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Customer service standards are established by organisations to provide procedures and guidelines for employees when dealing with customers. The image presented to customers, the ways employees communicate and treat customers, and their knowledge of products, services and customers’ needs all have an enormous effect on the success of an organisation.

As a manager, team leader or supervisor, you must be able to access, interpret, apply and monitor customer service standards in the workplace according to organisational standards, policies and procedures. This allows you to plan and prepare customer service strategies and accurately communicate these to your team members.

**Identify customers**

Customer service extends beyond those people who purchase your products and services. From a management viewpoint, customers may represent a variety of people.

Customers may be new, existing or previous clients of your organisation. Their requests for goods or services may be routine or special, depending on the nature of your business and the customers’ specific needs.

During your work, you are likely to meet people with different interests, backgrounds, cultures and experiences. You may deal with customers who do not speak English very well. Some customers may be angry, aggressive or annoyed. Some may have a disability.

Here is a list of customer types that organisations may encounter.

**Internal customers**

Internal customers are those from within the organisation who depend on you and your team to provide customer service, such as other managers and colleagues from other teams.

**External customers**

External customers are people who purchase and consume the products and services of the organisation. This is most commonly consumers, although other businesses can also represent your external customers.
Customer service models

A customer service model demonstrates how an organisation manages the various elements of customer service. It is generally presented as a flow chart or similar representation.

Customer service models often focus on strategies to increase customer satisfaction while reducing costs and conflict. Implementing an organisational model that focuses on service improvement is essential for achieving wider organisational goals and objectives.

Successful customer service models require the continual updating of standards, policies and procedures to meet customers’ needs.

These models take many forms and can be represented in a variety of ways. Here is an example of a customer service model.

Customer service documentation

Customer service standards, policies and processes allow you to set benchmarks that your team members must meet. For example, if you have a standard for serving customers that involves being courteous or completing transactions within a certain time, you can provide a positive experience to your customers, suppliers and distributors in their dealings with you. Customers who have a positive experience are more likely to become repeat customers and are less likely to complain about your organisation.

Having formalised customer service processes in place can save you time and money by increasing efficiency. Your team members will be more productive and efficient if there is a set of processes to follow and, as a manager, you can spend less time overseeing the day-to-day running of the business. Processes can also improve the consistency of product and service delivery by your team.
Role and responsibilities of customer service managers

- Identify and understand who the organisation’s customers are.
- Analyse customer service needs.
- Have thorough understanding of products and services.
- Be familiar with the customer service charter, standards and best practice.
- Resolve customer complaints.
- Coach, mentor and train team members in customer service skills.
- Review customer satisfaction.

Access customer service standards

As a manager, you should be familiar with your organisation’s customer service standards as a framework for developing and maintaining an acceptable level of customer service.

Customer service standards, incorporating protocols, policies and procedures, may be documented and stored in a paper-based manual, electronic file or an organisation’s intranet. You should be familiar with the methods and technology your organisation uses to collect and distribute its customer service standards to ensure you can accurately direct your team members to the information. For example, each customer service officer should have a copy of the customer service charter handy for quick reference when needed.

Interpret customer service standards

It is important that your team members are involved in the setting of standards to be applied in their particular work area. This will ensure they know what the standards are and how to apply them.

Managers should regularly review the customer service standards that have been set and determine where improvements could be made.

Assist your team members to interpret customer service by:
- being a role model in terms of behaviour, attitude and compliance with standards and systems
- recognising and applying organisational protocols
- encouraging fair and ethical practices in customer service
- encouraging non-discriminatory work practices
- providing strategies for achieving both work and personal goals
- providing feedback and encouragement to team members in applying the standards.

Apply customer service standards

Customer service standards, protocols and procedures should be applied to all areas that have customers, whether they are internal or external. Team members working within public contact areas and, where applicable, internal service delivery areas should implement strategies that demonstrate the organisation’s customer service standards and organisational protocols.

Here are the areas in which customer service standards commonly apply.
### Business hours

Customer service policies should outline the hours when the organisation is open for business, as well as the hours when customers can contact it.

### Separation of responsibility between departments

Outline which person, team or department is responsible for which areas of customer service. This is particularly important for larger organisations where collaboration between people or departments is required when serving customers.

For example, the charter could state which person, team or department is responsible for:

- receiving customer inquiries
- serving customers in the ordering process
- taking customer orders
- processing customer orders
- resolving customer complaints and disputes.

