

EFFECTIVE COMPLAINT LETTER FOR ACADEMIC AND BUSINESS CONTEXT

Desi Ratna Sari M.Hum., Dr. Afdaleni, M. Pd., M. Pd, Angel Aurora Butar Butar,
Study programme of International Trade Logistic, Batam State Politechnic, STBA Haji Agus Salim
Bukittinggi, International Trade Logistic, Batam State Politechnic
desiratna@polibatam.ac.id, afdaleni_09@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

Customer complaints — they come in the form of an abusive email, a scathing online review, an awkward face-to-face meeting, or an unexpected phone call. It's hard to hear, but the customer complaints that result from you, your products, your staff, or your services fall short of expectations. Although difficult and inconvenient, handling customer complaints is an important part of doing business, and they must be handled properly.

Keywords: *Complaint, Respons, business letter*

INTRODUCTION

Complaining is the submission of complaints for dissatisfaction, discomfort from the services provided. Customers complaint in general because they are dissatisfied with the services provided. If the service is good then the customer will appreciate and feel satisfied with the service provided but if the services is bad it will end in a protest (dissatisfaction) or what is called a *complaint*. According to Bell and Luddington (2016: 78), that "Customer complaints are feedback from customers addressed to companies that tend to be negative. This feedback can be done in writing or orally.

Reply is an activity that aims to reply something, In this case what is meant is how to respond to consumer requests properly and correctly. So that the costumer is satisfied with the result provided. Customers who file complaints via social media, telephone, or email are opportunities that must be taken advantage of. They are not dropping your product or company. They want your product or company to be better. Your job is to accommodate these complaints and apply them to your product, if you feel the feedback is feasible.

These are some of the benefits of the complaint given by the customer:

- a) You can find out what the customer service lacks and how to improve the quality of your product.
- b) Get knowledge about competitors from your customers.
- c) Increase customer loyalty
- d) Improve your reputation in the online realm
- e) You can also find out the habits and behavior of customers who use your product/service

In the business world when there are complaints from customers we must respond as quickly as possible to the complaints they give. Listen to complaints from your customers about the dissatisfaction they feel. Make sure you listen to their opinions to the end before you jump to conclusions. Also, try to find ways to reassure your subscribers so they keep coming back and subscribing. Then, solve the problem with a friendly and positive attitude. How you deal with any problems or complaints that arise will determine whether they will stay or unsubscribe from your business.

COMPLAINT LETTER

A. Why Do We Have to Write A Complaint Letter Professionally?

Writing a letter of complaint can be difficult, especially if you've never done it before. The most important thing to remember when writing your formal complaint letter is to be direct and tasteful. If you simply rant and rave incoherently, your complaint isn't likely to be taken seriously.

The contents of the complaint letter must effectively disclose the following matters:

- 1) Explain your problem and your desired result
- 2) Include important dates, such as when you purchased goods or services and when the problem

occurred

- 3) Identify what actions you have taken to fix the problem and what you will do if you and the seller cannot resolve the problem
- 4) Attach copies of relevant supporting documents such as receipts or simple invoices and request a response within a reasonable time

B. Generic Structure of Complaint Letter

1. In general, those all want to put in writing to make a powerful letter Sender's Address
2. Include name, home or work address and phone numbers.
3. Date (e.g. 8th of May, 2021)
4. Receiver's Address (e.g. PT. Indofood CBK Sukses Makmur, Tb)
5. Subject: (e.g. The goods arrive in a damage conditions)
6. Salutations

This is a proper greeting that have to apply to talk in professionally. They are three principal causes why salutations is important:

- Enhances Professionalism.
With the use of the perfect phrasing, punctuation and expert tittle in a business, salutation will show the writer's professionalism and strength in business writing.
- Personalize the document.
Including the recipient's complete call that point out in salutation is make permits them to recognize that they studying a specially letter that sending to them.
- Demonstrate professional tone.

