

How to manage customer complaints

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Learn how to deal with customer complaints and develop processes for your business.

When you have customers, it's likely that you will occasionally receive a customer complaint about a product or service your business provides. You could consider customer complaints a bad thing. However, if you handle it correctly, customer complaints are opportunities for your business to grow and develop.

A procedure allows your staff to handle customer complaints in a calm and professional manner. Your procedure needs to be accessible to all staff and easy to understand.

If you don't currently have a procedure in place, our 6 steps below will help you manage your customer complaints. These steps can form the basis of your procedure, but they are only a guide.

1. Talk and listen to your customer

More than anything, customers want to feel heard. Actively listen to them and develop a deep understanding of their complaint. You will build a strong relationship with your customer if you can show you genuinely care about their problems.

2. Make records

Keep a record of all the promises, agreements and undertakings you have with your customer. Clear, documented communication means you can refer back to it as a source of truth and avoid misunderstandings.

3. Ask for documentation

The best way to solve any issues is to understand the experience your customer had. Ask your customer if they can provide documents to help understand their issue.

Often customers will complain when returning items. If you make sure the process to return products is clear and available to customers, you're less likely to receive complaints.

Your business is legally bound by [Consumer Law](#), but you should have your own internal [procedures](#) to make returning goods more efficient. Just because a customer returns an item does not mean they won't buy from you again

4. Understand your legal obligations

Ensure that your business complies with the relevant laws and regulations to protect you and protect your customers.

[Learn more about fair trading for details on refunds, warranties, pricing and product compliance.](#)

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5. Follow up with your customer

Take time to follow-up with your customer after you have solved their problem. This provides you an additional opportunity to receive feedback on your process and how you and your staff handled their complaint. The feedback will help you improve your customer service in the future. Your customers will appreciate it if they see you act on their feedback.

Only a handful of customers complain. Most customers simply choose not to return. If you make it easier for customers to complain or provide feedback, more people may let you know about their experiences. This allows you to fix the problem before it becomes an issue for more customers.

6. Know your state or territory consumer complaint handling office

If you want more information, or can't solve the complaint yourself, contact your local consumer complain handling office:

- Australian Capital Territory - [Access Canberra](#)
- New South Wales - [NSW Fair Trading](#)
- Northern Territory - [Consumer Affairs](#)
- Queensland - [Office of Fair Trading](#)

- South Australia - [SA Government](#)
- Tasmania - [Consumer Affairs and Fair Trading](#)
- Victoria - [Consumer Affairs Victoria](#)
- Western Australia - [Department of Commerce](#)

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