

A

Good service

Read these comments by someone about a company they recently used.



They're a good company. They always make sure you get a **prompt**¹ reply to any **query**² and they're very **responsive to**³ complaints. When I rang to ask if I could change the delivery date, they were very **accommodating**⁴ and **got back to**⁵ me within ten minutes with a new date. Whenever I ring, I get **impeccable**⁶ service; they're always very helpful and **obliging**⁷, whatever the problem is.

¹ quick, without delay

² /'kwɪəri/ question or enquiry

³ they listen, take things seriously and act

⁴ willing to understand and help

⁵ called (or wrote) with an answer

⁶ 100% perfect

⁷ willing and happy to do things for someone

B

Adjectives connected with bad service

adjective	meaning	example
incompetent	failing through insufficient skill, knowledge or training	It wasn't just bad service; they were completely incompetent .
impersonal	lacking a personal element or feeling of human warmth	I find some big shops so impersonal .
shoddy	poor quality (of service or of goods)	They repaired my car but the work was very shoddy .
substandard	below the standard expected (often used about actions)	It was a substandard performance altogether for such a big company.
uncooperative	not supportive, unwilling to work together	The secretary was very uncooperative , so I ended up doing it myself.

There's a huge **backlog** of orders and they can't deliver for three weeks. [number which are waiting to be dealt with]

They never seem to have any **sense of urgency** when you ring them. It's exasperating. [feeling that your request is important or urgent]

They have a **helpline**, but it's useless; they always **put you on hold** every time you ring. [telephone number where you can get help if you have problems] [make you wait]

The home button on my tablet stopped working but it was still **under guarantee/warranty** so I didn't have to pay to get it repaired. [having a written promise by a company to repair or replace a faulty product]

C

Service encounters on the internet

Most big companies offer a **secure site** where you can **set up an account**, and they have a **privacy policy** guaranteeing **secure transactions**. [web address where no outside person can read your details] [enter all the details necessary to open an account] [set of rules to make sure your account is private] [business exchanges which protect, e.g., your credit card from use by someone else]

The hotel website lets you check **availability** and has all the information you need on its **home page**. [whether they can supply something, e.g. a room for when you want it] [main or first page of a website]

This site has a very good **FAQ** link where you can find answers to the most important questions. [frequently asked questions (pronounced as initials)]

This online bookshop is excellent: you can **browse** and it has a very good **site index**. [look at the list of goods/services offered before buying] [alphabetical list of contents of website]

Most large online stores offer **immediate dispatch** and a **nationwide** service. [goods will be sent at once] [covering the whole country] You can also **track** your order so you know when it will be delivered. [follow]

Do you buy clothes online or do you prefer to buy them **in-store**? [in a real shop]

Exercises

34.1 Fill the gaps with appropriate words or phrases from the opposite page. There may be more than one possible answer.

- 1 I rang to complain and they put me for about 15 minutes. Then I spoke to someone who promised to ring me again, but they never got me. I'll have to call them again.
- 2 They promised immediate of the goods I ordered, but I've been waiting over a week now, and nothing has arrived.
- 3 I've always found the company very to complaints and enquiries.
- 4 I was expecting a reply to my email, but I've been waiting two weeks now, and still haven't had an answer.
- 5 I asked why they hadn't dealt with my order yet and they said there was a of orders which had built up over the New Year's holiday.
- 6 In my opinion, the goods and the service were both pretty I would have expected better quality from such a famous firm.
- 7 Staff in that shop are so; they are genuinely helpful.
- 8 I rang the, but they couldn't solve my problem.
- 9 I think you need to try a musical instrument before you buy it, so I would recommend you buy your guitar rather than online.
- 10 Most online stores ask you to an account before you can buy things.

34.2 Here are some links from internet sites. Match them with the list of functions.

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1  Track your order | 4  Check availability | 7  At a glance site map |
| 2  Returns policy | 5  Browse our categories | 8  Your basket |
| 3  FAQ | 6  Gallery | 9  Privacy and cookies |

- | | |
|--|---|
| a look through the range before buying | e goods you have chosen but not yet paid for |
| b the most commonly asked questions | f see if the goods you want can be supplied |
| c rules for protecting your personal details and whether the site may leave tracking and other software on your computer | g look at pictures of something or someone |
| d with one look you can see what the website contains | h rules for sending back goods you are not satisfied with |
| | i follow the progress of your order |

34.3 Replace the underlined words with words from the opposite page.

- 1 The plumber we got lacked the necessary skills and he caused a flood in our kitchen.
- 2 If you have any questions about the service, there's a helpline you can ring.
- 3 The new TV came with a two-year promise to repair or replace a faulty item.
- 4 The service has no feeling of human warmth about it; they just treat you as a number.
- 5 Do they offer a service that covers the whole country?
- 6 The service they gave me couldn't have been better.
- 7 It's a website which safely protects all your personal details.
- 8 It didn't feel like a business exchange that was safe, so I cancelled it and logged off.

34.4

Over to you

To find more vocabulary connected with customer service on the internet, visit the websites of online stores and read their terms and conditions, privacy policy, etc. Note down useful words that you find.