



Best Practice Guide

for
**Customer
Service
Professionals**

Stephanie Edwards

The Best Practice Guide for Customer Service Professionals is for people who work at the customer interface. It covers the knowledge, understanding and skills needed to become a customer service professional. The book provides a stimulating blend of information, ideas and activities.

This **2nd Edition** of the Best Practice Guide has been updated to meet all the knowledge requirements of the U.K's 2006 National Occupational Standards for Customer Service.

David Parsons, CEO of the Institute of Customer Service:

"I wholeheartedly recommend the Best Practice Guide for Customer Service Professionals (2nd Edition) to any organisation or individual wanting to work to the National Occupational Standards in Customer Service. The Guide delivers - in a user-friendly and activity-based style - the underpinning knowledge needed to achieve one of the UK's level 2 customer service qualifications, namely the S/NVQs or Technical Certificates. This resource is an ideal motivational tool for those working directly with customers. It can help to build, through the knowledge and skills of customer-facing people, today's essential prerequisite for organisational success - a reputation for delivering first-class customer service."

Key Features:

- Clear definitions of customer service terms
- Complete guide for employees in customer service
- Innovative ideas on how to deliver excellence in customer service
- Ideal for both classroom activity and independent study
- Plenty of practical, work-related activities and self assessments
- Mapped to the 2006 National Occupational Standards for Customer Service Level 2
- Suitable for those undertaking an Apprenticeship in Customer Service

Author Stephanie Edwards is Director of Customer 1st International and Subject Matter Expert for Customer Service in the UK

Also Available:

Best Practice Guide for Customer Service Managers, Trevor Arden & Stephanie Edwards (2009)

E-Book versions of The Best Practice Guides for Customer Service Professionals and Customer Service Managers



CUSTOMER 1ST
INTERNATIONAL

www.customer1st.co.uk

ISBN 9780954874469



9 780954 874469

Best Practice Guide

for Customer Service Professionals

Customer 1st International

United Kingdom

Best Practice Guide for Customer Service Professionals E-Book Edition

Published by Customer 1st International Ltd 2009

ISBN-13: 978-0-9548744-6-9

Copyright © 2009 Customer 1st International

All rights reserved. No part of these materials may be reproduced in any form, or by any means electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or any information storage or retrieval system without prior permission from Customer 1st International.

All rights of Customer 1st International to be identified as the authors of this work have been asserted in accordance with Sections 77 and 78 of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

Condition of Sale

This E-Book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out or otherwise circulated in any electronic format or form of binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition, be imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

Published in the UK 2009 by
Customer 1st International Ltd
Bramblewood House
Longbridge Deverill
Wiltshire BA12 7DS
United Kingdom

Illustrations by Anne-Marie Sonneveld

Contents

Introduction	4
The aims and objectives of this Best Practice Guide	4
The importance of the customer service professional	4
Learning outcomes	5
Introducing the knowledge and skills that you need	8
The activities and learning log	8
Confirming your learning	11
Moving onto further learning	11
1 Basic Concepts of Customer Service	12
1.1 Learning outcomes	12
1.2 What is customer service?	13
1.3 Customer satisfaction	15
1.4 Customer expectations	17
1.5 Excellent and poor customer service	21
1.6 Customer service transactions	24
1.7 The service offer and added service value	25
1.8 Benchmarking	28
1.9 Measuring service standards	30
1.10 Moments of truth	31
1.11 Self-assessment	34
1.12 Learning log	35
2 Developing Relationships with Your Customers	37
2.1 Learning outcomes	37
2.2 Internal customers and external customers	37
2.3 Customer relationships	38
2.4 The components of the customer service process	39
2.5 Customer loyalty	44
2.6 Benefits of customer service	47
2.7 Self-assessment	48
2.8 Learning log	49
3 Customer Service in Different Organisations	51
3.1 Learning outcomes	51
3.2 The aims of different types of organisations	51
3.3 The service offer in different types of organisations	57
3.4 Moments of truth in different types of organisations	59
3.5 Self-assessment	60
3.6 Learning log	61

4 Match Features and Benefits 63

4.1	Learning outcomes	63
4.2	Your organisation	63
4.3	Features and benefits	64
4.4	Product and service standards	68
4.5	Welcome diverse customers and colleagues	71
4.6	Sell or promote products and services to your customers	75
4.7	Self-assessment	83
4.8	Learning log	84

5 Communicate Effectively 86

5.1	Learning outcomes	86
5.2	Why it is important to communicate well	86
5.3	Choose and use the appropriate communication methods	88
5.4	Face to face communication	89
5.5	Effective non-verbal communication	90
5.6	Body image	92
5.7	Active listening skills	93
5.8	Use behaviour appropriate to the situation	97
5.9	Communicating on the telephone	100
5.10	Email, letter and fax	105
5.11	Using websites	109
5.12	Remove the communication barriers	110
5.13	Self-assessment	112
5.14	Learning log	113

6 Deliver Service Excellence Through Teamwork 115

6.1	Learning outcomes	115
6.2	The need for teamwork	115
6.3	The benefits of teamwork	118
6.4	Satisfy your internal customers	119
6.5	Working in partnership with other organisations	119
6.6	Clear principles of team working	121
6.7	Self-assessment	124
6.8	Learning log	125

7 Systems for Delivering Service Excellence 127

7.1	Learning outcomes	127
7.2	Effective systems for customers	127
7.3	The benefits of customer service procedures	129
7.4	Identify and meet customer preferences	132
7.5	Product information and selection	133
7.6	Product and service innovation	135
7.7	Systems for customer feedback	138
7.8	Resolve problems well - Six steps to service recovery	140
7.9	Handling difficult customers by staying positive	146
7.10	Handling conflict Dos and Don'ts	149
7.11	Use ICT to support your systems	149

7.12	Self-assessment	152
7.13	Learning log	153

8 Laws and Codes of Practice 155

8.1	Learning outcomes	155
8.2	Laws and regulations - how they affect you	155
8.3	Consumer laws for customers' rights	156
8.4	Data Protection and Freedom of Information	158
8.5	Sex Discrimination Act	161
8.6	Disability Discrimination Act (DDA)	163
8.7	Health and Safety at Work Act	165
8.8	Human Rights Act and other EU legislation and directives	167
8.9	Copyright	170
8.10	Financial Services Act	171
8.11	Sector codes of practice	173
8.12	Useful websites	174
8.13	Self-assessment	176
8.14	Learning log	177

9 The You Factor 179

9.1	Learning outcomes	179
9.2	Getting fit to be a customer service professional	179
9.3	Emotional intelligence	180
9.4	Stress tolerance	182
9.5	Assertiveness	182
9.6	Happiness through personal attitude and motivation	187
9.7	Interpersonal relationships	188
9.8	Self-actualisation	191
9.9	Educating the customer	193
9.10	Winning more business	194
9.11	Your checklist for service excellence	196
9.12	Self-assessment	197
9.13	Learning log	198

Answers to self-assessments 200

S/NVQ Knowledge Matrix 201

References 210

Index 211

Introduction

The aims and objectives of this Best Practice Guide

The Best Practice Guide for Customer Service Professionals is for all those who deal with customers. Working effectively with customers demands more than customer care. Today's customers want to deal with real professionals, representing organisations that meet their high expectations. Your customers may be internal (within your organisation) or external (outside your organisation). The skills needed are very similar and the Best Practice Guide will help you to focus on improving the skills that you need in your work.

