

You're not the only one feeling like Grinch — 'customer rage' is real

[azcentral.com/story/money/business/consumers/2017/12/21/arizona-state-university-customer-rage-survey-american-families/971168001/](https://www.azcentral.com/story/money/business/consumers/2017/12/21/arizona-state-university-customer-rage-survey-american-families/971168001/)
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"Customer rage" is a real thing, according to an Arizona State University survey, and it's affecting 62 million of us. Wochit

(Photo: Giphy)

A national survey has confirmed what every holiday shopper knows: Dealing with customer service is horrible.

At least 62 million American families had at least one complaint against businesses in the last year, according to Arizona State University's 2017 "customer rage" study.



And shopper dissatisfaction has risen, despite companies spending big on customer-service programs. Forty years ago, 32 percent of people reported problems, compared to 56 percent today, the poll indicated.

To verify the survey, here's a quiz. Have you ever:

- Screamed at a blank screen when you tried to watch a TV show?
- Punched your computer keys as your browser failed to load?
- Clenched your fist when you opened a cell phone bill?

You're not alone.

The top three products that enrage customers, the study found, are cable and satellite television, followed by internet and telephone services.

Though you don't need to be told this, we're going to anyway:

The worst part of calling customer service, the survey found, is automated technology that prevents you from talking to a live person.

Press 1 for "Duh."

And when it comes to our feelings about getting help with a complaint, it's as if the mad emoji was invented for this survey. The most frequently reported emotions were frustration, disappointment and anger. 😡

The issue is no laughing matter for businesses.

The researchers estimated companies risk as much as \$313 billion dollars in future sales from people taking their wallets elsewhere.

The median amount of money customers said they lost because of a problem was \$250. More than a third of shoppers said they would never buy the product again.

The most effective actions companies can take to satisfy customers are pretty basic, the poll found.

Shoppers want companies to treat them with dignity, assure the problem won't be repeated, apologize and offer a refund. Even better, they should solve the problem on the first try.

"When customers complain, they don't want to waste their time repeating their problems to multiple people," Mary Jo Bitner, co-executive director of the Center for Services Leadership at ASU's W. P. Carey School of Business, said in a statement.

"The lesson to be learned, then, is do it right," Customer Care Measurement & Consulting CEO Scott Broetzmann added.

Finally, as we approach the busiest day of the year for gift returns, we must remember there's only one group that has it worse:

Customer-service representatives.

Dear brave retail workers, we wish you luck.

The survey of 1,000 people was conducted on landlines and cellphones by Customer Care Measurement & Consulting in partnership with ASU and research companies Confront and Bennett. The margin of error was +/-3.1 percentage points.

Have a problem? Contact Consumer Watchdog Reporter Rebekah L. Sanders at rsanders@azcentral.com or on Twitter [@RebekahLSanders](https://twitter.com/RebekahLSanders).