

## Tekst 4

# Oh, I can't complain

**At last the British have learnt to complain but we still fail to get good service, says Miranda Ingram**

1 **Y**ou know what we Brits  
are like. We find a slug  
in our salad and we're  
more likely to wrap it in  
5 a paper napkin and slip it into  
our handbag than to summon  
the waiter. "Delicious, every-  
thing's fine," we nod when he  
finally sweeps past our table.

2 10 If we do complain, we screech  
like I do, more madwoman than  
dissatisfied consumer. What we  
can't do is the cool, calm, effi-  
cient complaining at which the  
15 Americans are so good. I used to  
sit opposite one of these people.  
She never raised her voice but I  
would rather have paid for a re-  
placement myself than swap places  
20 with the salesman who had  
sold her shoddy goods.

3 The key to this woman's suc-  
cess, of course, was that she actu-  
ally believed she *deserved* to get  
25 what she had paid for, which is  
the key difference between the  
American and British attitudes to  
spending power.

4 Or was the difference. At last,  
30 it seems, we are catching on, ac-  
cording to a survey by the Insti-  
tute of Customer Service TMI,  
which shows that today half of us  
regularly complain about defi-  
35 cient goods and services – twice  
as many as ten years ago.

5 That is the good news. The  
bad news, however, is that all our  
newfound complaining techni-  
40 ques are getting us nowhere.  
We are becoming demanding  
and aggressive but not successful.  
You can complain all you like  
but British organisations just  
45 don't get the point.

6 "The point about complaints,"

says Cary Cooper,  
Professor of Organ-  
50 isational Psycho-  
logy, "is that they  
are an incredibly  
cheap and accurate  
form of market  
research. Com-

55 plaints show you  
the way to develop  
your products and  
services to meet  
customers' needs.

60 Our organisations  
are not used to  
confrontation and  
can't handle com-  
plaints. They see  
65 them as a waste of  
the company's time and  
something to be smoothed over  
and forgotten as fast as possible."

7 These companies will be in  
70 big trouble soon, though, says  
Cooper. In his view, people over  
50 dislike change. They will keep  
complaining to their bank but  
are unlikely to move their ac-  
75 count. The under-30s, however,  
are a completely different breed  
and, having grown up in a 24-  
hour, fast-changing world, think  
nothing of switching brands and  
80 loyalties.

8 Meanwhile, although we have  
learnt to complain, we now have  
to learn to do it properly. Scree-  
ching and exploding may give us  
85 instant satisfaction but to get *real*  
customer satisfaction we need  
more sophistication.

9 "First, keep cool," says Cooper.  
"Think what you want to get out  
90 of your complaint. Do you want a  
replacement? An apology? A dis-  
count? And be specific about what



**Like John Cleese in Monty Python's dead parrot sketch, we have not learnt to get customer satisfaction**

you want. Be logical about the  
fault. And judge the person you  
95 are complaining to – are they  
senior enough to deal with your  
complaint? Above all, be tena-  
cious. Make it quite clear that you  
are not going to give up until you  
have what you want."

100 Cooper's personal opinion is  
that it is really rather sad that we  
Brits are turning into complainers.  
The stiff upper lip that kept  
105 us quiet before was what made us  
so civilised. But in today's con-  
stantly changing, time-driven  
world, the ability to be tolerant is  
no longer a useful tool. Now we  
110 can stamp our feet and get what  
we want along with the best of  
them – but the cost is that it puts  
us into a state of constant conflict  
with others. "Sadly," says  
115 Cooper, "those who remain  
admirably relaxed and civilised  
and British are just going to be  
taken advantage of."

*'The Times'*

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- 1p **14**  "You know what we Brits are like." (regels 1-2)  
Op welke eigenschap van de Britten doelt de schrijfster hier?
- 1p **15**  How does the writer present the behaviour of one American woman in paragraph 2?  
**A** As a demonstration of rude behaviour.  
**B** As an embarrassing spectacle.  
**C** As an example that might be worth following.  
**D** As a useful lesson in hiding one's discontent.
- 1p **16**  "These companies will be in big trouble soon" (regels 69-70)  
Waarom zal dat het geval zijn volgens alinea 7?
- 1p **17**  Which of the following is meant by "properly" in "we now have to learn to do it properly" (lines 82-83)?  
**A** aggressively  
**B** effectively  
**C** modestly  
**D** quickly
- 1p **18**  How could paragraph 10 also start?  
**A** After all, Cooper's personal opinion...  
**B** Consequently, Cooper's personal opinion...  
**C** However, Cooper's personal opinion...  
**D** Moreover, Cooper's personal opinion...
- 1p **19**  "it is really rather sad that we Brits are turning into complainers" (regels 102-104)  
Waarom is dat "sad" volgens alinea 10?
- 2p **20**  "we still fail to get good service" (ondertitel)  
Geef voor elk van de onderstaande uitspraken aan of deze volgens dit artikel wel of niet een oorzaak hiervan vormt.  
1 Bedrijven gaan verkeerd om met de klachten die hen bereiken.  
2 Doordat de oudere generatie te veel klaagt, neemt niemand klachten nog serieus.  
3 Maar weinig klachten komen terecht bij de personen die ze echt kunnen verhelpen.  
4 Producenten hebben niet genoeg tijd om alle klachten af te handelen.  
Noteer het nummer van elke uitspraak, gevolgd door "wel" of "niet".