

CASE INFORMATION RELEASE

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CASE RECOVERED \$3 MILLION FOR CONSUMERS IN 2009

CASE attended to 21,782 cases of consumer complaints in 2009; down 6.06% from 23,188 cases in 2008. Among the cases in 2009, CASE successfully resolved close to 70% of them and recovered \$3 million for consumers.

“The results are encouraging. We were able to positively help the consumers,” said CASE’s President Mr Yeo Guat Kwang.

CASE also saw more consumers who opted to resolve their disputes directly with the vendor with some assistance and advice from the association. Out of the 21,782 cases received by CASE in 2009, 10.1% of the consumers had opted to do so.

Table 1: Filed and assisted cases received in 2008 and 2009

| | Filed cases | Assisted cases | Total number of cases |
|-------------|--------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|
| 2008 | 2,140 | 1,440 | 23,188 |
| 2009 | 1,597 | 2,200 | 21,782 |

Compared to 2008, there were more assisted cases and fewer filed cases. This goes to show that consumers are more empowered and savvy in taking up their disputes with retailers after receiving a written opinion from CASE.

(Note: Filed cases are cases whereby consumers authorise CASE to handle on their behalf. Assisted cases are cases whereby consumers deal with a vendor directly with a letter containing CASE’s opinion on the matter).

The fewer cases that CASE attended to is also visible through the decline in the number of cases in 2009 for the motorcars, clubs, contractors, maid agencies and furniture industries. On the other hand, there are also industries that contributed to the surge in the number of cases received such as the beauty, educational, timeshare, airlines and insurance industries. For the detailed statistics, please see Annex A.

Table 2(a) and 2(b): Comparison of the ranking of the top 10 industries being complained against in 2008 and 2009

Table 1(a) – Ranking of industries in 2009 Table 1(b) – Ranking of industries in 2008

| No. | Ranking of Industry in 2009 | Number of cases received in 2009 |
|------------|------------------------------------|---|
| 1. | Timeshare | 2,523 |
| 2. | Beauty | 2,060 |

| No. | Ranking of Industry in 2008 | Number of cases received in 2008 |
|------------|------------------------------------|---|
| 1. | Timeshare | 2,280 |
| 2. | Motorcars | 1,709 |

| | | |
|-----|----------------------------|-------|
| 3. | Educational | 1,843 |
| 4. | Motorcars | 1,343 |
| 5. | Electrical and electronics | 1,325 |
| 6. | Real Estate | 1,079 |
| 7. | Travel | 1,062 |
| 8. | Maid agency | 1,006 |
| 9. | Contractors | 946 |
| 10. | Furniture | 867 |

| | | |
|-----|----------------------------|-------|
| 3. | Electrical and electronics | 1,521 |
| 4. | Educational | 1,368 |
| 5. | Beauty | 1,275 |
| 6. | Contractors | 1,254 |
| 7. | Maid Agency | 1,234 |
| 8. | Travel | 1,102 |
| 9. | Real Estate | 1,100 |
| 10. | Furniture | 1,077 |

Each year, CASE also does a ranking of the top 10 industries being complained against. For 2009, timeshare is the top industry being complained against, followed by beauty and educational.

Some notable observations by CASE:

1. Timeshare has been the most complained against industry for the past 6 years (since 2004).
2. Beauty is ranked 2nd top industry being complained against in 2009 (5th in 2008). This is caused by a surge in the number of beauty-related cases received due to the closure of some spas.
3. Education is ranked 3rd top industry being complained against in 2009 (4th in 2008). This is caused by the increase of education-related cases received due to the closure of some private education institutions.
4. The motorcars industry has dropped from 2nd placing in 2008 to 4th placing in 2009. The drop in the ranking can be attributed to the launch of the CaseTrust-SVTA accreditation scheme for the motoring industry.
5. The electrical and electronic industry has also dropped its placing from 3rd to 5th placing in 2009. The drop in the ranking could be due to the bad economic environment in which the number of transactions for such products could have dropped.

CASE aims for 70% resolution rate

Apart from tracking success rates of the filed cases, CASE also started tracking success rates for assisted cases for 2009. Out of 2,200 cases, it was found that 1,278 cases were resolved. This means that 6 in 10 cases under the assisted scheme are resolved.

Moving forward, CASE aims to resolve about 70% of the filed cases. In addition, CASE will also embark on mass education programmes to increase consumer awareness and consumerism literacy in Singapore.