

Management responses and gender bias: Evidence from the hotel industry



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Context & Research question

Management responses have become a popular and effective tool for online reputation management

We study whether their effectiveness can be explained by changes in **who** decides to write a review, in particular:

Do management responses differentially affect the reviewing behavior of male and female users? And if so, why?

Example of a management response in TripAdvisor

Reviewed March 19, 2013

After paying a week two days in they kick my sister and one year old with no place to stay.

Review -

Never stay to many drug dealers and staff that take part in it. Would not make me a new room key after ours messed up. Only because my husband was not there. Had to have the cops there to finally get our stuff out. And did not refund our money for the four days we had left on our lease. Had the fat black security guard offer to sell me drugs in front of my daughter. So glad we got out of there alive. Very worst place I have ever seen, the cops

Jessica E, General Manager at Family Inns of America, responded to this review Responded March 26, 2013

Response -

This lady was not a registered guest to the room so she was unable to get a key from the front desk. She was angry and went to the room, where she proceeded to try to kick the door in, resulting in the disturbance to other guests that were trying to rest, as it was9 pm. We had to call police to have her removed from our property.

Highlights



Female users are more likely to perceive management responses as a potential source of conflict



Management responses negative reviews (2 stars or below) from female users are more likely to be contentious



After managers began responding to reviews, the probability that a review is written by a female user decreases by 0.5 percentage points



Such a decrease is stronger for negative than for neutral or positive reviews (0.8 vs. 0.4 percentage points, respectively)