

Achieving results

Resolve customer service problems

F5

Note: This unit has been taken from the National Occupational Standards developed by the Institute of Customer Service (ICS), the standards-setting body for customer service. The format of the unit is different to that used by the Management Standards Centre (MSC) for the units the MSC has developed.

UNIT OVERVIEW

The delivery of excellent customer service involves meeting and exceeding customer expectations. However, even if your customer service overall is excellent, some customers will experience problems. Part of your job is to help to resolve those problems. Some problems are reported by customers. In other situations, you spot the problem first and resolve it before your customer has even noticed that there might be a problem.

For this unit you need to resolve both types of problem having looked at all the options.

This unit is particularly important to customer service because many customers judge the customer service of your organisation by the way in which their problems are resolved.

NB: This is unit 4 from the Customer Service National Occupational Standards at level 2.

ELEMENT 1: IDENTIFY CUSTOMER SERVICE PROBLEMS

You need to show that you:

- 1.1 gather and interpret information from your customers about problems they have raised;
- 1.2 ask your customers appropriate questions to check your understanding of their problems;
- 1.3 identify repeated problems and alert the appropriate authority;
- 1.4 share customer feedback with others to help identify potential problems before they occur;
- 1.5 work independently or with others to identify problems with systems and procedures before they begin to affect your customers.

ELEMENT 2: SELECT THE BEST SOLUTION TO RESOLVE CUSTOMER SERVICE PROBLEMS

You need to show that you:

- 2.1 identify the available options for resolving customer service problems;
- 2.2 consult with others to identify and confirm the options available to resolve those problems;
- 2.3 work out the advantages and disadvantages of each option for your customer and your organisation;
- 2.4 select the best overall option for your customer and your organisation;
- 2.5 suggest to your customer other ways that problems may be resolved if you are unable to help.

ELEMENT 3: IMPLEMENT THE SOLUTION TO CUSTOMER SERVICE PROBLEMS

You need to show that you:

- 3.1 discuss and agree the proposed option for solving the problem with your customers;
- 3.2 take action to implement the option agreed with your customers;
- 3.3 work with others and your customers to make sure that any commitments related to solving the problem are kept;
- 3.4 keep your customers fully informed about what is happening to resolve problems;
- 3.5 check with your customers to make sure the problem has been resolved to their satisfaction;
- 3.6 give clear reasons to your customers when the problem has not been resolved to their satisfaction.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING

You will have an awareness of the basic legal and organisational responsibilities you need to apply when you are dealing with your customers.

You will need to show in your evidence that you have worked within the rules and regulations of your organisation and, where your knowledge of these is limited, you will need to show that you have gone to others for help or advice.

The rules and procedures you need to apply will depend on the industry and organisation you are working in. How much you need to know and understand will depend on your job role and your position in your organisation. You may need to ask somebody in your organisation or your assessor what these rules and regulations are and how they apply to your current job, or you may already know.

In addition you will need to demonstrate that you know and understand:

- 1 what your customers' rights are and how these rights limit what you are able to do for your customer;
- 2 the specific aspects of:
 - health and safety
 - data protection
 - equal opportunities
 - disability discrimination
 - legislation and regulations

that affect the way the products or services you deal with can be delivered to your customers;

- 3 industry, organisational and professional codes of practice and ethical standards that affect the way the products or services you deal with can be delivered to your customers;
- 4 any contractual agreements that your customers have with your organisation;
- 5 the products or services of your organisation relevant to your customer service role;
- 6 the guidelines laid down by your organisation that limit what you can do within your job;
- 7 the limits of your own authority and when you need to seek agreement with or permission from others;
- 8 any organisational targets relevant to your job, your role in meeting them and the implications for your organisation if those targets are not met;
- 9 how to communicate in a clear, polite, confident way and why this is important.

You will also need to show that you know and understand:

- 10 organisational procedures and systems for dealing with customer service problems;
- 11 how to defuse potentially stressful situations;
- 12 how to negotiate;
- 13 the limitations of what you are able to offer your customer.

EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS

Simulation is not allowed for any performance evidence within this Unit. You must supply all the evidence from work you have carried out with customers in your workplace. Your customers can be internal or external to the organisation or a combination of both.

You must prove that you have dealt effectively with a series of customer service problems. You must produce evidence that shows you have done this over a period of time with different customers on different occasions.

Your evidence must include examples of solving problems involving each of the following:

- problems first identified by customers;
- problems that you have identified before they affect your customer;
- problems due to differences between your customers' expectations and what your organisation can offer;
- problems due to a system or procedure failure;
- problems due to a lack of resources or human error.

Your evidence will need to show that you:

- have made positive efforts to keep your customers informed at all times while problems are being resolved;
- supplied relevant information tactfully when customers have requested it;
- supplied relevant information tactfully when customers have not requested it;
- have used agreed organisational procedures when solving problems;
- have made exceptions to usual practice with the agreement of others.

All options you have considered must be based on the existing products or services offered by your organisation.

Your evidence must show that you have applied the knowledge and understanding requirements when you are dealing with your customers.