

# Complaints Resolution Report

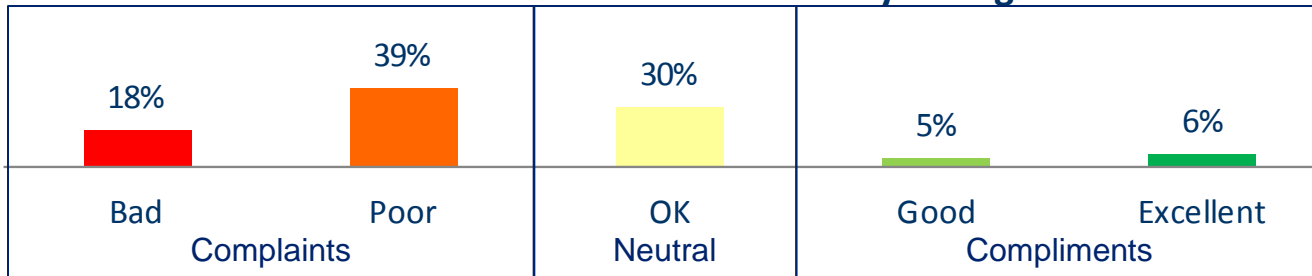
## Quarter ended Mar 31, 2014



# Feedback Summary

- During Q4 of the 2013/14 fiscal year 3.5 million customers travelled with BC Ferries
  - BC Ferries received 1,726 comments in Q4 2013/14
  - The average time to respond to customers was 2.5 days during Q4 2013/14 compared to 3.7 days in Q4 2012/13

**Distribution of Comments by Rating**



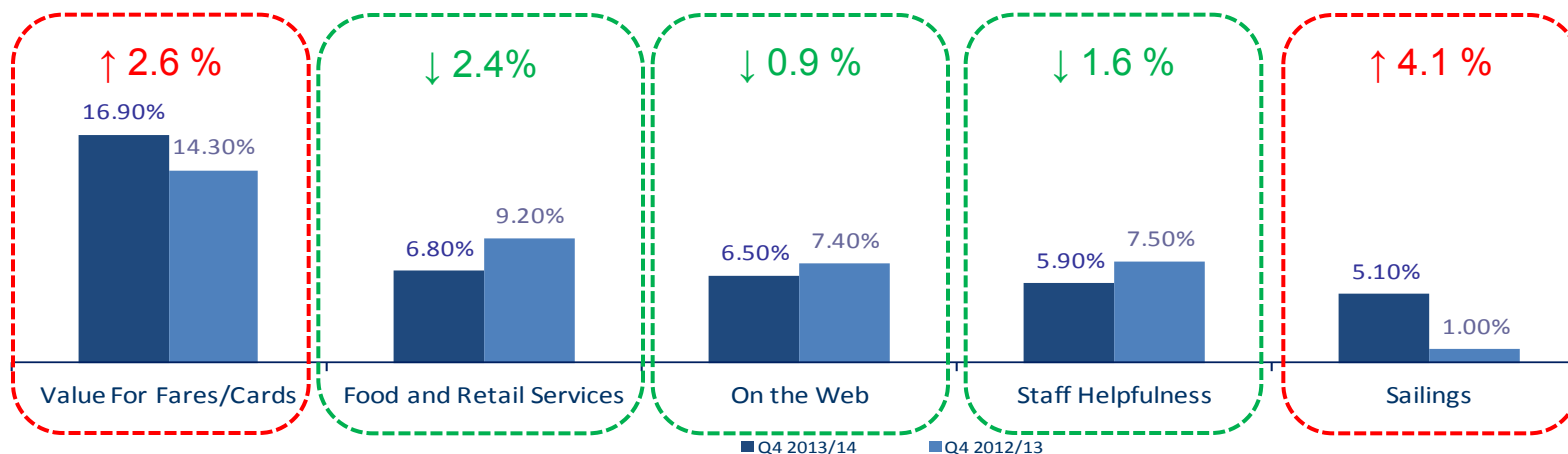
- Customer initiated feedback tends to be negative. Eleven percent (11%) of all customer feedback received in Q4 2013/14 was complimentary
- “Value For Fares/Cards” was the top issue: 236 complaints\* were made, representing 17% of the total comments received in Q4 2013/14
  - Top 5 complaints combined represent 41% of all complaints received in Q4 2013/14
- “General” comments are excluded from this analysis:
  - 296 “General” comments were received which were primarily made up of company information (116) and suggestions (93)

