

THE OFF PREMISE RESTAURANT

6 Tips to Own
Customer Experience

BY RESTAURANT EXPERTS

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To learn more, visit ovationup.com or text "off prem" to (844) 223-0914

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INTRODUCTION

Every successful restaurant understands that customer feedback is critical to success. Listening to customers helps you understand and serve their needs, which leads to a genuine relationship. It is this relationship with the customer that drives true loyalty better than points, likes, and check-ins.

But it can be hard to get that feedback!

People hate long surveys, online reviews tend to draw outliers, and table touches are no longer effective for gauging true satisfaction.

With the changing environment, off-premise is going to be part of the "new normal." Consumers are learning habits that they will carry with them, even after a full re-opening is instituted.

That's why we have created this eBook. We've interviewed dozens of restaurant experts and took our experience at Ovation working with hundreds of restaurants to serve up five hot-off-the-grill tips to help you gather that juicy, valuable feedback and, maybe more importantly, how to use it correctly to retain customers and drive business decisions.

It is time to step up how we talk to our customers, improve how we handle guest feedback, and grow like never before!



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01 | Control of the Delivery Experience

Imagine going to a sit-down restaurant and ordering a burger with no mayo and a side of fries. Now imagine that the server brings out a burger that has extra mayo and mashed potatoes instead of fries.

You say to the server, "Excuse me, sir, this isn't what I ordered."

He mumbles a terse response as he saunters away looking at his phone, "Sorry, that's what the kitchen gave me."

How do you feel about the experience?

About the service?

Did you even notice the server's name tag or is it more about the brand?

Yet, what seems to be a completely absurd antidote drummed from the dredges of Yelp nightmares, is commonplace with off-premise delivery.

In fact, a third of orders are incorrect when digitally input by a customer, manually read over by staff, and hand-delivered by a stranger.



**97% OF CUSTOMERS HAVE HAD ISSUES
WITH THIRD-PARTY DELIVERY COMPANIES**

Here's the worst part--consumers think of the brand, not the delivery service when that memory comes to mind.

While a table touch might have mitigated the lackluster service in our story above (more on that in the next section), when the experience of your brand is taken outside of your four walls and augmented by a non-employee delivering the food, you need a digital table touch. You need a way to measure guest satisfaction and have a conversation with your guest.

Now, more than ever, you need to take back control of the experience and your brand's reputation by making sure your guest feels important and heard, no matter where they are located.

For truly, customer experience has been and forever will be the biggest factor in a business's success or failure. It isn't about how your customers order, it's about how they feel.

"It's not about how customers order, it's about how they feel"

-Zack Oates. Founder Ovation



02 | Make it EASY to Give Feedback

We return to our bad burger story.

After the server left, you probably decided not to come back and might have already posted a negative review online! Then, you see what looks like the manager making his way to your table, and with a big smile, he touches the table and asks how the food is.

"Great!", you say, almost automatically.

"Yeah, thanks so much!", responds your friend.

The manager is glad to have checked your table off and walks away...and then you go back to complaining about your burger.

Why?

The truth is, most people don't want to tell a manager face to face about their complaints. Maybe they're intimidated or just don't want to have an awkward conversation. Maybe they'll give you that feedback somewhere else, right? Unfortunately, probably not.



94% OF CUSTOMERS WHO HAD A BAD EXPERIENCE DON'T EVER MENTION IT

Why don't they mention it? 79% say that it is because it is "too much hassle."

So it's clear that the only way to capture more of that valuable, negative feedback is to make it as easy and convenient as possible for customers to give it.

This means that you need to give them options for voicing their feedback, make it short, and have it lead to a conversation.

For example, receipt surveys can be great, but when customers are required to enter a 26-digit code into a long URL, it deters them from leaving feedback.

Customers still want their voices to be heard, so they'll look for an easier way to share it like posting a negative review online or venting to friends and family about their experience.

Eliminate as much of the legwork for your customers as possible. Try some of the following:

- QR codes instead of long links
- Posting a phone number to text,
- Use an iPad kiosk with smiley faces to choose from and a brief follow-up question
- Automated follow-up survey texted to them after a loyalty check-in
- Email after online order

Then make sure you don't give them a super long survey to fill out. 74% of people would not take a survey longer than 5 questions.



