

# **Adjustment Letter (AL)**

## **Reply to a Complaint letter**

### **Problem questions:**

- 1. Opening**
- 2. Asking for time to investigate the complaint**
- 3. Explaining the mistake**
- 4. Solving the problem**
- 5. Rejecting a complaint**
- 6. Closing**

- **Adjustment letter should always be courteous;**
- **Even if the sellers think that the complaint is unfounded they should not say so until they have good and reliable grounds on which to repudiate the claim.**
- **All complaints must be treated as serious matters and thoroughly investigated.**
- **If the sellers are the first to discover that a mistake has been made they should not wait for a complaint.**

- On receiving a complaint the sellers will make investigations, and if the complaint is justified they will at once apologize to the buyers and suggest a solution. If the buyers have offered to keep the goods, the sellers will probably agree to this and to a price reduction.
- The amount of the reduction will depend on how bad the mistake is. In some cases a substantial reduction is of more advantage to the sellers than the expense and trouble of having the goods returned to them.

- There is no need for the seller to go into a long story of how the mistake was made.
- A short explanation may be useful but the buyers are not interested in hearing how or why the error occurred but only in having the matter put right.
- In no case should the sellers blame their staff; it should be a point of honour with a firm never to blame its employees when writing replies to complaints: the firm has undertaken the work and the staff are part of the firm, so their sole aim is to put the trouble right and restore good relations with their customers.

## USEFUL PHRASES: OPENING

- Acknowledge that you have received the complaint, and thank your customer for informing you.
  - *Thank you for your letter of 6 August informing us that...*
  - *We would like to thank you for informing us of our accounting error in your letter of 7 June.*
  - *We are replying to your letter of 10 march in which you told us that ...*

# Opening phrases

- 1. **We are concerned to learn from your letter of ... that the goods sent under your order number... did not reach you until...**
- 2. **We are sorry that you have experienced delays in that delivery of...**
- 3. We note with regret that you are not satisfied with the goods supplied to your order of...
- 4. Thank you for your letter of... which has given us the opportunity to rectify most unfortunate mistake.
- 5. We wish to apologize for the unfortunate mistake pointed out in your letter of...

# Asking for time to investigate the complaint:

Sometimes you can't deal with a complaint immediately, as the matter needs to be looked into.

Do not leave your customer waiting but tell them that you are doing straight away. In this case an email or fax message is appropriate as the customer then knows that you have received the complaint and are doing something about it.

- ***As we are sending out orders promptly, I think these delays may be occurring during transit. I shall get in touch with the haulage contractors.***
- ***Would you please return samples of the items you are dissatisfied with, and I will send them to our factory in Düsseldorf for tests.***
  - ***While we cannot give you an explanation at present, we are looking into the problem and will contact you again shortly.***

## Explaining the mistake:

- If the complaint is justified, explain how the mistake has occurred but do not blame your staff. You employed them, so you are responsible for their actions.
- ***The mistake was due to a fault in one of our machines, which has now been corrected.***
- ***There appears to have been some confusion in our addressing system, but this has been sorted out.***

## Solving the problem:

- Having acknowledged your responsibility and explained what went wrong, you should put matters right as soon as possible, and tell your customer that you are doing so.
- ***We have now checked our accounts and found out that we have been sending you the wrong statement due to confusion in names and addresses. The database has been adjusted and there should be no more difficulties. Please contact us again if a similar situation arise and thank you again for pointing out the error.***

- ***The fabric you complained about has now been withdrawn. The fault was in the weave of the cloth, which was due to a programming error in the weaving machines. This has now been corrected and replacement fabric will be sent to you.***
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# REJECTING (отклонение, отрицание) A COMPLAINT

- If you think the complaint is unjustified, you can be firm but polite in your answer. But even if you deny responsibility, you should always try to give an explanation of the problem:
- *We have closely compared the articles you returned with our samples and can see no difference between them. Therefore, in the case we are not willing either to substitute the articles or to offer a credit.*

- ***Our factory has now inspected the unit you returned last week, and they inform us that the circuits were overloaded. We can repair the machine, but it will be necessary to charge you as incorrect use of units is not covered by our guarantee.***
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## CLOSING:

- It is useful when closing your letter to mention the mistake, error, fault is an exception, and it either rarely or never happens. You should also apologize for the inconvenience your customer experienced:
- In closing we would like to apologize for the inconvenience, and also point out that this type of fault rarely occurs in the Omega 2000.
- Finally, may we say that this was an exceptional mistake and is unlikely to occur again. Please accept our apologies for the inconvenience.

- Replacements for the faulty articles are on their way to you, and you should receive them tomorrow. We are sure that you will be satisfied with them and there will be no repetition of the faults. Thank you for your patience in this matter, and we look forward to hearing from you soon again.
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# Closing phrases

- 1. We assure you that we are doing all we can to speed delivery and offer our apologies for inconveniences this delay is causing you.
- 2. We hope you will be satisfied with the arrangements we have made.
- 3. We apologize once again for the unfortunate mistake and can assure you that a similar incident will not occur again.

- Dear Mr Crane

Thank you for informing us about the damage to our consignment (Inv.No.1887).

From our previous transactions you will realize that this sort of problem is quite unusual. Nevertheless, we are sorry about the inconvenience it has caused you.

Please would you return the whole consignment to us, postage and packing forward, and we will ask the shipping company to inspect the damage so they can arrange compensation. It is unlikely that our insurance company needs to be troubled with this case.

If you want us to send you another shipment as per your order No.1447, please let us know. We have the garments in stock and it would be no trouble to send them within the next fortnight.

# Getting feedback

- What is an Adjustment letter?
  - What should the sellers do on receiving a complain letter?
  - Should the sellers put the blame on the staff?
  - What points are to be discussed in the body of the Adjustment letter?
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