

Answer these questions to find out which type of complainer you are:

- 1** The morning post arrives with a new pair of shoes for you from an online retailer. One is slightly damaged. What do you do?
- A** Leave it alone – the damage isn't too bad and returning them by post will be too costly
 - B** Have a good old moan to your friends on Facebook
 - C** Contact their customer service department and ask to return the shoes for a full refund

- 2** On your way to the train station you order and pay for a coffee. It arrives and is only half full, how do you react?
- A** Walk away, you don't want to make a scene. You make a mental note not to return to that coffee shop again
 - B** Turn your back and grumble. You then tweet about your shoddy coffee
 - C** You politely point out to the barista that your coffee is not satisfactory and they immediately replace it for you

- 3** You jump on the train but the ticket inspector tells you that you have brought the wrong ticket, what do you do?
- A** Humbly pay the fine
 - B** Get off at the next stop and refuse to pay. You then rant on social media.
 - C** Pay the fine and take down the manager's contact details so you can write and complain about unclear ticketing

- 4** At lunchtime you go out for lunch with a friend and order a salad. It turns up with minimal chicken and a few limp salad leaves. Do you...
- A** Eat it anyway as you're hungry
 - B** Take a picture and share the sloppy service with your friends
 - C** Complain to the headwaiter and get a free meal

- 5** When you get home you open a bank statement. It shows you went overdrawn for five days and were excessively fined. This is because a payment was taken fraudulently. What do you do?
- A** Change your bank
 - B** Phone your bank and ask the operator to clarify their charges. Name and shame your bank on your social networks
 - C** Contact customer service, explain the problem and get a refund, compensation and an apology

Mostly 'A's

The meek customer

- ✗ Tend not to complain.
- ✗ Move their custom elsewhere.
- ✗ Believe complaining is unlikely to get their problem resolved.
- ✗ Have little faith in the system or in their own ability to complain.
- ✗ Feel that they don't know where and how to complain effectively.

Dr Marsden says

“ Good complaining is assertive. The most effective complainants are those who have a clear idea of what they want to achieve from their complaint. Whether it's a refund, an exchange or simply an apology, knowing what you want makes your complaint much easier to deal with and also more likely to be resolved to your satisfaction. ”

Mostly 'B's

The social complainer

- ✗ More concerned with warning their friends, family and social media followers about an offending product or service than making formal complaints.
- ✗ Motivated by frustration and revenge, by spreading negative word of mouth.
- ✗ May feel intimidated about complaining directly to an offending company.

Dr Marsden says

“ Give the company in question the chance to put matters right in the first instance. This means speaking or writing to customer services, outlining exactly why you are complaining and how you want the matter resolving. Stick to the facts of your case, saying what happened, when it happened and how much money was involved. Make sure you keep written records of those you have spoken to and what was said, as well as times and dates. ”

Mostly 'C's

The direct complainer

- ✓ The most effective and vocal complainers.
- ✓ Often take to social media to make their grievance heard and getting results fast.
- ✓ Often complain the right way – the assertive way – so that what they say is effective, kind and fair.
- ✓ Go about complaining in the right way and fully understand their rights.

Dr Marsden says

“ Always remember to keep a record of all receipts, bills and transactions. If you don't get resolution directly with the company go to an ombudsman who can help further. Remain calm and do not get aggressive when raising your complaint and use the correct channels to get redress, either it being an apology or financial compensation. These customers are confident, efficient and knowledgeable when it comes to their rights. ”