The Best Practice Guide covers all the knowledge and skills needed to deliver excellent customer service. It has been based on the UK's National Occupational Standards for Customer Service (released in 2006). The Guide delivers all the concepts, knowledge and understanding through simple explanations and examples. It then enables you to improve your skills by carrying out relevant, work-based activities involving your own customers.

The importance of the customer service professional

You individually play a key part in the success of your organisation. As a customer service professional you can make the difference for the customer. Your actions can turn new or even unhappy customers into loyal ambassadors for your organisation. Your skills and knowledge can provide customers with exactly what they are looking for. This will encourage them to return to your organisation over and over again - and this in turn can bring financial success.



Your organisation has ambitious aims and objectives. But without you and your fellow professionals working well as a customer service team, those plans cannot be realised. So as you progress through this improvement programme, remember that it is all about you. You can develop your skills in dealing with customers to the highest possible level. You can not only achieve success on behalf of your organisation, but you can also gain yourself - through job satisfaction, reward and recognition.

Learning outcomes

The learning outcomes for this Best Practice Guide describe what you will be able to do after successfully completing all the Modules. Each Module's learning outcomes are shown below.

Module 1 Basic Concepts of Customer Service	
When you have successfully read through all the explanations and completed all the activities in this Module you will be able to:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate an understanding of the basic concepts of customer service 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the importance to customers and of receiving excellent customer service 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand how an organisation's reputation can depend upon the delivery of excellent customer service 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distinguish between different levels of customer service 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate an understanding of how the service offer can be enhanced by added service value 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain a range of methods of measuring customer service 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify moments of truth in a customer service context 	
Module 2 Developing Relationships with Your Customers	
When you have successfully read through all the explanations and completed all the activities in this Module you will be able to:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognise and distinguish between internal and external customers 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the benefits and importance of customer loyalty 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the components of an effective customer service process 	

Module 3 Customer Service in Different Organisations

When you have successfully read through all the explanations and completed all the activities in this Module you will be able to:

- Explain why customer service is important to different types of organisation
- Explain how customer service differs in different types of organisation
- Recognise how the service offer tends to vary for different types of organisations

Module 4 Match Features and Benefits

When you have successfully read through all the explanations and completed all the activities in this Module you will be able to:

- Demonstrate an understanding of features and benefits of products and services that affect the delivery of customer service
- Identify customer preferences and match them to available options
- Recognise how organisations can set product and service standards
- Demonstrate an understanding of equality and diversity issues for an organisation
- Demonstrate an understanding of how to promote additional services or products to customers
- Identify an unique selling point for a product or service

Module 5 Communicate Effectively

When you have successfully read through all the explanations and completed all the activities in this Module you will be able to:

- Describe the importance of effective communication in the delivery of customer service
- Choose the most appropriate communication method to suit a specific customer service situation
- Recognise the value of effective verbal and non-verbal communication skills in customer service transactions
- Choose behaviour that is appropriate to a specific customer service situation
- Understand the benefits, features and methods of using information and communications technology (ICT) in order to deliver effective customer service

Module 6 Deliver Service Excellence Through Teamwork

When you have successfully read through all the explanations and completed all the activities in this Module you will be able to:

- Demonstrate an understanding of effective methods of team working in the delivery of customer service
- Identify examples of working in partnership with other organisations

Module 7 Systems for Delivering Service Excellence

When you have successfully read through all the explanations and completed all the activities in this Module you will be able to:

- Explain the importance of systems and procedures supporting consistent delivery of customer service
- Demonstrate an understanding that systems should be focused on customers
- Identify customer preferences and match them to available options
- Understand the meaning and benefits of product and service innovation
- Explain how organisations can benefit from customer feedback, both positive and negative
- Describe a systematic approach to service recovery
- Identify effective ways of resolving customers' problems
- Deal effectively with difficult customers and difficult customer service situations
- Understand the importance of using ICT to support systems and customers

Module 8 Laws and Codes of Practice

When you have successfully read through all the explanations and completed all the activities in this Module you will be able to:

- Understand the main aspects of customer service that are affected by legislation, regulation and sector codes of practice
- Recognise the main regulatory and legal restrictions on what you can and cannot do in all aspects of your work with customers

Module 9 The You Factor

When you have successfully read through all the explanations and completed all the activities in this Module you will be able to:

- Identify the skills of emotional intelligence that are relevant to customer service
- Demonstrate an understanding of the effects of submissive, assertive and aggressive behaviours on others
- Understand how personal attitude, health and emotional state affect your ability to deliver excellent customer service
- Plan and carry out activities that are needed for your own professional development

This Best Practice Guide covers the knowledge and skills required by the U.K.'s Level 2 National Occupational Standards for Customer Service. After Module 9 you will find an S/NVQ knowledge matrix that maps the knowledge requirements of the National Occupational Standards (NOS) to this Best Practice Guide. This shows you, section by section, where you cover the knowledge requirements of the Level 2 NOS for Customer Service.

Introducing the knowledge and skills that you need

As a professional you will need specific knowledge and skills. These take time, effort and motivation to develop. The Best Practice Guide will show you how to develop that set of skills and knowledge. This may be done either in your job role or within a learning programme.

We hope you find this Best Practice Guide informative and fun. For someone new to customer service all the concepts, guide-lines and activities will prepare you to operate as a true professional. If you are already experienced in dealing with customers you will discover new ideas and find ways of improving your expertise. Each Module introduces you to customer service knowledge and skills. There are examples and illustrations to help you relate the knowledge and skills to your own experience and job role.

The activities and learning log

You should complete the activities as you go through each Module of the Best Practice Guide. They will help you to consolidate your learning. They allow you to apply what you learn to your own organisation, or to one that you are familiar with.

If at the moment you are not employed, or in a position where you do not deal directly with customers, do not worry - you can still carry out the activities by applying them to organisations that you deal with in your everyday life.

To get you started, complete the following activity.

Activity

Your personal objectives for the Best Practice Guide

To start with, think about what you hope to get out of this development programme. Where in your customer service role do you need to improve your own understanding and skills? Decide on your personal objectives which will enable you to improve your performance as a customer service professional. Write in the space below up to five personal objectives for your development programme.

1

2

3

4

5

Use the learning log for each Module. This will help you to reflect on your learning. It will encourage you to plan changes and improvements - and to put them into place. Here is a your first learning log.

