2755 Call Your Critics

Product Book · https://kb.jeffreysummers.com/docs/2755-call-your-critics/

One of the first things I do with a new client is go through every negative comment they have. Comment cards, online reviews, every piece of bad feedback they've collected and — more often than not — ignored.

Then I call them. Every one.

Not to apologize generically. Not to offer a coupon. To have an actual conversation about what happened, what it felt like, and what it would take to bring them back.

The common thread across every single one of those calls is the same. It's not the food. It's not the wait. It's not whatever was on the comment card. It's always the same thing: nobody reached out. Nobody followed up. Nobody acknowledged that it mattered.

The Guest didn't leave because of the problem. The Guest left because of the silence after the problem.

A typical business hears from only 4% of its dissatisfied Guests. The other 96% don't complain. They just don't come back. Which means for every Guest who tells you something went wrong, twenty-four others walked out with the same experience and said nothing. You'll never know their names. You'll never get the chance to make it right.

Silence is not satisfaction. Silence is a Guest who already decided it wasn't worth their time to tell you.

Seven out of ten Guests with a complaint will return if you resolve the issue in their favor. Resolve it immediately, on the spot, before they leave the building — and that number jumps to 95%. The Guest who has a problem and gets it fixed on the floor — right then, right there — is nearly as loyal as the Guest who never had a problem at all. You didn't just save the relationship. You proved something they'll remember: when things go wrong, you show up.

Every one of those calls ends the same way. Within fifteen minutes the Guest has told me everything I need to know about the operation, agreed to come back, and become an advocate for the business — because they can't believe someone actually called.

That's the bar. It's that low. And it's that winnable.