Feedback is not a synonym for review (customer feedback part 2)

Is asking for feedback the same as asking for a review? Nope. Not even close.

There’s a huge difference between feedback and reviews: First of all, each targets a different audience. And second, each serves a different purpose.

Feedback is about you (service/product/offering)

If you ask for feedback, you want to know what works and what doesn’t, (presumably) in order to improve the offering. Do you want to know what customers/supporters really think about you? Then ask for feedback.

Reviews are about your customers/supporters (potential and current)

If you ask for reviews, you are asking customers to *share* their thoughts, both good and bad, about your product or service *with other customers*.

Many organizations make the mistake of asking for a review when what they want is feedback and some ask for feedback when all they want is a review.



You need both, but for different reasons

Organizations should try to get both feedback and reviews from their customers, but not at the same time or using the same method.

Feedback benefits the organization, because it provides honest insights meant to correct any issues.

Reviews are important too. They help with SEO, they can entice new customers, and they add credibility. Of course, not all reviews are positive, but negative reviews can serve as a red flag to businesses.

Do you want feedback or just an inflated review?

I am taking a course on Udemy (an online "school"). The course is super long, and I am almost finished with it. About half-way through, Udemy asked me to rate the course. I rated it three stars out of five, mainly because the course is too long, repetitive and somewhat disorganized.

And then I got this email from the course's instructor (in full below, except I removed the instructor's name):

> *Hey Deborah,*
>
> *Thank you for enrolling in my course.*
>
> *I noticed you left a 3 star review. Was there something specifically wrong with the course that I can help you with? If the course simply isn't for you, I can surely help you get a refund.*
>
> *Teaching on Udemy is part of my livelihood, and as you can see from the thoroughness of the course, I put a huge amount of effort into making it as useful as possible. I know the course could get boring from time to time, but I tried my*

best to be as thorough as possible for the beginner.

Udemy reacts very negatively toward 3 star reviews, and it tells them not to give my course as much visibility. It also hurts my livelihood generated from course sales.

If you can modify your review, that would be very much appreciated and it will go a long way toward helping me continue to teach on Udemy.

Once again, please let me know what was wrong with the course, and if you need me to get a refund processed for you, please let me know.

Thank you very much for your consideration,

Basically, the Udemy instructor wants me to give him a five-star review, *because it benefits him*, not because it benefits his potential customers. By the way, in my book, a three-star review is not negative, but fair/middling.

It occurs to me that if reviewers are pressured to change their reviews, and provide glowing reviews for something that is not five-star worthy, it can create problems down the road. Say this instructor gets all five-star reviews for a non-five-star course. People sign up based on those reviews and they are then disappointed because the course does not live up to the reviews. In turn, they provide not-so-glowing reviews. The instructor contacts them and offers to negotiate a refund, like he did for me. In the end, he will make less money.

If instead, the instructor asked for specific feedback and

disassociated it from the review or from the money I paid for the course, I would provide a critique. And if he were interested in actually improving his course rather than just improving the reviews, he would weigh it carefully and maybe consider incorporating my feedback.

So, ask for both

Businesses and organizations who want to improve, should always ask for *private, anonymous* feedback.

Businesses who want to build up credibility and SEO should ask for reviews. However, businesses need to be prepared for negative comments, and they need to have a way to deal with them.

What are your thoughts? Do you use reviews and feedback interchangeably? Do you solicit either feedback or reviews or both? How do you do it? Let me know in the comments.