Activity

Your learning log

This is not simply a learning programme. It is important that you make real changes and improvements to the way you work. Use the learning log to record what you have learned and the actions that you plan to take. Add items to your learning log. When you get to the end of the programme you will need to refine these items to produce a clear action plan.

What I have learned

1

2

3

4

5

Actions planned

Target date

1

2

3

4

5

Confirming your learning

The Best Practice Guide for Customer Service Professionals will help you to track your own progress and improvements. Each Module ends with a multichoice self-assessment consisting of five questions. Each self-assessment checks the progress you have made with your learning programme. You should carry out the self-assessment once you have finished going through the Module, including all the activities. You will find the answers to the self-assessments towards the end of this Best Practice Guide.

Moving on to further learning

Once you have completed this Best Practice Guide you may want to achieve one of the following vocational qualifications:

- The Level 2 Certificate in Customer Service - this is also known as the Level 2 Technical Certificate in Customer Service
- The Level 2 National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) or Scottish Vocational Qualification (SVQ) in Customer Service - this assesses how you apply your knowledge and skills in the workplace

To take your learning even further you may consider a qualification for supervisors or junior managers in customer service

- The Level 3 Certificate in Customer Service - this assesses your knowledge and skills as a supervisor or team leader, and is also known as the Level 3 Technical Certificate in Customer Service
- The Level 3 National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) or Scottish Vocational Qualification (SVQ) in Customer Service - this assesses how you apply your knowledge and skills in the workplace as a supervisor or team leader

Module 1: Basic Concepts of Customer Service

Module introduction

Welcome to Module 1 of the Best Practice Guide for Customer Service Professionals. In this Module we look at the basic concepts of customer service, what our customers expect, and standards of customer service.

1.1 Learning outcomes

12

When you have successfully read through all the explanations and completed all the activities in this Module you will be able to:

- Demonstrate an understanding of the basic concepts of customer service
- Understand the importance to customers and of receiving excellent customer service
- Understand how an organisation's reputation can depend upon the delivery of excellent customer service
- Distinguish between different levels of customer service
- Demonstrate an understanding of how the service offer can be enhanced by added service value
- Explain a range of methods of measuring customer service
- Identify moments of truth in a customer service context



1.2 What is customer service?

Let us start off with some ideas on what we actually mean by customer service.

Activity

What is customer service?

Think about the customer service that you provide to your customers. In your own words, write down what you think customer service means. If you want to, refer to the organisation you work for, or one that you are familiar with.

13

Definition

Customer service

Customer service is the sum total of what an organisation does to meet customer expectations and produce customer satisfaction.

Types of customer service

There are different types of customer service delivered at different stages. We can identify customer service delivered before the sale of the product or service, during the sale, and after the sale. Let us look at some examples.

Customer service in a restaurant

Customer service before sale	Welcoming the customer into the restaurant
Customer service during sale	Serving the food in a friendly and efficient manner
Customer service after sale	Asking the customer if everything was satisfactory

Customer service in a car dealership

Customer service before sale	Providing information and a test drive
Customer service during sale	Handling the finance for the customer's purchase of a new car
Customer service after sale	Dealing with after sales servicing in a friendly and efficient manner

Customer service in a hotel

Customer service before sale	Confirming the availability of rooms for specific dates
Customer service during sale	Responding to a customer's request to change to a quieter room
Customer service after sale	Returning customers' belongings that were left in the room in error

To do the same for your own organisation, complete the next activity.

Activity

Customer service in my own organisation

Give an example of customer service at each of the three stages.

Customer service before sale	
Customer service during sale	
Customer service after sale	

1.3 Customer satisfaction

You have probably heard of the term customer satisfaction. Here is a definition.

Definition	Customer satisfaction is the feeling that a customer gets when he or she is happy with the customer service that has been provided.
Customer satisfaction	

A satisfied customer is one who has received the level of service he or she expected; nothing went wrong and the customer went away reasonably "happy". But is that enough? What if the customer tries another competing business to yours, and is not merely satisfied, but delighted? Try to delight your customers by giving them more than they expected. Customers are very demanding, and if your organisation cannot delight them they will probably go to another.

One positive step you can make in your organisation is to measure the level of customer satisfaction. You need to get feedback from your customers to find out what they think of your level of service. You can get feedback from your customers by:

- asking them questions
- listening to them
- encouraging them to complete customer satisfaction questionnaires
- dealing with their suggestions for improvements
- handling their complaints

You might think of the different levels of customer satisfaction as (for example):

- delighted
- satisfied
- disappointed
- unsatisfied

On the other hand you might measure customer satisfaction by a score (out of ten, say) by analysing customer satisfaction questionnaires. However you do it, it is vital that you and your organisation know how satisfied your customers are, and always try to "go the extra mile" to delight your customers.



Listening to your customer

Be aware that customers are changing. They expect more than they used to, especially in terms of the service they receive. Study and then discuss with your colleagues the following statistics.

Customer satisfaction facts and figures

Here are some facts and figures about customer satisfaction in the UK.

Customer service

- Customer satisfaction in the UK is running at 69%; customers' needs are still not being met. (UK Customer Satisfaction Index [UKCSI] 2008)
- 71 % of respondents said they expected a higher standard of service. (Accenture Global Customer Service Satisfaction Survey Report 2007)
- Customer satisfaction is the biggest single factor determining future growth of the economy and the profitability of companies. (American Customer Satisfaction Index [ACSI] 2006)
- 69% of customers would be willing to pay up to 20% more for exceptional customer service (Hicks, ICS National Complaints Culture Survey 2006)

1.4 Customer expectations

You cannot plan properly to satisfy or delight your customers until you know something about their expectations. To understand the expectations of the customer, try to see it from the customer's point of view.

Remember that customers are individuals. Each one has a set of expectations of the service that you will provide. It is a vital part of your job to try to live up to and exceed those expectations. To help you do that, think like a customer.

Your organisation could "see it from the customer's point of view" on a regular basis. For example some organisations (such as shops, restaurants and hotels) use mystery shoppers to experience the level of service first hand. The mystery shopper goes into the organisation unannounced and checks the levels of service given against certain criteria. Feedback is then given to the staff and/or managers in order to identify where improvements can be made.

Activity

Customer expectations

Think of an example of poor customer service that you have experienced personally. In that organisation the customer service did not meet your expectations. Describe what went wrong, then list the things that would need to improve so that the service would meet your expectations.

Quote from ...	"I think in here they all know we offer help and a happy cheery smiling face at the check-out or at the customer service or the petrol station. That is what they expect, and that is what they get." (Johnston, 2003)
Tesco	

Definition	Customer expectations are what people think should happen and how they think they should be treated when asking for or receiving customer service.
Customer expectations	

Customer expectations can be complex. Think about how your customers' expectations are formed. Why do customers expect what they do of your products and services? Try to see things from the customer's point of view in the next activity.



