

RUSTY LUCAS
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SANDUSKY, OHIO 44871-0422

January 15, 2004

Shurfine-Central Corp.
Northlake, IL 60164-1889
ATTN: Consumer Relations Dept.

Dear Shurfine:

I have a problem with your macaroni and cheese dinners that I would like to address. But before I get into that I need to tell you about a psychological problem that I have which is relevant to my product complaint.

You see, ever since I was a child I have had difficulty eating foods that touched other different foods on my plate. I am unable to eat "contaminated" portions. I know that it a strong word to use, but my doctor and I have chosen that particular way of describing my feelings and fears. You see, I have an extreme phobia of mixing food items. I cannot eat two different food items in the same bite, and I usually cannot even mix unlike things together in my stomach. I eat everything plain without any toppings or condiments. I cannot eat a sandwich (bread and meat together), but it isn't even as simple as taking the bread or bun off of the meat. The fact that they were touching at one point and later separated does not correct the prior "contamination" factor. So do you see my condition? The only exception is that I can eat butter on bread or toast.

Believe me, I know that it sounds weird to you. It is normal to me, but I get enough strange looks from other people when I eat out (very rarely because you usually cannot get individual foods that have not been contaminated with other foods or food products) to know that other people think I am a freak. My family has also had to suffer through this problem of mine. Thankfully they are not afflicted and can eat 'normally' (which I am not absolutely sure that I am the abnormal one -- but I phrase it in that way to avoid any confusion). I don't know where the butter and bread exception came in or why that is the only exception I can stomach. The thought of jelly or peanut butter on bread makes me gag and the thought of both peanut butter AND jelly mushed together in a sandwich is enough to give me the dry heaves.

So where do you fit into this equation? Well, I like your macaroni and cheese dinners. I usually boil the macaroni and eat it and then eat the powdered cheese packet later after I have made certain that all of the pasta is fully digested.

Perhaps it was the fault of the supermarket in the unpacking of the product, but on TWO recent occasions I have opened boxes of your macaroni and cheese dinners to find that the cheese packet

was somehow opened or had been cut and some or all of the cheese powder had spilled out into the pasta. It looked as if the cheese pouches maybe had been cut with a box cutter or some other implement -- like maybe the actual box had been sliced in the process of opening a full shipment of your product -- thus making the cheese packet an unfortunate victim.

This rendered your dinners useless to me as contaminated. Nobody else in my family would eat them because they said that they only like Kraft brand. I don't see what the big deal is, pasta is pasta; but I can't convince them to eat it. (Now it is too late. Those dinners have long since been thrown away).

So like I said before, this may have been the fault of the supermarket, but even so, I wonder if you could check and/or revise your own packing procedures. Could you package the cheese in kevlar packages? Could you package the pasta and paper cheese packet into a kevlar or metal box? Could you reinforce the mac and cheese boxes that are packaged on the outside edge of the pallet inside one shipping carton? I am sure that any one of these alterations would make all the difference in the world.

See, the stock people at my local supermarket are all young kids who aren't as careful to detail as they used to be years and years ago. I remember a day when you could trust that the supermarket stock boy with opening any containers or cartons without doing any damage to the contents inside. But unfortunately, that work ethic died long ago. So you see, I am forced to come to you for help with this issue because I know that you probably still care about your consumers.

And I might add that this is not just a concern of me and people like me with this same condition. I don't know the figures on how many people that is -- it is a very rare phobia/psychosis... But anyway, the fragile boxes and/or cheese packets could cause other problems with the cheese leaking not only out of the cheese pouch, but also out of the box altogether. Wouldn't that be a horrible lawsuit to defend? Paying for macaroni and cheese and then only getting the macaroni?

That's the only other disadvantage that I can come up with at the moment, but I am sure that there are others. So you see, you would not just be addressing my concerns, but also the concerns of many many other consumers. Please consider making these changes to your packaging system.

Sincerely,

Rusty Lucas

Rusty Lucas

p.s. Do you have any free baseball caps with your company or any other parent and/or subsidiary company logos on them? I collect baseball caps and would like to have one that represents your fine company if possible.