

Soft Skills
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Lecture - 30
Types of Business Letters Part II

Hello welcome back to NPTL online lectures on Soft Skills. Presently we are dealing with the types of business letters. In the previous lecture we talked about varieties of business letters, and our focus mainly was on sales letters. And then letters of enquiry letters of credit. Of course, in a business world of today giving things on credit have become a fashion, but then organizations also see to it that the money that is involved in terms of credit especially for goods they have to come back. There have been times when only Because of these credit sometimes because of these credits not standing true, the relationships have become short the relationships have become painful.

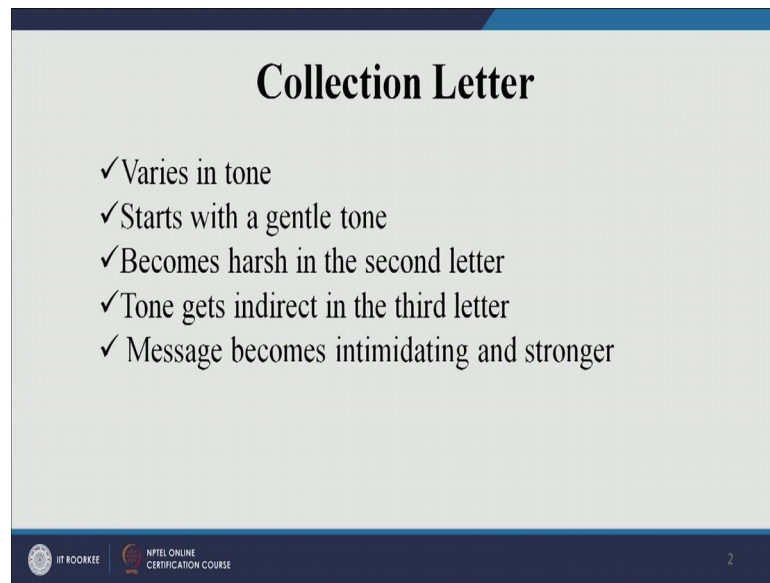
But then it is a question of money and money has to be brought back, and for that we need to know how to get back the money and how to have a sort of communication through which we can or the organizations can get back the money. For that we write a collection letter.

Now what is a collection letter? And how different is it from other letters, though we say that all business letters should have a very cordial tone should have a sort of style which is you friendly which is customer friendly.

But then it is slightly different. A collection letter because it has it is aim of collecting the money, and you write a collection letter, but there has been times when one letter goes unnoticed the other letter also passes unnoticed. And when you feel that the money is not to come back, but money has to come back you know. So, you have to write so many letters it is not a question of one collection letter in order to get back your money the organization has to write a series of letters. Of course, the first letter will be very gentle it will also maintain the sort of gentility, but when money does not come it hurts.

And as it hurts the tone also changes. So, the first letter will start with a gentle tone, it will become a bit harsh in the second letter.

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Collection Letter

- ✓ Varies in tone
- ✓ Starts with a gentle tone
- ✓ Becomes harsh in the second letter
- ✓ Tone gets indirect in the third letter
- ✓ Message becomes intimidating and stronger

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And then the third letter it will rather become harsher, it will become indirect. The tone will not be direct here it will become indirect, because it is painful, it is indifferent you know the other organization is showing a lot of indifferences or in terms of paying money. And hence your approach as a writer will also change. And the final letter because you need to have money the final letter will have a very strong message, at times it may become very intimidating and the tone will be harsher stronger, even to say it may be bitter at times.

So, I hope you with the sort of knowledge that I have tried to explain to you in my previous lectures we will be in a position to draft a collection letter. But then the third letter where you actually want to have your money, but at the same time you want that your customer should not be lost, because there may be different reasons for the payment being held up. So, here I am trying to give an example through a sample collection letter, but this is a letter which is of the last category Where look at the tone.

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A Sample Collection Letter

Dear _____

Despite three reminders, we have not received an outstanding amount of Rs. _____ for the purchase of 20 Photo Copiers.

You have ignored our previous request and failed to explain the circumstances which have blocked our payment.

You are morally obliged and bound to pay what you owe to us. Your further delay may force us to hand the matter over to legal agencies.

Please do your best to avoid any embarrassing situation. Kindly send the cheque at the earliest and inform us telephonically by 5 P.M. tomorrow.

Sincerely

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Where you can find the language, the language is not as it used to be in the first letter.

See it is you know it starts with no formalities all the formalities have already been discharged in the past. What is of utmost importance now is to be a bit bitter despite 3 reminders. We have not received an outstanding amount of such and such for the purchase of 20 photo copiers. You are not only trying to state what went wrong, but then you straightway come to talk about the payment, because it is the payment that matters. And then you are explaining also, because you felt that the other party failed in your teams to provide you with the payment. You have ignored our previous requests and failed to explain the circumstances which have blocked our payment.