"70 % is about fixing the person, 30 % is about fixing the car"

Activity

Your expectations as a customer

Pick a commercially available product or service that you buy. Choose one which has other competing products/services in the marketplace.

Name of the product /service	
------------------------------	--

How your expectations are formed

What do you look for in this product/service?	
---	--

Why do you choose to buy it from this particular business?	
--	--

How do you know what to expect from the product/service?	
--	--

Describe briefly your expectations as a customer	
--	--

How do the competing products/services compare to the one you choose?	
---	--

What ideas do you get from your family, friends or colleagues about the product/service?	
--	--

Describe briefly any advertisements, brochures, websites or other media that inform you about this product	
--	--

Price and value

How does the price compare to its competitors?	
--	--

How does the value for money compare to its competitors?	
--	--

Now you can see that the expectations that customers have of a product or service are built up from a variety of sources. A customer's expectation is a complex issue. It is very important that you and your organisation try to understand the customers' expectations, and how to meet them. So the next question is - how do we know if the customers' expectations are being met?

Activity

Check their expectations are met

Write down up to ten ways of finding out how well your products or services meet your customers' expectations. Two examples are shown below to get you started. Do not limit your list to the things you already do. Think of new methods of finding out this important information. (Include internal customers).

1	Ask customers verbally how satisfied they are with products/services
2	Give your customers a customer satisfaction questionnaire
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	
9	
10	

Quote from ...

The RAC

"The job is dealing with customer needs. 70% is about fixing the person, 30% is about fixing the car."
(Johnston, 2003)

1.5 Excellent and poor customer service

One great way of understanding what customers expect is to see it from their point of view. Put yourself in the customer's shoes. Think about what you expect as a customer yourself. You can try this with virtually any product or service that you use - it could be in shop, a restaurant or even a hospital.

Activity

Excellent and poor customer service

See it from the customer's point of view. Think of two organisations that you have dealt with (as the customer), where one has had excellent customer service, and one poor customer service.

Excellent service 😊

Poor service ☹️

Give an example of an organisation that impressed you when you were a customer

Now think of an organisation that disappointed you when you were a customer

What was it that impressed you?

What was it that disappointed you?

From the last activity you have seen the difference between good and poor customer service. Now we need to think about the levels of customer service that we can provide. It is easy to say that we should provide excellence, but what does “excellent customer service” actually mean? Complete the next activity to find out.

Activity

What is excellent customer service?

Think about the level of customer service that your organisation provides. How good is it? Here are some ideas of what excellent customer service means:

- *Meeting customers' needs*
- *Exceeding peoples' expectations*
- *Delighting the customer*
- *Making a good first impression*
- *Going the extra mile for the customer*
- *Providing a first class product and service*

All of these ideas are good ideas. But for you in your organisation it is vital that you discover what your customers expect, and then find ways of meeting and exceeding those expectations.

Now be specific about your own organisation, or one that you are familiar with. What would excellent customer service look like to one of your customers? Write down three ways of providing excellent service to your customers.

1	
2	
3	

Views of service excellence

Here are some quotes from people who work for organisations that have been recognised for the high level of customer service that they provide. Employees were asked what they thought excellent customer service means. The quotes show how customer service professionals think. (All quotes from Johnston, 2003).

Quotes from First Direct employees:

- Good service means that calls get answered promptly; customers get their issues dealt with on one call wherever possible. They get an efficient service, they can trust us to carry out their instructions as and when they require them
- By being there in the first place and picking up the calls quicker than any other organisation

Quotes from Shangri-La Hotels employees:

- When I meet them, I give them smiles. I greet them with friendliness, with sincerity, and hospitality. I give them a warm welcome
- Customers expect good and simple services without fussiness
- If a customer cried Wow!!!, after his or her first time tasting of my food, it would be the best. It was beyond his or her expectation. Food should always look tempting and smell great
- When we give them more than they asked for, this will impress them

Quotes from Tesco employees:

- The food looks good, the way that it is set out. The freshness is obvious
- Smile and be friendly towards the customers
- Generally they are dealt with straightaway
- Always give the best service possible
- Well, I always try to be pleasant. I always try to be as helpful as I possibly can

But why should we provide excellent customer service? Perhaps we should just do the minimum. No! If you and your organisation do not excel in customer service, the customers will go elsewhere.



Give the customer a warm welcome

1.6 Customer service transactions

Definition	A customer service transaction is a single exchange of information, product or service between a customer and a service deliverer.
Customer service transaction	

Your customers link up with you through customer transactions. Your organisation carries out many different transactions with customers. During an individual transaction, the customer may do, for example, one of the following:

- Request information from you
- Buy a service or product
- Make an agreement with you
- Log a complaint
- Book an appointment
- Return an item for repair

Your customers form their opinions of you and your organisation during these customer service transactions. They may get opinions from elsewhere, such as from friends, colleagues and relatives who have dealt with you, but they will make their judgments mainly on the basis of these transactions. Therefore, you have to get these transactions right! The transaction should be for the customer an easy, pleasant and positive experience. Aim to provide excellent service during every single transaction.

1.7 The service offer and added service value

The actual services that a customer is offered when he or she considers a purchase varies from one product to another. They also vary from one organisation to another.

The service offered by a luxury, five-star hotel is considerably more than that offered by a basic bed & breakfast business. The customer takes his or her choice. In the same way, a customer expects a much higher level of service at a high-class restaurant than from a burger bar!

Definition	A service offer defines the extent and limits of the customer service that an organisation is offering.
Service Offer	

Price and the service offer

The higher the price of the basic product or service being purchased, the greater the service offer tends to be. This is not always the case though. For example, if you buy an inexpensive small car, you expect more or less the same level of service as if you had bought an expensive luxury car. In general though a higher price tends to mean that the organisation can afford to provide extra services.

Look at similar products offered by different organisations. As an example, in the UK, everyone pays towards the running of the National Health Service through National Insurance contributions and taxes. When you become ill and have to go to hospital for treatment you can choose to go to an NHS hospital. Or, if you can afford it, you may choose a private hospital. This costs more. You pay the hospital fees or medical insurance in addition to the NI contributions and taxes. However, you will expect to

receive a better level of service. The service offer is greater because of the higher price of the product.

Other organisations and the service offer

Your organisation might choose to improve the service offer in order to win more business (if it is in competition with other organisations). For instance Starbucks, the global coffee shop, provides a unique service offer by providing more comfortable surroundings in an atmosphere that encourages customers to stay longer. They don't just drink coffee; they enjoy a much wider "experience". Starbucks made this service offer a success.

Starbucks shops in the United States also provide wireless internet connections. Customers with a laptop computer equipped with a suitable "Wifi" wireless connection can connect up to the internet to check their emails and surf the web. This service innovation extended the Starbucks' service offer.



