

Business ▶ The Basics

Apologizing

6 Intermediate

Exercise 1

Useful Expressions

- We are very sorry to hear that.
- We are sorry for the inconvenience.
- We apologize for any inconvenience caused.
- Please accept our sincere apologies.
- Let us know if there is anything we can do for you.
- Should you have any questions please call this number 612-64-64.

Exercise 2

An Apology Letter

Dear valued customer,

We are very sorry to hear that the magazine you received last month lacked a few pages. It is the first time we have made such an error. We pride ourselves on producing error-free copies and we are terribly sorry for the inconvenience.

We packed another copy of the magazine and sent it by post immediately after receiving your complaint. In case you do not receive it within the next three days, feel free to call us at 575 - 757.

Please accept our sincere apologies.

Yours faithfully,

Financial Times

Check your understanding:

1. What is Financial Times apologizing for?
2. What did they say in an attempt to regain the trust of the customer?
3. What kind of compensation did they offer for making the mistake?
4. What is the structure of this apology letter?

Exercise 3

Study Manual

Read the following tips.

How to Make a Business Apology

Correct timing. It is best to apologize as soon as you realize that there has been a mistake. However, it is equally important not to rush and to take enough time to prepare what you want to say.

Means of communication. There are many ways to apologize: you can apologize in person, over the phone, in an e-mail or a handwritten letter. Eye contact makes the apology more personal; however, if a person was deeply hurt, a letter might be a better option. Every situation is unique, so take your time to choose how to deliver your apology in a way that best suits the given circumstances.

Explanation without excuses. After apologizing you can shortly explain why it happened, but be careful not to start making excuses. Keep in mind that the customer is always right and take full responsibility for the mistake.

Clear structure. Whether written or spoken, an apology needs to have a clear structure:

- apologize
- clearly state what you did wrong
- acknowledge the inconvenience caused
- promise that it won't happen again
- offer compensation (if it is necessary or appropriate to do so)

Exercise 4

Discussion

1. Have you ever had to write an apology letter or have you ever received one? If so, what for?
2. Do you find it difficult to apologize when you make a mistake? Why? Why not?
3. Is it easier for you to apologize in person or via other means of communication?
4. *"The more excuses you give, the guiltier you seem."* Do you agree with this statement? Why? Why not?