

## Reading

## The customer is not always king

*Julia, 25.* We flew to Florianopolis for a relaxing, short break before my wedding. There were eight of us. We booked a villa with a pool and the plan was to be there for a week. We had a brilliant five days, but on the Friday, completely out of the blue, we got an email from our airline telling us our flight back to Sao Paolo on Sunday was cancelled. No other information. We were told we could book another flight but the next one was on the Wednesday! We tried to telephone our airline but they didn't answer. Their website crashed the next day because they had cancelled so many flights. They said we would get our money back but no news so far. We tried other airlines and managed to get three tickets for the Sunday but the rest of us had to book a coach back. Our journey back was awful – it took fifteen hours because the coach broke down, not the two hours we were expecting at the start of the week. I promise I will never fly with that airline again. Definitely 'no frills'!

*Roberto, 35.* We needed to book a car for our holiday in Florida last September. I made the booking online but unfortunately I had booked it to start the next day, not the following Monday. Later that day I checked the confirmation email and realised my mistake. I went online and entered the booking number but I was told that it was too late to change. It was annoying because it was my own mistake. Anyway, at the top of the screen was a telephone number and I decided to call it. They answered the phone immediately and asked what the problem was. I said it was completely my fault and probably too late to change the booking. The young man replied that there was no problem and in fact it would be \$50 cheaper! He changed the booking and repaid the difference within five minutes. Brilliant service. It was my fault after all.



- 1** Read the article and decide if Julia and Roberto would describe their customer service experience as positive (✓) or negative (✗).

Julia

Roberto

- 2** Read the article again and decide if these statements are *true* (T) or *false* (F).

- 1 Julia booked a holiday for five days. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 Her group bought alternative flights for the return date. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 Luckily, there were no problems with the bus journey. \_\_\_\_\_
- 4 Roberto couldn't change his booking online. \_\_\_\_\_
- 5 He had to wait a long time when he phoned. \_\_\_\_\_
- 6 He knew he had made the mistake. \_\_\_\_\_

- 3** Choose the correct option.

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <p>1 Why did Julia go away with her friends?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a to see Sao Paolo</li> <li>b to relax before her wedding</li> <li>c to attend a friend's wedding</li> </ol> | <p>3 What mistake did Roberto make when booking his car?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a He booked it from the wrong place.</li> <li>b He booked it with the wrong company.</li> <li>c He booked it from the wrong date.</li> </ol> |
| <p>2 They got new flights</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a for the following week.</li> <li>b for three of the group.</li> <li>c within fifteen hours.</li> </ol>                        | <p>4 The new dates for his booking</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a were the following month.</li> <li>b were less expensive.</li> <li>c were booked online.</li> </ol>  |

## Functional language Responding to customer concerns

### 1 Complete the conversation using the phrases in the box.

correct about that has filled me in on the has told me about that  
I'll go through I'm sure let me please, understand that I see  
we'll come up with a your side of things

**A:** Good evening, Madam. I hear that you're not happy with your room. My colleague, Claudia, <sup>1</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ details. Could you tell me again? I just want to hear <sup>2</sup> \_\_\_\_\_.

**B:** Basically, I stay here quite often and I always get a room with a bath, not a shower. I also like the 4th floor.

**A:** Yes. Claudia <sup>3</sup> \_\_\_\_\_.

**B:** I explained to your colleague but she said you were full and I couldn't change. She said I should speak to you.

**A:** Claudia is <sup>4</sup> \_\_\_\_\_. We are full and because you were the last to check in, she couldn't make a change.

**B:** So, will you be able to do anything about it?

**A:** <sup>5</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ the bookings and see if we can make a late change. Why don't you have dinner and come back and see me in an hour or so?

**B:** Sorry, but I'm not at all hungry. I just want a bath. I'm a regular customer here, and that's the only thing I ask for.

**A:** <sup>6</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ your point, but I'm afraid you'll have to wait. Why don't you wait in the bar?

**B:** OK. But do you think you will find a solution?

**A:** Yes, I'm confident <sup>7</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ solution. I just need an hour or so. <sup>8</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ speak to my colleagues. <sup>9</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ we'll find you a room with a bath. Hopefully on the 4th floor!

**B:** Thank you so much. I'll come back in an hour.

### Discussing and presenting ideas

#### 2 Read the suggestions between colleagues discussing improving their English. Put the words in the correct order to complete the sentences.

The training is over for another year. How are we going to keep improving our English?

<sup>1</sup> \_\_\_\_\_  
(do / need / the / thing / we / first / to)  
is to have an English homepage on our computers.

<sup>3</sup> \_\_\_\_\_  
(of / idea / like / team / would / to / push / the / our) having lunch in English at least twice a week.

<sup>2</sup> \_\_\_\_\_  
(the / of / idea / came / our / up / team / with) listening to the news every day in English. Just ten minutes of listening is useful.

<sup>4</sup> \_\_\_\_\_  
(suggest / everyone / to / needs / we) read a short story every week and discuss it.

They are all good ideas. <sup>5</sup> \_\_\_\_\_  
(is / be / thing / to / it's / got / the) easy.