

NCFE Level 2

Certificate in Principles of Customer Service

COMMUNICATION

PRODUCTS

EXPECTATIONS

SAMPLE

ORGANISATIONS

SERVICES

POLICIES

Workbook 1

Section 1: Principles of customer service and delivery

When working through the examples, activities and assessments, please base your answers on any of the following:

- a customer service role you have in your current job
- a customer service role in a previous job
- an organisation that is familiar to you
- an organisation that you have researched

Introduction

In this section, we are going to look at the principles of customer service and delivery. We will look at the products and service that organisations offer their customers, legal and ethical requirements and how to manage expectations. We will also examine how to deliver excellent customer service, manage customer information and understand the relationship between customer service and a brand.

The purpose and scope of customer service

Please read the following as it will help you to answer question 1.

We all know when we have received bad customer service, for example:

- when sales assistants are too busy chatting to serve us
- when staff in a restaurant or store are rude and unfriendly
- when a call centre puts us on hold for half an hour
- when our complaints are handled badly

But what makes customer service good?

Customers have expectations. They want:

- an efficient and polite service before, during and after a transaction (buying or using products or services)
- good-quality products and services
- any complaints and problems to be dealt with properly
- their opinion to matter

Good customer service meets these expectations.

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An organisation needs to offer good customer service at all times so that it can survive and thrive. If the customers are satisfied with the products or services, they return and they recommend the organisation to others. Quite simply, this keeps the organisation alive and means that their employees' jobs are safer.



The **purpose** of customer service is to:

- provide good-quality products and services that meet or exceed customers' expectations
- provide an efficient and polite service before, during and after a transaction
- treat customers with respect and consideration
- deal with any feedback, complaints and problems effectively

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The value of service offers for an organisation

Service offers can all be different, which can be valuable to an organisation that wants to offer something that their competitors do not.

Supermarkets often change their service offer to make themselves more appealing to current and potential customers. They might, for example:

- have a special deal for a week to lure customers in within a few days
- have long-term deals and bargains that customers know will always be there
- offer a very wide range of choice – e.g. 50 brands of bread or coffee
- offer a select and restricted choice – e.g. only locally-produced, organic food and drink
- stay open for longer hours
- offer free parking for a few hours
- have a variety of trolleys and baskets to suit different customers
- have wider aisles for easy access
- make sure that their staff are known for always being polite and friendly
- offer a 'no-frills' service with a very short turnaround time at the till
- pack customers' bags for them
- take groceries to their cars
- offer home delivery for in-store or Internet shopping
- offer free coffee and newspapers to loyalty card customers
- have loyalty schemes so that customers can earn points that they can redeem for goods and services
- offer non-grocery services – e.g. foreign currency exchanges, pharmacies or eye tests

These service offers are all valuable to the organisation as they allow them to:

- differentiate themselves from competitors
- attract more business
- keep themselves in the public eye when they make announcements or offer special deals
- secure and maintain customer loyalty
- set a high standard of customer service
- meet and exceed customer expectations

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Staff performance needs to follow or exceed agreed standards to make sure that customers are given high-quality service at all times. Standards will apply to, for example:

- politeness when speaking or writing to customers
- efficiency
- knowledge about all aspects of the service offer
- being helpful and approachable
- dealing with queries, problems and complaints
- knowing when and how to liaise with colleagues and others



It is important for an organisation to provide high-quality customer service as this will, for example:

- maintain, promote and increase customer loyalty
- reduce the number of complaints and rejected goods and services
- maintain and improve the organisation's reputation
- portray a good image of the organisation
- help to secure future business, profits and employment for all concerned

Knowledge Activity 3: Think of a time when you received bad customer service.



What happened?

How did you feel?

How did you feel about the organisation?

How did your bad experience make you feel about buying from the organisation again and recommending them to your friends and family?