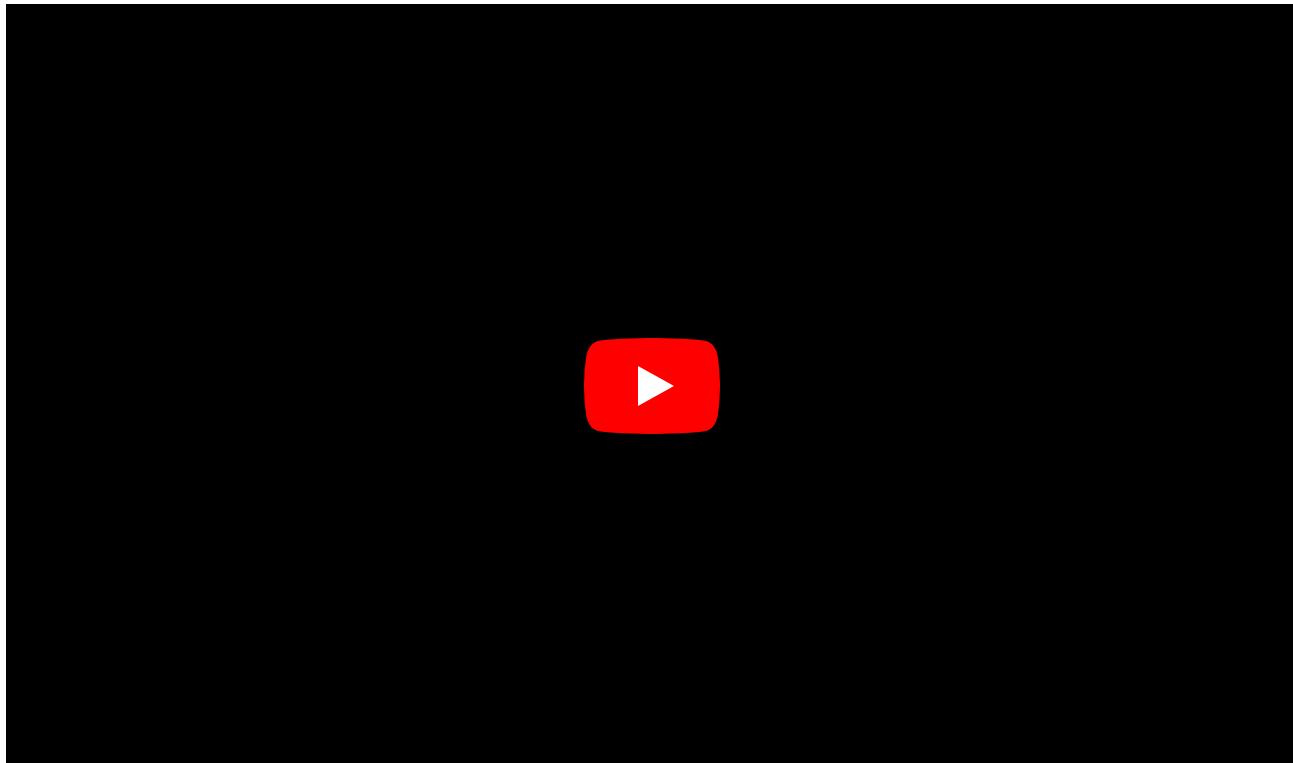


# Unit 5.

## Dealing with complaints



## How to deal with complaints





The customer isn't upset with you, they're upset with the situation. Don't take it personally.



- Empathy
- Listening with an open mind
- Expressing your understanding
- Acknowledge their problem



Defuse customer's frustration (restar tensión)  
Let them vent (desahogarse)  
Try not to interrupt or contradict them.



Remove the focus from yourself and focus on the customer.  
Stay detached



The goal is to calm the customer down, so you can look for a solution.



Attitude of caring and concern

Listen and respond with empathy

## CUSTOMER COMPLAINTS

### A guide for small businesses

Many business people regard a customer complaint as a negative experience. However, if your business handles complaints properly, previously unhappy customers may start singing your praises. Consider a complaint as one of the best opportunities you have to show your commitment to creating another satisfied customer. Customer loyalty is one of the biggest assets a business has; fight for this loyalty - be passionate about it!

Complaints should be handled sympathetically and promptly. Some businesses believe that if they don't receive many complaints, their customers must be satisfied. Wrong! Only a few customers will complain to you. The majority will not return to your business and will tell others of their bad experience.

