

Tips for Handling Challenging Client Discussions

Difficult conversations are called that for a reason. They are, well, difficult! Many of us avoid them, or try to delay them for as long as possible. With these Houzz Pro tips you can empower yourself to take steps to create a safe space to take on challenging, yet productive conversations.

CHAPTER 1

Received a Bad Review? Here's How to Turn it Around - Part 1

Today, 84% of people trust reviews as much as personal recommendations, and therefore just one negative review can erode your reputation. This chapter explores how pros like architect Anders Lasater turned his only 3-star review into a positive.

"I had many clients tell me that the one review that was most telling was my bad review, because they really liked my response. My response is what made them realize I'm a professional and I'd be a good person to work with." - [Anders Lasater](#)

We delve into these four steps of what to do if a less than flattering review arrives:

1. Take a time-out, then acknowledge the issue.
2. Take the high road.
3. Offer a reminder.
4. Apologize, and mean it.

CHAPTER 2

Received a Bad Review? Here's How to Turn it Around - Part 2

It's okay to tell your side of the story when a client makes accusations. Chapter two explores how to approach the discussion diplomatically since how we say things is often more important than what we say.

"Always remember: You don't have to be right, you just have to get it right! Getting it right means letting go of your pride and addressing client concerns or a bad review with the goal of them being totally satisfied and removing the review." - [Ginger Curtis](#)

This how-to for approaching client discussions explores four disarming techniques:

1. Provide your side of the story, being mindful of tone.
2. Choose your words -and punctuation-carefully.
3. Try to fix the issue, and communicate effectively.
4. Avoid future issues too.

CHAPTER 3

5 Communication Strategies to Successfully Resolve Client Disputes

The third chapter is designed to help you handle disagreements of all types with ease whether you are designer, home renovation specialist or contractor.

Managing a dispute the right way will help you turn a negative into a positive, and will demonstrate your leadership skills, help foster trust and ultimately position you as a business that cares.

Read how to incorporate these five strategies into your repertoire as conflicts arise:

1. **Listen actively.**
 2. **Focus on facts, not emotions.**
 3. **Be mindful of body language.**
 4. **Show empathy.**
 5. **Choose your words carefully.**
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CHAPTER 4

How to Turn Down a Project Without Burning a Bridge

Turning down jobs is necessary at times especially if a particular project will not be profitable or contribute to the growth of your business.

It's perfectly OK to turn down work for whatever reason you see fit, be it a disparity between your style and the client's, a realization that the scope of the project will stretch you too thin, or a gut feeling that a homeowner will be high-maintenance and impossible to please.

Learn more about four ways to say no with tact and grace to maintain goodwill and maybe even referrals:

1. **Blame your bandwidth.**
2. **Convey "It's not you, it's me."**
3. **Give a referral.**
4. **Keep it short, sweet...and honest.**