

# Turn Reviews into Revenue

## A Practical Playbook for Independent Hotels and Small Chains

How To Use Guest Feedback to Build Reputation, Justify Rates, Increase Direct Bookings, And Drive Long-Term Revenue

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Version: May 2025 Edition

# GUEST REVIEW REQUEST TEMPLATE

Subject: We'd Love Your Feedback on Your Stay at [Hotel Name]

Dear [Guest's First Name],

Thank you for choosing [Hotel Name] for your recent stay. We hope you had a comfortable and enjoyable experience.

Your feedback is invaluable to us and helps future guests make informed decisions. If you have a moment, we'd greatly appreciate it if you could share your thoughts about your stay.

[Leave a Review]

Thank you once again for staying with us. We look forward to welcoming you back in the future.

Warm regards,

[Your Name]

[Your Position]

[Hotel Name]

## TIPS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

- **Timing is Key:** Send this email within 24-48 hours post-checkout to ensure the experience is fresh in the guest's mind.
- **Personalization:** Use the guest's first name and reference specific details from their stay if possible to make the message more personal.
- **Ease of Access:** Ensure the 'Leave a Review' button or link directs guests straight to the review platform.
- **Mobile Optimization:** Design the email to be mobile-friendly.
- **Follow-Up:** If no review is received within a week, consider sending a gentle reminder.

# GUEST REVIEW RESPONSE CHECKLIST

Keep your hotel's tone professional and personal when responding to any guest review

## BEFORE YOU RESPOND

### 1. Read the review carefully

Read it twice. Understand the message behind the words. Identify if it's positive, mixed, or negative. Also, try to feel the emotion or frustration that might be between the lines.

### 2. Check guest history

Look up their stay details. Did they share any feedback while they were still staying at the hotel? Was any action taken then? Were they a returning guest or a first-time visitor?

### 3. Decide on the tone based on the review type

#### **Positive Review**

When a guest compliments your property, your team, or specific experiences, your tone should be warm, grateful, and appreciative. Highlight what they enjoyed and thank them sincerely.

#### **Mixed Review**

These reviews usually include both compliments and concerns. Your tone should remain balanced and respectful. Acknowledge the positives first, then address the issues clearly and politely.

#### **Negative Review**

When the guest is disappointed or upset, your tone must be calm, empathetic, and solution-focused. Avoid defensiveness. Focus on understanding and make sure they feel heard.

## WHILE WRITING THE RESPONSE

### **For all types of reviews:**

- Use the guest's name if available
- Start by thanking them for taking the time to write
- Recognize that their effort — even when critical — is valuable and helps you improve
- Refer to specific points from their review so it feels personal and not robotic
- Keep your message professional, human, and aligned with your hotel's brand voice

### **If the review is positive:**

- Thank them warmly
- Mention what they enjoyed and why it matters to you
- Encourage them to return and let them know you would love to host them again

### **If the review is mixed or negative:**

- Acknowledge the concern clearly and respectfully
- Apologize where appropriate
- Mention if the issue was raised during the stay and thank them for giving you a chance to respond or resolve it
- Explain briefly what you have done (or are doing) to improve
- As a thoughtful gesture, consider offering a small incentive such as a complimentary upgrade or a discounted meal for

their next stay

- End on a hopeful and welcoming note, inviting them back for a better experience

## AFTER YOU RESPOND

- Proofread for grammar, tone, and clarity
- Make sure the guest's name and the hotel name are included
- Log the response if your property maintains internal records
- Share praise or concerns with your team for recognition or improvement
- If the same issue appears repeatedly, discuss it with the leadership or operations team

## DON'T DO THIS

- Do not copy and paste the same message across different reviews
- Do not skip negative reviews — replying shows responsibility
- Do not be defensive or blame the guest
- Do not overpromise on things you cannot control or deliver
- Do not use overly casual language or humour in serious feedback
- Do not ignore positive reviews — they need acknowledgment too
- Do not delay your response for more than a few days

# REAL EXAMPLES OF TURNING FEEDBACK INTO PRICING CONFIDENCE

## 1. “BEST SLEEP I’VE HAD IN YEARS” - RAISE YOUR ROOM RATE

Feedback:

“The mattress was super comfortable, and I slept so well. I’ve stayed at many hotels, and this was by far the most restful sleep.”

How to use it:

- Highlight this in your room description on your website and OTAs.
- Position your rooms as premium for comfort-focused travelers.
- Test a ₹300 to ₹500 increase in your base rate or premium category and track conversion.
- Mention this feedback in upsell emails or upgrade pitches.

Result:

You’re no longer just offering a bed. You’re offering guaranteed rest, which supports a higher price point without guilt.

## 2. “WE LOVED THE PERSONAL ATTENTION” - CHARGE MORE FOR SERVICE VALUE

Feedback:

“The staff went above and beyond. It didn’t feel like a hotel, more like home.”

