Recovery and Community Playbook

LoftyBiz 041 · Turn customers into fans: fix mistakes generously and build community.

These are examples, not promises. Figures are illustrative, in US dollars, and are not targets, forecasts or typical results. General business education, not financial, legal or tax advice. No contact details.

Point 1 · Fix mistakes generously

Worked example: Nimali, cake and catering business, Colombo. About 250 orders a month, average order $80. About 10 orders a month went wrong (late delivery, wrong name, missing tray). Staff said sorry and offered a small discount. Only 3 of those 10 customers ever ordered again.

The five steps: 1) own it fast — someone calls within 1 hour, no excuses: “We got this wrong, and I’m sorry. Here’s what we’re doing right now.”; 2) fix it, then do more than fix it — remake the cake the same day, and add a free dessert tray with the next order (make it right, then make it better); 3) let staff act without asking — a recovery budget of up to $40 per mistake, no permission needed; 4) ask, don’t tell — “What would make this right for you?” and, after the recovery, “What should we change so this never happens again?”; 5) fix the process, not just the customer — log every mistake in Systex (date, what went wrong, why, what we changed), review the log each Monday, and call again one week later just to check. Wrong-name cakes stopped when they started reading the name back on the phone. Late deliveries dropped when drivers confirmed each address the day before.

Nimali · Colombo (USD, example)	Before	After three months
Orders a month	250	250 (same volume)
Average order	$80	$80
Mistakes a month	10	4
Of those, order again	3 of 10	3 of 4
Recoveries cost a month	—	about $150
Customers they keep, a month	—	more than $1,000
Recovery budget per mistake	—	$40, no permission needed

She tracked mistakes and recoveries every week in Systex, so the new numbers stayed visible. Example figures, not a promise.

Point 2 · Build a community around your business

Worked example: Ana, coffee roastery, Guatemala City. She sells beans in her shop and online to about 600 customers, but only 120 bought every month. The rest came once or twice and drifted away.

The five steps: 1) study your best customers — her top 20 had come to a Saturday tasting, knew at least one other customer by name, and bought a grinder in their first month; 2) help new customers follow that path — a personal invitation to a Saturday tasting in the first month, and a small discount on a grinder; 3) introduce your regulars to each other at every tasting; 4) give the community a home and a rhythm — a WhatsApp group for regulars, a weekly brewing tip and one customer photo, a monthly tasting where members vote on the next beans, and a short 20-minute monthly video call; those tastings and follow-ups lived in Systex; 5) let fans bring friends — once a month the tasting is “bring a friend” night, with a small thank-you on the wall, not a big discount.

Ana · Guatemala City (USD, example)	Before	After six months
Customers (shop and online)	600	600 (same list, at the start)
Monthly buyers	120	210
Friend referrals a month	about 4	22
Average spend a month	$30	$30
Extra monthly buyers	—	90 (210 − 120)
Extra revenue a month	—	90 × $30 = $2,700

She tracked monthly buyers and friend referrals in Systex, so the new numbers stayed visible, with almost no advertising. Example figures, not a promise.

This week

#	Action	Done
1	Write your recovery rule: call within one hour, fix it, then add something extra.	
2	Set a recovery budget your staff can use without asking.	
3	Start a mistake log.	
4	List your top 20 customers and find what they have in common.	
5	Invite five regulars to meet each other.	
6	Put this week's list into Systex.	

Blank numbers for your own business

Your numbers (USD)	This week	After (date: _____)
Mistakes a month		
Of those, order again		
Recovery cost a month		
Monthly buyers		
Friend referrals a month		
Extra revenue a month		