

MEDIA RELEASE

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Seven in ten who approached CASE resolved their cases

Seven in ten of those who approached CASE for help last year had their cases resolved. CASE attended to 22,240 cases of dispute last year and resolved on average 70 per cent of the 4062 filed^[1] and assisted cases, recovering a total of \$3.5 million. This included cases that CASE also helped consumers to write to the businesses whom they would follow up with directly.

The cases that could not be resolved included cases whereby consumers have decided to drop the cases, proceed to Small Claims Tribunal or seek other legal means. For such cases, it is mainly because there is no favourable settlement reached between the consumers and businesses.

The top three sectors that drew the most cases were the beauty, contractors and timeshare industry. The same three sectors were also the same ones that drew the most cases in 2010. The only difference was that the contractor and timeshare industries are now the top 2nd and 3rd industry being complained against in 2011.

Table 1: Filed and assisted cases received in 2010 and 2011

	Filed cases	Assisted cases
2010	1,574	2,087
2011	1,396	2,666

Table 1 above shows that there is a decreasing trend for filed cases but increasing trend for assisted cases compared to 2010. This may imply that consumers are more empowered to deal with the vendors directly with a letter written by CASE, instead of requesting CASE to handle the matter for them. This also shows that CASE's education efforts over the years have enabled consumers to stand up for their rights.

Each year, CASE also does a ranking of the top 10 industries being complained against. For 2011, beauty is the top industry being complained against, followed by contractors and timeshare.

Table 2(a) and 2(b): Comparison of the ranking of the top 10 industries being complained against in 2010 and 2011

Table 2(a) – Ranking of industries in 2011

Table 2(b) – Ranking of industries in 2010

No.	Ranking of Industry in 2011	Number of cases
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No.	Ranking of Industry in 2010	Number of cases
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		received in 2011
1.	Beauty	1,565
2.	Contractors	1,488
3.	Timeshare	1,458
4.	Telecommunications	1,453
5.	Travel	1,396
6.	Maid agency	1,382
7.	Electrical and electronics	1,305
8.	Furniture	1,289
9.	Motorcars	1,258
10.	Handphones	799

		received in 2010
1.	Beauty	3,111
2.	Timeshare	2,001
3.	Contractors	1,313
4.	Electrical and electronics	1,262
5.	Motorcars	1,232
6.	Furniture	1,190
7.	Telecommunications	1,162
8.	Maid agency	1,088
9.	Real estate	1,044
10.	Travel	994

Some notable observations by CASE:

1. The beauty industry is the most complained against industry in 2011. This is the second time beauty-related cases top the most number of cases. However, even though beauty is still the most complained against industry in 2011, we are glad that there has been a sharp decrease from 3,111 cases (in 2010) to 1,565 cases.
2. The contractors industry is ranked 2nd top industry being complained against in 2011 (3rd in 2010). The surge in the number of cases could be due to more consumers moving houses or engaging renovation contractors in view of the better economy in comparison to 2010.
3. The timeshare industry is ranked 3rd top industry being complained against in 2011 (2nd in 2010). In comparison to 2010, the number of cases had fallen by 543 cases (27.1%). This can be due to CASE's efforts in educating the consumers on timeshare issues.
4. The telecommunications industry has risen from 7th placing in 2010 to 4th placing in 2011. This can be due to third party charges, data plan charges that come with the emergence of smartphones and tablets in the market.
5. The travel industry has risen from 10th placing in 2010 to 5th placing in 2011. This can be due to the economy in 2010, where more consumers can afford to travel.

CASE aims for 75% resolution rate

Year 2011	Filed cases	Filed cases with closed status	Resolved closed filed cases	Resolution rate
No. of cases	1,396	1365	962	70.5%

Year 2011	Assisted cases	Assisted cases with closed status	Resolved closed assisted cases	Resolution rate
No. of cases	2,666	1744	1214	69.9%

With reference to the above table, CASE achieved 70.5% resolution for filed cases and consumers were able to resolve 69.9% of their cases under the assisted scheme. Taking into account the two schemes, the average resolution rate is about 70%.

Moving forward, CASE aims to resolve about 75% of the filed and assisted cases. In addition, CASE will be embarking on mass education programmes to increase awareness regarding the Consumer Protection (Fair Trading) Act.

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[1] Filed cases are cases in which consumers authorise CASE to handle on their behalf. Assisted cases are cases that CASE assists consumers to pursue their own claims through writing a letter on their behalf to the vendor, citing the dispute and ideal resolution).