





Michel Tremblay
Ombudsman

PO BOX 90026
OTTAWA ON K1V 1J8

CP 90026
OTTAWA ON K1V 1J8

Mr. Marc A. Courtois
Chairman of the Board of Directors
Canada Post Corporation

Dear Mr. Courtois:

In accordance with the mandate established by the Board of Directors of Canada Post on November 13, 1997, I am pleased to submit my sixth annual report as Ombudsman covering the period January 1 to December 31, 2007.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michel Tremblay". The signature is written in a cursive style and is placed on a light-colored rectangular background.

Michel Tremblay

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A Message from the Ombudsman

In accordance with my *Mission Statement*, I independently review customer concerns unresolved by all other avenues offered by Canada Post in a fair, unbiased and timely manner to improve postal service for all Canadians. I act as an impartial mediator committed to maintaining confidentiality on issues that are brought to my attention and I recommend actions that are equitable to all parties.

In 2007, my office processed 6,921 requests for assistance, representing a decrease of 5% from last year. We examined 6,572 complaints and processed 349 requests for information. Of the complaints examined, we processed and closed 1,872 complaints at intake, resolved 1,693 complaints at the initial stage of the investigative process, and conducted 3,007 in-depth investigations. These investigations resulted in 1,242 recommendations where Canada Post modified its original decisions and 601 recommendations where I concluded that Canada Post's original decisions should be maintained as I found no cause or justification to recommend different resolutions.

The complaint resolution process ensures that Canada Post has every opportunity to resolve customer complaints. As such, customers may only appeal to my office once Canada Post has completed its review of their complaint and they are not satisfied with the proposed solutions. With this in mind, in late 2006, we incorporated this process into our integrated voice response system. Given that my office received in excess of 10,000 calls, this initiative had a positive impact on intake staff, as our statistics revealed a 53% decrease in the number of premature calls processed over the previous year.

My office operates at arms-length from Canada Post and does not have access to Canada Post files. Therefore, before customer complaints can be assessed, we ask that customers provide us with the details pertaining to their complaint including copies of all relevant documentation. As we noted an increasing number of customers who did not provide all the necessary information, we encountered delays in initiating the investigative process. To minimize these delays, our *Request for Review* form was modified to include a number of prompting questions aimed at drawing more product or service specific information from customers.

We also undertook a two-phased approach to reviewing our website. Phase one involved redesigning and amending its contents to provide concise information to customers, and phase two consists of introducing an *On-line Request for Review* form, which is currently being developed.

Again this year, Canada Post played a fundamental role in the success of my office, as it continued to be receptive to settling customer complaints. Also, I am very pleased with the on-going dedication of my staff as they have consistently demonstrated a firm commitment to the values described in my *Mission Statement*. Their sustained effort undoubtedly contributed to the success of the office.

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light-colored background. The signature reads "Michel Tremblay" in a cursive, flowing script.

Michel Tremblay

The Ombudsman's Role

The Ombudsman is determined, within the limitations of his mandate and resources, to be accessible, proactive and diligent. His role is to promote and facilitate communication between the customer and relevant representatives of Canada Post, mediate between parties to find mutually acceptable solutions, act as an appeal authority to review in a fair and unbiased manner customer complaints, and to assist Canada Post in gaining a better understanding of customer concerns and the manner of their resolution. He is empowered to conduct investigations, to question the parties involved in a dispute, and to recommend appropriate resolutions.

However, the Ombudsman's mandate precludes him from becoming involved in the Corporation's relations with its employees, contractors and suppliers, matters that relate exclusively to Canada Post subsidiaries, the setting or amending of Canada Post Corporate policies, and any matter involving existing legislation such as the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, the *Official Languages Act*, etc., and matters before the courts.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is at the core of the Ombudsman function, therefore, the office places considerable emphasis on protecting personal information and will not disclose any information to anyone who is not deemed relevant to an investigation, except in cases of imminent danger. Furthermore, under the provisions of the *Privacy Act*, customers have the right to the protection of and access to any personal information as well as the right to request that changes be made to that information. Pursuant to the Act, the office submits an annual report to Parliament.

Customer Service

The office is highly mindful of the quality of service it offers its customers and is constantly looking for means of improvement. As the number of in-depth investigations has increased steadily over the last five years and resources have remained constant, the office had to implement a number of refinements to its communication tools and its practices and procedures to maintain quality service.

1. Telephones

Customers may only appeal to the Ombudsman once Canada Post has completed its review of their complaint and they are not satisfied with the proposed solutions. In light of the fact that a significant number of customers were contacting the office prematurely, the complaint resolution process was incorporated into the integrated voice response system in late 2006. This initiative had a positive impact as it reduced the number of premature calls by 53%. Given that intake staff received in excess of 10,000 calls in 2007, the office will continue to optimize its telephone processes.