**MAKE YOUR SURVEY LESS THAN SIX
QUESTIONS FOR BEST CUSTOMER
EXPERIENCE**

03 | Collect the Correct Info

The survey should be easy and accessible regardless of how they ordered.

In the past, it might have been enough to have a single sign in your restaurant saying, "How'd we do? Email us here." --but those days are gone--and like mullets and frosted tips--the world is better for it.

Meet the customer where they are at. If they ordered through a delivery system, put a card in the bag asking for feedback. If you can message with your own delivery system, send an automated message. If the customer is in your location, allow both the person who paid and the rest of their group to give feedback.



**OVATION CUSTOMERS GET 18X MORE
FEEDBACK THAN RECEIPT SURVEYS**

When you ask customers for their information, be sure to collect these four things:

- 1. NAME** - this enables you to personalize all communication with them
- 2. PHONE** - people are much more likely to give out their phone number than before. Since 95% of text messages are read within 3 minutes, it is by far the best way to communicate with customers. To get a higher rate of cell phone redemption, offer a prize, such as a chance to win a \$100 gift card where they have to enter in their number to be notified if they won
- 3. PERMISSION** - meet with an attorney or find templates online that obtain permission to respond to them. Many have overlooked this step and it can be costly!
- 4. SATISFACTION** - unless you know if they had a good experience or not, how do you know to invite them back or to apologize?

04 | Make the Survey Timely

Let's go back to our bad burger joint.

Imagine if the next day they sent you a survey asking you how your experience was. Not only would it almost seem insensitive, but it would be too late.

The decision to not go back has already been made. The 1-star review has been posted. The damage is done.

When a survey is sent out with too much delay, it only can benefit one party: the company. It isn't about the customer at that point, because the issue cannot be resolved.

It is about being there when the delivery box is opened with a card. It is about having a satisfaction kiosk where they're waiting to be seated. It is about having that signage encouraging their feedback on the table. It is about being there right when the customer has something to say.

Having multiple ways to ask your customer will help to make sure they see the survey as the right time for them.

After all of this, as we'll discuss in the next section, it is really about what you do after they give you that feedback.



05 | Take Action: Prompt & Personal

It may sound backwards, but disappointed patrons, when treated right, will become loyal customers. This principle is known as the "service recovery paradox", and while it seems that it can only occur under certain conditions, such as "when the failure is not considered by the customer to be severe", or "the customer has had no prior failure with the firm", the value of trying to keep your customers can't be understated (Emerald).

Many angry customers probably won't end up with a higher level of brand affection than before, but customer retention efforts are great at keeping most of them from hating you.

Even if a resolution isn't exactly what the customer felt was what they deserved, if it was handled in a prompt and personal manner, they were still satisfied.



91% OF UPSET CUSTOMER FELT SATISFIED IF RESPONDED TO PROMPTLY AND PERSONALLY

The key words here are "prompt" and "personal".

While definitions of "prompt" may vary, 56% of respondents felt that a reasonable response time from a company was within one day (GatherUp). A study by the Harvard Business Review found that customers were willing to spend \$20 more on an airline ticket when the company responded to them within 5 minutes.

And as far as "personal" goes, customers are willing to spend \$14 more if the business used their name in responding to their feedback (HBR).

Simply put: the sooner the better and the less robot-y the better.

So while managers should try their best to find a solution that appeases the customer, at the end of the day consumers feel satisfied if they feel the company was genuinely sorry for whatever went wrong and made a quick and individual effort to resolve it.

Read more:

<https://www.emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.1108/08876040710746561/full/html>

<https://gatherup.com/blog/quickly-business-respond-complaint/>

<https://hbr.org/2018/01/how-customer-service-can-turn-angry-customers-into-loyal-ones>

06 | Fix the Root Issue

Kaizen is the Japanese term for “continuous improvement” and in business, it represents the idea of everyone in the company working together to make operations as optimal as possible.

For example, in a kaizen-influenced car manufacturing plant (where business kaizen gets its origin), there would be a line running overhead that spans the entire assembly floor. If any worker makes a mistake, such as dropping a tray of equipment, they can pull the line and stop production. A supervisor will come, and—rather than yell at the worker—will assess the situation, and then she and a committee will work together to find the deeper flaw in the system that allowed for an employee to drop the tray.