TIP

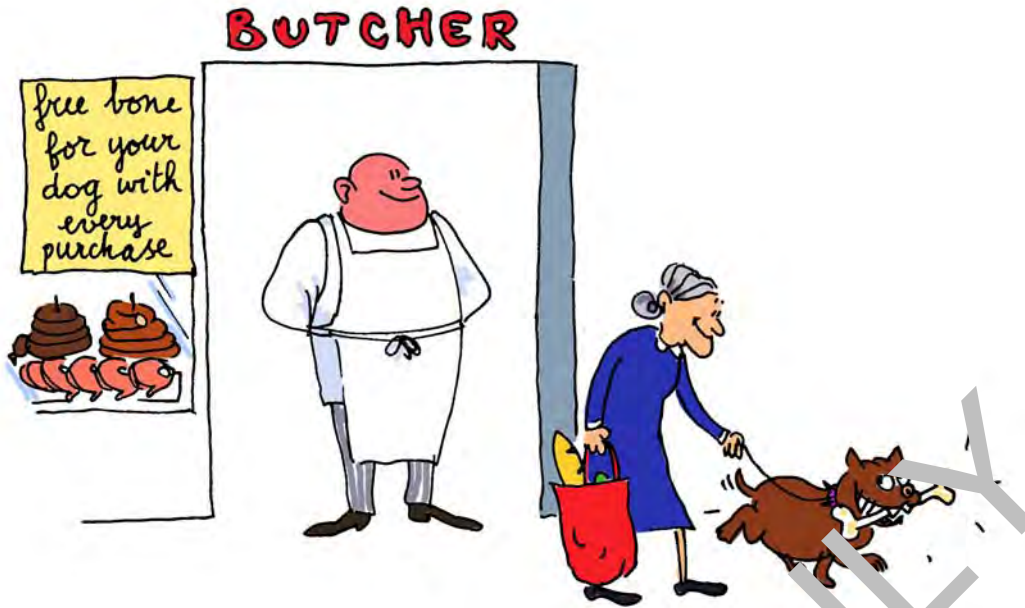
Don't be afraid of making suggestions to your manager - you are the one who knows best what the problems and solutions are!

Now complete the next activity.

Activity	
Extend the service offer	
<p><i>Choose three well-known organisations. For each one, think of one way of extending the service offer, which may benefit the business.</i></p>	
Name of organisation	How the service offer could be extended
Now do the same for your own organisation	
Name of organisation	How the service offer could be extended

Another way of ensuring that a not-for-profit organisation is performing well is to look at the added service value that it provides to its customers. Look at this definition of added service value.

Definition	<p>Added service value is the extra, over and above the basic product or service provided, that an organisation offers to its customers. This added service value represents extra service benefits that can truly delight the customers and keep them loyal.</p>
<p>Added service value</p>	



Added service value

1.8 Benchmarking

Whatever an organisation's aims are, customer service is very important to achieving them. Customer service can enhance reputation and give added service value.

Benchmarking should be used to ensure that the level of customer service is as high as possible.

Definition	Performance Benchmarking is the process of trying to reach target levels of performance that are achieved by the best organisations. The organisations could be in the same sector, or another sector.
Performance Benchmarking	

Benchmarking is good for you and good for your customers. If you benchmark your levels of customer service against other organisations (or other sectors, or even other countries) you will be aware of the best practice. You will be inspired to copy elements of that best practice to your own situation. Benchmarking is not simply reaching the same standard that others have reached. It is really about raising the level of service that you provide to the best possible. If you can do that then you will delight your customers and establish a reputation for excellence.

Benchmark against the best organisation that you know of. Think of businesses that are well known for their excellent customer service. Now try to transfer that excellence to your own organisation. This is how to excel at customer service - be different and innovative. Think of ways of delighting your customers that no-one else has thought of.

Now complete the next activity.

Activity

Case Study : Performance benchmarking

Look at this sample case study from the care sector. Read the case study and write your answers in the spaces provided.

Pro-Care Homes

Pro-Care is an organisation that runs 15 care homes for elderly people. It is a not-for-profit organisation. It has charitable status. It is funded by a number of charities, plus some direct donations from the public.

Chrissie Clarke is the Operations Manager for Pro-Care, and she works at Head Office. She oversees the management of each of the 15 care homes, making sure they provide the best possible level of service to the customers. Chrissie uses performance benchmarking to set targets for the care home managers. She uses information provided by researchers in the care sector, who provide statistics on a range of service levels in UK care homes. She uses the service levels of the country's best care homes as performance benchmarks. In this way she knows that, if Pro-Care homes achieve their targets they will be some of the best homes in the whole country.

One service that she wants to improve is how the staff in the homes respond to requests from the relatives of the elderly patients. Chrissie has set the following targets for the year ahead. Care home managers must do whatever is needed to try to meet these targets.

Performance aim	Benchmark	Current Pro-Care figure	Pro-Care target
1 To inform relatives quickly of any change in the patient's condition	3 hours	7.5 hours	3 hours
2 To increase the maximum visiting hours per week	20 hours	8 hours	15 hours
3 To reduce the average time to respond to a telephone message	45 minutes	2.5 hours	1 hour
Questions	Your answers		
What might the Pro-Care home managers need to do to achieve Target 1?			
If the homes achieve Target 2, what will the customers think of this?			
What problems might the managers and staff come across in trying to achieve Target 3?			
Do you think all targets can be measured as numbers, like the ones above? If not, what other kinds of targets can be set?			
How could Chrissie find out the general level of customer satisfaction with each of the Pro-Care homes?			

1.9 Measuring service standards

To benchmark against others you need to measure your own performance. Think of ways of doing that. You may have questionnaires or other methods of getting feedback. Here are some ideas on how to use service standards:

- Use customer satisfaction questionnaires
- Analyse your questionnaires - and do something with the results. Action plan your improvements, so that your customer feedback is used to make a difference
- Keep track of your performance (that is your own and your team's performance)

- Publish the results of your performance measurement - make easy to understand graphs and put them up on notice boards - let everyone know how you are doing and how you can improve
- Show your results to your customers - they are interested in how you are doing
- Show your results to your other stakeholders - managers, shareholders, directors, suppliers, and everyone else who is interested in the success of your organisation
- Track improvements over time - put up on the notice board a graph showing progress against planned improvements

1.10 Moments of truth

In dealings with customers there are moments of truth. Here is a definition:

31

Definition	A moment of truth is a critically important point in time when a customer forms an opinion about the organisation's level of service. At a moment of truth the customer will either decide to stay loyal to the organisation, or go elsewhere, perhaps to a competitor.
Moment of Truth	

Here are some examples of moments of truth. Study them before you tackle the activity that follows.

Activity	
Moments of truth	
Organisation	A moment of truth
A package holiday company	The point when the customer logs into the company's website. The potential customer will move onto another site unless this one seems easy to use.
A superstore	The point when the shopper asks an assistant for help in finding a product. The assistant needs good product knowledge - if not, the moment of truth is not a good one!

In the next activity you get the chance to think about the moments of truth that you have experienced as a customer.