2. Website

In 2007, we undertook a two-phased approach to reviewing its website. Phase one involved redesigning and amending the contents to provide customers with concise information on:

- the complaints resolution process;
- how complaints are processed once received in the office; and,
- what they should expect when they approach the office.

Phase two of the web redesign will enable customers to submit their complaints on-line.

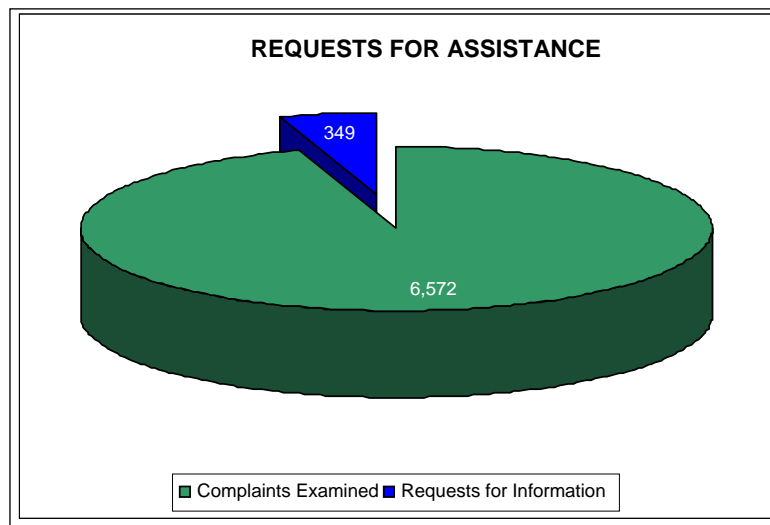
3. *Request for Review Form*

As the Ombudsman's final decisions are based on the facts and circumstances specific to each complaint, the office requires customers to provide the details pertaining to their complaint and relies on the information captured on its *Request for Review* form. As an increasing number of customers failed to provide all the necessary information, the office modified its *Request for Review* form to include a number of prompting questions aimed at drawing more product or service specific information from customers. This enables the office to provide customers with more timely assessments of their complaints and reduces the number of administrative delays in initiating the investigative process.

Numbers at a Glance

1. Requests for Assistance

In 2007, the office processed 6,921 requests for assistance – 349 requests for information and 6,572 complaints examined – representing a decrease of 5% from the previous year.



2. Complaints Examined

The complaint resolution process ensures that Canada Post has every opportunity to resolve customer complaints. Therefore, prior to appealing to the Ombudsman, customers must contact Canada Post Customer Service. Call agents will attempt to resolve their complaint and provide them with a file number referencing their complaint. Once Canada Post has completed its review and rendered a decision, customers may appeal to the Ombudsman if they are not satisfied with the proposed solutions.

a. Processed at Intake

Once intake staff determines whether complaints fall within the Ombudsman's mandate and whether the complaint resolution process has been followed, customers are advised that they are required to complete the *Request for Review* form before their complaint can be assessed.

Intake staff may refer customers to Canada Post in extenuating circumstances. Additionally, customers may be referred to a broad spectrum of public or private sector agencies, if it is determined that the complaints are not related to the postal service or are not within the Ombudsman's mandate.

b. Resolved at the Initial Stage of the Investigative Process

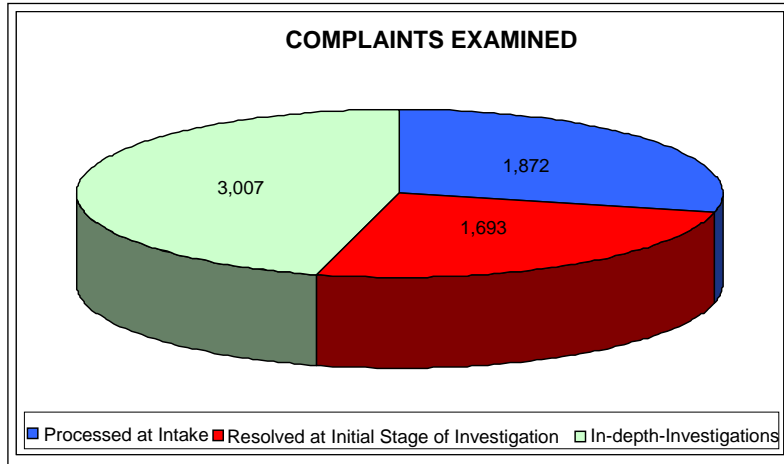
If the initial stage of the investigative process reveals that information deemed essential to proceed with an investigation is missing, the office suspends its activities until all necessary information is provided.

