Dealing with complaints

When we deal with a complaint, we usually have to do the following:

| listen to the guest | apologize

| take measures to solve the problem

| follow up: telephone the guest to make sure that the guest is satisfied

* Listen carefully. Be polite. Do not comment until the customer has finished, except when it is absolutely necessary. Do not argue with the customer. You may ask the guest about the problem in the following way:

*Is anything the matter, sir=madam?*

*Is there anything wrong* (*with : : :* )*, sir=madam?*

* Make a short clear apology:

*I’m sorry. That shouldn’t have happened.*

*I’m terribly*/*awfully sorry for the inconvenience.*

*I’m really very sorry about this, sir* (*madam*)*.*

*I’m extremely sorry, sir. I’m sure the waiter didn’t mean to be rude. Perhaps he didn’t understand you correctly. He should have changed your steak.*

*I’m really sorry, madam. They should have cleaned your room.*

* Repeat the complaint. This is to make sure that you fully understand the problem and there are no misunderstandings. When possible and if necessary, note down what the customer has said.
* Decide who will deal with the complaint. If it is not a serious complaint, you can deal with it yourself. Tell the customer what you will do and when. In the reply we can use *have SOMETHING DONE* or *get SOMEONE* *TO DO SOMETHING* when we need to say that some other person willperform a service that a customer requests:
* have SOMETHING DONE

*I’ll have the heating turned up.*

*I’ll have the towels changed right away.*

* get SOMEONE TO DO SOMETHING *I’ll get the maid to empty the dustbin. I’ll get the maid to change it right away. I’ll get someone to bring it up right away.*
* I’ll do something

We can use *I’LL DO something* when we need to say that we will perform the action ourselves:

*I’ll see to it right away, madam.*

*I’ll make sure it doesn’t happen again.*

*I’ll inform housekeeping. They will solve the problem immediately. I’ll contact* (*call* ) *maintenance department.*

*I’ll do it right away, madam.*

Note: When we offer a solution to the guest’s problem, we use the future with I’ll for a decision made at the time of speaking.

If you decide that a manager should deal with a complaint, you should first inform the manager and then arrange a meeting between the manager and the customer. You may say:

*I’ll be glad to call the duty manager for you, madam.*

* Follow up. Once the problem has been corrected, follow up. If you are certain that you won’t be disturbing the guest, phone the guestroom to make sure that everything is ok. Your guests will appreciate this extra care and attention, and because of your efforts, they will probably forget any negative feelings they had earlier.

Some complaints may be unreasonable or unjustified, or they may not be your fault. However, it’s usually best to apologize and offer to take action. In the service industry, \the customer is always right" (even if he or she is wrong). An apology costs nothing, but it can help the client to feel better. Remember that complaints may help you to improve your service in future.