Activity

Moments of truth for you as a customer

Remember a situation when you were a customer. Perhaps it was in a restaurant, a public house or hotel. Think of three moments of truth that made a big impression on your view of the organisation's customer service. (They could be positive or negative).

1	
2	
3	

You understand what moments of truth are. They can be different for every person and every organisation. What you can be sure of, though, is that the customers of your organisation do have their own moments of truth. In the next activity you will be able to identify some moments of truth in your own organisation, or one that you are familiar with.

Activity

Moments of truth in your organisation

Now find three moments of truth for your own organisation. Briefly explain each one.

My organisation	3 moments of truth	
	1	
	2	
	3	

SAMPLE ONLY

1.11 Self-assessment

Module 1 Self-assessment

In each case tick the answer that best fits the question.

1	Customer satisfaction is:	Smiling at the customer	A	<input type="checkbox"/>
		The feeling of being happy with the service provided	B	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Filling in the satisfaction questionnaire	C	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	You can get feedback from your customers by:	Showing them the new products	A	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Handling their complaints	B	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Taking their payment	C	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	Mystery shoppers:	Check service given against certain criteria	A	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Are all buyers of products	B	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Are customers who buy on impulse	C	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	A good way of understanding what customer's expect is to:	Tell them all about your products and services	A	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Read the newspapers	B	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Put yourself in the customer's shoes	C	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	Some signs of truth are when:	The manager carries out your appraisal	A	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Customers form an opinion about your level of service	B	<input type="checkbox"/>
		The company has financial problems	C	<input type="checkbox"/>

1.12 Learning log

Now complete your learning log.

Activity

Learning log for Module 1

Add items to your learning log. When you get to the end of the programme you will need to refine these items to produce a clear action plan.

What I have learned

1

2

3

4

5

Actions planned

Target date

1

2

3

4

5

Module summary

- Well done - in this Module you have learned about the basic meanings and concepts of customer service. You have identified what “customer service” means, and you have discovered what customers expect in a variety of organisations. Moments of truth are important because they help customers to judge your organisation. There is a clear difference between good and poor customer service and you have seen some examples of excellent service from very successful organisations. Benchmarking is used to learn best practice from, or share it with other organisations. These might be similar organisations - or very different ones - to your own.
-

SAMPLE ONLY

Answers to Self-Assessments

Module 1 Self-Assessment: Basic Concepts of Customer Service

1	B	2	B	3	A	4	C	5	B
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Module 2 Self-Assessment: Developing Relationships with Your Customers

1	A	2	B	3	C	4	C	5	A
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Module 3 Self-Assessment: Customer Service in Different Organisations

1	B	2	C	3	A	4	B	5	A
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Module 4 Self-Assessment: Match Features and Benefits

1	B	2	C	3	B	4	A	5	B
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Module 5 Self-Assessment: Communicate Effectively

1	B	2	B	3	A	4	C	5	B
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Module 6 Self-Assessment: Deliver Service Excellence Through Teamwork

1	C	2	B	3	C	4	B	5	A
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Module 7 Self-Assessment: Systems for Delivering Service Excellence

1	B	2	A	3	B	4	A	5	C
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Module 8 Self-Assessment: Laws and Codes of Practice

1	A	2	C	3	A	4	C	5	C
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Module 9 Self-Assessment: The You Factor

1	A	2	C	3	A	4	C	5	A
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

S/NVQ Knowledge Matrix

This matrix shows where the knowledge and understanding requirements of the U.K.'s Level 2 NOS for Customer Service are covered in this Best Practice Guide.

S/NVQ Knowledge Matrix		
<i>This matrix shows where to find the knowledge items of each S/NVQ Unit in this Best Practice Guide.</i>		
Unit 1 Prepare yourself to deliver good customer service		
Knowledge item		Section
1a	what the organisation does	3.2 4.2
1b	what services or products the organisation provides	1.7 4.2 4.3
1c	what the key features of the organisation's services or products are	4.3
1d	what the key benefits of the organisation's services or products are	4.3
1e	what the structure of the organisation is	2.4
1f	what a customer is	2.2
1g	who the organisation's customers are	4.3
1h	what building an organisation's reputation means	2.3
1i	what can damage an organisation's reputation	2.5
1j	what customer service is	1.2
1k	how customer satisfaction depends on customer expectations and service delivery	1.4
1l	how customer service affects the success of the organisation	2.6
1m	the key customer service requirements of the job	2.4
1n	how company procedures contribute to consistent and reliable customer service	7.3
1o	the kinds of information the organisation keeps about its customers	8.4

Unit 5 Provide customer service within the rules

Knowledge item		Section
5a	organisational procedures that relate to your job	8.2 8.11
5b	limits of what you are allowed to do	8.2
5c	what might endanger customers or their property	8.7
5d	what health and safety risks and hazards might be faced by your customers	8.7
5e	why it is important to respect customer and organisation confidentiality	8.4
5f	the main regulations that apply to your job	8.2
5g	the main things you must do and not do in your job under laws covering:	
	• equal opportunities	4.5
	• disability discrimination	8.6
	• data protection	8.4
	• health and safety	8.7
	• employment responsibility and rights	8.2
5h	the security arrangements of your organisation and how they apply to your job role	8.7

202

Unit 9 Give customers a positive impression of yourself and your organisation

Knowledge item		Section
9a	your organisation's standards for appearance and behaviour	5.6 5.8 9.3
9b	your organisation's guidelines for how to recognise what your customer wants and respond appropriately	4.3
9c	your organisation's rules and procedures regarding the methods of communication you use	5.3 5.4 5.9 5.10
9d	how to recognise when a customer is angry or confused	5.4 9.3 9.5
9e	your organisation's standards for timeliness in responding to customer questions and requests for information	1.9 4.4 8.4

Unit 10 Promote additional services or products to customers

Knowledge item		Section
10a	your organisation's procedures and systems for encouraging the use of additional services or products	4.6
10b	how the use of additional services or products will benefit your customers	4.6
10c	how your customer's use of additional services or products will benefit your organisation	4.6
10d	the main factors that influence customers to use your services or products	2.4 4.6
10e	how to introduce additional services or products to customers outlining their benefits, overcoming reservations and agreeing to provide the additional services or products	4.6
10f	how to give appropriate, balanced information to customers about services or products	4.3 4.6

Unit 11 Process customer service information

Knowledge item		Section
11a	your organisation's procedures and guidelines for collecting, retrieving and supplying customer service information	7.11 8.4
11b	how to collect customer service information efficiently and effectively	7.11
11c	how to operate the customer service information storage system	7.11
11d	why processing customer service information correctly makes an important contribution to effective customer service	7.11
11e	the importance of attention to detail when processing customer service information	7.11
11f	legal and regulatory restrictions on the storage of data	8.4