Providing a proper salutation to greet recipient, that you are putting a expert tone with the intention to convey thru within side the letter. Example of appropriate salutations is seems like this:

- Dear Marketing Manager
- Dear Jenny Riawan
- Dear Mr./ Ms./ Mrs./ Miss Anthony
- Dear Dr. Shava
- Dear Dr. and Mr. Reynald.
- Dear Officer Rey

7. Body of the letter:

- Introduction
- Main reason to write the letter
- Conclusion

8. Closing of letter (Yours sincerely/faithfully)

<p>Your Address</p> <p>Your City, State, Zip Code [Your email address, if sending by email]</p> <p>Date</p> <p>Name of Contact Person [if available] Title [if available] Company Name Consumer Complaint Division [if you have no specific contact] Street Address City, State, ZIP Code</p> <p>Re: [Your account number, if you have one]</p> <p>Dear [Contact Person or Consumer Complaint Division]:</p> <p>On [date], I [bought, leased, rented, or had repaired/serviced] a [name of the product, with serial or model number or service performed] at [location and other important details of the transaction].</p> <p>Unfortunately, [your product has not performed well (or) the service was inadequate] because [state the problem, like the product doesn't work properly, the service wasn't performed correctly, I was billed the wrong amount, or something was not disclosed clearly or was misrepresented, etc.].</p> <p>To resolve the problem, I would appreciate a [state the action you want, like a refund, store credit, repair, exchange, etc.]. Enclosed are copies [do not send originals] of my records [include receipts, guarantees, warranties, canceled checks, contracts, model and serial numbers, and any other documents] concerning this purchase [or repair].</p> <p>I look forward to your reply and a resolution to my problem. I will wait until [set a reasonable time limit] before seeking help from a consumer protection agency or other assistance. Please contact me at the above address or by phone at [phone number with area code].</p> <p>Sincerely,</p> <p>Your name Enclosure(s)</p>

9. Signature

Example Format:

Picture 1. Example of Complaint Letter

Writing Your Complaint Letter

1) Address your letter to the customer service department.

When writing a letter of complaint, your best chance of success will come from directing the letter to the customer service department of the company. The customer service department is accustomed to dealing with complaints and your letter is likely to be processed efficiently and effectively.

Try to find out the name of the customer service manager or director and address your letter to them personally. Begin your letter with **Dear Mr., Mrs., Miss or Ms. followed by their surname**. If you cannot find the name of the customer service manager, simply write Dear Sir or Madam.

You should be able to find the address of the customer service department on the company's website, on any of the company's promotional or advertising materials or product packaging or labels.

For example: Dear Marketing Manager, Dear Officer, etc.

2) Quickly get to the point of your letter

The very first line of your letter should clearly address why you are writing the letter and what your exact complaint is. Give as many pertinent facts as possible, including the date, time and location where you made the purchase or received the service, along with any relevant serial or model numbers.

The recipient of the letter should be able to identify the point of the letter in under five seconds, so avoid any long, rambling intros.

You may provide further detail or explanation of the situation in the paragraph following your opening sentence, but the first line should draw attention to your complaint as succinctly as possible.

For example: "I am writing to complaint about a faulty rice cooker that I purchased from

your company on the 15th of July at your location on Grand Batam Mall."

3) State specifically what outcome or remedy will satisfy you.

If you want a replacement, a refund, a repair, or some other form of compensation, state this clearly in your second paragraph. This will help to avoid receiving a form letter or other stock response, and give the recipient something to work with on their end.

Try to be as constructive as possible in your comments, suggesting a way that you can move forward and continue your relationship with the company. If you demand a refund or some other form of compensation, while simultaneously informing them that you plan on taking your business elsewhere, they will have little incentive to try to resolve the problem

For example: "As a dedicated customer, I hope you will work to resolve my problem and find a resolution"

4) Attach copies of supporting documents

These may include receipts, guarantees, warranties, copies of checks you sent and, if appropriate, photos or videos. All documentation should be included with your letter.