You look at the use of the words blocked our payment. I mean this anyway shows the anger this in a way shows the sort of outburst which an organization may have once it is money is held up. And the last line even before the last line you are writing a paragraph which is very intimidating, which is threatening and which is also trying to make the other party aware. That if the payment is not paid even after this perhaps there may be some legal scruples and you write you are morally obliged and bound to pay what we owe to you.

What you owe to us sorry, your further delay may force us to hand the matter over to legal agencies. Now the moment you talk about the world legal agencies the party will get more into action and perhaps will feel helpless enough then to pay the payment. And

finally, again you are going to be cordial though this cordiality is the cost of a sort of cruelty which you have already mentioned in the past. Please do your best to avoid any embarrassing situation kindly sends the cheque at the earliest and inform us telephonically by 5 pm tomorrow. Now you are also setting a deadline a time line and this is a 4th letter.

And the final letter I mean at times we have to be like this, because it is a question of money. Money matters more than relations, but remember once you get the money you perhaps feel yourself successful as a writer of collection letters. Credit and collection go hand in hand, but sometimes it actually affects not only our hands, but also our hearts. And I think you will be quite careful while providing somebody a sort of credit, but then you will be more intelligent when you write a collection letter and try to see that the money comes back. Of course, you are in a position to get the money back, but then sometimes when you are having along the relationship or an association with an organization.

Though the past transactions have been very good, but one transaction whether you felt that the things ordered did not come in the right way. There were certain lapses certain damages and for that what you need to do is you need to write claim letters. With a customer writes to correct wrong, you do not want to stop the ties. But all you want is that there have been some wrong in it some lapses in it, but then that has to be corrected and for that you write a claim letter. The letter written for the purpose of getting things back, or getting further compensation is called a claim letter or sometimes it is also called a complaint letter.

Now, while writing a complaint letter, what are the cares what are the cautions that one need to be in position off. Now let us have an observation here.

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Claim Letters

When a customer writes to correct a wrong, the letter written for this purpose is called a claim letter.

An observation:

“You are most likely to hear from customers when they have a complaint , and that's good thing. They are not only giving you a chance to help them, but they’re initiating a dialogue, which is exactly what you want to have with your best customers”.

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You are most likely to hear from customers, when they have to complaint. Sorry, you will find that some people think that when a complaint letter comes, it is actually going to harm our reputation. It is going to affect our reputation, but remember even through complaint letter and complaints they are actually the sort of opportunities where you can go step further and where you can build relationships. So, they are most you are most likely to hear from customers.

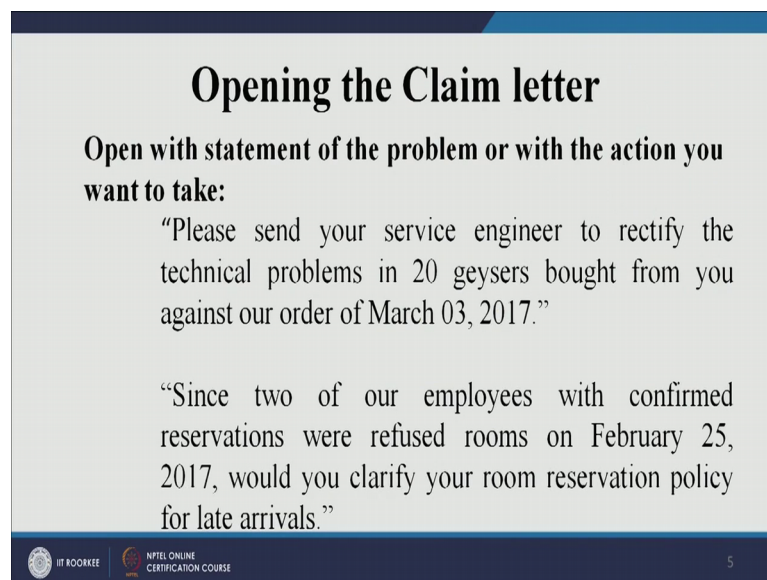
When they have a complaint and that is a good thing. You know this observation says receiving complaint is not a bad thing it is a good thing, how? They are not only giving you a chance to help them, but they are initiating a dialogue. A dialogue that discourages very important, I mean if you feel that you do not need to lodge a complaint and you forget, forgive. Naturally from your point of view it is, but from the point of view of the organization it is actually a loss. And then organizations also want that it is customers should write because organizations see in these complaints is sort of opportunity not only to create relationships but also to improve the qualities of some of their products.