Unit 12 Live up to the customer service promise

Knowledge item		Section
12a	the key features, moments of truth (those points in the customer service process that have the most impact on the customer experience) and customer experiences that define the organisation's service offer, vision and promise	3.2 1.10
12b	ways in which staff can contribute to communicating the service vision or promise to customers	2.4
12c	sales, marketing and/or public relations reasons for defining a service offer, vision and promise	2.4
12d	how words can be used and adapted to reflect a defined service offer, vision and promise	4.4
12e	how actions can be used and adapted to reflect a defined service offer, vision and promise	4.4

Unit 13 Make customer service personal

Knowledge item		Section
13a	how use of your customer's name makes service more personal	2.4 4.6
13b	personality types and their receptiveness to personalised services	5.8 9.3
13c	types of personal information about customers that should and should not be kept on record	8.4
13d	features of personal service that are most appreciated by customers with individual needs	4.5
13e	body language and approaches to communication that are generally interpreted as open	5.5
13f	your organisation's guidelines on actions that are permissible outside of the normal routines and procedures	8.2 8.11
13g	your own preferences and comfort levels relating to how you are willing and able to personalise service	5.8 9.3 9.7

204

Unit 14 Go the extra mile in customer service

Knowledge item		Section
14a	your organisation's service offer	1.7
14b	how customers form expectations of the service they will receive	1.4
14c	what types of service action most customers will see as adding value to the customer service they have already had	1.7
14d	your organisation's rules and procedures that determine your authority to go the extra mile	8.2 8.11
14e	relevant legislation and regulation that impact on your freedom to go the extra mile	8.2 8.11
14f	how your organisation receives customer service feedback on the types of customer experience that has impressed them	1.9 7.7
14g	your organisation's procedures for making changes in its service offer	7.6

Unit 15 Deal with customers in writing or using ICT

Knowledge item		Section
15a	the importance of using clear and concise language	5.2
15b	the additional significance and potential risks involved in committing a communication to a permanent record format	8.4
15c	the effects of style and tone on the reader of a written or ICT communication	5.10
15d	the importance of adapting your language to meet the needs of customers who may find the communication hard to understand	5.10 7.11 8.6
15e	your organisation's guidelines and procedures relating to written communication and the use of ICT to communicate	5.10 8.4
15f	how to operate equipment used for producing and sending written or ICT communications	7.11
15g	the importance of keeping your customer informed if there is likely to be any delay in responding to a communication	7.8 7.11
15h	the risks associated with the confidentiality of written or ICT communications	8.4

Unit 16 Deal with customers face to face

Knowledge item		Section
16a	the importance of speaking clearly and slowly when dealing with a customer face to face	5.4
16b	the importance of taking the time to listen carefully to what the customer is saying	5.4
16c	your organisation's procedures that impact on the way you are able to deal with your customers face to face	5.4
16d	the features and benefits of your organisation's services or products	4.3
16e	your organisation's service offer and how it affects the way you deal with customers face to face	1.7 5.4
16f	the principles of body language that enable you to interpret customer feelings without verbal communication	5.5
16g	how individual transactions between people can be understood by using a behavioural model such as transactional analysis	5.8
16h	why the expectations and behaviour of individual customers will demand different responses to create rapport and achieve customer satisfaction	5.8
16i	the agreed and recognised sector cues in customer behaviour that indicate that your customer expects a particular action by you	5.4 5.5 5.7 8.11

Unit 17 Deal with customers by telephone

Knowledge item		Section
17a	the importance of speaking clearly and slowly when dealing with customers by telephone	5.9
17b	the effects of smiling and other facial expressions that can be detected by somebody listening to you on the telephone	5.9
17c	the importance of adapting your speech to meet the needs of customers who may find your language or accent hard to understand	5.9
17d	your organisation's guidelines and procedures for the use of telephone equipment	5.9
17e	your organisation's guidelines and procedures for what should be said during telephone conversations with customers	5.9
17f	what details should be included if taking a message for a colleague	5.9
17g	how to operate the organisation's telephone equipment	5.9
17h	the importance of keeping your customer informed if they are on hold during a call	5.9
17i	the importance of not talking over an open telephone	5.9
17j	your organisation's guidelines for handling abusive calls	5.9

Unit 21 Deliver reliable customer service

Knowledge item		Section
21a	your organisation's procedures and systems for delivering customer service	8.2 8.11
21b	methods or systems for measuring an organisation's effectiveness in delivering customer service	1.9 7.7
21c	your organisation's procedures and systems for checking service delivery	2.4 7.7
21d	your organisation's requirements for health and safety in your area of work	8.7

Unit 22 Deliver customer service on your customer's premises

Knowledge item		Section
22a	the importance of sensitivity to people's feelings about their own premises and possessions	8.7
22b	the regulatory and legal restrictions on what you can and cannot do in all aspects of your work	8.2 8.7
22c	the insurance implications of working on your customer's premises	8.7
22d	the organisational procedures you would take if any accidental damage is incurred by you on your customer's premises	8.7

Unit 23 Recognise diversity when delivering customer service

Knowledge item		Section
23a	the importance of recognising diversity in relation to age, disability, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, values, ethnic culture, education, lifestyle, beliefs, physical appearance, social class and economic status	4.5 8.6
23b	reasons why consideration of diversity and inclusion issues affect customer service	4.5
23c	organisational guidelines to make customer service inclusive for diverse groups of customers	4.5 8.6
23d	legal use and meaning of the word 'reasonable'	8.6
23e	how to observe and interpret non-verbal clues	4.5
23f	how to listen actively for clues about your customer's expectations and needs	5.5 5.7
23g	techniques for obtaining additional information from customers through tactful and respectful questions	4.5 5.4 5.7
23h	behaviour that might cause offence to specific groups of people to whom you regularly provide customer service	4.5 8.6
23i	how to impress specific groups of people to whom you regularly provide customer service	4.5 8.6

Unit 6 Recognise and deal with customer queries, requests and problems

Knowledge item		Section
6a	who in the organisation is able to give help and information	4.2
6b	limits of what they are allowed to do	8.2 8.11
6c	what professional behaviour is	9.2
6d	how to speak to people who are dissatisfied	5.8 7.9 9.3 9.5
6e	how to deal with difficult people	5.8 7.9
6g	what customers normally expect	1.4 7.4
6h	how to recognise a problem from what a customer says or does	5.7 9.3
6i	what kinds of behaviours/actions would make situations worse	5.8 9.3
6j	the organisational procedures you must follow when you deal with problems or complaints	7.7 7.8
6k	understand the types of behaviour that makes a problem worse	5.8 9.3 9.5

Unit 31 Resolve customer service problems

Knowledge item		Section
31a	organisational procedures and systems for dealing with customer service problems	7.8
31b	how to defuse potentially stressful situations	5.8 7.8 9.5
31c	how to negotiate	5.8 7.8
31d	the limitations of what you can offer your customer	7.8