Make sure that you send copies of any documentation you wish to include, not the originals. That way, there's no chance of this key information being lost or mislaid, should you need to provide evidence to someone else.

Also make sure to state in the body of the letter the exact materials you are including.

For example: "Please find attached a copy of my original receipt, along with a copy of the Rice cooker guarantee and information regarding the serial number."

5) Give them a time limit to resolve the matter

It is helpful to provide an exact time period within which you would like the issue to be resolved. This will give you peace of mind and will help bring the issue to a speedy conclusion.

Just make sure that the time period you provide is reasonable. A week or two is usually sufficient, though this will vary depending on what your requests are.

For example: "I will wait one week to hear back from you about this issue, and then I will seek help from a consumer protection agency or my local Better Business Bureau."

6) Finish the letter respectfully.

Thank the recipient for their assistance, and let them know how and when they can reach you to resolve the matter. This will make their job a lot easier, resulting in a more efficient outcome for you.

Sign off the letter with yours sincerely, if you know the name of the person you are writing to, or yours faithfully if you referred to them as **"Sir"** or **"Madam"**. Avoid informal closings such as **"Best," "Yours truly"**, or **"Yours faithfully"**

C. Elements of A Winning Complaint Letter

Here are six things every successful complaint letter has:

1) Solid research

As any write up, your complaint letter should be well researched. You should be able to determine whether or not the company recognizes and addresses the nature of your complaint. Aside from this, you can easily find formats and contents of a successful complaint letter that warrants a response in the Internet.

2) Keeping it tight

Effective emails and letters are usually short and direct. The complaint letter should not exceed one page or 500 words. Keep in mind that there are real people processing your letter and if it's

too convoluted it's less likely that your complaint will be processed. Besides, always get to the point of your letter.

3) Being Polite

As the saying goes, "Manners make a man," it's important to display courtesy in your letter. You may be upset that you have to write a letter of complaint but you should always be polite. Contact customer service agents in a friendly manner as they are real people too. And that can be a great factor for them to want to help you with your problem.

4) Citing The Rules

You can convince the company that it did not follow their own rules or that they have broken the law, your letter will most likely be treated with a sense of urgency.

5) Nicely tell them what you want

As mentioned above, manners really matter. Be extra nice to the customer service agent, they are just doing their job and act appropriately with your given information about concern. You should directly mention what outcome you want from the letter as it should leave no room for questions. Nicely tell them what you want and be direct as much as possible. Rest assured their response will be in your favor.

REPLY LETTER

A. How To Write a Customer Complaint Response Letter

Understanding how to write a customer complaint response letter can help you communicate with your customers in a way that leads to customer retention, increased product sales, and customer satisfaction. In this article, we discuss the steps you can take to write a helpful customer complaint response letter and why a customer complaint response letter is so important to your business.

B. Why Is It Important To Respond To Customer Complaints?

Some reasons why customer complaints are valuable include:

1) Possibilities for customer retention

Responding to a customer complaint may result in customer retention, especially if the response provides a good outcome for the customer. If a customer writes to a company complaining about a missing product, it could respond with a voucher for a free product to replace the one the customer didn't receive initially. Customers may respond positively to apology letters that involve free products or reimbursement. Consider carefully planning what you can offer a customer while writing your customer complaint response letter.

2) Opportunities to receive feedback

Customer retention and happiness are important to a business, customer complaints can help a company improve. Sometimes customer complaints or suggestions offer more detailed data than those found in customer surveys. This makes any customer feedback, even in the form of a customer complaint, very valuable to a company's growth and development. Consider taking the words of a complaint seriously and thanking a customer for their time in providing their thoughts and feelings about an incident.