Moreover they also get a chance to receive the feedback of a particular product. They are initiating a dialogue which is exactly what you want to have with your best customers. You are not going to lose your customers, but the ties are going to be stronger. Now you also need to know how to start how to write claim letters. If you feel that you have some grievances against a particular product or particular organization against a particular item

say to it that you know how to write a claim letter. Open with the statement of the problem.

There are times when you write them a complaint and because you know when you have a complaint you become very angry. And in anger you lose all your consings, you lose your control over your language also. The language not only becomes harsh, but the language becomes very alleging the language also becomes very insulting. But then this is not the remedy all you need is you need actually a sort of re-compensation, or you need a sort of substitution or you need a sort of replacement, but unless and until the organization comes to know about the sort of problem you came across How can the organization replace.

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Opening the Claim letter

Open with statement of the problem or with the action you want to take:

“Please send your service engineer to rectify the technical problems in 20 geysers bought from you against our order of March 03, 2017.”

“Since two of our employees with confirmed reservations were refused rooms on February 25, 2017, would you clarify your room reservation policy for late arrivals.”

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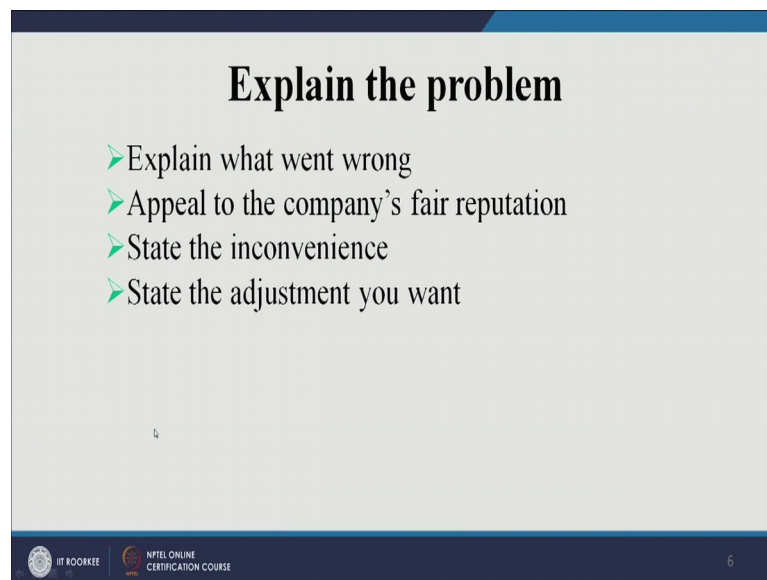
So, the need of the our is to write or to open your letter by explaining the problem or with the action that you want. At times we want a sort of replacement, but on another occasions we also want that we should get back our money. Now see let us see the language of a complaint letter the way it should begin. Please send your service engineer to rectify the technical problems in 20 geysers bought from you against our order of march third, this I mean when you have started writing, you are cordial because you begin with the please and then straightaway you come to the problem.

I mean there may be another way also where you can say we are thankful to you for sending us this and this and then you can explain, but remember you have to be brief.

Sometimes or the other you can also adopt a language where you can say, suppose some of your employees went for a trip or went for a conference, where they were not given the rooms know though the rooms are booked. Now what is do the language be like? Since 2 of our employees with confirmed reservations, were refused rooms on February such and such would you clarify.

Now, here look at this line would you clarify your room reservation policy for late arrivals, here you are a bit angry you are showing your anger and the moment. You say would we like to get a clarification about your room reservation policies you will find the organization feels that there has been some people who have been wronged. And they will see to it that the wrong is righted. Now, while doing so when you are writing the claim letters, as I said first explain what went wrong. I mean after the beginning explain what went wrong, but remember you are not going to allege them. For example, if you use for language like I do not understand the carelessness that your employees have shown towards the behavior with some of our employees by not providing them the rooms they had already booked for.

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Explain the problem

- Explain what went wrong
- Appeal to the company's fair reputation
- State the inconvenience
- State the adjustment you want