\*Complaints = “bad” or “poor” rating accompanied by a comment  
 Note: Q4 2013/2014 = Jan 1st to Mar 31th 2014

# Top Complaints\*: Corporate

#	Complaint	Q4 2013/14		Q4 2012/13	
		Complaints*	% of Comments (n=1,399)	Complaints*	% of Comments (n=1,353)
1	Value For Fares/Cards	236	16.9%	193	14.3%
2	Food and Retail Services	95	6.8%	125	9.2%
3	On the Web	91	6.5%	100	7.4%
4	Staff Helpfulness	83	5.9%	101	7.5%
5	Sailings	71	5.1%	13	1.0%

## % of Comments



\*Complaints = "bad" or "poor" rating accompanied by a comment  
 Note: Q4 2013/2014 = Jan 1st to Mar 31st 2014  
 Q4 2012/2013 = Jan 1st to Mar 31st 2013

# Value For Fares/Cards

## Sample of Customer Comments:

### Complaints

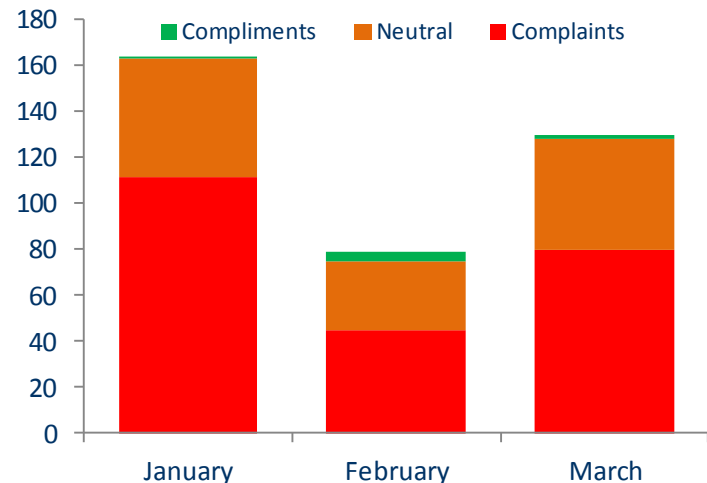
- “As of April 1, 2014 you are putting up the minimum load value again on the Experience Card. You don’t get it do you? The more you put up costs, the less people will use your service. Less people means less money. Doesn’t take a rocket scientist to figure that out!”
- “There are no real promotions for islanders who have to use the ferries as part of the public highway system.”
- “Hi, I was checking the fares from Tsawwassen to Victoria and can’t believe that the cost to travel with 3 passengers and a car return is just over \$200. It’s unfortunate that the costs are so high and as a proud resident of BC I will be spending my dollars south of the border and enjoying their reasonably priced public transportation.”
- “Another increase, cut back to routes and seniors? And you are expecting a busy Family Day? As a BC and Canadian citizen I have to say, enough is enough!”

### Compliments

- “I found out that BC Seniors travelling Monday through Thursday travel for half price starting in April. That’s not so bad! Why is everyone complaining? We have gotten it free for so long, I don’t mind paying half price. Thanks!”

## Value For Fares/Cards includes:

Group/Attribute	Complaints	Neutral	Compliments
Fares: Value for Fares Paid	128	9	2
Fares: Experience Card	32	24	0
Fares: Errors	16	8	0
Fares: Other Fares	16	17	1
Fares: Discount Fares	16	15	1
Fares: Refunds	12	32	3
Fares: Coast Card	10	17	0
Fares: Credit/Debit Card	2	0	0
Fares: Promotions	2	6	0
Fares: Frequent Travel	2	2	0
<b>% of all comments (1,399)</b>	<b>16.9%</b>	<b>9.3%</b>	<b>0.5%</b>



\*Complaints = “bad” or “poor” rating accompanied by a comment  
 Note: All data is for Q4 2013/2014 = Jan 1st to Mar 31th 2014

# Value For Fares/Cards

## Root Cause:

Fares and Service Levels: On April 1, 2013, BC Ferries adjusted its tariffs in accordance with the price cap increases set by the British Columbia Ferry Commissioner. Service levels are set by the Provincial Government and have largely remained unchanged since 2003.

