Dear Mr. Leetch,

I am writing in response to your voice-mail message from October 18. In your message, you said that if I sent you a letter explaining the customer-service problems I have had recently with Peoples, you would respond.

To be blunt, I don’t believe for a minute that you will respond meaningfully to this letter, and that’s the crux of my problem with Peoples. I have contacted you and other Peoples employees repeatedly since June, in writing and by telephone, about problems with the bank, and I have not received satisfactory responses to any of my inquiries. Why should I believe that your response to this letter will be any different?

The only reason I am bothering to write you this letter, as opposed to simply closing my Peoples accounts and switching to another bank, is because there’s a slim chance that this letter might actually prompt you to clean house and fix some of these systemic problems.

Let me emphasize that last point.... I am not asking merely for you to solve specific computer problems, accounting errors, etc. I am telling you the response I’ve received to my inquiries since June indicates to me that there are serious, systemic problems in how you relate to your customers, and I cannot and will not remain one of those customers unless you convince me that you have done something about those problems.

I have already wasted far more time than I should have dealing with this, so this letter is your last chance. If I am not satisfied with your response, then I will close my Peoples accounts, never do business with your bank again, recommend to all my friends that they do the same, and file complaints with the Better Business Bureau and whatever State and Federal regulatory agencies seem appropriate when I take the time to investigate the matter.

In your voice-mail message, you said that if I am still having technical problems, you would like me to discuss them with Mr. Gaffney. However, as you will see from the remainder of this letter, Mr. Gaffney is part of the problem, and I have no confidence that he is willing or able to put forth the effort necessary to help me. Therefore, I am asking you to get him to solve them. I hope that he is responsive to his boss even if he is not responsive to his customers.

As you know, if you actually read the letter which I sent you on July 20, the computer upgrade which Peoples performed on the weekend of June 8 was, at least from my point of view, a complete disaster.¹ (Each of the superscripts in this text indicates a distinct problem. I am counting problems
in this way to illustrate just how badly I’ve been treated.)

On June 11, I sent the bank, through your Web site, a detailed message complaining about problems I experienced with your telephone-banking system after the upgrade. No one ever responded to that message.²

On June 17, I sent another message through your Web site, detailing serious additional problems I had discovered with the new computer system, including the fact that I was unable to access my money market account from non-Peoples ATM machines. No one ever responded to that message.³

On June 20, I sent a third message through your Web site, describing how a receipt printed for me by your ATM machine after a money-market deposit was incorrect. On June 22, I received a response from Mr. Gaffney; his response did not address the problem I had reported.⁴ I sent him a response the same day, explaining why what he had told me did not address my problem; he never responded.⁵

When my June bank statement arrived early in July with an incorrect 75-cent ATM service charge on it, I called the bank and asked why the charge was there. I was told that the charge had been applied erroneously to everyone’s account during the upgrade and would be refunded in my next statement. In fact, it was not.⁶

On July 20, I sent you a letter in which I enclosed an issue of the “Risks-Forum Digest” containing an article I wrote about all the problems with your computer upgrade, and asking you when these problems would be addressed. You sent me a response, dated July 27, in which you said, “Please be reassured that your computer processing center, our information technology manager and our staff have worked diligently to correct all of the issues that you have brought forward.” In fact, at the time you wrote your letter, none of the problems I had previously reported to the bank had been fixed.⁷

On July 31, I sent an E-mail message to Mr. Gaffney asking several specific questions about how Peoples has calculated interest payments in the past and asking him to provide me with a detailed description of the interest-calculation algorithm you are currently using. He never responded.⁸

On August 8, I sent you an E-mail message complaining about the errant 75-cent service charge which still hadn’t been refunded and listing several other previously reported problems which hadn’t yet been resolved and I wished to pursue further (I “dropped” numerous issues because I knew I wouldn’t be able to get them all resolved). I also enclosed the message I had sent to Mr. Gaffney on July 31 and asked you to get him or someone else to respond to it. You never responded to my letter,⁹ and still, no one responded to the questions I had sent to Mr. Gaffney.¹⁰

When my statement arrived early in September, I saw that the incorrect 75-cent service charge still hadn’t been refunded,¹¹ and what’s more, that I had been charged another incorrect 75-cent service charge.¹²

On September 9, I sent you via U.S. Mail a copy of the E-mail message I had sent you on August 8. Once again, I received no response,¹³ although I assume that someone actually read my letter, since (a) the $1.50 in incorrect service charges was refunded to me on my October statement and (b) I suddenly stopped being able to access my money market account through your ATM machine. This suggests to me that someone tried to fix the ATM-machine problems I had reported in my
letter, but they did it wrong, so instead of fixing things, they made them worse.\textsuperscript{14}

On October 12, when I discovered that I could no longer access my money market account through your ATM machine, I brought my ATM card into the bank and asked a customer service representative to fix the problem. He disappeared into a back room for a few minutes with my card, came back out, and informed me that the problem was fixed and my money market account would now show up on the ATM machine as a savings account, as it should have but never did since the upgrade in June. It seems that the problem with my ATM card, about which I complained several times since June, could have been fixed at any time, but no one ever bothered to respond to any of my complaints to tell me that!\textsuperscript{15} Furthermore, the customer service representative made comments indicating that the bank was aware that some accounts were, like mine, not transitioned properly to the new computer system; and yet, in the five months since the upgrade, you have never bothered to search through your database to locate all such accounts and fix them!\textsuperscript{16}

Please get either Mr. Gaffney or someone else at your bank to provide detailed, complete answers, in writing, to the following questions:

1. Why was I charged fees for using SUM ATM machines in June and August? Has this problem been fixed, i.e., if I use a SUM ATM machine in the future, is it going to be free as it’s supposed to be, or am I going to have to fight with the bank yet again to get an incorrect fee refunded? I want to know \textit{exactly why this happened and exactly what you’ve done to fix it}. I don’t want to hear, “Trust us, we’ve fixed it,” because I no longer trust you.

2. What is the exact algorithm you use to calculate monthly interest payments? The answer to this question should be detailed enough that I can use it to calculate, using the information on one of my statements, the amount of interest I should have received on that statement. I find it necessary to do this because, given how many problems I have experienced with your new computer system, I no longer have any confidence that it can correctly perform a function even as basic as calculating interest.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Kamens