product. We've sent this issue to our customer support team, and they should be reaching out to you within the next day to resolve the problem.

Of course, if you promise to get back to someone, you need to remember to do so; however, these responses both show your willingness to hear complaints and follow tip number 6: take the conversation offline. By doing this, you can have a much more interesting and productive conversation with the person who is making the critique.

In addition to these guidelines, keeping things light and somewhat tongue-in-cheek can also be effective for a short message response.

Wendy's on Twitter

Wendy's Twitter has a bit of a reputation for being irreverent and "savage" (just check out this article from Market Watch). While this brand of humor has gained Wendy's quite a bit of positive attention, some people argue that Wendy's is making outdated jokes, and simply trying to appeal to its audience by trying to be current. In response to this broad criticism, Wendy's tweeted the following:

buy our cheeseburgers pic.twitter.com/tohfFsyER4

— Wendy's (@Wendys) June 28, 2018

In this tweet, Wendy's largely agreed with the comments that their Twitter account is a marketing move, but they were able to make a joke out of the interaction and maintain the tone of their Twitter presence.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. Beesley, Caron. "7 Tips for Dealing With Criticism of Your Business on Social Media." *SBA Blogs: Managing a Business*. 11 Oct 2012. Web. 10 July 2018.

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