FREE RESOURCE

How to respond to negative reviews: formula *and templates*

The 4-step formula, 6 templates by complaint type and what to do about a fake review.

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You don't write a reply to a negative review for the customer who complained: you write it for everyone who will read it before choosing a shop. Reply within 24 to 48 hours, publicly, calmly and without arguing.

The 4-step formula

1. Thank them and use their name. "Thanks, Laura, for taking the time to write."
2. Name the specific problem. Show you read their review.
3. Show action, not excuses. One sentence on what you're reviewing or fixing.
4. Take it offline. A name, a phone number or email, and sign with your name.

TIP Three lines are enough. If it sounds defensive when you read it out loud, rewrite it.

Templates by type of complaint

PRICE OR INVOICE

Hi [name], thanks for your feedback. We understand the final bill was higher than expected, and we should have called you before continuing with the extra work. We've gone over it with the team so any extra cost gets approved first. Please call me at [phone] so I can review your case. — [your name], [shop]

DELAY

Hi [name], we're sorry about the wait on your car. [Short reason] and we should have kept you better informed. We've tightened up our updates. Call us at [phone] if there's anything else we can check. — [your name], [shop]

THE PROBLEM CAME BACK AFTER THE REPAIR

Hi [name], we're sorry the issue is still there after our work, and we want to make it right. Our [X-month] warranty covers this repair: book an inspection at no charge at [phone]. I'll handle it personally. — [your name], [shop]

POOR SERVICE

Hi [name], thanks for letting us know. That's not the service we want to give, and we've talked it over with the team. I'd like to hear what happened: please call me at [phone]. — [your name], [shop]

A REVIEW THAT DOESN'T MATCH WHAT HAPPENED

Hi [name], thanks for writing. We checked our records and couldn't find a work order matching these details. Please email us at [email] with the approximate date of your visit and we'll look into it with you. — [shop]

ONE STAR, NO TEXT

Hi, we saw your rating and want to understand what happened. Please contact [manager] at [phone] so we can review your case. Thank you. — [shop]

What never to do

AVOID THIS	WHY IT COSTS YOU CUSTOMERS
Arguing technical details in public	Nobody reads five paragraphs of defense; they read that you picked a fight.
Posting customer or work-order details	It violates their privacy and scares readers off.
Replying while angry	It sounds defensive. Wait a few hours.
Offering a discount to delete the review	Google prohibits it, and it looks like buying silence.
Copying the same reply everywhere	It shows, and it erodes trust.

If the review is fake

1. Reply anyway, using the “doesn’t match” template: calm, with your records.
2. Report it from your Business Profile, choosing the exact reason.
3. If it’s rejected, appeal through Google’s review management tool.
4. If someone asks for money in exchange for not leaving bad reviews, report it to Google as extortion.

TIP Your best defense is volume: ask every real customer for a review. Ten honest reviews a month outweigh one fake.

Your routine

- [ ] You check your reviews twice a week.
- [ ] You reply to everything new within 24 to 48 hours.
- [ ] You have these templates saved with your name.
- [ ] Tricky cases move to a private channel the same day.

Want to do it together? If you’d rather have me handle your ads, Google profile or WhatsApp, reach out: **jhonnymorenoautomkt.com**