

RDYOU

How to Complain

YOU CALL customer service to complain about a product, and you hang up angrier than when you started. That's customer rage, a feeling experienced by 73% of people with a major complaint last year, says Scott Broetzmann, president of Customer Care Measurement & Consulting, a firm that tells companies how to offer the best customer service. His secrets to getting good service:

Have a goal If you want your product fixed, say so. Want an

apology? Speak up.

Keep it short

Focus on one problem, and be succinct.

Stick with it

You have to invest the time it takes. Don't get what you want? Ask for a supervisor.

Skip ultimatums

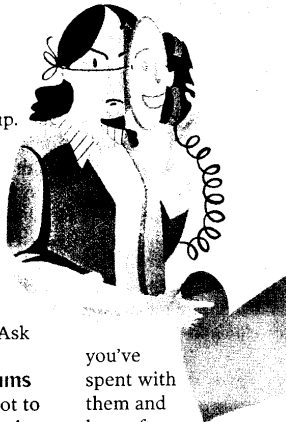
Don't threaten not to do business with them again. Why help you if you won't buy from them in the future?

Plead your case

Many companies have information such as how much money

you've spent with them and how often you complain. If you're a good customer, they may be more willing to help.

Be nice You likely won't get what you want if you're rude.



How Quick Getaways Bring Stress Relief

Taking a short trip, such as on Presidents' Day weekend, can have the same stress-busting effects as a longer one. You shift to a more relaxed mind-set in the first few days, says Stanford University psychiatrist David Spiegel. To get the most out of a trip, plan well:

Stay close If you live in Arizona, don't go to New York; you'll be in transit all weekend. Better: a quick jaunt to Vegas.

Hit the--brr--beach? It's off-season, which means no stress-inducing crowds. Take walks along the shore, browse antique shops and eat seafood.

Pamper yourself Splurge on a top-notch hotel. Explore the city, get relaxing spa treatments, and sleep in. You'll come home with a new perspective.

LISA MILLER FIELDS