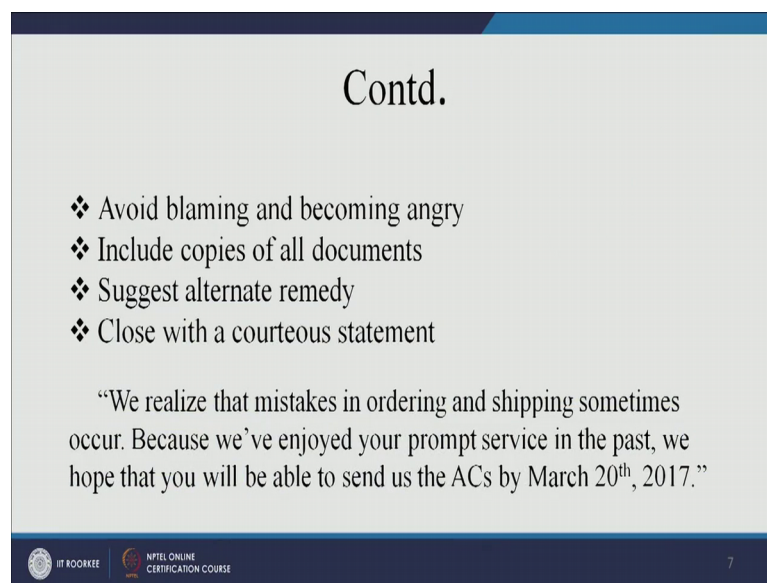
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I mean this is going to be very harshening insulting, language rather you need to talk about you need to appeal to the company's fair reputation. For example, you can always say we have always enjoyed your prompt service. Since so many years, or for so many

years, the way you are going to talk about you are going to make a sort of appeal about the company's policy.

But at the same time later on you are going to talk about the problem, and then what was the inconvenience, what was the problem? State the problem that you came across. And if you feel that you need your money back or you want the sort of replacement please state the adjustment that you want. There is no point my dear friend in blaming and becoming angry.

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- ❖ Avoid blaming and becoming angry
- ❖ Include copies of all documents
- ❖ Suggest alternate remedy
- ❖ Close with a courteous statement

“We realize that mistakes in ordering and shipping sometimes occur. Because we’ve enjoyed your prompt service in the past, we hope that you will be able to send us the ACs by March 20th, 2017.”

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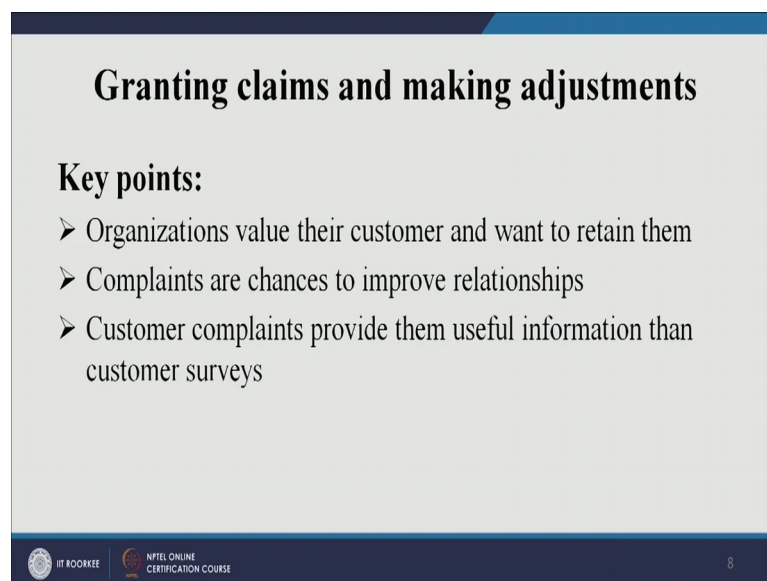
As I have said in the previous lecture also, you are right to be angry. And you know if you if you show your anger even then the response that will come from the organization will be because the organization does want to lose you. So, they will say you are right in pointing out the difficulties you faced I mean they are polite.

So, why should we not be polite? Because the people who are doing these transactions or business, they are not at fault. It may be somebody else's fault also. So, there is no need to shout at or to fulminate your fire on people. Rather it is always better to include the copies of all documents, if you find that something there has been wrong. I mean say if you if you have a receipt if you have a bill, if you have some other materials that you got while you are make you are making the purchase. I mean include all the documents and then suggest the alternate remedy. Whatever remedy you want you are free to suggest the sort of remedy.

And while you are closing as once again I will repeat, please close on a very cordial note. Say for example, as the person here has said, we realize that mistakes in ordering and shipping sometimes occurred. Now see this is also a letter by a customer fine. So, the customer is not showing his anger, but what the customer is saying is presented in a very polite manner. We realize that mistakes in ordering and shipping sometimes occur, because we have enjoyed your prompt service in the past, we hope that you will be able to send us the AC's by such and such date. I mean here also you have explained the problem.

But the way you have explained the problem it does not appear to upset anyone it does not appear to make anyone think ill of you. But then when you write a claim letter you are also actually waiting for an adjustment letters. Organizations see to it that claims are adjusted claims are responded to, when these claims are responded we call them adjustment letter. They are also written keeping into consideration the goodwill and the relationship. Every organization you know as I have said in the beginning.

