The Recovery Playbook

SAMPLE DATA, NOT REAL RESULTS **Sample brand:** Sample Co., a small-batch home goods shop

What to say, who says it and how fast when something goes wrong. Plan it now, while nothing is on fire.

WHAT IT IS
A set of ready answers for the problems every store eventually has: late orders, wrong items, a send that should not have gone out. Written in advance, in your own voice.

HOW TO USE IT
1. List the situations that could happen. 2. Say how you would find out. 3. Set a time limit for the first message. 4. Draft the message kit. 5. Name who approves.

WHY IT MATTERS
How you handle a mistake is often remembered longer than the mistake. A fast, honest, plain message keeps trust. Silence loses it.

The four parts of a good recovery message

1. SAY WHAT HAPPENED	2. OWN IT	3. SAY WHAT YOU ARE DOING	4. SAY WHAT THEY CAN DO
Plainly, in one or two sentences.	No blame and no excuses.	A real fix with a real time.	One clear step and a reply path.

Do not offer discounts as a first move. Fix the problem, then decide whether a gesture is warranted.

Situations and response times

SAMPLE DATA

List each situation, how you will find out, and the longest you will wait before the first message.

SITUATION	WHO IS AFFECTED	HOW WE FIND OUT	FIRST MESSAGE WITHIN	OWNER
Shipping delay	Open orders on that carrier	Carrier alert, support tickets	24 hours	Store manager
Wrong item sent	One customer	Customer reply or photo	4 hours	Support lead
Email sent by mistake	Part or all of the list	Team alert, replies	1 hour	Email manager
Out of stock after order	Orders with that item	Stock report	12 hours	Store manager
Site or checkout outage	Anyone shopping	Monitoring, support	1 hour	Developer
Wrong price or offer sent	Everyone who got it	Replies, orders	1 hour	Marketing lead

Message kit

SAMPLE DATA

Draft the subject pattern and the must-haves for each situation now. Keep it plain and warm.

SITUATION	SUBJECT LINE PATTERN	MUST INCLUDE	MUST NOT INCLUDE	APPROVED BY
Shipping delay	An update on your order	New date, reason in one line, how to reach us	Excuses, vague dates	Support lead
Wrong item sent	We got your order wrong	Apology, free fix, return label	Asking them to prove it	Support lead
Email sent by mistake	Please ignore our last email	What was wrong, what is right	Long explanations	Marketing lead
Out of stock after order	About your order	Choices: wait, swap or refund	Surprise cancellations	Store manager

Action plan and review rhythm

SAMPLE DATA

Turn what you found into a short list. Fix the highest impact items first, and give every item an owner and a date.

#	ACTION	LINKED FINDING	EFFORT	IMPACT	OWNER	DUE
1	Draft the four message kits and save them where the team can find them	Message kit	Medium	High	Support lead	Month 1
2	Add a team alert for send errors	Email sent by mistake	Low	High	Email manager	Week 2
3	Agree who can approve a refund or gesture	All situations	Low	Medium	Marketing lead	Week 2
4						

Review rhythm

AFTER EVERY INCIDENT
Hold a ten-minute review: what happened, how fast we told people, what we change.

QUARTERLY
Read the kits again. Update times, names and tone.

YEARLY
Run a pretend incident and time the first message.

Next: the Reply Loop turns the replies you get during a problem into lasting fixes.