### Pricing policy

The pricing policy outlines the organisation’s overall pricing policy. This is usually done broadly in terms of where the business prices itself in the market (high-end versus low-end) and may include a commitment to guarantee the lowest cost, or to match or beat competitors’ offerings.

### Refunds, returns and exchanges policy

The refunds, returns and exchanges policy outlines the circumstances under which the organisation allows customers to return or exchange items and under what conditions refunds are issued. This needs to be clear and specify things like the time frame in which products can be returned, any purchase amount limits that apply, staff/manager approval required and presentation of receipt conditions.

### Guarantees and warranties in effect

A guarantees and warranties policy outlines the guarantees and warranties that the organisation provides on its products and services. These need to be specific and clear to meet legal guidelines and to provide the customer with an accurate view of any conditions or restrictions that may apply in order to prevent misunderstandings later on.

### Customer service charter: external customers

Here is a section of a customer service charter that describes the behaviours expected of staff towards their external customers.
Contribute to quality customer service standards

Customer service standards formalise the level of customer service you aim to provide and what practical things you must do to achieve this. The standards set a target for organisations to meet customer needs through the use of its people, systems and technology.

Establishing quality customer service standards in your organisation requires commitment from yourself and your team members to plan, develop, implement and sustain the standards. It also involves training and feedback.

An important aspect of your role is to make contributions to your organisation’s customer service operations to better meet the needs of the organisation and its customers.

Contribute to developing the customer service model

The customer service model, plan or program within your organisation should be regularly monitored and reviewed to ensure it continues to meet customer needs and remains in line with customer service trends and customer expectations.

The customer service standards, policies and processes that make up an organisation’s customer service model are generally developed as an exercise involving all staff, and further refined by a specific team responsible for development and implementation.

Here are some ways that you can contribute to a customer service plan.

Gather feedback

Gather feedback to gain customer insight

Interview customers to gain better understanding of their experiences with your organisation and with your competitors. Ask customers to describe their expectations for your type of business and try to discover any unmet needs.

Use a variety of survey methods to gain customer insight, including in-person interviews, online surveys, focus groups and customer satisfaction forms.

Analyse operations

Analyse current operations

Create a thorough analysis of your current operations, focusing on the customer service element. Draw process flow charts and service-area diagrams to visualise the ways your team members interact with customers and with each other. Write a process narrative describing an average customer experience from your customers’ and team members’ points of view.

Ask fellow team leaders, managers or other colleagues to assist you by providing details of their own experiences in frontline management.
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Implement customer service standards

Summary

1. Customer service involves assisting customers in a variety of ways by providing them with information, support, products and/or services that meet their needs and address their concerns or issues.

2. Organisations formalise customer service standards, policies and procedures in customer service charters to ensure that internal and external customers are treated consistently and with the desired results.

3. Having customer service standards in place and training team members on your directives can help encourage repeat business and improve the overall operations of your organisation.

4. As a manager, team leader or supervisor, you should be familiar with your organisation’s customer service standards as a framework for developing and maintaining an acceptable level of customer service.

5. Maintaining quality customer service standards requires an organisation to regularly monitor and review its service with regard to customer satisfaction. This should be an ongoing process of continuous improvement.

6. You can contribute to developing and improving the customer service plan by using your knowledge of what customers want, observing customer service staff, seeing how other organisations respond to their customers and then providing suggestions and ideas for improvement.

7. Once you and your team have understood and analysed customer service needs and the quality of service your organisation provides to customers, you need to prioritise the areas most in need of improvement.
Feedback system

Implement a customer feedback system

There are several formal and informal information sources that organisations can implement to access data on customer service needs in order to provide quality customer service, such as a website form for comments, a feedback form inserted with products or a question put to customers from staff after a purchase to seek a comment on their opinion of the service. Implement a customer feedback system that collects reliable and useful data that helps your team to identify service delivery areas in need of improvement and make adjustments as necessary.

CRM

Utilise customer relationship management (CRM) systems

Customer relationship management (CRM) is an approach to managing your organisation’s interactions with existing and potential customers. It involves using technology to organise, automate and synchronise sales, marketing, customer service and technical support. As well as improving the service you provide to customers, CRM can reduce costs, wastage and customer complaints by streamlining customer service processes to make the experience efficient and engaging. CRM also reduces staff stress, as it opens lines of communication with customers and simplifies market research efforts.

Promotion

Promote customer service to customers

It is not just the quality of your products and services that keeps customers coming back to your organisation with their business. Promoting your organisation’s commitment to quality customer service and fulfilling promises by doing what you say you will do are effective marketing strategies and improve the organisation’s service delivery reputation. Use strategies such as newsletters, media releases and community work.

