

ENGW 3335 Unit #1: Business Correspondence

(Worth 20% of your grade; due February 3)

Overview

Businesses and organizations continually strive to satisfy their customers. Sometimes they succeed, and sometimes they fall short. In both situations, companies rely on customer feedback to know what they are doing well and what they need to change. In this assignment, you will contact two companies or organizations by letter to share your positive and negative experiences. Then you will assume the role of a customer satisfaction specialist and respond to a negative letter similar to the one you wrote.

Step One: Identify a Positive Experience

As consumers, we interact with businesses and government service providers on a daily basis. Reflect upon your recent experiences and identify one experience in which a business (or a specific employee) went “above and beyond” your expectations. Write a letter to the company describing your experience, using as many concrete details as possible.

Step Two: Identify a Negative Experience

Unfortunately, there are times when businesses (or individual employees) perform far below your expectations. In such situations, you may need to resolve a negative situation by expressing your complaints in writing and asking for a suitable remedy to the problem. Reflect upon your recent experiences and identify one experience that has negatively affected you. Write a letter to the company describing your experience and asking for an appropriate resolution to the matter.

Step Three: Put Yourself in the Company’s Shoes

Once you have written your positive and negative feedback letters, you will have the chance to approach this communication situation from a different perspective. You will assume the role of an employee who has been asked to respond to a negative letter received by your company. For this portion of the assignment, you will choose one of three available scenarios and draft a suitable response to the letter writer.

Assignment Details

Your letters should follow the standard conventions of business letter writing, as explained in *The Essentials of Technical Communication*. Each letter should be no longer than a single page, and should include your real return address (and other contact information, if applicable). In addition to submitting the letters electronically for grading (as explained below), you will submit printed copies of the first two letters, along with stamped envelopes, properly addressed to the recipients of your letters. After I have graded your assignment, I will mail the letters to the addressees. If your letters contain serious errors, you may be asked to revise them before I mail printed copies.

When you have printed your letters and envelopes, submit the final copies of your letters for grading as a single electronic file. Your positive letter should come first, followed by your negative letter, followed by your response to the fictional negative letter. To submit the correspondence unit for grading, follow these steps:

1. Login to your Google Docs account: <http://docs.google.com>
2. Click on the “Upload” button underneath the Google Docs logo.
3. Select your file, make sure that the “Convert documents ... to Google Docs format” box is checked, then click the “start upload” button.
4. Name your file as follows: “Full Name Correspondence Unit” (for instance, my file would be named “Quinn Warnick Correspondence Unit”).
5. Scroll through your document and fix any formatting problems as you go.
6. When you are satisfied with the letters, click the “Share” button in the upper right-hand corner of the screen and type my email address (quinnwarnick@gmail.com) into the “Add people” field. Make sure the “Can edit” option is selected and the “Send email notifications” box is checked, then click “Share.”
7. Your document must be submitted *before* class begins on February 3, 2011.

Evaluation Criteria

Your letters will be evaluated based on how well they:

- describe your experiences in clear, understandable language.
- establish your credibility through citing specific details of your experiences.
- request a reasonable solution from the company that caused the negative experience.
- offer a reasonable solution to the unhappy customer who wrote to you.
- maintain future relationships with the company (and customer), in spite of the negative experiences. (In other words, your letters shouldn’t “burn bridges.”)
- follow the conventions of standard business letters (including layout and design).
- adhere to the conventions of standard written English (spelling, grammar, punctuation, etc.).