

Overview

This standard is part of the customer service competence area related to Customer Service Management. It includes improving customer relationships and services. It covers activities and approaches that play a vital part in customer service by seeking and implementing improvements and developments. 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.

To improve relationships with your customers you deliver consistent and reliable customer service. You make your customers feel that you want to provide great service and make efforts to exceed their expectations. You encourage loyalty from external customers or longer-term service partnerships with internal customers. You are proactive with your customers and negotiate between your customers and your organisation to find ways of meeting your customers' expectations. The people you work with to improve customer service may include team members; colleagues; suppliers; service partners; supervisors; managers; and team leaders. You communicate with each other and agree how you can work together to improve service. You must also monitor your own and the team's performance and change the way you do things to improve customer service.

This standard is for customer service professionals on supervisory or managerial levels who improve customer relationships and services.

Performance criteria

You must be able to:

1. select and use methods of communication that meet your customers' expectations
2. contact customers to update them about unexpected circumstances
3. adapt your communication style to respond to individual customers' feelings
4. monitor your interactions with customers using your organisation's information channels
5. negotiate to meet your customers' expectations within your organisation's guidelines
6. explain the reasons why customer expectations cannot be met when necessary
7. identify alternative solutions for your customers either within or outside your organisation
8. identify the costs and benefits of the alternative solutions to your organisation and to your customers
9. negotiate and agree solutions that balance the needs of your customers and your organisation
10. identify opportunities to exceed your customers' expectations
11. take action to exceed your customers' expectations within the limits of your own authority
12. contribute ideas for improving your organisation's customer service
13. identify how you can personally improve customer service and confirm this with your manager
14. collaborate with your team to improve customer service and keep your commitments
15. monitor your own performance in delivery customer service to identify improvements
16. work with your team to collect information on the team's customer service performance
17. agree actions with your team to improve customer service collaboration
18. improve customer service performance by implementing the agreed team actions
19. 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. the methods of communication for dealing with your customers and how to select and use them to meet customers' expectations
2. how to identify when unexpected circumstances arise or when you require more information from your customers to provide services and products
3. how to identify customers feelings during interactions and adapt your communication style to respond to them
4. how to monitor information about your interaction with customers from available communication channels including internet communication channels and social media platforms
5. how to negotiate with your customers to meet their expectations whilst balancing the needs of your organisation
6. the communication techniques used to inform customers that you cannot meet their expectations
7. the internal and external providers who can delivery alternative solutions to your customers
8. how to assess the costs and benefits to your customer and your organisation of any unusual agreement you make to provide alternative solutions
9. the importance of customer loyalty and/or improved internal customer relationships to your organisation
10. the methods that you can use to exceed customer expectations and the implications of using them
11. the colleagues who are involved either directly or indirectly in the delivery of customer service in your organisation and their roles
12. the roles of others outside your organisation who have an impact on your services or products
13. the skills used to collaborate with colleagues to deliver service improvements
14. how to assess your own performance, plan to improve and monitor your progress
15. what the goals or targets of your organisation are in relation to customer service and how these are set
16. how your organisation and team identify actions to implement improvements in customer service
17. the actions that can be taken to improve customer service performance

18. the legal, organisational, codes of practice and policies relevant to your role and the activities being carried out

Improve customer relationships and services

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