



## ***Time to Face the Music – Six Tips to an Acceptable Business Apology***

It might hurt a little, but when an apology is due, the smart thing to do is pony up and deliver one in a **timely and genuine** manner.

In addition to being the **right thing to do**, an apology can also help **lower costs**. In the past, legal counsel often advised that an apology should be avoided, since it could be used as an admission of responsibility. But in actuality, study results have found that an apology can factor largely in **reducing lawsuits**, and some legal counsel are seeing the bigger picture.

Recent studies also indicate that the offended party is more likely to move on to reconciliation when an apology is offered, even in cases where losses are great. This allows the opportunity for trust to be rebuilt. On the flip side, most offended parties are far more likely to terminate a business relationship following a serious mishap if no apology is offered.

For instance, hospitals have found that owning up to medical errors can **reduce litigation** as well as **prevent future mishaps**. The University of Illinois Medical Center has experienced **40 percent** fewer lawsuits since it adopted a policy to admit to and apologize for errors.

Being **proactive** with an official apology can help with customer retention because it emphasizes a company's dedication to being **honest and loyal**, even in bad times.

Some tips on how to properly craft an apology:

- Start by **recapping the situation in detail**, so everyone is on the same page
- Recognize the negative outcome or the damage that the bad situation caused to show **true admittance**
- **Admit responsibility** for the issue and don't blame outside parties
- Show **regret and remorse** for the situation without excuses or "buts"
- Ask for forgiveness and **give detailed reasons** why the situation won't occur again
- Offer **recompense** if applicable and appropriate

If to err is human and to forgive is divine, then to apologize is to enable others to see your company's humanity ... and respond to it in a positive way. Apologies, in short, are powerful tools in relationships.