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Granting claims and making adjustments

Key points:

- Organizations value their customer and want to retain them
- Complaints are chances to improve relationships
- Customer complaints provide them useful information than customer surveys

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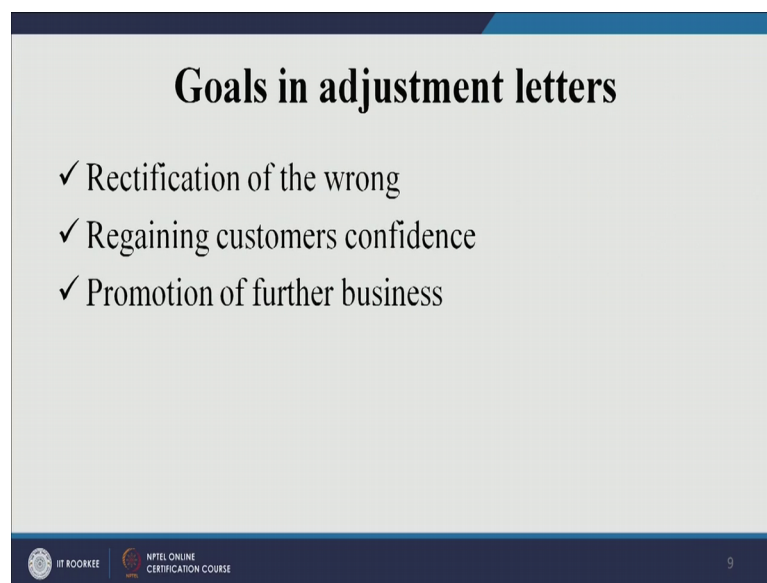
They see an opportunity in the complaints, and customer complaints are more important than customer service.

Because when you write a complaint, you are writing personally surveys. May be different surveys may at times be exaggerated also, but then the complaints which come from persons they are exactly matured and they provide the organizations a fair chance to

make adjustments. So, when you write an adjustment letter you should have certain goals in mind while you are drafting the adjustment letter. Your main purpose is that the wrong has been rectified and of course, all of you because you have already paid, you do not want the money back.

Unless in exceptional circumstances Where you find the product was totally out of date absolute and it could not be corrected whatsoever, but then most of the customers they want a sort of replacement.

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And the organizations also want to regain the confidence of the customer and they want that further business to be promoted. For that while they are going to write the adjustment letter they actually have certain policies. Of course, sometimes they have certain limitations that they cannot fulfill all your demands.

But then they can always offer you something which will feel is of course, better I do remember that there have been certain situations, where in case I had missed a flight and I have become very angry. But then the agencies see to it that I get booked in the next flight and by the time I have to spend, before the next flight they make all arrangements they actually see to it that as a customer one should not have any problem. Such as the business policy and most of the organizations they follow the same business policy. So, when you are going to draft a bill a business letter which is in the form of an adjustment letter.

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Things to do

- ✓ Convey the adjustment first, such as the action you are taking
- ✓ Explain why things went wrong
- ✓ Give additional information for the same product or send some new materials
- ✓ Close the letter emphasizing the action that you want your customer to take
- ✓ Address your claimant by name

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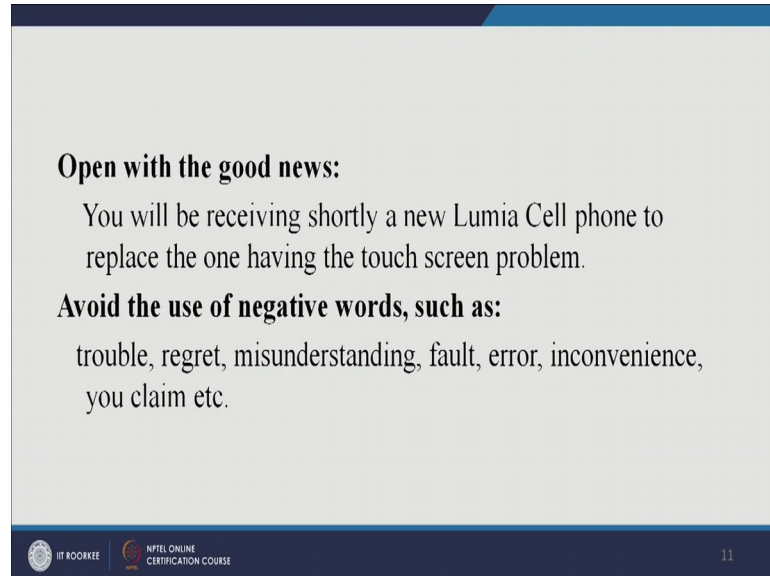
The first thing is the first line that you are going to write should be the pleasant news. Give them the pleasant news first I mean convey the adjustment first such as the action that you are going to take and when you write the first sentence let the first sentence be in active voice not in passive. You cannot say your refrigerator has been sent you should always begin saying we have sent the new photocopier machine at your address. I mean the not only the tone, but also the construction of sentence appears as very pleasant and very fresh. Having said that you are also going to explain here why things got wrong because you know as a valued customer.