Discounted Fares & Social Programs: Fare discounts have been in place since 1961 for all Gulf Islands and since 1972 for the Sunshine Coast, previously in the form of paper books or pre-paid tickets. In the spring of 2008, the BC Ferries Experience™ Card was introduced as a replacement to the paper books of pre-paid tickets. The minimum buy-in level generally increases with the annual price cap adjustment, and is established at a minimum to cover two round trips for car and driver on any route which has an Experience™ Card discount. The logic for this is simply that the card is intended for frequent users, and two round trips is the most basic level of 'frequent'.

There currently is no discount available for customers to travel on the major routes and no service fee is provided to BC Ferries by the Provincial Government to operate these routes.

The Provincial Government provides fare subsidies for BC seniors, students and passengers with a permanent disability. The levels of discounts for these programs are set by the Provincial Government. BC Ferries administers these discounted fares on behalf of the Provincial Government and acts within the guidelines and policies set by the Government.

## Lessons Learned:

There is anecdotal evidence that the increase in fares has caused customers to limit discretionary travel. A report provided by InterVISTAS Consulting Inc., acknowledges some minor price elasticity, but notes that there are other causal factors affecting ridership.

Through customer feedback the need for the recognition of frequent travel on the major routes has been identified. System upgrades are required in order to be able to offer more dynamic pricing models for frequent travel in the future.

As service levels are a public policy decision of government, BC Ferries has had limited opportunity to shape service to meet demand and to realize the associated operational savings that could help keep fares affordable.

# Value For Fares/Cards

## Action Taken:

Amendments to the *Coastal Ferry Services Contract (CFSC)*, which took effect April 1, 2012 included target net savings of \$30 million from service level adjustments over Performance Term 3. Savings of \$4 million will be realized through service level adjustments on three of the major routes. Adjustments in service levels to realize the remaining \$26 million in savings were to be identified by June 30, 2013. Through a subsequent amendment to the CFSC the deadline for identifying the additional service level adjustments was extended to March 31, 2014. Funding of \$7.1 million was received from the Province to compensate BC Ferries for this deferral.

Through the BC Coastal Ferries Community Engagement initiative the Provincial Government engaged coastal communities and ferry users from across the province on strategies to ensure the long term sustainability of the coastal ferry service. In addition to seeking feedback on Government's proposed adjustments to service levels, opportunities to reduce the pressure on fares through such things as reducing the level of seniors' discount, introducing time of day pricing as well as loyalty programs, pursuing a gaming pilot project and other initiatives were canvassed.

On February 5, 2014 the Province confirmed \$14.9 million in service reductions will be implemented over the remaining two years of the current performance term commencing in the spring of 2014, to better align service levels to demand. Government also announced it will proceed with a reduction in the seniors' discount and pursue a gaming pilot project. BC Ferries was tasked with creating revised schedules, to announce the schedules to the public at the end of March and to bring them into effect on April 28, 2014.

On February 12, 2014 BC Ferries invited the public to provide their input on proposed revised schedules via on-line survey and phone interviews for a 10 day period. BC Ferries consequently held 10 meetings with community leaders and Ferry Advisory Committee members on the 16 affected routes to discuss public feedback and options on sailing schedule refinements in order to ensure optimal schedules were developed under the service level adjustments and still achieve the net savings set out by the provincial government.

# Food and Retail Services

## Sample of Customer Comments:

### Complaints

- “Hi there, I ride your ferries no less than twice a month, this month I rode it 4 times and I have to say I really look forward to the buffet but on the Coastal Renaissance you have the coastal café which is horrible. You have to stand in line for an hour for a greasy hamburger and some lousy fries and in the Sitka lounge you have the lousy salad bar, OK if you’re a rabbit. Why would you spend all that money building a ferry and not put a buffet on it? I absolutely hate riding on the Coastal Renaissance, the food service really is a joke.”
- “I am a vegetarian and am almost always disappointed with the few options on the vessel. I would greatly appreciate it if your service brought in vegetable sushi rolls. That would create more options for vegetarians and vegans for a well balanced meal. Thank you!”
- “You probably hear this a lot, but you Wi-Fi sucks, slow as 1980. In this day and age you could do better.”

