



ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF CUSTOMER COMPLAINT & GUIDE

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Sample Acknowledgment of Customer Complaint

1. Overview

Customer complaints are par for the course in business and the efficient handling of those complaints can be the difference between a company's success and failure. Mistakes may be inevitable, but dissatisfied customers are not.

A complaint can include any expression of dissatisfaction by customers about service or products that they have received. Careful management of these complaints can save companies, limiting the loss of goodwill associated with customers bad mouthing their organization. This may be of particular concern in the online business environment, in which one person's frustration can be communicated immediately around the world.

If you follow the suggestions provided, you will show consideration for all of your customers, establishing a tone of respect, increasing your efficiency, and laying the foundation for an ongoing business relationship. Ignoring your customers or treating them poorly will hurt your company. A well-constructed acknowledgment letter will allow you to maintain these relationships and build your business.

2. Do's & Don'ts Checklist

- Make sure customers know how and where to make complaints. The harder it is to provide feedback to your company, the less apparent it is that you are receptive to their concerns. This may compound the problem that the customer wanted to resolve.
- Institute a procedure for handling complaints. The purpose of the procedure should be both to provide dissatisfied customers with a means of resolving their issues and to allow the company to improve its performance or correct mistakes. Having a clear and consistent process will let you keep track of problems and address concerns quickly and efficiently.
- All complaints should be taken seriously and addressed immediately and thoroughly. Failure to address complaints can lead to bad word of mouth, which can have a significant detrimental effect on your business. In addition, for every one complaint you receive, there may be twenty or thirty other customers who have had the same experience. Addressing the problem and implementing a solution can prevent repetition of the same mistakes.
- Keep a record of all of the complaints you receive. Categorize each for resolution and record-keeping. Make sure the collective date is provided to managers and executives for purposes of both market research and evaluation of internal efficiency and effectiveness.
- Even if you disagree or dispute the claims of the customer, acknowledge his or her complaint and frustration. Most people who experience bad service or receive flawed products do not bother to file a complaint. If someone did take the time to complain, they probably have strong feelings and need some validation. Although the enclosed letter provides a good framework for a response, personalize the document to the specific incident and follow up with a phone call.

- Convey that your organization takes complaints seriously and that you are working to investigate and resolve the issue as quickly as possible. The tone of the letter is important – the customer is not in the wrong for making the complaint.
- Make it as easy as possible for your customer to navigate the complaint process and give consideration to their needs and frustrations. Passing the customer from one representative to another, having the complaint handled by multiple individuals, and forcing them to contact you at your convenience may make the resolution experience worse than the initial problem.
- Keep on file copies of all documents related to the complaint. If the matter escalates into a more formal dispute (e.g., arbitration, lawsuit, etc.), you'll want to have evidence that you attempted to resolve the matter reasonably and rapidly.
- Follow up is essential, both internally and externally. Make sure that the issues underlying the complaint have been resolved, and that the customer is satisfied with the outcome of the investigation. It's good to respond immediately to concerns, but failure to complete the promised review can dissipate any goodwill that you worked to build.

3. Acknowledgment of Customer Complaint Instructions

The following instructions will help you understand the terms of your sample letter. The numbers below correspond to numbers in the acknowledgment. Please review the entire letter before starting the step-by-step process.

1. Briefly describe the general nature of the customer's complaint. You'll have a chance to summarize your understanding of the issues more completely below.
2. Use the space provided to illustrate your understanding of the issues involved, and if applicable, the resolution sought by the customer. Try to be as thorough as possible. If the customer disagrees with your restatement of the problem, indicate how you should be contacted to correct this understanding.
3. This is an optional provision that allows you to describe any actions that you have already taken to address the customer's concerns. If you have not yet begun your investigation or efforts, you can delete this sentence.

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Form Sample

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF CUSTOMER COMPLAINT

[Date]

[Customer Name]

[Address]

[City, State, Zip]

Dear [Customer Name]

Option 1

We have received your [letter][message][e-mail] on _____, _____
regarding _____

❶. I am sorry to hear that you were dissatisfied with the [service][product] we provided.

We want to address your concerns as quickly as possible. To that end, please [call] [e-mail] me at [number][address] if the following summary of your complaint is accurate.