How to use it:

- Move your hotel messaging from “budget-friendly” to “warm, personal hospitality.”
- Add a hospitality fee or build a bundle with welcome drinks, a handwritten note, and express check-in.
- Use this guest quote in social media posts and booking confirmations.

Result:

Emotional connection justifies a premium. You’re not competing with faceless rooms. You’re offering human service.

## 3. “LOCATION IS SO CONVENIENT” - DEFEND YOUR RATE AGAINST LOWER-PRICED COMPETITORS

Feedback:

“We could walk to the lake and shops within 5 minutes. Saved us so much time.”

How to use it:

- Call out your location benefits clearly in your headline and booking engine.

- Justify your slightly higher rate by showing the time or cost savings.
- Create a small location map with reviews attached to share at booking.

Result:

You reduce price-based comparisons and stand firm in not undercutting others in the neighborhood.

#### 4. “STAFF WAS QUICK TO FIX THE ISSUE” - BUILD TRUST THAT JUSTIFIES PRICING

Feedback:

“There was an issue with the AC, but the front desk responded quickly and we were shifted to another room within 10 minutes. Very professional.”

How to use it:

- Add these kinds of service recovery stories to your website testimonials.
- Use them in guest messaging to show how you handle problems.
- Don’t drop rates because of a single negative review – share the resolution story.

Result:

Even service recovery feedback builds trust. It supports a premium image, even when things go wrong.

#### 5. “BETTER THAN THE 5-STAR WE STAYED IN LAST WEEK” - USE FOR RATE BOOST AND DIRECT BOOKING

Feedback:

“This little place was cleaner and friendlier than the 5-star hotel we stayed at in Jaipur last week.”

How to use it:

- Use this line in your direct booking promotions: “Some of our guests say we beat the 5-stars.”
- Run a direct booking campaign with better value than OTAs.
- Add this quote in your header on Google My Business.

Result:

Guest comparison becomes your brand advantage. And confidence comes from their words, not just yours.

# HOW TO ALIGN YOUR REVIEWS WITH YOUR REVENUE GOALS

Guest reviews don't just reflect service quality — they can be powerful tools to support rate strategy, upsells, conversions, and even direct bookings. Here's how to make reviews work for your top revenue objectives.

## 1. GOAL: INCREASE ROOM RATES WITHOUT LOSING BOOKINGS

What to do:

- Identify recurring praise in reviews (e.g. “amazing sleep,” “peaceful surroundings,” “superb staff”).
- Use these specific phrases in your room descriptions, website headers, and OTA listings.
- Gradually test rate increases in high-praise categories — especially if reviews highlight value and quality.

Why it works:

When your reviews support the value of the experience, guests are more willing to pay higher rates without questioning it.

## 2. GOAL: DRIVE MORE DIRECT BOOKINGS

What to do:

- Showcase selected 5-star reviews on your website's homepage or booking engine.
- Add a section like “What Guests Say” near your direct booking CTA.
- Include review quotes in email confirmations or WhatsApp reply templates.

Why it works:

Reviews act as social proof. If OTAs highlight your ratings but your website doesn't, you're missing conversion leverage.

## 3. GOAL: JUSTIFY PREMIUM CATEGORY ROOM PRICING

What to do:

- Tag or filter reviews that mention suites or specific room types.
- Use quotes like “worth every rupee” or “felt like a 5-star” in the description for those rooms.
- Highlight what guests loved most — views, space, service, quiet.

Why it works:

Positive feedback builds trust in high-ticket categories and reassures hesitant buyers.

## 4. GOAL: INCREASE UPSELLS (E.G. BREAKFAST, SPA, TRANSFERS)

What to do:

- Collect reviews that mention these services specifically.
- Reinforce their value in upsell offers with real guest language.
- Train your staff to use this feedback during upsell conversations.

Why it works:

Real testimonials reduce hesitation. People trust peer experience more than marketing lines.

## 5. GOAL: IMPROVE REVIEW RATINGS TO SUPPORT FORECAST ACCURACY

What to do:

- Actively ask for feedback from happy guests — especially during peak periods when forecasted rates are higher.
- Make sure your operational team knows that improved reviews can help you maintain high rates.
- Fix recurring pain points mentioned in reviews that threaten future demand.

Why it works:

Better reviews lead to more conversions, which help stabilize booking pace and strengthen rate forecast confidence.

## 6. GOAL: REDUCE DISCOUNTING DURING LOW DEMAND

What to do:

- Use reviews to highlight what still makes your property attractive (peace, cleanliness, safe family stays).
- Create “value-driven” campaigns using guest quotes instead of price cuts.
- Bundle small extras like early check-in or complimentary tea — based on what guests value — and promote using review language.

Why it works:

You protect rate integrity while still offering value through experience, not price.