

HOLD

The Suffering Economy
of Customer Service
And the Revolt That's
Long Overdue

Your Pre-Purchase Guide to Avoiding Customer Service Hell

Customer Service Quality Audit Checklist

Before making any purchase over \$100, use this comprehensive checklist to evaluate the company's customer service quality. This tool will help you avoid future frustration by choosing companies that actually serve their customers.

✓ The 10-Point Service Quality Checklist

Score each company on these critical service factors:

- ☐ **Can I reach a human in under 3 minutes?**
Call their customer service number and time how long it takes to speak with a real person
- ☐ **Can I find their phone number without a treasure hunt?**
It should take less than 30 seconds to locate on their website
- ☐ **Do they have multiple ways to contact them?**
Look for phone, email, and chat options available
- ☐ **Is their return policy written in plain English?**
Check for hidden fees or impossible timelines
- ☐ **Do they respond to social media complaints professionally?**
Review their Twitter/Facebook response patterns
- ☐ **Are their hours reasonable for my time zone?**
Ensure service is available when you might need it

- ☐ **Can the first person I talk to actually help me?**
Or do they just transfer to other departments?
- ☐ **Do they have generally positive reviews for service?**
Look for service quality feedback, not just product reviews
- ☐ **Can I cancel/return/modify without "retention specialists"?**
Cancellation should be as easy as signing up
- ☐ **Do they proactively communicate about problems?**
Check their communication history for outages or issues

Scoring Your Results

8-10 checks: Safe to purchase - This company values customer service

5-7 checks: Proceed with caution - Service may be problematic

Below 5: Find a competitor - You will likely regret this purchase

The Customer Service Test Drive

Before committing to any major purchase or long-term contract, take these four steps to evaluate the company's true service quality:

1 Call Before You Buy

- Find their customer service number on their website
- Time how long it takes to reach a human representative
- Note the representative's helpfulness and knowledge level
- Ask a specific question about their policies or products

Red Flag: If it takes more than 5 minutes to reach a helpful human for a simple question, imagine what happens when you have a real problem.

2 The Return Policy Reality Check

Ask the representative: "If I needed to return this, what exactly would I need to do?"

Listen carefully for:

- Vague language ("Just contact us" without specifics)
- Hidden fees ("Restocking charges may apply")

- Impossible timelines ("Must be returned within 48 hours")
- Department runaround ("You'd need to speak to a different department")

If they can't explain the return process clearly, the actual return won't be clear either.

3 The Social Media Stress Test

Visit their Twitter or Facebook page and ignore the marketing posts.

Focus on customer interactions:

- Do they respond to complaints at all?
- Are responses helpful or just corporate-speak?
- Do they solve problems publicly or just say "DM us"?
- How recent are the complaints? (If people stopped complaining, they probably stopped buying)

4 The Reddit Reality Check

Search Reddit for: "[Company name] + customer service"

Reddit users provide brutally honest feedback. Look for patterns:

- The same complaints appearing repeatedly
- Stories about being transferred endlessly
- Warnings from other customers to avoid the company

- Any positive service experiences (rare but valuable)

From "HOLD: The Suffering Economy of Customer Service" by Amas Tenumah

Join the revolution at WaitingForService.com