

Men's Health

Why Online Rants Are Pointless

by Scott Rosenfield

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Think twice before you tweet with F-bombs. **Ranting online actually makes you angrier**, finds a new study in Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking.

We understand: Sometimes you feel compelled to speak up if you think you've been wronged. But instead of posting profanity-laden messages in the comments section (don't get any ideas!), there are calmer, more creative ways to complain . . . and actually get what you want. Try these three less stressful—but more successful—strategies:

1. Take to Twitter

Only 30 percent of customer service tweets ever get a response, according to a recent Maritz Research Company study. That said, some companies respond more through the social world. For example, JetBlue has a team in place to answer every tweet, says Morgan Johnston, the company's manager of public communications and social media strategist. If you're having a problem, use the company's Twitter handle and ask a specific question; with JetBlue, any tweet that mentions a negative or positive experience with crew members gets an instant response. But every business is different, so quickly scan its Twitter feed for a sense of how responsive customer service is, says Guy Winch, Ph.D., author of *The Squeaky Wheel*. If no one has responded to customers in the last 24 hours, stick to the phone.

2. Size Matters

Small businesses live and die by word of mouth, says Scott M. Broetzmann, president of Customer Care Measurement & Consulting. So if you're fed up with your local pub, go straight to the manager. Let him know you're a fan, but you're thinking about picking a new hangout and taking your buddies with you if the place keeps serving flat beer. Chances are he'll listen—that's business he can't afford to lose.

3. Cool the Threats

Before you yell, remember this: You're screaming at someone who probably doesn't care that the phone company he works for screwed you over. So threatening to switch providers right off the bat doesn't usually land you a better deal, says Broetzmann. What will: Getting the right person on the phone. "Usually, the person at the bottom is not going to have any authority," says Rick Doble, author of *Cheaper: Insiders' Tips for Saving on Everything*. So ask for the next guy, who almost always has that power. If not? "Sometimes it's two levels," Doble says. "The higher up the totem pole you go, the more likely you are to find someone who wants to keep you as a customer."



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