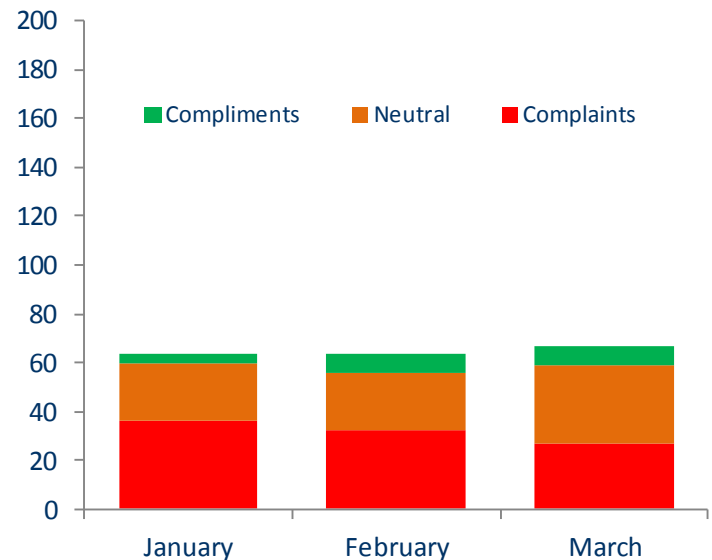
### Compliments

- “BC Ferries are nicer to sail on then the American ferries and they have more amenities.”
- “Hello BC Ferries – Just wanted you to know about the excellent customer service (with a friendly smile) from xxx in the cafeteria on 9 p.m. sailing from Tsawwassen to Swartz Bay on Sunday, March 2. Great job!”

\*Complaints = “bad” or “poor” rating accompanied by a comment  
 Note: All data is for Q4 2013/2014 = Jan 1st to Mar 31th 2014

## Food and Retail Services includes:

Group/Attribute	Complaints	Neutral	Compliments
On the Ship: Amenities	57	27	1
Food and Retail Services: Food Selection/Quality	22	9	0
Food and Retail Services: Lounge/Buffer/Coffee Bar	10	2	1
Food and Retail Services: Food Value	4	0	0
Food and Retail Services: Retail Selection	2	40	17
Food and Retail Services: Retail Value	0	1	0
Food and Retail Services: Staff Helpfulness	0	1	1
<b>% of all comments (1,399)</b>	<b>6.8%</b>	<b>5.7%</b>	<b>1.4%</b>



# Food and Retail Services

## Root Cause:

Vessels operating on the Swartz Bay – Tsawwassen route without buffet service:

The effort to more efficiently match vessels with traffic demand during periods with historically low traffic resulted in some vessels operating on the Swartz Bay – Tsawwassen route for approximately 4 months per year without the amenity of a Pacific Buffet. All vessels originally designated for the Swartz Bay – Tsawwassen route were planned and built with a buffet but it is cost prohibitive to retrofit a vessel with a buffet and seating area if the vessel is only going to be on the Swartz Bay – Tsawwassen route for a few months each year.

## Lessons Learned:

The Pacific Buffet is a very popular amenity with frequent travelers on the Swartz Bay – Tsawwassen route. Customers needed to be made aware of the possibility of sailings without buffet service.

## Action Taken:

As an alternative to the Pacific Buffet, the existing Sitka Coffee Place onboard the *Coastal Renaissance* was adapted to be able to offer a Breakfast and Salad Bar.

Through a prominent link on the homepage of the BC Ferries website, detailed information is provided regarding the onboard amenities available on the various vessels. And, on the Current Conditions Arrivals and Departures webpages customers can see what vessel is sailing at what time.



# Food and Retail Services

## Root Cause:

### Food Selection:

Consumer behavior demonstrated loyalty towards favorite menu items and in the past BC Ferries was hesitant to remove such items in favor of new and unproven menu options.

The rising number of customers with various food sensitivities and preferences have led to a higher demand in specific food options.

## Lessons Learned:

Through customer feedback BC Ferries has recognized that frequent customers are expecting more frequent changes to the menu options. We have further identified the increased demand of food options for special dietary needs and preferences.

## Action Taken:

In order to determine customers' interest, BC Ferries offered additional White Spot menu items onboard vessels servicing the Departure Bay – Horseshoe Bay route on a trial basis and conducted a survey after completion of the trial. Customer feedback was positive and BC Ferries gradually expanded the popular White Spot menu options onboard vessels servicing the Swartz Bay – Tsawwassen, Departure Bay – Horseshoe Bay and the Duke Point – Tsawwassen routes starting April 17, 2013.

