

B _____ R _____
Dr. Dwayne Gremler
MKT 405
11/24/03

Company Complaint Letter and Response Analysis

My complaint letter was written to Verizon Wireless discussing my dissatisfaction with their customer service representatives. Verizon had an extremely difficult time clarifying my address and consistently sent my cell phone bill to my previous address. After the first time this mistake took place, I was not concerned with the matter. After multiple conversations with customer representatives at Verizon, I had assumed my new address was corrected in my records. However, when it happened again, two more times, and my bill was increased because of accused late fees, I began to get frustrated and irritated with Verizon's errors. Finding fault in Verizon's service, I then decided to stress this dissatisfaction through a formal complaint letter.

I had ultimately hoped that Verizon would send me a letter of apology admitting their mistakes. It would have been nice if they also offered me a discount on my next cell phone bill to make up for my time and energy to correct mistakes that were not mine. In response to my complaint letter I did not expect much from Verizon Wireless. I can honestly say they are not a company I would consider to take the time to sincerely restore confidence in me. Verizon has so many customers that it would take a lot of negative actions and word of mouth from me to hurt their company financially. I did expect, however, an apology from them and at the very least, my address to be corrected.

Verizon Wireless fortunately *did* respond to my complaint letter. Their response was done over the phone from a manager of the customer service division in Dublin, Ohio. The call occurred on September 23rd, 2003, twelve days after the complaint letter

was mailed. The female representative first started the conversation by apologizing for the miscommunication regarding my change in address. She then apologized for any inconveniences that this incident may have caused. She insisted on decreasing my worries by saying (twice) how this problem was resolved and it would certainly not happen again. The rep again apologized and said to feel free to call the customer service any time with questions or concerns. She finalized our conversation with thanking me for my business with them. She then slyly said that Verizon hopes I will continue business with them considering the value placed on each and every customer.

I believe Verizon Wireless replied to my complaint over the phone because they wanted to make it more personal than in letter. Although, I think letters are formal and a helpful tool in addressing a matter, I do believe a phone conversation is more genuine and sincere. I feel like talking over the phone is as forward you can get without having to be in person. Phone conversations give both receiving parties the opportunity to submit their opinions and hear from the other party in response simultaneously. Another reason I believe Verizon Wireless dealt with this using a manager is to show me how important this matter is to them. If a standard customer representative called and apologized to me, I would have thought it was a joke because I would not think they truly care, they were probably just told to call me and say sorry. However, when the rep said she was a manager I felt more relieved and reassured that Verizon honestly values my business. Now, I am also well aware that Verizon could have just as easily told a standard rep to simply say they were a manager, when they really are not, just to make me feel reprieved. If this is the case, it also worked! I may fall into a naive category of people, but thinking the representative was a higher-status person, I did feel like the problem was recovered.

A third reason I believe Verizon chose to discuss this issue over the phone was because it saves them from having to write up an apologetic letter, post it, and mail it. The phone call saved them time and money which is always a good thing when you are the one or company who is actually doing the conserving!

I feel that registering my complaint letter online through complaintbook.com was a brilliant idea and I am pleased with my decision to do so. I think that by placing this letter online, it created awareness to other customers. In fact I know it did! A student in my marketing class actually came up to me and told me that they were having similar problems with Verizon and they were glad to see someone actually write to them. Upon hearing this, I knew it was best to register my complaint letter online to let others see what kind of defaults Verizon has. I was not trying to discourage customers from partaking in Verizon's company; I was just simply forewarning people to check their cell phone bills every month and make sure they are not getting overcharged for Verizon's mistakes. I also think registering this complaint letter online influenced the firm's response because it most likely gave them a little bit of a spook. Seeing a letter posted online, visible for anyone to see, possibly made Verizon feel nervous that this letter would make customers question Verizon's service. Feeling this tension, Verizon most likely wanted to respond to me as fast as they could, choosing the telephone method so they did not have to wait for the letter to reach me.

After encountering this situation with Verizon Wireless, I have definitely had my doubts about the organization. However, I am only considered a voicer. A voicer is a type of complainer who complains to the service provider and does not spread negative word of mouth nor switch companies. I dealt with this matter in my own hands

complaining directly to Verizon and I have decided to remain a customer to Verizon Wireless. I know people make mistakes, and it is one thing to keep making these mistakes but it is another to admit and learn from them. I believe this is what Verizon did and therefore I am willing to give them a second chance. My thoughts on the company are not negative so much anymore, but they can guarantee they will be hearing from me again if another incident occurs.

“The customer who complains is the firm’s friend.” I would definitely agree with this statement because I think a customer’s complaint can be beneficial to the company and help them realize what they may need to do better to improve their service. Most companies actually encourage complaints so they can act quickly to solve any problem and redeem themselves through a recovery strategy. Sir Colin Marshall, chairman of Ads for British Airways, agrees by saying, “I ardently believe that customer complaints are precious opportunities to hold on to customers who otherwise might take their business elsewhere and to learn about problems that need to be fixed” (Marshall, 1980). Any input from customers might hurt a firm’s feelings, but that only lasts a mere instance. This input will hurt the firm’s profitability, nonetheless, if no action is taken to tackle these complaints. This gives companies one solution; listen to the customers and work to fulfill their needs.

I learned a few different things about this experience. First, I learned how to deal with a company when I am displeased or find fault in their service. I feel like this was a helpful tool in allowing me to turn an unpleasant situation into a satisfactory one. Writing the complaint letter not only helped my writing sound more professional and profound, but it also taught me a lesson. It taught me how to approach an issue in a

mature, orderly fashion. Completing this complaint letter also allowed me to see a different side of Verizon Wireless. It made me realize that not every person or company is perfect and it helped me learn the wonderful virtue of patience. Lastly, I learned a lesson on how to treat customers I may encounter in my future job or career. Verizon *did* do a poor job in meeting my needs and gaining my satisfaction, but I can learn from their mistake by remembering to treat my customers, wherever I may work, with respect and loyalty.

I will benefit from these things I learned as I enter the business world in several ways. First, I will not be apprehensive about confronting an issue that bothers me or that I am not necessarily in accordance with. I now know a proficient way of writing a complaint letter, how to address the problem, and how I wish things to be resolved. I will also apply the virtue of patience, in which I think all people should have a lesson on, in my work and encountering other service endeavors. I believe that those who have patience will not be so cynical of service and learn to deal with the fact that everyone, some time or another, makes a mistake or has a bad day. It is a fact of life, and it is one that I can appreciate more thanks to completing this complaint letter. Lastly, because I learned how customers want to be treated, by looking at my own wants and desires, I can apply this into my future entering the business world. I know that when I call a customer service line I expect the rep to be courteous, informative, and most willing to answer any and all of my questions. Knowing this, I can assume that others expect and want the same thing. Therefore, whenever I have to answer phones, or even speak to a customer face to face, I know that they want me to facilitate to their needs making them more satisfied with customer personnel and the overall service.

Appendix

Copy of original letter.....	1-2
Original printed copy of registered complaint.....	3-4
Brief description of firm correspondence.....	5