3) Increased chances to advertise your company's goodwill

A well-written and orchestrated response to your customer complaints may result in increased marketability for your company. For example, suppose you've received a complaint about an empty package that was supposed to contain a product upon delivery to your customer. As a response and

apology, your company sends a well-written response in addition to an improved version of the product the customer originally purchased. The customer seems very satisfied and posts this response letter to social media. Users who see it may view your company as good-natured and generous, making your response a marketing attempt in multiple ways. Consider writing your response letter as if it were being presented to your entire customer base.

C. How To Write A Strong Customer Complaint Response

When writing a customer complaint response letter, consider following these steps:

1) Read the entire complaint letter

Before you begin writing your response letter, consider reading the entirety of the complaint letter as carefully as possible. Including details from a customer's complaint in your letter may encourage customer retention as a result of your response. By restating the problem, customers may feel validated in their feelings of frustration. Additionally, ensuring you understand all aspects of the customer's complaint may make writing the response a faster process.

2) Apologize for the inconvenience

As you begin your letter, consider making the apology for the inconvenience a priority. It may even be a good opening line to use in your response letter. The more genuine the apology is to the customer, the more it may help improve your chances of customer retention.

3) Explain what may have caused the inconvenience

Customers may feel more satisfied if they understand why the situation resulted in an inconvenience for them. In as much detail as possible, consider explaining the process behind why the customer encountered this inconvenience. If you don't know why, try explaining your best estimation as to why the problem occurred.

4) Propose an actionable, detailed solution

One of the most important aspects of a customer complaint response letter is the action that the company promises to take as compensation to the customer. This can include many things, such as:

- a) An invitation to call regarding the issue
- b) An offer to replace a missing product
- c) A rescheduling of the service
- d) A refund of the product or service

More important than the promise, however, is if the promise is actionable. Ensure any promise you make to the customer can be fulfilled and that your company can do it as soon as possible.

5) Explain how you can improve the customer's experience in the future

After ensuring that your company will resolve the situation, the next immediate step would be to detail how your company plans to improve the customer's experience in the future. The more details you can provide regarding the future of an improved customer experience, the more meaningful your response will feel.

6) Offer an incentive

If possible, offer an incentive to your customer in your response letter. This can be anything from a discount for a product subscription to an upgrade to a better version of a product. Incentives are a great way to encourage a customer's response and may even cause the customer to promote your product by telling others about your company's response.

7) Encourage customer response

To conclude your letter, encourage the customer to respond with any questions or concerns they may still have about your product or the situation. By ensuring your customer that you are open for further conversation, you may appear amicable and helpful to your customer.

8) Reply to any follow-up letters or questions

Consider replying to any further letters your customer sends. Replying quickly and genuinely shows your customers that your company appreciates them.

D. Tips For Responding To Customer Complaints

When writing your customer complaint response letter, consider the following tips:

1) Use the customer's name

Directly addressing your customer helps you appear more personable and less like a company representative. Consider using the customer's name during your response to establish a personal relationship early on in your letter.

2) Reference the complaint letter when needed

An advantage of writing your response letter with the complaint letter within view is the fact that you can refer to it at any time. This is helpful for the purposes of fact-checking and ensuring that you've addressed everything the customer had concerns about.

3) Keep your customer's position in mind

One helpful tactic that may help you write a good customer complaint response letter is by keeping the customer's position in mind. If your customer is an important stakeholder, you may need to take extra consideration when writing your letter. Stakeholders often have very important parts in your business activities, so because this type of customer is already familiar with your company, a shorter, more formal response letter may show that you respect them and their time. For a customer you have never personally interacted with before, your letter may benefit from taking a friendly tone.

Try to view things from the customer's perspective If a customer has experienced a major inconvenience on the company's behalf or due to a company-related issue, try to empathize with their point of view while writing your response letter. Viewing the situation from their perspective may help you relate to their emotions, which can increase the likelihood of a satisfied customer.

