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Office Of The President
1 Sony Drive, MD #138
Park Ridge, New Jersey, USA
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Dear Sir or Madam:

I am writing to you concerning my extremely dissatisfying experiences with your VAIO laptop computer line. As a long time Sony customer, I have enjoyed the quality and reliability associated with the Sony brand name; however, my recent experience makes me reconsider the suitability of Sony products for any of my future consumer appliance needs. As this is the **third failure of a Sony laptop that I have personally experienced in the last two years**, I believe my case warrants special attention.

One year and four months ago, my wife purchased a PCG-F290 VAIO laptop in New Jersey for \$3400 USD; a month and a half ago, it became increasingly erratic and began spontaneously 'falling asleep'. As an electrical engineer, I pursued all avenues that I had at my disposal to resolve the problem, including reinstalling the OS, changing settings in the BIOS, and applying driver upgrades, without success. We finally decided to contact Sony to get it fixed; Sony Canada's PC support line gave us instructions to send the computer to a service center, and we shipped it off to be serviced.

We were notified that the 'main board' had to be replaced; as an electrical engineer, I knew that only one component on the main board had probably failed, and asked why the faulty components couldn't simply be isolated and replaced. I was told the service center was 'not authorized to perform those type of repairs'; my options were a \$2800 CDN new main board, or a \$900 CDN refurbished main board. The customer representative explained that the cost was so high because this laptop was 'really old'; I choose the refurbished board, deciding that I would sell the VAIO once it was fixed.

Three weeks later, I was informed that a refurbished board was not available, and my only option was to purchase the new \$2800 CDN main board; I deemed this cost, more than half the original price of the laptop, too much. I attempted to contact Sony to seek some resolution to this issue; I know all too well the pace of progress, but the failure of a laptop after just over one year is unacceptable. Not only that, this is the **third Sony VAIO in the last two years** that I have seen fail just after the warranty expired; it seemed a little suspicious. In the other two cases, one was my company laptop and the other was my co-worker's company laptop; both began suffering hardware problems just over a year after purchase, and suffered irreparable hardware failures before a year and a half had elapsed since their purchase.

Contacting Sony sounds easier than it is; attempting to escalate the issue with the Canadian customer support representatives (1-877-899-7669) was unsuccessful. According to those representatives, because I had purchased the laptop in the US, I would have to contact the US division of Sony. In my view, this defeats the purpose of buying a brand-name computer; after all, don't international conglomerates exist to service their customers, no matter what their location? After calling the US customer support number (1-888-476-6972), I was directed to yet another support line for VAIO computers (941-768-7669). To add insult to injury, this line told me 'your computer is no longer covered by warranty, please call 1-900-225-7669 at a cost of \$19.95 per incident to receive technical support'. I don't want technical support. I want customer support.

Returning to the original Canadian customer support line, I explained the situation and they decided to send a 'critical note' to Sony in the US. I never heard back from them. Contacting them again, they could only give me this address to contact in order to seek a resolution to the issue.

I am not only extremely annoyed with the failure of a Sony product, I am annoyed at the fact that this is the third time I've seen it happen; it appears the VAIO computer line suffers from **poor quality assurance**. I am outraged with Sony hiding behind a façade of customer service, while providing almost no mechanism to obtain a real resolution. Consider that the laptop cost \$5100 CDN, whereas my new 32" Sony Wega TV cost merely \$1800 CDN: If a Sony TV customer received this type of customer service, Sony would witness an extreme customer backlash; then again, most TV's don't fail after only a year, so I guess they don't normally need customer service. Should I expect the TV to fail after a year? No. Should a computer be any different? No.

In summary, I want a response and a resolution to this matter; I am willing to pay **reasonable** cost for the repair to the Sony VAIO to get it working in order to be able to sell it to recoup some of the original cost of the computer. Alternatively, if Sony would buy back the computer to use for spare parts for other unfortunate Sony VAIO victims/customers, I would also judge that to be an acceptable solution. I suspect, however, that I will only receive a form letter response, further confirming my bad experience with Sony in this matter. If I am correct, I will be compelled to enlighten all of my IT manager friends, local computer user groups, and international computer web sites (such as Slashdot.org) with my unsatisfactory Sony experience.

Should you wish to contact me further, you can contact me during the day by telephone at (604) 473-3634, or also by email at bwilson@infowave.com.

Sincerely,

Brendon J. Wilson