STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

Customer Complaint Handling SOP

Document no.	SOP-CS-001
Revision	1.0
Owner	Customer Service Manager
Effective date	September 15, 2026
Review cycle	Every 12 months

1. Purpose

To make sure every customer complaint is acknowledged quickly, investigated fairly, resolved within the agent's authority or escalated appropriately, and logged so recurring issues can be identified.

2. Scope

Applies to formal complaints received through any channel about service, product or billing. Routine questions and support requests are covered by the relevant channel SOP, such as call handling, email support or live chat.

Definitions

Complaint	An expression of dissatisfaction about service, product or billing that requires investigation and a response.
Authority limit	The maximum refund, credit or exception an agent can approve without escalating.
Goodwill gesture	A discretionary credit, discount or apology offered to repair a customer relationship.
Root cause	The underlying reason a complaint happened, as opposed to just the symptom the customer reported.

3. Responsibilities

Support Agent	Logs, investigates and resolves complaints within their authority, and communicates outcomes to customers.
Team Lead	Approves resolutions above the agent's authority limit and handles escalated complaints.
Quality Analyst	Reviews closed complaints for recurring themes and reports trends.
Customer Service Manager	Owns the complaint process and acts on trend reports to drive improvement.

RACI matrix

Activity	Support Agent	Team Lead	Quality Analyst	Customer Service Manager
Log and acknowledge the complaint	R/A	I	-	-
Investigate and determine resolution	R	A	I	-
Approve resolution above	C	R/A	I	C

Activity	Support Agent	Team Lead	Quality Analyst	Customer Service Manager
standard authority				
Implement and communicate the resolution	R/A	I	-	-
Review complaint trends	I	C	R/A	I

R = Responsible, A = Accountable, C = Consulted, I = Informed

4. Materials and PPE

Materials, tools and systems

- Complaint log or CRM
- Refund and goodwill authority matrix
- Customer contact and account history
- Response time target reference

5. Procedure

Step	Task	Owner	Done
5.1	**Log the complaint** The Support Agent logs the complaint with the channel it arrived through, the date, the customer's details and a clear description of the issue.	Support Agent	☐
5.2	**Acknowledge receipt** The Support Agent sends the customer an acknowledgment within the target response time, confirming the complaint has been received and is being looked into. **Checkpoint:** Acknowledgment is sent within the target response window, even if the full resolution will take longer.	Support Agent	☐
5.3	**Classify the complaint** The Support Agent classifies the complaint by category, such as billing, product or service, and assigns a severity based on impact to the customer.	Support Agent	☐
5.4	**Investigate the complaint** The Support Agent reviews the customer's account history, prior interactions and any relevant records to understand what happened.	Support Agent	☐
5.5	**Escalate if outside authority** The Support Agent escalates to the Team Lead when the complaint involves a policy exception, a refund above their authority limit, or a repeated failure to resolve. **Warning:** Never promise a resolution outside your authority limit; escalate first and let the customer know a specialist will confirm next steps.	Support Agent	☐
5.6	**Determine the resolution** The Support Agent, or the Team Lead for escalated cases, decides on the resolution: a correction, refund, replacement, apology or goodwill gesture appropriate to the issue.	Support Agent	☐

Step	Task	Owner	Done
5.7	**Communicate the resolution** The Support Agent clearly explains the resolution and any next steps to the customer, in plain language rather than internal process terms. **Checkpoint:** The customer confirms they understand and accept the resolution, or their objection is noted for follow-up.	Support Agent	☐
5.8	**Implement the resolution** The Support Agent processes the agreed refund, replacement or correction within the timeframe communicated to the customer.	Support Agent	☐
5.9	**Document root cause** The Support Agent records the root cause of the complaint and the resolution applied in the complaint log.	Support Agent	☐
5.10	**Close the complaint** The Support Agent closes the complaint record and sends the customer a confirmation that it has been resolved.	Support Agent	☐
5.11	**Review for recurring themes** The Quality Analyst reviews closed complaints weekly, grouping them by root cause to spot recurring or emerging themes.	Quality Analyst	☐
5.12	**Report trends for improvement** The Quality Analyst reports significant or repeated complaint trends to the Customer Service Manager so the underlying process issue can be fixed.	Quality Analyst	☐

6. Quality checks

- All complaints are acknowledged within the target response time.
- Resolutions above standard authority are approved by a Team Lead before being promised.
- Root cause is documented for every closed complaint.
- Weekly trend review is completed and reported.

7. Records

- Complaint log entry
- Resolution and approval record
- Weekly trend review notes
- Customer confirmation of resolution

8. KPIs

- Average time to acknowledge a complaint
- Average time to resolve a complaint
- Complaint recurrence rate
- Customer satisfaction after complaint resolution

9. Common mistakes

- Promising a resolution beyond the agent's authority limit.
- Closing a complaint without customer confirmation.
- Not logging complaints received informally, such as on social media.
- Skipping root cause analysis, so the same issue keeps recurring.

10. Revision history

Revision	Date	Description	Reviewed by
1.0	September 15, 2026	Initial release	Alexa Uskova

Approval

Prepared by	Approved by	Date

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