The renewed partnership with White Spot enables BC Ferries to offer greater flexibility to make periodic changes to the cafeteria menu options in future.

In July 2012, BC Ferries conducted a survey regarding gluten-free food items. Working closely with customers we were able to identify on how best to satisfy the need for gluten-free food items. As a result, we were able to complement the vegetarian and vegan options with several gluten-free options in November 2012.

BC Ferries is actively monitoring the various dietary needs and when possible is responding by adding items to the food selection. New menu options are tested for quality, value and feasibility while monitoring demand and the potential for increased waste.

# Food and Retail Services

## Root Cause:

### Amenities / Wi-Fi:

On July 5, 2010 BC Ferries started the pilot project for a complimentary Wi-Fi service to allow customers to browse the web or check e-mail while travelling with BC Ferries. This service is now available at the Swartz Bay, Tsawwassen, Departure Bay, Horseshoe Bay and Langdale terminals as well as onboard select vessels that travel to and from these terminals.

A standard global filtering service is restricting access to websites tagged as displaying inappropriate content. Furthermore, streaming websites are restricted in order to allow all customers shared access to the limited wireless bandwidth available on our networks for basic web browsing and e-mail usage. To allow streaming media would impact other customer's ability to use the free resource efficiently.

The high demand for Wi-Fi during busy sailings can lead to access issues.

## Lessons Learned:

Customers need to be kept informed of the restrictions that do apply to the free Wi-Fi service to avoid disappointment.

## Action Taken:

The BC Ferries website provides information about the complimentary Wi-Fi service as well as a list of Frequently Asked Questions to assist customers who encounter difficulties with the service.

The possibility of expanding the Wi-Fi bandwidth is currently under review.

# On The Web

## Sample of Customer Comments:

### Complaints

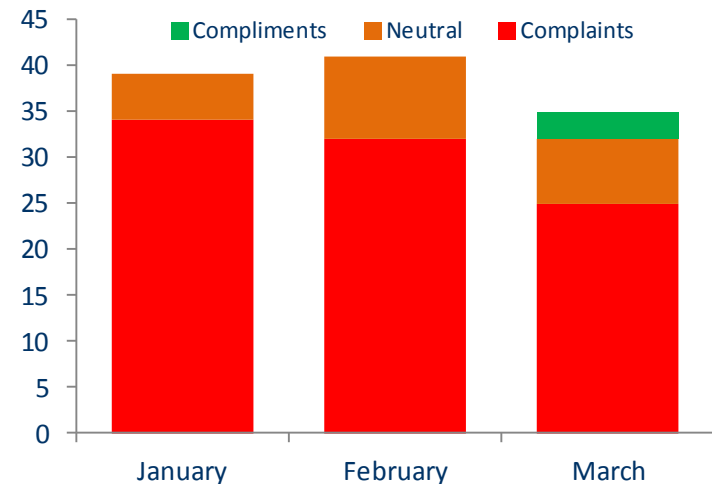
- “Just my observation that your new reservation pages are not as easily navigated as the old ones. I prefer the old version more. This newer one seemed slow and a little busy.”
- “Your website automatically assumes that on my iPad I prefer to see a mobile version of your site with a list of items to select from in one column down the left hand side. I don’t since it works poorly, when you select a topic it doesn’t take you to that topic, so you have no idea that it has actually opened.”
- “I have been trying to make a reservation on your website all morning. It is stuck at the vehicle details page. It won't proceed. It is so frustrating, what is going on?”

### Compliments

- “I just used your new web design for booking my reservations for a round trip from Pender/Otter Bay to Vancouver and back....WOW! The design is really easy to use, very fast, simple and easy to follow....great work you guys. Many thanks!”

## On the Web includes:

Group/Attribute	Complaints	Neutral	Compliments
On the Web: Design and Usability	47	6	3
Reservations: Online Reservations	17	3	0
On the Web: Information/General	12	9	0
On the Web: Travel Planning	8	1	0
On the Web: Service Notices	3	0	0
On the Web: Current Conditions	2	0	0
On the Web: Login/Passwords	2	2	0
On the Web: Online Giftshop	0	0	0
<b>% of all comments (1,399)</b>	<b>6.5%</b>	<b>1.5%</b>	<b>0.2%</b>



\*Complaints = “bad” or “poor” rating accompanied by a comment  
 Note: All data is for Q4 2013/2014 = Jan 1st to Mar 31th 2014

# On The Web

## Root Cause:

During this quarter, comments regarding BC Ferries' customer-facing website have included requests to improve accessibility and page rendering for mobile devices and improve compatibility with newly released version of popular web browsers.

