

Culture File 41, Unit 41

Confrontations

On public relations courses, people are taught to avoid confrontation. When a customer is complaining, you should acknowledge the complaint sympathetically: *I hear you. I understand what you're saying. I'm sorry to hear that. I'm sorry that you're unhappy with this.*

However, for legal reasons, public relations personnel will not actually agree (or disagree) with the complaint.

In all situations, asking politely is usually more successful than demanding things. In North America and in the U.K., employees are told that they do not have to talk to customers who are **abusive** (rude and aggressive).

Culture File 42, Unit 42

Complaining

Sometimes you need to complain. It is best to be polite, but firm. You can ask to speak to a manager, but don't do this unless you have to. It is insulting to the person you are talking to.

Receiving complaints

When you are in a business situation, you may have to answer complaints. It's important to answer complaints immediately, and to have a system where people can complain if they are unhappy with a product or a service. It's worse if the customer doesn't complain to you, but goes away and tells everyone that your product or service was bad.

Culture File 43, Unit 43

Concierge services

Large North American hotels have a concierge desk. The concierge desk is responsible for excursions, and postal services and generally helping guests. The concierge can

arrange tickets for theaters and sports events. They can also arrange limos, transport and anything you require. You don't tip concierges.

Culture File 44, Unit 44

Invitations

Invitations are always a problem! People usually refuse the *first* invitation, in case the person inviting is only being polite. If you're inviting someone (and you really mean it)

you should expect to ask twice. Americans sometimes say that British people refuse three, four or even more times before accepting an offer or invitation!