

## A response to a complaint

Learn how to write a response to a complaint.

### Before reading

Do the preparation task first. Then read the text and tips and do the exercises.

### Preparation task

Match the definitions (a–f) with the vocabulary (1–6).

#### Vocabulary

1. .... to assure
2. .... to ensure
3. .... to take something on board
4. .... a policy
5. .... to state
6. .... a quote

#### Definition

- a. to say something formally
- b. to tell someone something confidently so they don't worry
- c. a statement of how much something will cost
- d. to listen to and accept a suggestion
- e. a document that shows your agreement with an insurance company
- f. to make certain that something will happen

### Reading text: A response to a complaint

**To:** pierre\_houches@me.com

**From:** Customer Service Team – TC Insurance

**Subject:** Your recent policy renewal

Dear Mr Houches,

Thank you for your recent renewal of your insurance policy with Top Car Insurance.

It has been brought to our attention that at the end of your renewal call you registered a complaint and stated that you were dissatisfied with the service you had received.

We value your custom and I assure you that we take all customer feedback seriously. On behalf of the company I would like to apologise for the length of time it took for you to receive your final quote for this renewal. I am also sorry for the inconvenience caused when the discounts you received were not automatically applied.

We have taken your suggestions on board and will review our renewals process for existing customers. We understand your point that the process should not take as long for existing customers as for new customers buying a new policy.

In appreciation of the many years you have been a customer of Top Car Insurance we are happy to refund you the difference in price between your new and your previous premium, i.e. £73.20. I have also made a note on your account to ensure that your next renewals process will run more smoothly for you.

We value your feedback and will use it to improve our service.

We trust that you will find this a satisfactory response to your complaint and that this correspondence will bring this matter to a close. However, should you wish to discuss this matter further, please let us know how best to contact you.

With kind regards,

Rowena Harrod

Customer Service Team

.....

## Tips

1. Use a formal register.
2. Choose vocabulary that is more objective and reduces negative emotions where possible, e.g. *dissatisfied* rather than *unhappy/upset*, *inconvenience* rather than *trouble/problem*.
3. Acknowledge the complaint and show you understand the problem. Focus on the facts and avoid making excuses or placing blame on individual people.
4. Apologise and explain what steps will be taken to ensure it doesn't happen again.
5. Emphasise the positive relationship with the customer:  
*We value your custom ... / feedback ...*  
*In appreciation of the many years you have been a customer ...*  
*We are happy to ...*  
*We trust that you will ...*
6. Offer some kind of solution or compensation if appropriate.

## Tasks

### Task 1

Write a number (1–5) to put the parts of the email in order.

\_\_\_\_\_ Acknowledge the validity of the complaint and say what you'll do internally.

\_\_\_\_\_ Close the issue.

\_\_\_\_\_ Start by thanking the customer for their custom or for their feedback.

\_\_\_\_\_ Reiterate the complaint and apologise on behalf of the company.

\_\_\_\_\_ Offer some compensation or benefit.

**Task 2**

Circle the best option for a formal response to a complaint.

1. Which option is best?
  - a. I heard you were not happy with the service you received.
  - b. It has been brought to my attention that you were dissatisfied with the service you received.
  
2. Which option is best?
  - a. We value your custom.
  - b. We're really pleased you shop with us.
  
3. Which option is best?
  - a. I promise you that we take a lot of notice of our customers.
  - b. I assure you that we take all customer feedback seriously.
  
4. Which option is best?
  - a. I would like to apologise on behalf of the company for any inconvenience caused.
  - b. My colleagues and I are really sorry you had such a nightmare.
  
5. Which option is best?
  - a. We have taken your suggestions on board and will review this process for the future.
  - b. We like your ideas and we might use them in future to improve this process.
  
6. Which option is best?
  - a. We are happy to refund you the difference in price.
  - b. We accept that we will have to refund you the difference in price.
  
7. Which option is best?
  - a. We hope this is all OK for you now.
  - b. We trust that you will find this a satisfactory response.
  
8. Which option is best?
  - a. Should you wish to discuss this matter further, please let us know how best to contact you.
  - b. Don't be shy! Call or email me if there's anything else you need.

**Task 3**

Complete the sentences.

apologise	brought	feedback	wish
dissatisfied	value	quote	board
happy	ensure	matter	policies

1. It has been ..... to our attention that you were ..... with the service.
2. We ..... your custom and I assure you that we take all customer ..... seriously.
3. I would like to ..... for the length of time it took for you to receive your final .....
4. We have taken your suggestions on ..... and we have taken steps to ..... that this does not happen again.
5. We are ..... to refund you the price difference between the two .....
6. However, should you ..... to discuss this ..... further, please let us know.

**Discussion**

Do you have any tips for dealing with customer complaints?

## Answers

### Preparation task

1. b
2. f
3. d
4. e
5. a
6. c

### Task 1

1. Start by thanking the customer for their custom or for their feedback.
2. Reiterate the complaint and apologise on behalf of the company.
3. Acknowledge the validity of the complaint and say what you'll do internally.
4. Offer some compensation or benefit.
5. Close the issue.

### Task 2

1. b
2. a
3. b
4. a
5. a
6. a
7. b
8. a

### Task 3

1. brought | dissatisfied
2. value | feedback
3. apologise | quote
4. board | ensure
5. happy | policies
6. wish | matter