## Lessons Learned:

In this world of constantly evolving devices and web browsers, a proactive approach to ensuring a quality online experience is required. This can be challenging given the pace of change, but customer satisfaction depends on it. Future efforts in support of a better website will be focused accordingly.

## Action Taken:

A release was completed on February 25, 2014 to further improve myBCFerries account and online reservation interfaces, including compatibility issues related to the IE11 browser.

Active monitoring of new devices, new browsers and new versions of established browsers was implemented to help us identify potential compatibility gaps before they become widespread.

# Staff Helpfulness

## Sample of Customer Comments:

### Complaints

- “Ticketing agent was aggressive, rude and embarrassed us by facial grimaces, shouting and loudly proclaiming my grandson was old enough to figure out departure procedures, baggage check in by himself. He's thirteen she shouted sarcastically to us.”
- “The agents usually don't offer a resolution, it's always something they can't help you with, it's just the way things are. No interest from them to try and help you.”
- “My daughter was on a field trip with her school. On her trip home she went to the cafeteria to buy a meal. She was quite excited to be using her own money, ordering what she wanted. When she got to the cashier, she belittled my daughter, scolding her. My daughter came home crying. What the heck was that cashier thinking? She is a 12 year old child.”

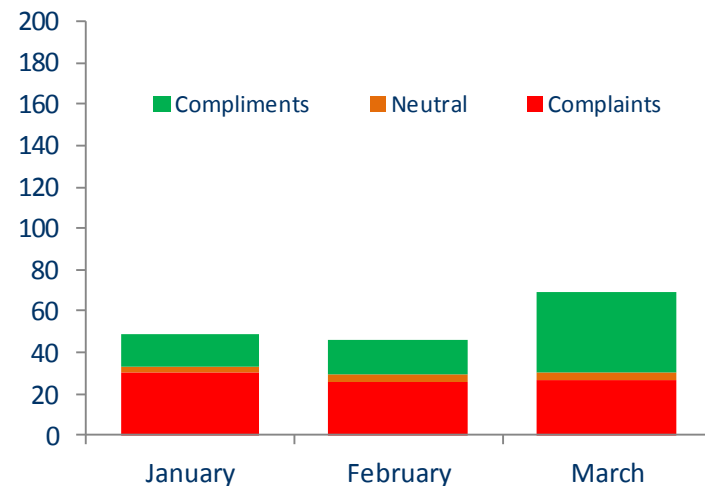
### Compliments

- “I rode the 3:30 PM boat from Horseshoe Bay to Snug Cove and absentmindedly left my lights on during the crossing. I am very grateful to have received a jump start at the other end from a member of BC Ferries staff. What a great service! Thanks so much!”
- “I travel between Tsawwassen and Nanaimo often, carrying dangerous cargo (bees) and just want to say that both terminal's staff and vessel staff are amazing and work well together. It always goes like clock work and I appreciate it.”

\*Complaints = “bad” or “poor” rating accompanied by a comment  
 Note: All data is for Q4 2013/2014 = Jan 1st to Mar 31th 2014

## Staff Helpfulness includes:

Group/Attribute	Complaints	Neutral	Compliments
Check-In: Staff Helpfulness	34	1	6
On the Ship: Staff Helpfulness	24	4	37
Inside the Terminal: Staff Helpfulness	17	2	22
On the Phone: Agent Helpfulness	3	1	6
Outside the Terminal: Staff Helpfulness	2	0	1
On the Phone: Resolution of Issues	2	0	0
On the Phone: Information Accuracy	1	1	0
<b>% of all comments (1,399)</b>	<b>5.9%</b>	<b>0.6%</b>	<b>5.1%</b>



# Staff Helpfulness

## Root Cause:

Communication issues, ticketing errors, misunderstandings, inappropriate behavior by employee leading to customer dissatisfaction.

## Lessons Learned:

Customer feedback has given us an opportunity to identify areas of improvement in customer service and ongoing customer service training and coaching is required.

## Action Taken:

Complaints regarding employees are investigated on a case by case basis. The customer is sent a response with an apology.

