

Service Recovery Strategies

Let's face it. All campgrounds run into problems with their service at some point, which can result in angry, upset guests. It's up to you to turn the situation, when possible, around and earn back these guests' satisfaction.

In a perfect world, campground staff would always know exactly what to say and do for guests – but that's not the reality. Issues are unavoidable in any business. The system goes down and eats the guest's reservation. The potential of equipment failure is always high: Wi-Fi, washers, dryers, pool pumps etc. But there is a wide range of issues that are avoidable. These are the responsibility of campground operators. For example, failure to enforce stated policy (rules), or inconsistent enforcement (quiet hours, unleashed dogs, pool policies). Inattentive or rude behavior of campground staff. Houskeeping that is sloppy and incomplete where surface wipe-downs and taking out the trash is substituted for attention to detail and deep cleaning. Outside operations where sites are not cleaned after every stay and prepared for the next guest's arrival. Landscaping is neglected and careless operators cause damage to guest's rigs. Maintenance is deferred on buildings, grounds, and equipment. How many "out of order" signs are up at your campground and how long have they been there?

Strategy 1:

So, as we move into a discussion of Service Recovery Strategies, realize that in some areas, we must take responsibility for the fumble and work diligently toward remedying the situation.

- Do a deep dive into your reviews noting situations where staff, facilities, amenities, and general campground observation are discussed in a negative light. Discuss your findings with your staff and proactively work toward solving the problems.

- Consider inviting someone to your campground to provide a non-biased evaluation of your campground's facilities and operation.

- Consider inviting a "secret shopper" to your campground.

- Communicate and train your staff to have a "hospitality mind set".



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Strategy 2:

Understand that Service Recovery refers to the ability of a company to solve a dissatisfied guest's problem through good guest service. Service recovery doesn't occur naturally, you must design systems that enable your staff to deliver the best possible resolution for your guests. There are many customer service and service programs available. Choose one that can be easily adapted and used by you and your staff. Here is a classic approach that has been taught for years and is still relevant.

- **Apologize to the guest** - The first step to service recovery is offering a sincere and heartfelt apology to the guest. It must not feel mechanical or fake and you must ensure that the guest understands that you mean it. Many times, the guest just needs to know that you don't think what has happened is right. The guest wants to feel like you are listening to what they are saying. They want to feel like they are a priority and that their problem is being taken seriously. Listen closely to the guest's problem and tailor your apology to their unique circumstances. This is no time for a boilerplate message that obviously feels copied and pasted.

- **Take ownership of the problem** - You need to empower your employees to take ownership of the problem and take steps to correct it. No guest wants to feel passed around to different team members or feel like your staff is blaming the situation on someone else.

- **Get to the root of the issue** - You've apologized to the guest and taken ownership of the problem. Now is the time to ask follow-up questions and do some digging to get to the root of the issue and find out if you can fix the problem.



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• **Solve the problem** – There could be a time when a particular issue can't be solved or solved in a timely way or even in a way the guest wants. However, many times a resolution can be reached with the guest in such a way that recovery of that guest is possible. Remember to ask follow-up questions to check that the guest feels the problem has been fixed, and don't make assumptions.

• **Offer something extra** - A guest may have been thoroughly inconvenienced by your service lapse and it's not enough to offer exactly what they should have received in the first place. You may need to offer something extra. Come up with creative ways to restore guest happiness with your campground. That does not always have to be a refund or discount. It could mean a bag of free ice, or a free bundle of firewood. Remember that your guest has been troubled and inconvenienced by the service issue, and you need to go that extra mile to make up for the hassle.

• **Follow up with the guest** - Once you've closed the conversation with the guest, don't forget to follow up with them. Show your concern by stopping by their site, sending a follow-up email, or if they are no longer at the campground, making a follow-up phone call.

With guest service recovery, you can potentially turn an unhappy guest into a satisfied and loyal one. Guest service failure doesn't have to be the end of the road with your guest – now you know what you can do to turn it around and salvage a negative situation. Make sure you apologize sincerely, take ownership of the problem and get to the root of the issue. Next, solve the problem and offer the guest something extra for their troubles. Finally, follow up with the guest to check they are satisfied.

*Resources:
Setting the Table:*

*The Transforming Power of Hospitality in Business by Danny Meyer
Harper Collins, Oct 13, 2009 - Business & Economics - 336 pages*

*6 Customer Service Recovery Strategies to Add to your Toolbox [+ Examples]
<https://blog.hubspot.com/service/service-recovery>*

*Best Service Recovery Strategies In 2023
<https://surveysparrow.com/blog/service-recovery-strategies/>*

Campground Masterclass

Park owners and operators who are the most successful understand that it starts with knowing the industry's best practices and being forward-thinking. With that thought in mind, Woodall's Campground Magazine (WCM) is excited to launch its "Campground Masterclass" series — under the Woodall's Campground Education banner — which features classes on a variety of topics led by industry experts. The masterclass series is launching with six courses. Park owners/operators, developers and more can access the content for FREE by simply setting up an account. WCM plans to add even more courses in the fall and update the Campground Masterclass series on a quarterly basis. Sponsored by Campground Views, Marshall and Sterling Insurance and the Business Finance Depot, the Campground Masterclass series is accessible at <https://www.campgroundeducation.com/>.