Activities on complaint files are also suspended when it is determined that Canada Post has not completed its review. If customers are dissatisfied with the proposed solutions, they may request that their file be re-activated.

c. In-depth Investigations

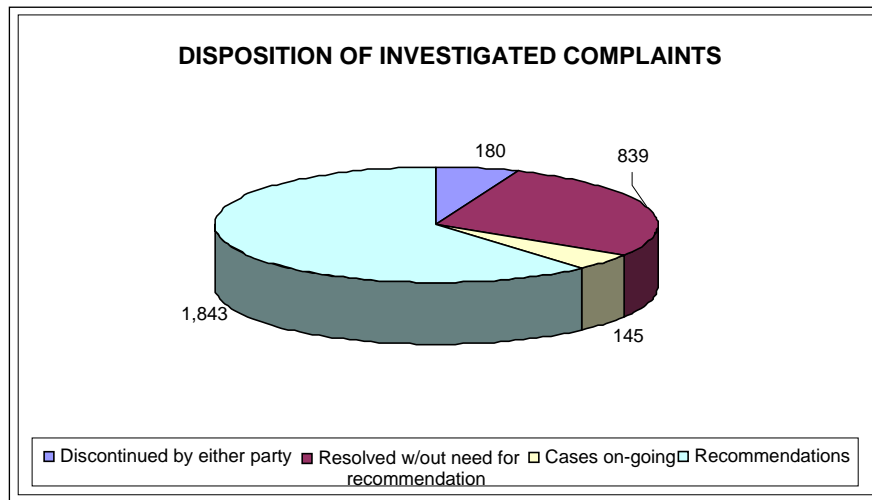
The focus of all investigations is to determine whether Canada Post applied its policies, procedures and guidelines appropriately. Investigative staff has the discretionary powers to interview the parties involved in a dispute, and may, in certain circumstances, conduct on-site visits to verify the information or evidence upon which the parties disagree.

Critical elements related to disputes are detailed in investigative reports and submitted to the Ombudsman who carefully considers all the facts presented to him before rendering his decisions.



3. Disposition of Investigated Complaints

The graph below provides an overview of the resolution of cases including the recommendations put forth by the Ombudsman.



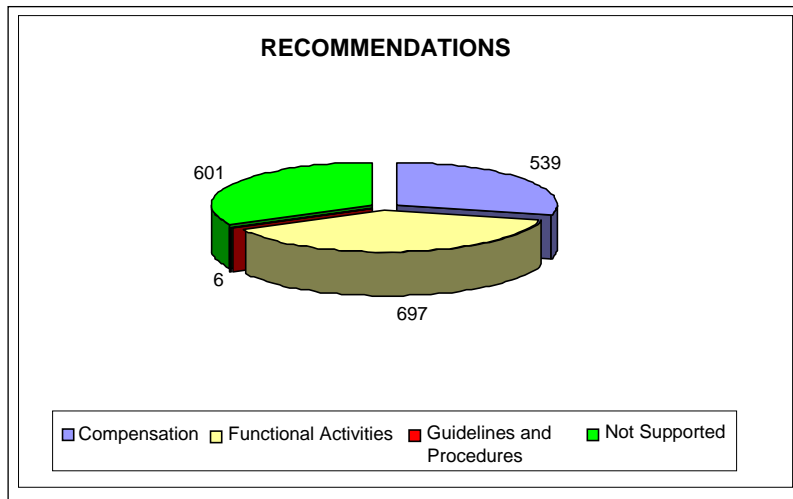
4. Recommendations

The Ombudsman reviews all investigative reports and makes recommendations for equitable courses of action to resolve customer complaints. As the Ombudsman has no binding authority, he relies on moral suasion to ensure that all parties consider his recommendations. Canada Post may accept or reject any of his recommendations.

The following graph depicts the break down of the 1,843 recommendations the Ombudsman made to Canada Post.

- *Compensation* - the Ombudsman recommended that customers be provided with some form of compensation for a service failure.
- *Functional Activities* - the Ombudsman recommended that Canada Post implement corrective measures aimed at improving the quality of service provided by Canada Post to a customer or a group of customers at a local or regional level.

- *Guidelines and Procedures* – the Ombudsman recommended that Canada Post modify its guidelines and procedures to ensure consistency in the service provided.
- *Not Supported* – the Ombudsman recommended that Canada Post maintain its original decision as he found no cause or justification to recommend different resolutions.



How to Contact the Office of the Ombudsman

Mail: PO Box 90026
OTTAWA ON K1V 1J8

Telephone: 1-800-204-4198

Facsimile: 1-800-204-4193

Website: www.ombudsman.postescanadapost.ca