Restaurants also need to use reviews and negative feedback to not only fix surface issues but to find their root causes and truly refine their operations.

For example, maybe you find out through several reviews that a certain employee at your restaurant has been treating customers poorly, causing them to have a bad experience at your location. A quick fix would be to either tell the employee that they need to shape up or even fire them.

Once, an Ovation customer received private feedback through our real-time chat tool that the portions were getting smaller. Instead of brushing it off, he called the store and discovered they had put the wrong scoop so indeed, their portions had been smaller that day. He fixed the issue, compensated the customer, and won her back for life!

By putting on your kaizen-branded detective hat, asking yourself, “Is there anything in my operations that is allowing this?”, and digging a little deeper, you may discover a larger issue hiding. In this case, the shift manager is actually a brutal boss to their employees - rude, belittling, etc. You discover that the employee in question was letting his frustrations out on customers because he didn’t have a way to let higher-level management know.

With this insight, you now have a quick fix: work with the employee and the shift manager. You’ve also realized your next big initiative: work with HR to implement better channels of communication for front-line employees. Good job, super-sleuth!



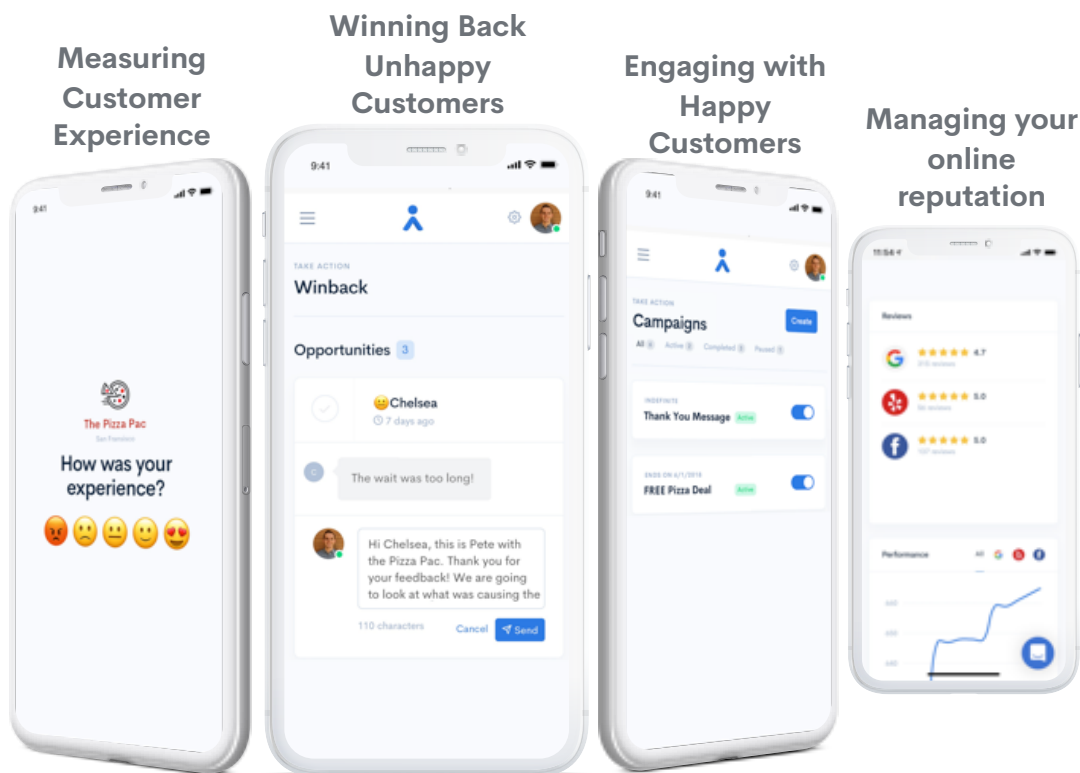
CONCLUSION

We know all 6 of these principles will help you build better, longer-lasting relationships with your customers. Nothing is more important.

If you're looking for assistance, this is kind of what we're all about here at Ovation.

Running a business is tough, but we are here to help! Ovation is The Actionable Feedback Tool™ that is easy, real-time, and actually drives revenue. We will help you collect actionable data, connect with customers for the very best feedback, close the gap between marketing and operations, and more.

To learn how we can help grow your brand visit ovationup.com.



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