Unit 36 Develop customer relationships

Knowledge item		Section
36a	the importance of customer retention	2.3 2.5
36b	how your own behaviour affects the behaviour of the customer	5.8
36c	how to behave assertively and professionally at all times	9.5
36d	how to defuse potentially stressful situations	5.8 7.8 9.5
36e	the limitations of the service offer	1.7 3.3
36f	how customer expectations may change as they deal with your organisation	2.5
36g	the cost and resource implications of an extension of the service offer to meet or exceed customer expectations	2.5 4.6
36h	the cost implications of bringing in new customers as opposed to retaining existing customers	2.5
36i	who to refer to when considering an variation to the service offer	4.6 8.2

Unit 37 Support customer service improvements

Knowledge item		Section
37a	how customer experience is influenced by the way service is delivered	1.4 2.5
37b	how customer feedback is obtained	1.9 7.7
37c	how to work with others to identify and support change in the way service is delivered	7.4 7.6 7.7
37d	why it is important to give a positive impression to your customer about the changes made by your organisation even if you disagree with them	5.2 9.6 9.9

Unit 38 Develop personal performance through delivering customer service

Knowledge item		Section
38a	your organisation's systems and procedures for developing personal performance in customer service	9.2
38b	how your behaviour has an effect on the behaviour of others	6.4 9.2
38c	how effective learning depends on a process of planning, doing and reviewing	2.4
38d	how to review effectively your personal strengths and development needs	9.8
38e	how to put together a personal development plan that will build on your strengths and overcome your weaknesses in areas that are important to customer service	Learning logs + 9.8
38f	how to access sources of information and support for your learning	9.8
38g	how to obtain useful and constructive personal feedback from others	6.5 6.6 9.8
38h	how to respond positively to personal feedback	9.2 9.3 9.7 9.8

References

Texts

Armistead, C., Beamish, N. and Kiely, J., 2001, *Emerging skills for a changing economy: Evolution of the Customer Service Professional*, Institute of Customer Service.

Barlow, N., 2001, *Batteries Included!: Creating Legendary Service*, Random House Business Books

Berne, E., 2004, *Games People Play: The Psychology of Human Relationships*, Penguin Books Ltd

Codling, S., 1998, *Benchmarking*, Gower

Institute of Customer Service, 2006, *National Occupational Standards in Customer Service 2006*, Institute of Customer Service

Johnston, R., 2001, *Service Excellence = Reputation = Profit*, Institute of Customer Service

Johnston, R., 2003, *Delivering Service Excellence: The View from the Front Line*, Institute of Customer Service

Smith, S. and Wheeler, J., 2002, *Managing the Customer Experience: Turning Customers into Advocates*, Financial Times Prentice Hall

Research reports

ABA Research Ltd and Surrey University, 2003, *Research Report*, ABA Research Ltd

Bain & Co., 1998, *The Future of Customer Service*, Institute of Customer Service

James, G., 2003, *National Complaints Culture Survey 2003*, TMI/Institute of Customer Service

Hicks, C., 2004, *National Complaints Culture Survey 2004*, TMI/Institute of Customer Service

Customer service websites

www.instituteofcustomerservice.com Institute of Customer Service

www.ecustomerserviceworld.com E-Customer Service World

www.customerserviceawards.com Customer Service Awards

www.customer1st.co.uk Customer 1st International

Index

- accidents, 167
- active listening, 95
- added service value, 25, 27
- aggressive behaviour, 183
- aggressive customers, 185
- assertive behaviour, 183
- assertiveness, 180, 182
- attitude, 187
- behaviour, 97
- benchmarking, 28
- benefits of customer service, 47
- body image, 92
- body language, 79, 90
- certificate in customer service, 11
- close the sale, 81
- closed questions, 103
- codes of practice, 155
- communicate, 86
- communicating on the telephone, 100
- complaints, 141, 143
- consumer laws, 156, 157, 174
- consumer protection, 157
- copyright, 170, 174, 171
- Credit Act, 157
- customer charter, 68
- customer expectations, 17, 18, 130
- customer feedback, 138, 139
- customer loyalty, 44, 45, 46
- customer preferences, 132
- customer relationships, 38, 39
- customer satisfaction, 15, 16
- customer service, 12, 13, 51, 53, 210
- customer service procedures, 129
- customer service professional, 4, 179, 182, 192
- customer service transactions, 24, 40
- data protection, 158, 159, 161, 174
- difficult customers, 146
- disability, 72, 163
- Disability Discrimination Act, 71, 163, 174
- discrimination, 72
- diversity, 72
- ego states, 99
- email, 105, 108
- emotional intelligence, 180, 181
- equal opportunities, 72, 74
- Equal Pay Act, 71
- equality and diversity, 71, 74, 75, 174
- external communication, 87
- external customers, 37, 38
- face to face communication, 89
- fax, 105, 108
- features and benefits, 63, 64, 67
- Financial Services Act, 171, 175
- follow-up, 104
- Food & Drugs Act, 156
- Freedom of Information 158, 159, 161, 174
- going the extra mile, 22
- handling conflict, 149
- happiness, 180
- Health and Safety at Work Act, 165, 175
- Human Rights Act, 167, 175
- ICT, 149
- innovation, 135
- insurance, 167

internal communication, 86
 internal customers, 37, 119
 interpersonal relationships, 180, 188, 190
 laws and regulations, 155
 listening skills, 93, 96, 97
 making a good first impression, 22
 moments of truth, 31, 32, 33, 59
 monopoly power, 51, 54, 55, 56
 motivation, 187
 National Occupational Standards for
 customer service, 201
 National Vocational Qualification, 11
 non-verbal communication, 90
 not-for-profit organisation, 51, 53
 open questions, 103
 organisational structure, 40, 63
 partnership, 119
 performance benchmarking, 28
 personal objectives, 9, 193
 plan, deliver, follow-up, 41
 positive language, 148
 procedures, 129
 product and service standards, 18
 product innovation, 135, 152
 profit making organisation, 51
 publication schemes, 160
 questionnaires, 35, 30, 40, 43
 Race Relations Act, 71
 reputation, 44
 resolve problems, 142
 S/NVQ, 191, 201
 Sale and Supply of Goods Act, 156
 sector codes of practice, 173
 self-actualisation, 180, 191
 self-assessment, 11
 service excellence, 2, 3, 23, 115, 118,
 119, 120, 127, 140, 191, 196, 200
 service innovation, 136, 137, 138
 service offer, 25, 57, 58
 service recovery, 140, 142
 service standards, 30, 69, 70, 110
 sex discrimination, 161, 162, 175
 strategy, 39
 stress, 180
 stress tolerance, 182
 submissive behaviour, 182
 systems, 127, 132, 149
 team working, 121, 122
 teamwork, 115, 118
 telephone greetings, 105
 Trades Description Act, 156
 training, 130
 transactional analysis, 98, 99
 unique selling point, 80
 vicious circle of behaviour, 186
 vision, 39
 websites, 109, 110, 174, 210
 Weights & Measures Act, 156
 winning more business, 194