

# Handling Customer Complaints



## Exercise 1

### Vocabulary

#### 1. violate

Verb

**'vareɪ, leɪt**

to break or disregard a law, promise, or rule

He was arrested for violating the law.

#### 2. decent

Adjective

**'di:sənt**

considered to be moral, good and/or reasonable

For example: Donating blood is a very decent thing to do.

#### 3. identify

Verb

**aɪ'dentə, faɪ**

to establish someone's identity; to recognize a person  
For example: He identified himself as a security officer.

#### **4.compensate**

Verb

**'kɑ:mpən,seɪt**

to make satisfactory payment or reparation to someone for specific unpleasant experiences he/she had to endure

For example: The company had to compensate for the damage caused by its factory.

#### **5.complaint**

Noun

**kəm'pleɪnt**

a statement a person makes when he/she is unsatisfied with a service or product

For example: She had a serious complaint.

#### **6.intern**

Noun

**'ɪntərn**

a person who is training on the job, often unpaid

For example: The intern is receiving training on the job.

## **Exercise 2**

# **Useful Expressions**

- What seems to be the problem exactly?
- Would you mind giving me some more details?
- I'm terribly sorry about that.
- I'm very sorry for the inconvenience.
- Thank you so much for letting us know about this.

- I completely understand how you feel.
- I understand your position.
- I'm going to see how we can make this better for you.
- Please rest assured that...
- We will make sure that/ensure that...
- To make up for this/To compensate you for...
- Due to the inconvenience we have caused you...
- I would like to offer...
- Would you possibly be willing to accept...?

### Exercise 3

## Dialogue Practice

Read the dialogue aloud with your partner.

The secretary of Golden Shoes is dealing with a complaint.



Good morning! Golden Shoes, the secretary speaking. How may I help you?



I want to talk to the company manager.



I am sorry, but he is out of the office today. Would you like to leave a message? Or, perhaps I can be of assistance?



Well, maybe you can. I want to make a **complaint** about one of your workers. He was terribly rude and unprofessional.



I am very sorry to hear that. *Would you mind giving me some more details?* What happened exactly?



Yesterday I was in one of your shops. I was trying on some shoes and I wanted to ask the salesperson a few questions, but he had his earphones on and was listening to music. He could barely hear when I called him!



*I'm terribly sorry about that.* That kind of behavior is unacceptable and it will not be tolerated. *Thank you so much for letting us know about this.* May I ask for the address of the shop to **identify** the worker?



It was the shop on the corner of Crimson Street. But that's not the end of the story! When he packed the shoes I purchased, he placed two shoes of different sizes in the box! I only noticed it when I came back home. So I went back to the store to return them and to get the right size, but he said that my size was out of stock!



*I completely understand how you feel, sir, and I'm very sorry for the inconvenience.* It seems that we have an **intern** working in that shop. *Please rest assured that* he will be sanctioned for **violating** our rules and regulations. I would like to apologize on his behalf, and on the behalf of the company. We will refund the full price of the shoes you purchased. Also, to **compensate** for this, *I would like to offer* you a 20% discount on any item that you choose in any of our shops.



All right, thank you. I am glad to see that at least your management team is doing a **decent** job.

### Check your understanding:

1. Why did the customer call the Golden Shoes company?
2. What did he complain about?
3. How did the secretary handle the complaint?

### Exercise 4

## Role Play

Role-play the following situation with your partner.

### Situation

You are working in a travel agency. An angry customer calls you to make a **complaint about one of the tour guides**. Try to **calm the customer, apologize** and **offer appropriate compensation**. Your partner will act as the customer. You may use the following expressions:

- What seems to be the problem exactly?
- I'm terribly sorry about that.
- I understand how you feel.
- We will make sure that...
- To compensate you for...

### Exercise 5

## Discussion

1. Have you ever had to deal with an angry customer? How did it go?
2. What do you think are the best practices for handling customer complaints?
3. How can a company benefit from customer complaints?
4. Is it common in your country to complain about poor service? Why? Why not?