

Replying to Google reviews without sounding like a robot

The prompts

You are helping [BUSINESS NAME], a [TYPE OF BUSINESS] in [SUBURB/CITY], reply to a glowing Google review.

Here is the review:

"[PASTE THE FULL REVIEW TEXT]"

Write a reply that:

1. Opens by naming one specific thing the reviewer mentioned, not a generic "thank you". If they named a staff member, the job, or a detail, use it.
2. Sounds like a real person replying, not a business account. Short, warm, a little informal if that matches the brand.
3. Avoids repeating the exact same opening line used on other reviews. Vary the structure.
4. Does not make a blanket promise or claim ("we always", "every time") unless it's true every time.
5. Is under 40 words. Longer replies to five-star reviews read as trying too hard.

Tone: [MATCH THE BUSINESS'S NORMAL VOICE, E.G. "WARM AND A BIT CHEEKY" OR "STRAIGHTFORWARD AND PROFESSIONAL"]

Give me two versions with different openings, so I have a choice rather than one fixed reply.

You are helping [BUSINESS NAME], a [TYPE OF BUSINESS] in [SUBURB/CITY], reply to a negative Google review in a way that stays calm, factual, and never defensive.

Here is the review:

"[PASTE THE FULL REVIEW TEXT]"

Here are the actual facts of what happened, from the business's side:

"[WRITE OUT WHAT ACTUALLY HAPPENED, INCLUDING ANYTHING THE BUSINESS GOT WRONG. BE HONEST HERE, THE PROMPT NEEDS THE REAL STORY, NOT A DEFENCE.]"

Write a public reply that:

1. Does not argue with the reviewer's opinion or contest how they felt about the experience.
2. States only checkable facts, never a guess about what happened or an accusation about the customer.
3. Acknowledges the specific issue raised, without being vague ("we're sorry you feel that way" is not acceptable, it dodges the actual complaint).

4. If the business got something wrong, says so plainly, in one sentence, without over-apologising.
5. Invites the conversation offline: a direct phone number or email, so the resolution doesn't play out in public.
6. Ends without a plea for the review to be changed or removed.
7. Is under 80 words. Long defensive replies read worse than short calm ones.

Tone: calm, level, slightly formal even if the business's normal voice is casual. This is the one moment where formal reads as trustworthy.

Give me one version only. This reply needs to be exactly right, not a menu of options.

File 1: review-reply-prompts.txt (both prompts, saved together)

PROMPT 1: THE GLOWING REVIEW REPLY

[Full text as written in "The prompts" section above, glowing review block]

PROMPT 2: THE ONE-STAR REVIEW REPLY

[Full text as written in "The prompts" section above, one-star review block]

File 2: review-reply-rules.txt (a one-page checklist, keep it next to wherever reviews get checked)

REVIEW REPLY RULES: ONE PAGE

BEFORE REPLYING TO ANY REVIEW:

- [] Read the whole review twice. Don't reply from the first sentence alone.
- [] Decide: does this need a public reply only, or a phone call as well?
- [] Never reply in anger, or within the first ten minutes of reading a bad one. Draft it, sit on it, post it later.

FOR A GLOWING REVIEW:

- [] Name a specific detail from the review itself.
- [] Keep it under 40 words.
- [] Vary the opening line from the last reply posted.
- [] Don't promise something that isn't true every time.

FOR A BAD REVIEW:

- [] No arguing with their opinion, ever.
- [] State facts only. No guessing, no accusing.
- [] Own it in one sentence if the business got something wrong.
- [] Invite the conversation offline: phone number or email.
- [] Never ask them to delete or change the review in the public reply.
- [] Keep it under 80 words.

AFTER POSTING:

- [] If offline contact happens and the issue resolves, it's fine to leave the public

reply as is. The next customer reading it sees a business that handled it well, which is worth more than a five-star average with zero replies.