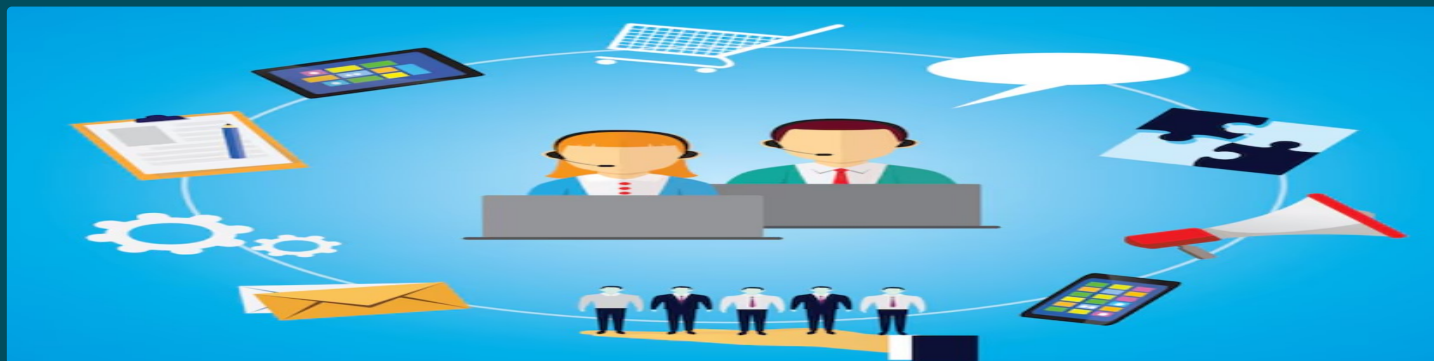




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Consumer-Focused Companies: The Need for Convergence with the National Consumer Helpline (NCH)

AUTHOR Rahul Sundaram

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In an era where consumer satisfaction drives business growth, ensuring swift and effective grievance resolution is critical. Companies catering directly to consumers must consider collaborating with the **National Consumer Helpline (NCH)**, an initiative by the Department of Consumer Affairs. This partnership builds customer trust and helps settle potential disputes at an early stage.

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Understanding the National Consumer Helpline (NCH)

The NCH is an integrated grievance redress mechanism under the **Integrated Grievance Redress Mechanism (INGRAM)** initiative. It provides a unified platform for consumers, businesses, regulators, and government bodies to address grievances. With its accessible services via toll-free numbers, online portals, and mobile apps, the NCH empowers consumers to raise complaints and seek redressal conveniently.

The Role of NCH in Consumer Grievance Redressal

1. Awareness and Guidance:

The NCH educates consumers about their rights and responsibilities under the Consumer Protection Act. Its repository of resources ensures consumers are well-informed, reducing the scope for disputes.

2. Complaint Registration:

Consumers can lodge complaints through various channels, including:

- Toll-free helplines: 1800-11-4000 and 1915
- SMS at 8800001915
- NCH app, UMANG app, WhatsApp, or directly via the online portal.

The system generates a unique docket number for each complaint, enabling easy tracking.

3. Mediation / Redressal:

Acting as a pre-litigation alternate dispute resolution platform, the NCH forwards grievances to the concerned companies, regulators, or ombudsmen. It ensures real-time updates on action taken and follows up at regular intervals.

4. Transparency and Accountability:

The portal allows consumers to monitor the progress of their complaints without needing additional logins. This transparency encourages accountability among companies.

5. Time-Bound Resolution:

NCH aims to resolve grievances within 45 days.

Why Companies Should Partner with NCH

1. Builds Consumer Trust:

Early and efficient resolution of grievances strengthens consumer confidence in the brand, enhancing loyalty and reputation.

2. Reduces Legal Liabilities:

NCH is a pre-litigation mechanism, allowing companies to address complaints without escalating to consumer courts, saving time and resources.

3. Simplifies Complaint Management:

The centralized system ensures structured handling of complaints, reducing overlaps and delays.

4. **Encourages Collaboration:**

By joining the NCH platform, companies can access valuable feedback, helping them identify systemic issues and improve their products and services.

5. **Compliance with Consumer Protection Goals:**

Active participation aligns companies with national consumer protection objectives.

The Process for Companies to Engage with NCH

- **Integration:**

Businesses can integrate their grievance redress systems with the NCH portal to receive complaints directly and respond promptly.

- **Training and Awareness:**

Collaborating with NCH ensures that customer service teams are trained to handle grievances effectively.

- **Tracking and Reporting:**

The portal offers tools to track grievance progress and update actions taken, ensuring transparent communication with consumers.

Conclusion

In a competitive market, resolving consumer disputes at an early stage can significantly impact a company's reputation and bottom line. Partnering with the National Consumer Helpline improves the grievance redressal process and shows a company's commitment to consumer welfare. By using the NCH platform, businesses can build stronger relationships with their customers, supporting sustainable growth and trust in the long term.

For further details write to contact@indialaw.in