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If you are writing a "bad news" adjustment letter, salvage as much goodwill as you can by showing that you have acted reasonably. In denying a request, explain your side of the matter, thus educating the customer about how the problem occurred and how to prevent it in the future.

The writer does not begin by stating that he is denying the reader's request. Instead, he begins politely by trying to form a bond with the reader. In trying to meet the customer on neutral ground, be careful about admitting that the customer is right. If you say "We are sorry that the engine you purchased from us is defective," it will bolster the customer's claim if the dispute ends up in court.

The writer summarizes the facts of the incident, as he sees them.

The writer explains that he is unable to fulfill the reader's request. Notice that the writer never explicitly denies the request. It is more effective to explain why granting the request is not appropriate. Also notice that the writer does not explicitly say that the reader failed to make a backup copy of the plan and therefore the problem is her fault.

The writer shifts from the bad news to the good news. The writer explains that he has already responded appropriately to the reader's request.

The writer ends with a polite conclusion. A common technique is to offer the reader a special discount on another, similar product.

Quality Storage Media

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February 3, 2016

Ms. Dale Devlin
1903 Highland Avenue
Glenn Mills, NE 69032

Dear Ms. Devlin:

- Thank you for writing us about the external hard drive you purchased on January 11, 2016. I know from personal experience how frustrating it is when a drive fails.
- According to your letter, you used the drive to store the business plan for your new consulting business. When you attempted to copy that file to your internal hard drive, the external drive failed, and the business plan was lost. You have no other copy of that file. You are asking us to reimburse you \$1,500 for the cost of re-creating that business plan from notes and rough drafts.
- As you know, our drives carry a lifetime guarantee covering parts and workmanship. We will gladly replace the defective external drive. However, the guarantee states that the manufacturer and the retailer will not assume any incidental liability. Thus we are responsible only for the retail value of the external drive, not for the cost of duplicating the work that went into making the files stored on the drive.
- However, your file might still be recoverable. A reputable data-recovery firm might be able to restore the data from the file at a very reasonable cost. To prevent such problems in the future, we always recommend that you back up all valuable files periodically.

We have already sent out your new external drive by overnight delivery. It should arrive within the next two days.

Please contact us if we can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely yours,

Paul R. Blackwood

Paul R. Blackwood, Manager
Customer Relations

FIGURE 9.8 "Bad News" Adjustment Letter



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