Everyone would like to know why is such a thing happened. So, convince them and when you give them explanations you know all of us are human beings we can understand that there can be there can be lapses at times, but we want only the wrongs to be corrected. So, explain why things went wrong, and then provide them additional information for either for the same product or if there are some additional products provide them the information, when you are going to close the letter. Before closing the letter emphasize, the action that you want your customers to take.

Close the letter emphasizing the action that you want your customers to take, and it is better it has been seen when you know most of the time we actually address people even customers by dear sir dear mam. But it is always better if you address your customer by name. This actually reveals the sort of familiarity, at the sort of association you have with

your customer. So, address your claimant by name and then having drafted that now start the letter.

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Open with the good news:
You will be receiving shortly a new Lumia Cell phone to replace the one having the touch screen problem.

Avoid the use of negative words, such as:
trouble, regret, misunderstanding, fault, error, inconvenience, you claim etc.

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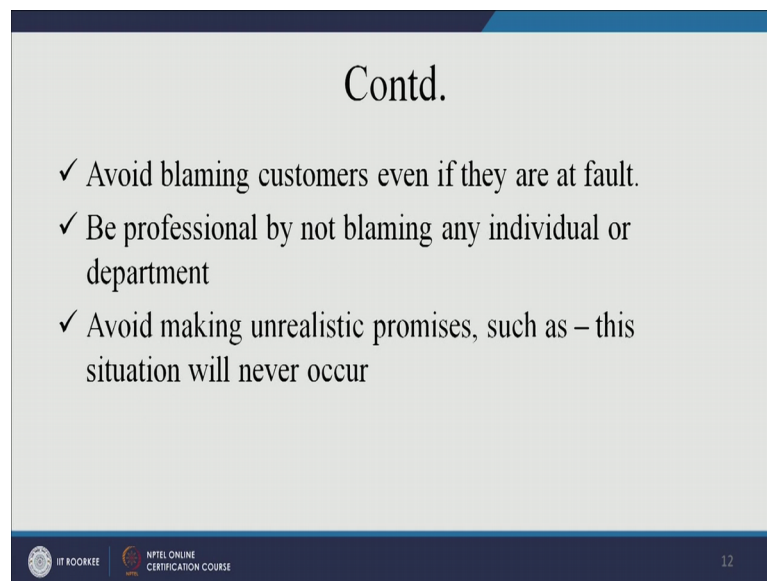
Open with the good news first give them the good news, you will be receiving shortly a new lumia cell phone.

Suppose this was there was a actually a claim about some lumia phone having some problem. So, the first news that you are going to tell the customer in the opening of the letter is you will be receiving or we have sent your new lumia cell phone to replace the one. Here you are also mentioning that you are going to replace. You have replaced you have replaced the one having the touch screen problem. Now here the problem is that of a touch screen. In some other product the problem may be of some other nature. Now in such a situation what you need to do, you actually need to explain why things went wrong.

For example you can always write we take utmost care while shaping our lumia cell phones and ensuring that the touch screens work properly. But in exceptional cases because of some problem such complaints come. We see to it that our customers are satisfied. And we provide them the substitute or the replacement. Remember when a complaint letter comes, and you are going to respond to that complaint letter, you should always try to avoid the use of certain words which actually have a negative bearing, such as trouble, fine regret no some people saying we regret the inconvenience caused to you.

I mean do not say like this, or there you can also sometimes you may also feel that some people may write there might have been some misunderstanding. You know avoid using such words do not say the fault is mine, the error is mine, the error is ours, like that I mean you know there has been problem no doubt, but for this problem not an individual is responsible. Rather there might have been problems of some other nature you are actually to address the problem, and not address or allege other people.

