

# 5 Tips for Responding to Reviews for Property Managers

By Jennifer Williams

Online ratings and reviews are a massive beast in the apartment industry, and every Property Manager has perused a review from “anonymous” that sound like below:

“The maintenance guy entered my apartment without notice, got scared by my 6 pound Chihuahua and then locked himself in my room.”

“If you had a choice of living here or poking hot metal rods into your eye sockets, choose the metal rods. This place is awful.”

“I’ve been living here for 5 years. It might look pretty when you first drive up, but be warned I’m convinced there is mold growing somewhere. I fear for my health, and management does nothing.”

These reviews borderline on entertainment, never mind that they are often riddled with spelling and grammatical errors. It’s hard to take them seriously. However, before you get the popcorn out and gather your co-workers for their weekly review entertainment, keep this in mind. **Reviews are very important to today’s purchase process for consumers.**

The Googles and Yelps of the world exist for one main purpose. To provide people with relevant information that in many cases happens to drive them to a purchase decision. What better way to provide relevant information than to get it straight from other consumers. Thus, reviews were born!

As much as it’s difficult on businesses, and certainly difficult on the apartment industry, they are here to stay, and they can’t be ignored. Let’s review a few guidelines for responding to negative reviews.

**#1 Keep It Timely:** Respond as quickly as possible, and try to **address the issue before the next reviewer points out that you haven’t**. After 2 months or so, your negative review has an identity of its own. Be a part of the conversation, and respond within the week that the review is posted.

**#2 Be Sincere:** No matter how dramatic the review appears, this is a very real situation to a real person sitting on the other end of the inter-webs. **How would you respond if they were standing in front of you?** Ok, how would you respond if they were standing in front of you and they were your Mom? Be respectful, be sincere, be passionate about what you do and let your personality shine through.

**#3 Offer A Solution & Be Specific:** Because this is a very real situation, to a real person, remember that **I’m sorry never feels authentic unless it is followed up with why it will never happen again**. Saying I’m sorry for drinking out of the milk carton just doesn’t quite have the same effect if you keep doing it. So for example, if the gate to your community is broken or you have someone in maintenance that might not be handy man of the year, fix the problem and tell people about it specifically addressing their concerns in your response. Never write a canned response, or send the same response to every negative review.

#4 Don't Point The Finger: After all, **the customer is always right**. Getting in a back and forth internet argument with a reviewer will only add to the entertainment of others.

#5 Be Courteous & Professional: This goes without saying. However, as expressed in point number 2, just remember that **you can be courteous and professional without losing sincerity**. If you apply these guidelines to your review responses you should be in good shape. However, since seeing is believing, I thought I'd also provide an example of a good review response.

"We truly appreciate your feedback and plan to use this as a means of education on how we can continuously strive to improve and provide excellent service. It's a point of pride for us that we don't make anyone wait in our leasing office for long to be greeted. We are sorry you had a less than positive experience, and have spoken with our staff about greeting everyone promptly. Please let us know if there is any way we can be of assistance. We look forward to seeing you at our next resident event, but please feel free to stop by or call the leasing office anytime with questions or concerns!"

You'll have to take my word for it that it's timely, but it is certainly sincere, offers a specific solution tailored to the situation by explaining we will improve our service, accepts blame and is of course professional. Happy review responding!