### WHY SHOULD YOUR BUSINESS WELCOME COMPLAINTS?

Some published statistics say that:

- a typical business hears from only 4% of its dissatisfied customers; the other 96% just go quietly away and 91% of them will never come back;
- a typical dissatisfied customer tells more than 8 people about his or her problem;
- 7 out of 10 complaining customers will do business with you again if you resolve the complaint favourably.

### HANDLING COMPLAINTS

Try putting the following points into practice:

- Set up a complaints handling system and train your staff to handle complaints well;
- Make it easy for customers to lodge a complaint;
- Welcome customer complaints and deal with complaints promptly.

## Reading

Find words and phrases in the text which mean:



1. take action in order to solve a problem (two synonyms):
2. showing your approval (idiom):
3. willingness to give your time and energy to something (noun):
4. useful qualities or advantages (plural noun):
5. repeatedly purchasing goods or services from one company; not changing for another company (phrase):
6. immediately (adverb):
7. not satisfied (adjective):
8. to your advantage (adverb):
9. make an official complaint (phrase):

## Listening

Listen to four dialogues. Which complaint/excuse did you hear in each dialogue?

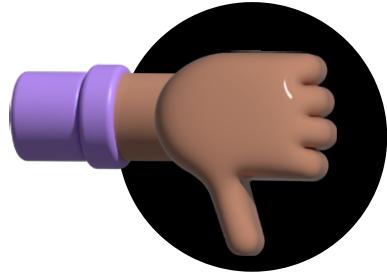
What action was decided on in each dialogue?

Audio player -  
[Linguahouse.com](http://Linguahouse.com)

null

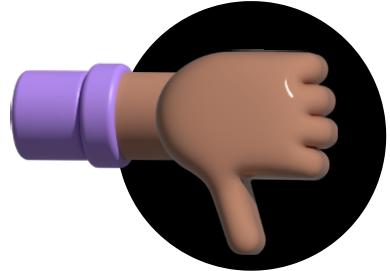
Linguahouse





**Put the expressions into the correct categories below:**

1. MAKING A COMPLAINT:
2. APOLOGIZING AND EXPLAINING:
3. GETTING MORE INFORMATION:
4. PROMISING ACTION:



**Put the expressions into the correct categories below:**

1. **MAKING A COMPLAINT:** 1, 4, 10
2. **APOLOGIZING AND EXPLAINING:** 2,7,9,11,13
3. **GETTING MORE INFORMATION:** 5,6
4. **PROMISING ACTION:** 3,8,12,14



## Steps

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1. Listen
2. Empathise
3. Thank the customer for the opportunity to solve the problem
4. Find a solution
5. Deliver on your promise
6. Follow up



## To start:

- I understand...
- Yes, I see...
- Could you tell me a little more about why/how/what happened...?
- Could you clarify what you mean when you say...?
- Can you tell me exactly what happened...?
- I'd like to summarize the situation to make sure I understand everything correctly.

## Useful expressions

### To apologize:

- I'm really sorry to hear that. I understand how difficult/frustrating/disappointing that would be.
- I sincerely apologize. We/I/The company would like to repair the damage (or resolve the situation).
- I apologize for the inconvenience/the problem.
- I'm terribly sorry. We will work to resolve the problem immediately.
- We are going to solve this/take care of it as quickly as possible.



## Take action:

## Useful expressions

- Let me talk with ... to see what we can offer you to amend the situation. Would it be okay if I call you back in a few hours with a solution?
- We will send a repair person immediately (or as soon as possible). Let me confirm your location.
- I'd be happy to walk through all the steps you need to repair the issue. (Common for software problems or technical problems discussed over the phone)
- We'll issue a refund immediately to resolve the issue.
- Let me check with the manufacturer (or the shippers, the programmers, etc.) to see what happened so we can fix this. I will get back to you as soon as I know what happened.
- Let me review this situation so I can identify the best solution. I will get back to you within 24 hours.
- Let me discuss this with my manager/supervisor/sale team and get back to you later today with a solution.



## Follow up:

Follow-up after you resolve the problem to make sure the customer is satisfied. You can follow-up with a quick phone call or email message.

- I just wanted to follow-up with you regarding [the problem] – is the issue fixed?
- Did everything work out ok with [the solution to the problem]? I just want to make sure you are satisfied.
- Was the problem resolved successfully? Is there anything else we can help you with?
- Was everything satisfactory? Do you have any other concerns?
- Please be sure to let us know how we can help you if any other issues occur.