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- ✓ Avoid blaming customers even if they are at fault.
- ✓ Be professional by not blaming any individual or department
- ✓ Avoid making unrealistic promises, such as – this situation will never occur

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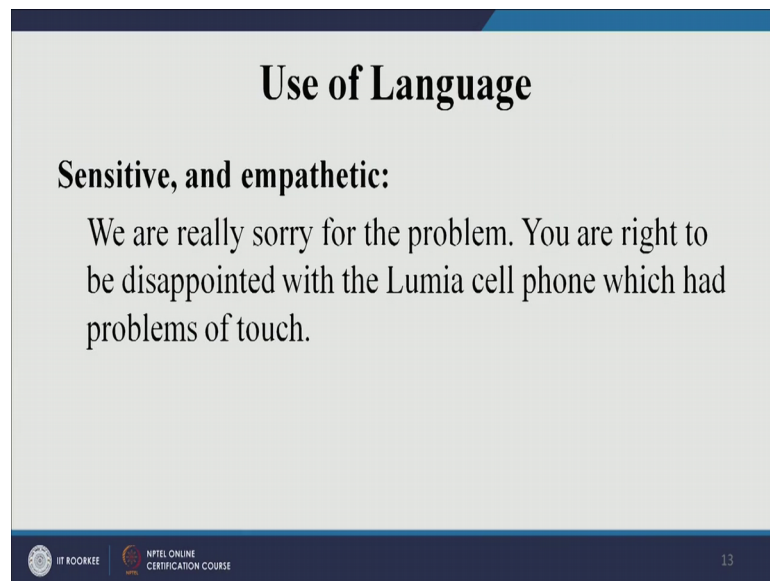
Sometimes it has been seen that, sometimes customers may be blamed avoid blaming the customers sometimes the customers may not be right also you know every now and then customers may not be right, but even then it is not advisable to blame the customers sometimes because of the lapse or because of the mistake or because of the inexperience of some staff also. There might have been problem, but it is always better not by blaming others in your department or whosoever. Because when you are in an organization you are representing that organization my dear friends.

Moreover it is also advisable not to make any unrealistic promises, such as you know that sometimes people, say such a sort of difficulty such a sort of trouble will never arise. This situation will never occur I mean these are actually wrong cues of language. You never know tomorrow may there may be some other problem. So, do not go on having such predictions which may also be hurting others. Now when we talk about the

language part of it as we have been doing in the past also while discussing the language of the business.

Say to it that while writing an adjustment letter the language has to be very sensitive and empathetic. I am using the term empathetic, keeping yourself in the position of the person who has written the letter.

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Use of Language

Sensitive, and empathetic:

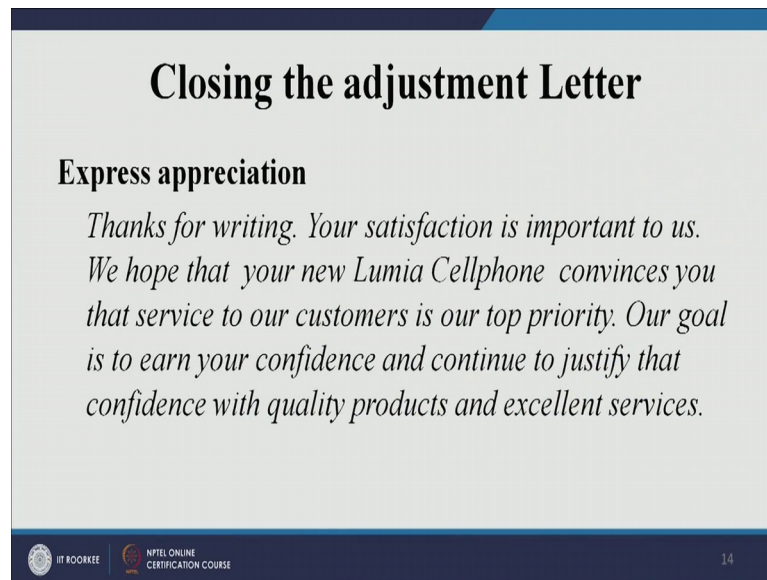
We are really sorry for the problem. You are right to be disappointed with the Lumia cell phone which had problems of touch.

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So, we can say like this we are really sorry for the problem. You are right to be disappointed. Now you see even if the customer may be wrong, but then the organization says you are right to be disappointed with the lumia cell phone which had problems of touch. I mean referred to what sir Ernest Gower says, if he convicts you of a mistake admit it.

So, here is the admission my dear friends we are admitting our fault. So, say you are right to be disappointed the lumia cell phone which had developed some problems in it is touch screen. But when having said all that you are going to close the letter, close it on a note which is full of appreciation, for whom appreciation?

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Closing the adjustment Letter

Express appreciation

Thanks for writing. Your satisfaction is important to us. We hope that your new Lumia Cellphone convinces you that service to our customers is our top priority. Our goal is to earn your confidence and continue to justify that confidence with quality products and excellent services.

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For your customer, even though the customers have given you the complaint laws the complaint, but please appreciate saying thanks for writing. And you know here is an opportunity because you know you are going to ensure and you say your satisfaction is important to us.

