

## I. BUSINESS FOCUS

Once you have discussed the complaint with your partners it is time to send them a letter of adjustment confirming your telephone conversation.

1. ✍️ *A letter of adjustment usually comprises the following elements:*

- ✓ Introductory sentence with acknowledgement of complaint letter/call and problem
- ✓ Explanation of why difficulties have arisen and apology
- ✓ Comment on the customer's suggestions of how to solve the problem
- ✓ Agreement on one of the customer's suggestions or a new suggestion for further procedure
- ✓ Schedule for making up for the inconvenience caused
- ✓ Hope for further business in the future
- ✓ Closing sentence

*Can you identify these elements in the extracts from adjustment letters below? Can you supply the missing parts?*

Dear Mr. Brankovich,

Thank you for your letter of (date)./ I am writing with reference to our phone call on the (date).

We are sorry that we were unable to dispatch your consignment on the agreed dates. Due to a major outbreak of viral flu in our area we have been faced with serious staff problems causing delays in all sectors and making it impossible for us to meet all the deadlines.

To ensure that this does not happen again, we have hired temporary workers and placed your order on the priority list.

We appreciate your patience. Your business is important to us, and we hope that this incident will not hurt our relationship.

Dear Ms Gross,

Thank you for your letter of (date)./ I am writing with reference to our recent phone conversation.

We are very sorry that the consignment of telephones you purchased is causing difficulties. Our products are tested thoroughly before shipping, and it is indeed a rare instance when defective items are found.


To date we have provided for a replacement shipment as agreed in our telephone conversation. If you need further assistance, please call us at 555-5555. We want you to be a satisfied Primko customer.

Dear Mr Muratti,

Thank you for your letter of 5 December in which you pointed out that four mistakes totalling € 528.00 had been made on your invoice.


We apologize for the errors which were due to a fault in our computer. The problem has now been removed. We have enclosed another invoice which indicates the correct sum total amounting to € 45,528.00.

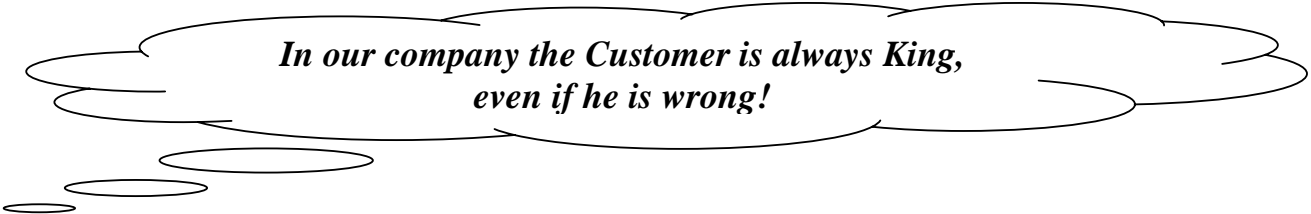
Yours sincerely,

2.  Here are a few questions about adjustments. See if you can answer them from your experience:

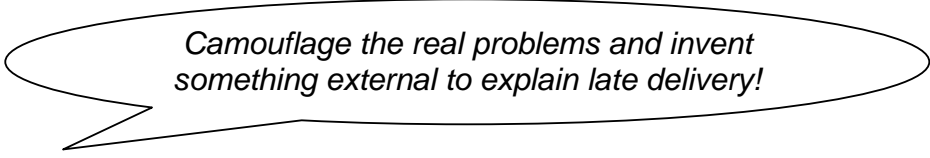
- What can go wrong in letters of adjustment? What would be the worst case?
- What kinds of complaint can you imagine and what kind of adjustment would be appropriate?
- Complaints about poor service are common. How can the seller best respond to such complaints? Is the customer always king?
- Who writes adjustments in companies? How big a part will the Financial Department play?
- Are adjustments best dealt with by letter in all situations? Can you think of situations where the phone would be more appropriate? Or fax or e-mail?

