

# Feeling like the Grinch? 'Customer rage' is real

[usatoday.com/story/money/business/2017/12/21/feeling-like-grinch-customer-rage-real/971904001/](https://www.usatoday.com/story/money/business/2017/12/21/feeling-like-grinch-customer-rage-real/971904001/)



A video posted on Facebook late Sunday evening shows a passenger on a United Airlines flight from Chicago to Louisville being forcibly removed from the plane before takeoff at O'Hare International Airport. Wochit

(Photo: Getty Images)

A new national survey has confirmed what every holiday shopper knows: Customer service is horrible.

Shopper dissatisfaction has risen, despite companies spending big on customer-service programs, according to Arizona State University's 2017 "Customer Rage" study.



Based on the results, at least 62 million American families had at least one complaint against businesses in the last year.

Forty years ago, 32% of people reported problems, compared to 56% today, the poll indicates.

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 most, the study found, are cable and satellite television, followed by Internet and telephone services.

Pepper the robot looks like another expensive toy, but it would be a mistake to dismiss it as mere child's play. The chatty humanoid is part of an ambitious push to put customer-service robots in malls, airports, stores and other businesses. (Dec. 29) AP

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.

When it comes to our feelings about getting help with a complaint, it's as if the mad emoji were 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

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.