4) Respond as promptly as possible

Customers are more likely to respond well to a complaint response if they receive answers quickly. Ensuring your response is as prompt as possible without compromising the integrity of the response may lead to greater customer satisfaction. Responding quickly to an issue shows the customer that the company values their time.

E. Step-by-Step How to Write a Complaint letter

- 1) If you agree that the complaint is justified (even if only in part), say so, and express your desire to correct the problem. If you do not agree with the complaint, politely thank the writer for bringing the problem to your attention.

Example Sentences for Step 1:

- a. We are sorry to hear of your dissatisfaction with your new iron. We make every effort to be fair in the replacement or repair of defective merchandise in accordance with the terms of our limited warranty.
 - b. Thanks for caring enough to point out what is happening in the front office. I appreciate your informing me of the problem.
 - c. I am sorry that our misunderstanding has caused you so much concern and am glad that I now have a chance to set the record straight.
- 2) Explain what you have done or plan to do to resolve the complaint, or explain why you are unable to resolve it.

Example Sentences for Step 2 :

- a. **We are sorry, but we no longer make the 4GS model. The machine you purchased is not covered by the same warranty as the newer digital models**
 - b. **We would be happy to either replace the clock, give you a full refund, or credit your account with the amount of the purchase. Please let us know by mail or telephone which of these options you prefer.**
 - c. **Our service representative makes calls every weekday. He will call for an appointment on Monday and then determine whether the machine requires only minor adjustments. Otherwise, we will replace it without charge.**
- 3) Close with an expression of good will.

Example Sentences for Step 3:

- a. **Please let us know if this will be satisfactory.**
- b. **We apologize for the misunderstanding and look forward to serving you for many years to come.**
- c. **Please assure the president that we intend to work this out as soon as possible. We will send you a report soon.**
- d. **We appreciate your concern, and hope that these actions will meet with your approval.**

Use a polite, understanding tone. Don't argue. Even if you do not agree with the complaint, and can do nothing about it, a considerate response will often help soothe an irate client

Conclusion

In the end, we may come from a bad place of dissatisfied state that is why we have come to write a letter of complaint. To sum up, Complaint Letter is a submission of complaints for dissatisfaction, discomfort from the services provided. We can write a Complaint Letter to a company to give feedback for the dissatisfied with the services provided.

So that your complaint letter can on record with the company, helps preserve any legal rights you may have in the situation, and lets the company know you're serious about pursuing the complaints, and with professional complaint letter you can more easily explain the problem that you have to the company in detail, and you can explain what solution you want for the company to solve the problem.

The function of a complaint letter is to change an unacceptable situation. Writing a letter takes more time than making a phone call. People who know this letter of complaint. Instead, they read letters of complaint, unlike voice mails, which are often ignored. A letter of complaint is very useful in the business world, it can improve the quality of performance or product. Explain the problem. The complaint letter clearly describes the problem and tells the receiving party to take responsibility. This is very helpful in business to provide satisfaction to customers

Reference

- Acquaire. 2018. Customer complaint response email template, Acquire.io, San Fransisco.
- British Council. 2020. A response to a complaint, Learnenglish.britishcouncil.org.
- Federal Trade Comission. 2019. Sample customer complaint, Consumer.ftc.gov.
- Formplus. 2020. How to write a complaint letter, Formpl.
- Labibah I. A. 2021. Definition, Structure, and Examples of Complaint Letters in English. Scholars English.
- Prasanna. 2021. Complaint letter format, Aplus Topper.
- Ruchika Gupta. 2020. Learn English writing skills Complaint Letter, SuccessCDs.
- Scribendi. 2020. Articles example complaint letter, Scribendi.
- Triana M. 2016. *Order Letter and Complaint Letter*, WordPress, Depok.
- WikiHow. 2016. How to write a complaint letter to a company, WikiHow.
- Walter E., 2008, *Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, Third Edition, Cambridge University Press, United

Kingdom.