

# Newsletter ACNA Canada

An Informative Newsletter for Canadian Nanny & Caregiver Agencies



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## ACNA Canada agencies stand together

Various representative nanny agencies of the Association of Caregiver & Nanny Agencies Canada (of which PG Nannies is a founding director) marched to the office of NDP Vancouver East MP Libby Davies last July 17 to register their objection to suggestions that their companies are exploiting caregivers.

In a letter to Conservative Minister of Public Safety Peter Van Loan, Davies wrote: "I urge you to immediately stop the airport deportations and review the program to make sure prospective workers in Canada are not, in effect, being ripped off by employment agencies." Davies wrote the letter to Van Loan in response to the deportation of Filipino national Liqaya Villacrusis, a trained nurse who arrived in Vancouver to work as a nanny.

Representatives of different nanny and caregiver agencies such as Golden Home International Agency, Tender Care Services, Reponte Care Services, White Personnel Domestic Services, Reliable Nanny and Caregiver Placement Agency and A-Class Nannies and Caregivers Inc. hoped the MP would retract her statement.

Davies was in a meeting when they walked in to her office. "Our objection in this instance is the inference that the employment agencies are ripping off nannies," explained Derek Townson, President of Golden Home International. "Agencies are hardworking legitimate companies facilitating this program (Live-In Caregiver Program). She's (Davies) making a blanket statement that gives the impression that employment agencies are bad in some way."

"We believe that there may be some bad agencies out there, but we don't have specific examples, we don't actually know that," Townson commented.

In response, Davies wrote an email to the employment agencies saying that she had consulted four advocacy agencies in the Lower Mainland before writing to Mr. Van Loan. "The advocacy agents provided information about situations they have dealt with. This does not infer that all agencies are problematic," wrote Davies.

Villacrusis was turned away at the Vancouver Airport last July 6 when Canada Border Service Agency officers apparently couldn't find her employer, said Townson. Townson believes that Canada Border Service officials should have called the agency to find Villacrusis' employer. But he said the problem is that "border services refuses to speak to the agencies".

In reference to the deportation of Villacrusis, Ramil Domaoan, President of A-Class Nannies and Caregivers Inc., said that agencies are only facilitating the documentation and application between the worker and the employer. "An employer can come to us and say, 'I need a nanny.' The agency gives her a nanny and all of a sudden, the employer changes his/her mind and the nanny is here. Would that be the agency's fault?" Domaoan said. "There are certain responsibilities attached to us, but not all."



## Scheduled Meetings with Government

The directors of ACNA have two exciting meetings tentatively scheduled for September. On September 4<sup>th</sup>, we will be meeting with Canada's Minister of Immigration Jason Kenney to discuss issues such as employers' and agencies' side of the live-in caregiver program, changes to work permit types and processes, and challenges with overseas processing missions. Later in September, we have been invited to meet with British Columbia's Minister of Labour Murray Coell. Planned items for discussion are employee breaks and overtime, interpretation of sections 10(1) and (2) of the Employment Standards Act, and employer education. If any ACNA Canada members have any questions or concerns they would like brought up with either Mr. Kenney or Mr. Coell, please advise the directors by email through [info@acnacanada.ca](mailto:info@acnacanada.ca). Wish us luck!

## 6 Steps to Dealing with a Client's Complaint

There is no doubt that a sour client can ruin your day, however complaints are a great way to identify areas where attention is required and change may be needed. Try viewing complaints as a springboard to improving customer service, or as a means to help you retain clients and gain new business. The next time you are presented with a complaint, you may not want to hide or make excuses, instead, let it be known that you are genuinely interested in what your client has to say and make every effort to correct the situation and move forward.

Here are six steps that can help you effectively deal with a client who has a complaint.

1. **Show genuine interest.** Be sure to present yourself as being approachable and give your client the opportunity to blow off steam. It is important that you remain calm, interested and attentive. If the complaint is made face to face, be sure to maintain eye contact and verbally acknowledge what is being said. Nodding in agreement and smiling when appropriate will communicate that you understand. If the complaint is made on the phone, be sure to respond encouragingly with well-placed phrases such as "Yes" and "I understand".

Keep in mind that regardless of how unreasonable a complaint may appear the client has the right to express their opinion. If the client is frustrated and argumentative, you may want to assist in deflating the situation by allowing them to vent their frustrations. If the complaint is received with an open mind, in an accepting manner, the client will begin to calm down.

2. **Identify the complaint.** Don't take the complaint personally and react in a defensive manner, don't get aggravated or exaggerate or minimize the complaint. As your client speaks, focus on the factual information (who, what where, and when) and the impact the problem is having on the client.

You may want to take notes in case the conversation becomes lengthy and covers many specifics. This will assist you in analysing the situation better and in dealing with the items of concern one at a time or in sequence of importance.

3. **Rephrase the complaint.** It is important that you establish the facts and that your client can see that you understand the problem as they see it. The next step is to explain how you plan to deal with complaint you have not been presented with. Be sure to start with an investigation of their account of the situation, followed by a plan of action for its resolution. This doesn't mean you have to come up with a solution at the time of the complaint, however, you should request that your client give you a reasonable amount of time to sort out the details of their complaint and to come up with an action plan for moving forward.
4. **Thank the complainer.** By delivering a statement which conveys an understanding of your client's feelings, avoiding argument, avoiding any attempt to assign blame will help client loyalty. They will not only respect and appreciate the manner in which you handled the situation; they will also appreciate and respect you as a business person.
5. **Initiate prompt follow through.** It is highly important that you follow through with what you promised. Failure to do so will result in a loss of credibility. Often such negligence can turn a bad situation into a hopeless one. In following through, you must be sure to analyse the convictions being made, and develop a strategic plan to resolve the issue(s) at hand. Communication with your client throughout this process is equally important.
6. **Provide feedback.** As soon as possible, report back to your client with findings into your investigation and how you intend to act on its resolution. Feedback to your client should convey any additional information you may have uncovered during your investigation. You may also want to include your synopsis of the situation along with any conclusions you may have.