## II. INTERCULTURAL ASPECTS

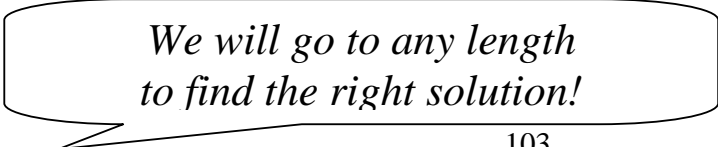
1.  Discuss the following suggestions which show the company's attitude to adjustments.
- How typical are they in your culture?
  - Are they typical of certain fields of business?



*In our company the Customer is always King,  
even if he is wrong!*



*Camouflage the real problems and invent  
something external to explain late delivery!*



*We will go to any length  
to find the right solution!*

2. ✍️ Read the letters on the next two pages and compare them. Which one do you think would promote a better business relationship? Why?

TONUTTI Design Möbel  
Am Neumarkt 3  
D-50668 Köln  
Deutschland

Healthy Business Life Ltd.  
Novakova Rd 9  
1000 Pristan  
Slovenia

19/02/2004

Dear Ms. Tominc

We have received your letter in which you tell us that your delivery arrived 5 days late. We are very sorry about this and hope that it will not happen again.

We are glad that you have chosen our products for your new office and hope that you will be satisfied.

In your letter of 22<sup>nd</sup> January you requested information about conference room furniture. We are sorry but this type of furniture is unavailable, because we do not produce such goods.

As regards the telephone call, we should be glad if you can telephone us at 12.00 on 25<sup>th</sup> February.

Yours sincerely

Alessia Neukirchen

Beautiful Hotels Co.  
Freeland  
Telephone: ++ 543 222 222 2  
e-mail: nothere@freeland.net

Letter Ref. No.: PUR / CON / 02

Date: May 09, 2004

Best partners  
My street 13  
1100 Wronn

Dear Sir and Madam,

We are extremely sorry for the misunderstanding caused with respect to the visit to the city of Beauty Land. The required changes have been made to the plan. The final plan is as follows:

- Reservation has been confirmed at the Beautiful Hotel Shelter.
  - 10 Rooms - Single - \$994
  - Off-season discount of 19.8% on accommodation included.
  - Free access to library and Internet Connection are provided.
  
- In our sightseeing package we have included tours of Freeland, the venue for your conference, and Beauty Land. Details can be obtained from our Brochure. Please note the special points mentioned below:
  - The Reservation at the Beauty Hotel at Beauty Land has been cancelled.
  - Total Sightseeing costs have been fixed at \$425. This is not negotiable.

The total cost of the package now stands at \$1419, other conditions remaining same.


Looking forward to a fruitful business relationship with you.

Yours truly

Nadia Chaturvedi  
Manager  
Marketing

### III. BUSINESS COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

#### CASE STUDY

1.  You work in the Sales Department of Aryan Ethnics in Bhopal. Here is a letter of complaint forwarded to you by your boss, Mr Roger, with a short note from him. Read the letter and the note.

Swatch Imports  
Paradeplatz 24  
8000 Zurich  
Switzerland  
8 September 2002

Aryan Ethnics  
114 M P Nagar  
Bratun, M P  
India 5862012

Dear Mr Oberoi

I am writing with reference to order no. AS 675 which we received last Friday.

When we checked the items we noticed that 12 out of the 34 hand carved tables have scratches on them. It seems that the tables were not packed properly or not tested for quality before dispatch.

Please let us know what you intend to do about this matter.


I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely


Andreas Neier  
Purchase Manager

Mr Oberoi's accompanying note:


*I received this letter this morning. Surprisingly, last week we received a fax confirming that the goods had reached them in good condition!*  
*What should we do?*  
*Joe*

2.  Discuss the questions below in small groups.  
What will you do?

- a) Replace the tables?
- b) Ask the customer to return the tables so that you can repair them and send them back?
- c) Refund the money?
- d) Refuse to accept responsibility?
- e) Other solutions?

3.  Decide upon your option and discuss it with your group. Justify your position to the other groups.

#### **IV. BUSINESS SKILLS (WRITING)**

1.  In your group, draft a suitable reply to the letter of complaint from Switzerland. Use the structure suggested in II 2 above.

 Write a letter of adjustment to your partners and send it.