Where communication is the issue, information is provided to the customer to assist in preventing further confusion. In the case of inaccurate information or inappropriate behavior by an employee, corrective action is taken with the employee and the customer is contacted to correct the misunderstanding.

Positive feedback is also shared with the employees.

## Sample of Customer Comments:

### Complaints

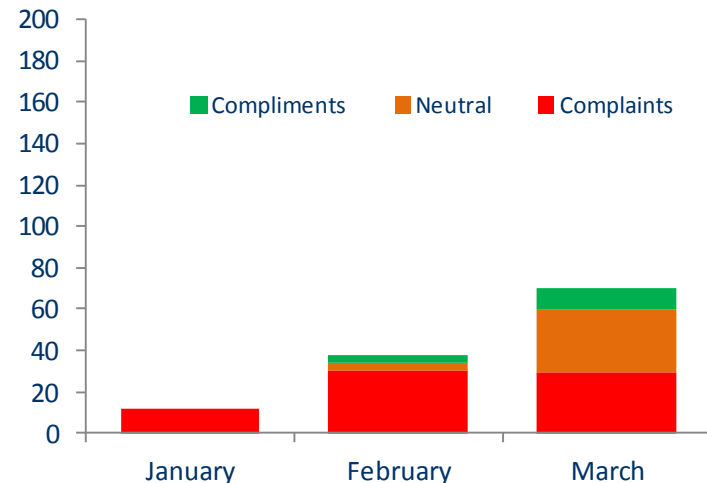
- “Why make passengers wait 4 hours when 5:00 pm sailing is fully booked at 2:50 pm, 7:00 pm sailing 80 percent booked at 3:10 pm, why not run an extra sailing at 6:00 pm?”
- “Due to the change/reductions for May sailings, I had to cancel 2 hotel reservations, skip Vancouver Island entirely and all BC Ferry service. Not pleased!”
- “I would suggest that on the Crofton to Vesuvius route that you give your staff a 2 hour break in the middle of the day rather than cutting the earliest and latest sailings. This would make economic sense and assist the customers who require those sailings!”

### Compliments

- “Just wanted to thank BC Ferries for the 6:00 pm ferry Sunday night. Don't know if that was a regularly scheduled ferry, or if it was added because of the Heritage Classic. Ferry was totally full with those returning to the Island. Appreciate that we didn't have to wait until 7:00 pm. Thanks.”

## Sailings includes:

Group/Attribute	Complaints	Neutral	Compliments
Sailings: Frequency of Sailings	54	32	10
Sailings: Making Connections	12	3	4
Sailings: Loaded on Sailing of Choice	5	0	0
<b>% of all comments (1,399)</b>	<b>5.1%</b>	<b>2.5%</b>	<b>1.0%</b>



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 Note: All data is for Q4 2013/2014 = Jan 1st to Mar 31th 2014

## Root Cause:

The average utilization rate for BC Ferries vessels is slightly below 50%, however there are times where customer demand is focused on certain sailings and not all customers will be able to travel on the sailing of their choice.

On February 5, 2014 the Province confirmed \$14.9 million in service reductions will be implemented over the remaining two years of the current performance term commencing in the spring of 2014, to better align service levels to demand.

## Lessons Learned:

Sailing waits have an adverse affect on customers who choose not to reserve or travel non-reservable routes.

## Action Taken:

During the schedule planning for the individual routes, detailed consideration is given to historic traffic patterns, seasonal changes, time of day demand and special events especially related to long weekends and holidays.

Manager's discretion sailings are scheduled tentatively on the major routes on days where historic traffic shows varying demand. If traffic builds up unexpectedly during low season periods, the Management team will carefully monitor the situation and consider adding a sailing after the completion of the scheduled service.

Vessels operating on some minor routes may change their operation to "shuttle mode" to respond to high traffic volumes.

On February 12, 2014 BC Ferries invited the public to provide their input on proposed revised schedules via on-line survey and phone interviews for a 10 day period. BC Ferries consequently held 10 meetings with community leaders and Ferry Advisory Committee members on the 16 affected routes to discuss public feedback and options on sailing schedule refinements in order to match community needs with schedules that were implemented under the service level adjustments and still achieve the net savings set out by the provincial government.

Customers may book a reservation on applicable routes to avoid sailing waits. Customer feedback has led BC Ferries to explore the possibility of expanding the fully reservable system currently in place on the Tsawwassen – Southern Gulf Island and on the Northern Routes.