Keep notes in your client's file of the complaint, your investigation and its resolution in case you need to remind yourself of the situation at a later date. This is a great time to review your processes and ensure that a similar complaint will not take place in the future.



## As a sole proprietor, you are indispensable

Running your own business can be exciting, rewarding and challenging. When you own and run your own business, you're responsible for all aspects of the business. Decisions have to be made constantly to make sure of a smooth operation. Just like everything else, businesses and business owners are vulnerable. There should be a constant check whether the owner, key person and the business are exposed to any kind of risk. No matter how much control we have over our business and decisions, there are still uncontrollable events in life that we should be aware of and plan for, events that could drastically change or take away everything.

Imagine for a second that you have a machine in your basement that prints a minimum of \$5000 a month. How would you protect it? You would probably put it somewhere safe, encased in a nice room or vault, constantly monitored and maintained and well protected from heat, liquid or anything that will jeopardize its performance. What if it breaks down temporarily or worst, forever? Well, that machine is you and your business - What would happen if you become unavailable for 6 months, years or more due to illness, injury or death? How would that impact your family's lifestyle, your business' profitability, the flow of income and valuable service to clients? Your business would lose its key person and your income source may disappear. There may not be enough income to manage all the business liabilities if you, the key person, will not be around. Creditors would press for immediate payment, and accounts receivable might become uncollectible.

If you die, become critically ill or disabled, your family would face three alternatives:

1. They could **continue the business**, requiring family members to have the ability and experience to run your business, sufficient cash after debts are paid and the ability to retain your customers.
2. They could **liquidate** the business. A forced sale attracts bargain-hunters and with "goodwill" gone, the value of the business may be drastically reduced - by as much as 40 to 90 per cent.
3. They could **sell as a going concern**. However, finding a qualified buyer may be difficult: the cash for purchase may not be readily available and the agreement on a fair price may be difficult to reach.

Alternatively, you could protect your business and family if you chose business life, disability and critical illness insurance. These products could help you and your family carry out your plans for the business if you were to become critically ill or die - for example, life insurance can provide funds to buy the business under a purchase agreement, and disability insurance can provide income if you become disabled. Critical illness insurance can help you pay off debts, stabilize your credit position, offer cash values or loan options or establish a fund for personal income at retirement, independent of the business.

We've worked hard for our business to be recognized and respected. Most successful business and business owners have contingency plans. It pays to have an advisor working for you, to make sure that your financial health is in tiptop shape. Some things may alter our life, but it doesn't mean life has to totally stop. Life happens, what's your plan?

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## Don't Let Stress Stand In The Way Of Success

Stress is a fact of life. How you handle it, though, is up to you. Here are a few tips for keeping stress and anxiety under control in turbulent times:



- Focus on right now. Worries about the past or the future can undermine your attempt to accomplish anything in the present. When you feel yourself growing anxious, concentrate on what you can do right now, and do it.
- Identify your fears. Sort out your feeling so you know exactly what you're worried about. Overcoming a vague dread is difficult, but once you've got a specific target, you'll be able to find ways to deal with your fear directly.
- Look for positive energy. Don't hang out with people whose anger or depression spills over onto you—find friends who support you and offer encouragement. Watch hopeful movies, listen to upbeat music. The more positive energy in your life, the better you'll be able to keep stress at bay.

## Great Quotes

*So don't follow the money. Follow the excitement. The people inventing the future are doing so just because it's fun.*

—Tim O'Reilly, publisher

*Everything has been figured out, except how to live.*

—Jean-Paul Sartre

*I think I've discovered the secret of life -- you just hang around until you get used to it.*

—Charles M. Schulz

## How to Write a Professional Business Letter

When it comes to writing a professional business letter there are five main parts:

1. The heading
2. The date
3. The opening
4. The body
5. The closing

The Heading refers to your business name and contact information and this is typically printed on your letterhead's title page and may be positioned anywhere on the page.

The date is an important piece of information to include in your letter as it can be used as a reference in filing, or it may be used for legal purposes. The date should be the first piece of information you put on your letter after your letterhead title and can be positioned on either the left or right side of the page.

The next section in a professional business letter is the opening and will contain your addressee's name, their title, and full address. The opening section will also include your salutation and this information is written in the left margin of your page below your letterhead title and date.

The body of the letter is simply your message to your reader and should be:

- \* Clear
- \* Concise
- \* Courteous

The way your letter is put together and organized is in priority of importance, so be sure to cover the most important things first.

It is important to be careful how you word your letter as you want the reader to clearly understand the purpose of your letter. It is equally important to use words that your reader can understand.

When composing your business letter you should have an introduction, body and ending. This allows your reader to follow the flow of your letter and ensures the avoidance of misunderstanding.

Finally, the closing section of your letter will inform of any necessary action to be taken or thanks your reader. Once you have completed the above, your letter should include a sign off where you type 'Sincerely Yours' or 'Kind Regards'. Your closing signature will then follow. The sign off section and closing signature should be at the left margin, directly below the body of your letter.

One thing to consider when composing a multiple page letter is to include page numbers in the footer of your letter.

## Tough Questions?

For members with tough questions about agency, immigration, employment standards, or any other issue, please email your questions to [info@acnacanada.ca](mailto:info@acnacanada.ca). We will be happy to discuss them amongst ourselves and share what answers we may find. Who knows, your question may become the topic of a future newsletter article!