Identify relevant personnel

The designated individuals and groups to whom you must promote your customer service systems will vary depending on the nature and size of your organisation. Customer service systems must be promoted to all people whose support and input is required to implement them.

Here is a list of the types of personnel required to implement customer service systems.
Sales practices
Organisations are required to provide proof of transactions to customers for goods or services valued at $75 or more, such as a tax invoice, a cash register receipt, a credit card or debit card statement, a handwritten receipt, a lay-by agreement or a receipt number provided for a telephone or internet transaction.

It is illegal to request payment for goods or services that the customer has not agreed to buy or to use referral selling, pyramid schemes, unconscionable conduct, or harassment and coercion to persuade a customer to purchase a product or service.

Product safety
Under ACL, the relevant Commonwealth, state and territory ministers can regulate consumer goods and product-related services.

They can do this by issuing safety warning notices, banning products on a temporary or permanent basis, imposing mandatory safety standards or issuing a compulsory recall notice to suppliers.

Meet legislative requirements
There are a range of tips you and your team members can follow to ensure you do not breach ACL when dealing with your customers and other organisations.

Here is a list of actions you may take and what you should not do.

Tips on what to do:

- Set up a system to handle complaints and ensure that your organisation is able to comply with ACL.
- Delegate responsibility to a team member for overseeing direct selling techniques to ensure that your organisation’s activities comply with ACL.
- Join an industry association that advises its members on how to comply with direct selling and other laws.
- Contact the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) to make a complaint if your organisation becomes the victim of any conduct by other businesses in breach of ACL and you cannot get the dispute resolved.
Mystery shopper
Mystery shoppers are hired by an organisation to monitor the customer service in their stores. They assess the organisation’s customer service by posing as genuine customers. Provide them with a list of prearranged questions and issues to test on customer service representatives. They then complete an assessment report, which is used to review and analyse customer service performance.

Third-party feedback
Seek feedback via discussion or forms from third parties such as consultants, suppliers, contractors and industry bodies to find out an organisation’s perceived customer service level.
Record how satisfied they are with the way the organisation conducts business with them, including communication methods, resolving issues or difficulties, negotiating and prompt payment of invoices.

Social media monitoring
Monitor your social media engagement and feedback where customers share their customer service experiences and make complaints. Social media can also be used to run surveys and test concepts. Prepare a system to record all feedback so it is easy to review.

Secondary research
Review data that already exists within the organisation to analyse customer service performance, such as the number of customer complaints received; number of product refunds, returns and exchanges; customer waiting times; net sales figures, market share, sales growth; staff performance appraisal data; staff turnover and absenteeism; quality assurance data; number of cancellations of services or appointments; number of existing clients.

Customer service audit
A common way to measure customer satisfaction is to conduct a regular customer service audit, a process whereby procedures, practices and records are closely examined and checked to ensure they meet certain standards. A customer service order reviews the organisation’s customer service performance by analysing the business from the customer’s perspective.

The organisation performs a customer service audit by observing customer service staff interacting with customers, gathering and analysing information from customer feedback and complaints, conducting surveys, issuing questionnaires and asking third parties (such as industry bodies or suppliers) to comment on service levels.
Audits should be conducted regularly and their results reviewed and acted on.
Consolidate feedback results

After you have read, categorised and separated feedback, and identified trends and root causes, consolidate your results and develop a plan of action as to how you intend to respond to each of the issues raised. Make a feasible and effective plan that addresses all the problems your customers have identified, while maintaining the service delivery areas that are functioning well. This process will assist you to make recommendations that improve customer service systems and improve work practices.

Consult and seek input from appropriate personnel

Review customer feedback in consultation with appropriate personnel and seek their input when addressing problems. The benefits of a consultative team culture include additional insights and ideas from different perspectives, an increase in staff satisfaction levels and stronger commitment to their jobs. Members of a team feel their opinions are valued and that they are playing an important role in the context of the organisation.

All teams benefit from understanding and managing agreed methods of gathering and reviewing customer feedback and measuring service delivery performance. While agreement can be partly determined by the team during collaborative strategy sessions or planning meetings, managers can also use their judgment to make final decisions on solutions that have mutual benefit.

