

Letters of complaint

Letters of complaint usually include the following stages:

- ✓ Background
- ✓ Problem - cause and effect
- ✓ Solution
- ✓ Warning (optional)
- ✓ Closing

1. Background

This section describes the situation; e.g.

- ✓ I am writing to inform you that the goods we ordered from your company have not been supplied correctly.
- ✓ I attended your exhibition Sound Systems 2008 at the Fortune Hotel (22-25 January) and found it informative and interesting. Unfortunately, my enjoyment of the event was spoiled by a number of organisational problems.
- ✓ I am a shareholder of Sunshine Bank and I am very concerned regarding recent newspaper reports on the financial situation of the bank. Your company is listed as the auditor in the latest annual report of the bank, so I am writing to you to ask for an explanation of the following issues.
- ✓ I am writing to inform you of my dissatisfaction with the food and drinks at the 'European Restaurant' on 18 January this year.

Problem

Cause:

- ✓ On 14 November 2008 we placed an order with your firm for 12,000 ultra super long-life batteries. The consignment arrived yesterday but contained only 1,200 batteries.
- ✓ Firstly, I had difficulty in registering to attend the event. You set up an on-line registration facility, but I found the facility totally unworkable.
- ✓ You sent us an invoice for £10,532, but did not deduct our usual 10% discount.
- ✓ We have found 16 spelling errors and 2 mis-labelled diagrams in the sample book.

Effect:

- ✓ This error put our firm in a difficult position, as we had to make some emergency purchases to fulfil our commitments to all our customers. This caused us considerable inconvenience.
- ✓ Even after spending several wasted hours trying to register in this way, the computer would not accept my application.
- ✓ I am therefore returning the invoice to you for correction.
- ✓ This large number of errors is unacceptable to our customers, and we are therefore unable to sell these books.

2. Solution

- ✓ I am writing to ask you to please make up the shortfall immediately and to ensure that such errors do not happen again.
- ✓ Could I please ask you to look into these matters.

- ✓ Please send us a corrected invoice for £9,479
- ✓ I enclose a copy of the book with the errors highlighted. Please re-print the book and send it to us by next Friday.

3. Warning (optional)

- ✓ Otherwise, we may have to look elsewhere for our supplies.
- ✓ I'm afraid that if these conditions are not met, we may be forced to take legal action.
- ✓ If the outstanding fees are not paid by Tuesday, 2 December 2008, you will incur a 10% late payment fee.

4. Closing

- ✓ I look forward to receiving your explanation of these matters.
- ✓ I look forward to receiving your payment.
- ✓ I look forward to hearing from you shortly.

Politeness

The tone of complaint letters should not be aggressive or insulting, as this would annoy the reader and not encourage them to solve the problem. In addition, questions such as 'Why can't you get this right?' should not be included.

Content

- ✓ The content should contain enough details so that the receiver does not have to write back requesting more.
- ✓ Legal action is not normally threatened in the first letter of complaint, unless situation is very serious.

Here you have an example:

Fortune Goods
317 Orchard Road
Singapore

21 November 2008

Attn: Mr David Choi
Sales Manager
Everlong Batteries
171 Choi Hung Road
Hung Hom
Hong Kong

Dear Mr Choi

Re. Order No. 768197

I am writing to inform you that the goods we ordered from your company have not been supplied correctly.

On 14 November 2008 we placed an order with your firm for 12,000 ultra super long-life batteries. The consignment arrived yesterday but contained only 1,200 batteries.

This error put our firm in a difficult position, as we had to make some emergency purchases to fulfil our commitments to all our customers. This caused us considerable inconvenience.

I am writing to ask you to please make up the shortfall immediately and to ensure that such errors do not happen again. Otherwise, we may have to look elsewhere for our supplies.

I look forward to hearing from you by return.

Yours sincerely

J. Wong

J. Wong
Purchasing Officer

