

## Overview

This standard is part of the customer service competence area related to Customer Service Foundations. It covers developing customer relationships. It includes the language and concepts of customer service as well as the organisational context and the external environment in which you work. Remember that customers include everyone to whom you provide products and services. They may be external to your organisation or they may be internal customers.

You deal with your customers regularly, aiming to make each occasion a good customer experience. The impression you create and the way the service is delivered affects this in just the same way as when you deal with a customer only once. However, a longer-term relationship with a repeat customer also depends on you building up your customer's confidence in the service you offer. Loyalty and a long-term relationship rely on your customers having a realistic view of your organisation's products and services. Your customer will return to your organisation if they feel confident that they will receive a high standard of service because they have experienced it previously.

This standard is for customer service professionals who develop customer relationships to provide high standards of customer service.

## Performance criteria

### *You must be able to:*

1. explain your organisation's products and services to customers
2. communicate with your customers to build and maintain their confidence in your organisation's products and services
3. estimate the time you require to deal with customers to meet their needs and expectations
4. reassure customers that you are doing everything possible to keep your organisation's promises to them
5. identify conflicts between customer expectations and your organisation's products and services
6. explain the limits of the products and services your organisation offers to customers
7. manage customer expectations by offering an alternative product or service when required
8. resolve any difficulties in meeting customer expectations
9. refer any difficulties that you cannot resolve, or are outside your level of authority, to colleagues
10. give additional help and information to customers to respond to their questions and comments about your organisation's services or products
11. discuss customers' expectations with them and explain how these compare with your organisation's products and services
12. share feedback received from your customers with colleagues
13. identify new ways of helping your customers based on the feedback they have given you
14. identify added value that your organisation could offer to long-term customers
15. follow the legal, organisational, codes of practice and policies relevant to your role and the activities being carried out

## Knowledge and understanding

### *You need to know and understand:*

1. how to access up-to-date information about your organisation's products and services and build your knowledge of these
2. the importance of customer retention for your organisation
3. how your own behaviour affects the behaviour of customers and their expectations
4. how to create a positive impression of your organisation, in line with its culture and values
5. the benefits of using proactive methods of customer service and when these may be required when dealing with customers
6. how to recognise and defuse potentially stressful situations for yourself and your colleagues
7. the limitations of your organisation's services and products in meeting customer needs
8. the types of difficulties that arise when trying to meet customers' expectations and how to resolve them
9. how customer expectations may change as they deal with your organisation
10. the cost and resource implications of extending products and services offered to meet or exceed customer expectations
11. the costs of bringing in new customers compared to retaining existing customers
12. who to refer to when considering any variation to your organisation's products and services
13. how to develop customer relationships using different communication channels such as social media
14. the ways that you can offer added value to long-term customers
15. the legal, organisational, codes of practice and policies relevant to your role and the activities being carried out

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