We hope that your new lumia cell phone convinces you that service to our customers is our top priority our goal is to earn your confidence and continue to justify that confidence with quality product and excellent services. Now if you close your letter adjustment letter with this I mean even this grunted customer would like to continue businesses with you. Now this is actually the beauty of this style and the language and the way you appreciate. But my dear friends sometimes it So happens the wrong assignment has already been replaced and if it has been replaced from your point of view it also becomes mandatory Rather obligatory to send them a note of appreciation.

Or send them a letter when you appreciate. You know, as all of us are human beings we will do that. But remember there is one more letter that I would like to talk about here and that many of you when you in organization, climb the ladder you may be asked to write recommendation letters which is very crucial nowadays. It has been seen that many people are not interested to write recommendation letters, but it is actually in the fashion of things that if somebody needs your recommendation it is always better to write recommendation letters the purpose of a recommendation.

Letter is to nominate or actually to justify the merits of a person for the next rank for the next promotion sometimes also for awards for recognitions. While doing so there has to be certain cares which actually require our attention we cannot recommend each and every one, but when you are going to recommend. Please see that you are honest you are maintaining a sort of confidentiality, but then sometimes when you are writing a recommendation letter at the suggestion of some of your colleagues or friends and all or some of your employees.

Please do mention that you are writing a recommendation letter because somebody has told you to write this recommendation letter. When you are going to write this recommendation letter make a proper evaluation of the candidates merits especially their communication skills, organizational skills, leadership skills the team skills their dynamism behavioral skills and all. You see in it in a technical day of today sometimes you may also receive some queries about a person for whom you have given the recommendation letter. It is always advisable that you keep in your own record a copy of the recommendation letter so that when you are asked.

Because it has been seen that people often give the name of referees they know well, while it is good, but at the same time a person who is writing the recommendation letter, should not be biased fine should not actually exaggerate, should not write in a language that is vague ambiguous rather you should try to stick to the truth.

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Some guidelines

- Respond only to written requests
- State that your remarks are confidential
- Focus on job-related information
- Avoid vague or ambiguous remarks
- Stick to the truth
- In case of any negatives, supply specific evidence

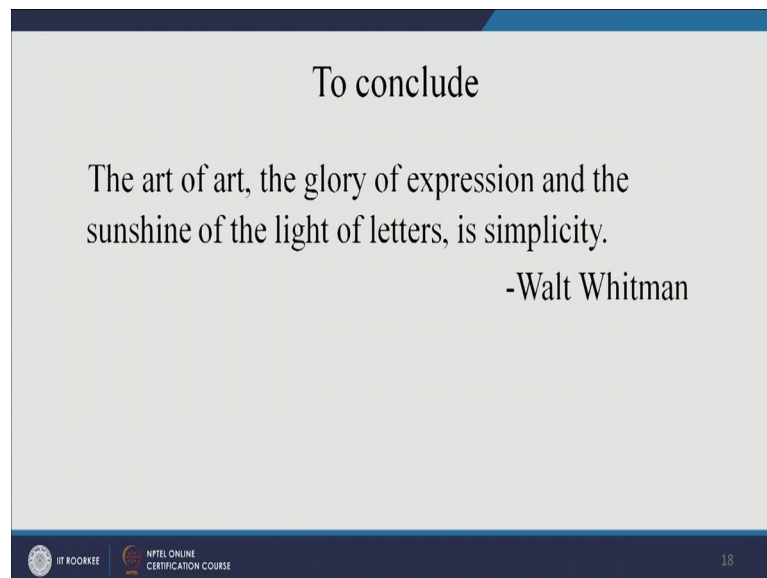
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And in case there is something negative it is always advisable not to write anything negative, but if you feel that some negative information is there please do not write unless And until you have sufficient evidences.

Because it may actually mold and it may mark somebody's career with you. As a person recommending somebody would not like, friends in a global world of today when things have become global when people are switching over jobs it is mandatory to write recommendation letters. It is also mandatory for an employee in an organization to write varieties of letter, but remember one thing that is quite important whatever letter it be let the letter be written in a language. From the point of view of the receiver, from the point of view of the organization and from the point of view that it actually establishes good will it actually helps in creating a sort of relationship.

Because letter writing whether it is a business or a general purpose letter, letter writing is an art. Let me conclude my talk today by quoting what a famous poet says about letter the art of art the glory of expression and the sunshine of the light of letters each simplicity.

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I do hope that while writing your letters you will take extra care in being simple in being straightforward if writing for a business in being specific.

But at the same time keeping into consideration that you are writing not only for the organization you are writing to another person, who may be your friend. Who may be a person like you, hence please try to ensure cordiality. Because it is in cordiality that all sorts of business thrive and it is in cordiality that all sort of businesses continue.

Thank you very much.