Here are some tips for promoting consultation:

- Conduct team meetings to review customer feedback.
- Invite personnel to brainstorming sessions so they can contribute and strategise about how to address issues in service delivery.
- Use email and intranet services to facilitate communication between teams and other personnel.
- Share professional and personal skills, knowledge, experience and insights.
- Build consultation mechanisms into people’s workplaces so they are encouraged to implement customer service systems.
- Provide feedback to personnel on the results their ideas have generated and the usefulness of these results.
- Promote and encourage personnel to share their thoughts and ideas and to communicate clearly and freely within the team.

Identify customer service problems

Reviewing and analysing your customer feedback allows you to identify any developing problems that are negatively affecting the quality of your customer service. There are a number of common issues that customers make relating to customer service delivery. Having procedures in place to find solutions to common problems helps you resolve quality service issues quickly and improve work practices accordingly.
**Target markets**
The organisation's primary target market/customer must be kept firmly in mind when developing any strategies to improve customer service. Any potential strategy must be reviewed to ensure it will be effective at meeting the needs of your target market. A particular strategy may sound excellent in theory, but you should ensure it will not alienate or disappoint your ideal customer.

**Organisational structure**
The organisation's structure ensures various departments and people within it have responsibility for various areas of the organisation's operations. Any potential customer service strategies must be developed in conjunction with those whose responsibility it is to develop, produce, market and sell products and services, as well as the people responsible for interacting with customers and providing customer service.

**Organisational goals and objectives**
Organisational goals and objectives are the most important consideration when developing customer service strategies. All departments within an organisation must be working together to achieve wider organisational goals. Customer service strategies must align with these goals and objectives, and the organisation's overall market position.

**Existing customer service policies and procedures**
Many organisations have formalised policies and procedures in place that operate as guidelines for all team members when interacting with customers. An organisation’s existing customer service policies and procedures need to be referenced and kept in mind when proposing strategies and improvements to customer service.

**Resource considerations and restrictions**
In formulating any strategy designed to improve customer service, the resources at your disposal must be kept firmly in mind to ensure funds are available to implement any proposed strategy. For example, if you have identified that customers are demanding longer business hours, then a strategy aimed at opening for an extra hour each day needs to factor in whether the organisation has the staff and money available to be able to implement the strategy.
Inaction

Describe the implications of inaction
Clearly state what is likely to occur if adjustments to customer service delivery are not actioned. Make sure that your audience clearly understands the implications of failing to deliver a quality service to customers, such as a loss of business, decrease in revenue, potential job cuts or damage to the organisation’s reputation. If possible, link the problem and the consequences of inaction to your wider organisational objectives or describe how this contravenes your customer service charter.

Solutions

Describe a range of possible solutions
Identify and list the various options that exist to address customer service issues. Doing this demonstrates how you have reviewed the situation extensively and decided to implement a solution based on thorough research and analysis. Explain the different solutions available and why they should be considered, as well as any benefits or limitations. Keep in mind that anyone who has authority to approve an adjustment to customer service delivery will be interested in the costs involved to implement the change.

Resources

Describe the resource implications
Your presentation must include budgetary considerations and identify the costs involved in implementing any recommended adjustments to customer service delivery. Imagine you and your team have identified two possible solutions to a customer service issue you need to address. You have been asked to make a recommendation to your own manager about the best solution. This must include detailed information about the costs. You cannot make a recommendation if you do not know which solution is the more expensive.

Recommendations

Recommend a solution
From the range of possible solutions, make a case for the recommendation you believe will best achieve the desired outcome. This decision should be made with the input of relevant personnel within your organisation. As you and your team members are familiar with customer service issues and solutions, you should include their ideas and opinions in your presentation to verify your recommendations.
Pronunciation

Articulation focuses on the making of individual sounds, and pronunciation focuses on the stress, rhythm and intonation of the syllables in words. You change the sounds coming from your vocal folds by moving your teeth, tongue and lips in recognisable patterns.

When communicating with clients, make sure you are not substituting or omitting sounds when you say a word, and pay particular attention to common sound substitutions so that you speak clearly and confidently.

Clarity of speech

Clarity of speech refers to the ability to be heard and understood. Clarity of speech can be achieved by closely looking at the way you speak: how you say it and what you say. Using correct enunciation to pronounce a word clearly makes you easier to understand when communicating with a diverse range of clients.

You should avoid using ‘filler’ words; for example, ‘um’, ‘like’, ‘actually’ and ‘basically’. You gain more clarity when you watch for the words that you repeat often without even realising. Consider whether these words bring value to your communication.

Improve verbal communication skills

Here are some tips to help you to improve your verbal communication skills when presenting adjustments to customer service delivery.

