

# 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 customers' complaints and deal with complaints **promptly**.

## EXERCISES

### 1. Find words and phrases in the text which mean:

- Take action in order to solve a problem (**two possible words**):
- Showing your approval (**idiom**):
- Willingness to give your time and energy to something (**noun**):
- Useful qualities or advantages (**plural noun**):
- Repeatedly purchasing goods or services from one company, not changeling for another company (**phrase**):
- Immediately (**adverb**):
- Not satisfied (**adjective**):
- To your advantage (**adverb**):
- Make an official complaints (**phrase**):

## 2. Listen to two dialogues.

- Which complaint did you hear in each dialogue?
- What action was decided to follow on each dialogue?

	COMPLAINT	SOLUTION
Dialogue 1		
Dialogue 2		
Dialogue 3		
Dialogue 4		

## 3. Listen again and complete the sentences.

- I'm **afraid** we **have a problem with** your latest delivery.
- I'm very **sorry** about that. I'm afraid our driver was d\_\_\_\_\_ at the border again.
- Leave it w\_\_\_\_\_ me. I will l\_\_\_\_\_ i\_\_\_\_\_ the matter.
- I'm **calling because** we **have a problem** with our order.
- What **seems** to be the problem?
- In what w\_\_\_\_\_ are they d\_\_\_\_\_?
- I'm very sorry. This has never **happened** before. It must be **due** to bad handling.
- If you s\_\_\_\_\_ us back the d\_\_\_\_\_ sets, we'll send you r\_\_\_\_\_ immediately and give you a d\_\_\_\_\_ on your next order.
- I **apologize** again for any **inconvenience** caused.
- I'm **calling** about a **mistake** on our invoice. It **looks** like you have **overcharged** us by 50p.
- I'm sorry about this. Our accounts department m\_\_\_\_\_ h\_\_\_\_\_ made a small mistake when they processed your order.
- We'll i\_\_\_\_\_ a c\_\_\_\_\_ invoice immediately.
- I'm very sorry madam, we are r\_\_\_\_\_ s\_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ at the moment.
- Please **wait** here and I'll **find staff** to help you.