**Tips for improving your verbal communication skills**

1. **Know your material**

   If you know your topic thoroughly, you feel more at ease talking about it and will be able to respond if people ask questions. You will sound more natural in your response and more interesting to the audience if you are knowledgeable and interested in what you are saying.

2. **Know your audience**

   You may have to do some research to find out how much your audience knows and what they are hoping to learn. You can then tailor your communication or presentation to the audience’s needs. People quickly switch off if they think they already know what you are talking about.
**Appearance**

Appropriate appearance in the business environment will vary depending on your vocation and organisational requirements. Even so, in most business settings your appearance should be neat and professional in order to present yourself as confident, capable and trustworthy.

Your appearance sets the tone for your interactions. Clothes should be sensible and well fitted. Try not to wear distracting accessories. Neat and tidy personal grooming is of utmost importance.

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**Improve your nonverbal communication skills**

There is a range of actions you can take to improve your nonverbal communication skills when presenting adjustments to customer service delivery.

**Tips for improving nonverbal communication skills**

- Mirror the other person’s body language
- Don’t be stiff; keep yourself relaxed when sitting or standing
- Maintain strong eye contact
- Show a genuine smile (not a smirk)
- Avoid unnecessary head movement and keep your head straight yet relaxed
- Give compliments by nodding or giving a thumbs up
- Think and believe that there is already rapport, to avoid looking awkward
- Use proper body language to leverage your success
- Lower the pitch of your voice
- Use hand gestures while speaking

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**Communicate within appropriate time frames**

It is important to communicate adjustments in service delivery within appropriate or designated time frames, to ensure strategies are implemented in line with organisational goals and objectives.

On those occasions when implementation of the decision impacts on customers, other departments or work areas, or other organisations, you need to provide timely advice to those concerned. This is particularly important when there may be a negative reaction to your message.

Ensure that, in such cases, the information is shared promptly and clearly with all relevant parties. Open and timely communication helps minimise the likelihood of gossip and the rumours that often surround changes to procedures. You are also more likely to secure the support and commitment of other people when they feel they have been involved in the early stages of the change process.
A key responsibility for managers is to coordinate and manage the delivery of products and services to ensure they meet agreed quality standards.

Making it easy and enjoyable for your customers to purchase your goods and services is an important customer service strategy for your organisation. This is particularly important when customers place orders or apply for goods and services not immediately available or to be delivered on a future date.

By receiving fast and efficient service, satisfied customers will return to your organisation to buy your products or use your services, and are also likely to recommend your organisation to others.

**Manage service and product delivery**

Organisations should have developed and implemented strategies to coordinate and manage efficient and effective delivery of goods and services.

Be confident that you and your team understand the procedures for taking customer orders, confirming what has been ordered, confirming the order status (that is, pending, ordered, processed or delivered) and receiving customer payments.

Here are typical steps for confirming orders, billing, delivery, credit and lay-by, and ensuring there is clear communication at all times.

**Confirm orders**

Confirming orders gives the customer confidence that their order will proceed as expected. Depending on your organisation, confirming an order may be done via a phone call; however, written confirmation should be included in your documentation process. Written confirmation may include emails, order forms, faxes, text messages, purchase orders or a unique order number provided over the phone. Not only does order confirmation allow you to finalise your customer service records, it also shows your customers that you care about their business.
### Example: coordinate and manage service and product delivery

The following example demonstrates how a manager coordinates the delivery of products and services to meet agreed quality standards.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Quality standard</th>
<th>Coordination and management</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Describe product to customer</td>
<td>Product described accurately</td>
<td>Ensure information sheets are supplied to team members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process customer order</td>
<td>Order processed successfully</td>
<td>Ensure ordering system is efficient and easy to use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confirm customer order</td>
<td>Order confirmation sent to customer</td>
<td>Ensure customer receives accurate order confirmation details</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process customer payment</td>
<td>Payment processed successfully</td>
<td>Ensure correct payment is taken and payment system is running efficiently</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deliver product to customer</td>
<td>Product delivered safely within agreed time frames</td>
<td>Ensure team members are trained in delivery procedures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manage return of faulty product</td>
<td>Customer guarantee honoured, product returned and customer refunded</td>
<td>Ensure returns, refunds and exchanges policy is accurate and up to date</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Practice task 6

Read the case study, then complete the questions that follow.

**Case study**

Phoebe is the customer service manager at Earthy Gear, an online business selling hiking and camping gear to customers out of a large warehouse in northern Queensland. Earthy Gear is one of Australia’s leading independent service-oriented adventure stores and prides itself on its value-added services, which extend beyond the payment for a customer’s product. As well as everyday low prices, Earthy Gear promises super-fast delivery, a genuine registered manufacturer’s warranty, expert technical advice from passionate outdoor staff, spare parts, ongoing customer support and a loyalty program, knowledge base and online support. Phoebe’s customer service team has undertaken product knowledge training and has ongoing access to product features and specifications, as well as order processing and delivery procedures, via the business intranet.

*continued ...*
Properly setting up your customer service team is a critical step that affects many other aspects of your business operation. A well-functioning team can mean the difference between success and failure.

Here are some elements to consider when forming a customer service team.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elements of a customer service team</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Customer needs</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understand the needs of your customer: survey your customer base to define the common issues that need to be regularly addressed by your customer service team. Categorise these areas to see whether they can handled by the whole team or separate service divisions are required. If you have significant volume in issues such as sales assistance, technical support or product usage, you may need to split your customer service team into components and allocate activities and resources accordingly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Team standards</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design your customer service model to reflect your organisation’s ethical and social culture, as well as your recognised duty to your customers. Develop and implement team customer service standards, such as prompt knowledge and courteous advice, attentive and clear consumer relations, and accessible service and support options.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Team objectives</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop team goals, objectives and KPIs to gauge the effectiveness of your customer service team. You need to frequently review and provide your team members with regular feedback regarding their individual and team performance, with suggestions on how to improve service delivery. Ensure goals, objectives and KPIs are relevant to your customer base and industry type.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Team training</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equip your customer service team with the tools and knowledge it needs to adequately meet customer needs and expectations. Conduct on-the-job training or include team members in professional development activities. Make sure your team has access to the equipment and technology needed to complete team and work activities, such as computers, phone systems, internet connectivity, adequate lighting, product or service manuals, and telephone scripts.</td>
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</table>
Work activities

Customer service teams are responsible for acting as a liaison between customers and the organisation. Team members assist with complaints, orders, errors, account questions, billing, cancellations and other queries relating to service delivery.

In addition to their specific daily work tasks, team members may also be given non-routine work tasks that are critical to meeting customer needs and expectations, and help achieve wider organisational goals; for example, they may be asked to run a brief information session for new team members. They may need extra training to be able to complete these non-routine tasks satisfactorily.

Customer service managers must plan a range of routine and non-routine tasks and implement actions in accordance with the plan to meet desired outcomes. Planning should incorporate the work activities, customer service standards, desired performance levels and resources required to complete tasks.

Here is more about routine and non-routine work tasks.

Routine work tasks include:
- answering inbound telephone calls
- handling customer complaints
- assisting with placement of orders, refunds or exchanges
- advising on organisational policies
- taking payment information
- offering solutions to product or service-related issues.

Non-routine work tasks include:
- organising rosters or schedules
- generating sales leads
- managing team resources
- completing sales paperwork
- compiling reports on overall customer satisfaction
- participating in professional development activities.

Team communication

Information communicated to your team members must be in context, accurate, timely and presented in a way that makes it easy to understand and act on, if action is needed.

Clearly articulate customer service systems and standards in a team environment, using language suitable to diverse audiences, and use listening and questioning techniques to confirm your team members’ understanding.
Implement team customer service standards

7 Facilities
   • Develop child-minding facilities.
   • Improve lighting, thermal settings and toilets.

8 Customer and employee incentives
   • Set up a customer rewards program.
   • Start team member awards for delivery of excellent customer service.

Budgetary limitations

The structure and limitations of budgets can have an impact on the implementation of customer service systems and how team activities are completed.

For example, your organisation may wish to improve the way it handles incoming customer calls promptly by installing new computer-based telephone equipment and sophisticated computerised answering services. However, the cost may far exceed the amount allocated in the budget.

For recommendations to be realistic and achievable, you must take budgetary considerations into account.

Here are some examples of taking budgetary considerations into account.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Reduce unproductive travel time by using videoconferencing to hold meetings or training sessions. Time saved on travelling can be better spent on more productive activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Outsource IT tasks to a managed service provider that has the expertise your team members may lack.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personnel</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Create specialised roles within your team and allow staff to focus their skills in one area to improve productivity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Create a standardised approach to customer management, allowing your organisation to maintain a high level of individualised support with less effort.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Integrate your software to minimise the time spent handling data and maximise the time spent servicing customers.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>