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Qatar Banking Studies and Business  
Administration | Secondary School

# Employability Skills المهارات الوظيفية Grade 11 | Business

بنّي  
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المستقبل

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قَسَمًا بِمَنْ نَشَرَ الضِّيَاءَ  
تَسْمُو بِرُوحِ الْأَوْفِيَاءِ  
وَعَلَى ضِيَاءِ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ  
عِزٌّ وَأَمْجَادُ الْإِبَاءِ  
حُمَاتُنَا يَوْمَ النِّدَاءِ  
جَوَائِحُ يَوْمِ الْفِدَاءِ

قَسَمًا بِمَنْ رَفَعَ السَّمَاءَ  
قَطَرٌ سَتَبَقَى حُرَّةً  
سِيرُوا عَلَى نَهْجِ الْأَلَى  
قَطَرٌ بِقَلْبِي سِيرَةٌ  
قَطَرُ الرِّجَالِ الْأَوَّلِينَ  
وَحَمَائِمُ يَوْمِ السَّلَامِ

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## About this Learner Resource

■ The purpose of this Learner Resource is to provide you with the underpinning knowledge required to assist you in completing assessment/s in Deliver a service to customers.

This Learner Resource also contains activities for you to test your knowledge and examples of skills application.

Throughout this Learner Resource you will see icons that identify important information, provide opportunities to test your knowledge and practice skills as well as suggested times to begin a formal assessment. These icons are displayed as follows:



### Practice

This icon is used to highlight an ideal time to test your knowledge or practice what you have learnt.

### How will I be assessed?

- In order to achieve competency in Deliver a service to customers you will need to demonstrate the skills and knowledge required for the unit.
- Your teacher will decide with you how and when you will be assessed.

## Copyright

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### About this unit:

Welcome to the Learner Resource for Deliver a service to customers. In this Learner Resource you will be learning about delivering all aspects of customer service at an introductory level. It includes creating a relationship with customers, identifying their needs, delivering services or products and processing customer feedback.

It is suggested that to meet all the requirements of Deliver a service to customers you will need to complete the following tasks:

- Read the information contained in this Learner Resource.
- Complete the activities.
- Complete all the required assessment/s for this unit.

### The topics in this Learner Resource are:

- Establish contact with customers
- Identify customer needs
- Deliver a service to customers
- Process customer feedback.





## Introduction



You are about to commence a vocational course where you will be required to demonstrate your competency in delivering all aspects of customer service at an introductory level. This unit of competency includes creating a relationship with customers, identifying their needs, delivering services or products and processing customer feedback.



## Establish contact with customers

All business organisations rely on customer service to some degree, some do so more than others. Customer focused organisations base their business decisions around the needs of their customers. They ensure that they fully understand their customers' needs and provide products and services to meet these needs.

Individuals who are focused on customer needs will establish a positive rapport with customers when they meet them for the first time.

A welcoming greeting will create a positive image of the business in the mind of the customer.



*A welcoming greeting*

## **Acknowledging and greeting customers**

Every business organisation needs its customers. It is the role of all employees to build a professional relationship with their customers. Clear and effective communication will contribute to a positive customer relationship.

Unhappy relationships can be very damaging for a business. Usually, a customer will not make a formal complaint if they feel they have not been treated well. Instead, they will take their business to a competitor. They will also talk to other people about the bad experience.

Acknowledging and greeting customers in a professional and courteous manner, according to organisational requirements is the first step in overcoming these problems.

While 'acknowledging' and 'greeting' go hand-in-hand, there are some different aspects to each.

How many times have you been in a shop or a showroom and tried to get the attention of a salesperson only to have them totally ignore you? How many times has a salesperson, made you feel unimportant?

In some situations where you cannot greet a person, you can still acknowledge their presence. For example, if we are at a service counter dealing with those customers first in line, we can acknowledge the other customers who are waiting by making eye contact and smiling or nodding, or even looking at them and making a general statement such as, 'I will be with you in a moment'.

Your role is to greet people and deal with their needs. Customers come from a range of social and cultural backgrounds. They have varying physical and mental abilities and can display a range of emotional behaviours. They have a range of needs.

When we think about customer service we often think only about our external customers. These are the people we rely on to continue coming into our business and buying our products and services.

It is very easy to forget about internal customers. These are the people who work in our organisation with whom we do not have face to face contact. They are the people who work in the stores section, the accounts department, the manufacturing areas, the mail room etc. While they may have limited contact with customers, the work they do still contributes to a positive customer experience.



## Practice

### Practice activity 1

Think about a teacher at your school. Who are his customers? List them below.


Let's assume you are working in an electronics repair shop. In the table below, list the intern come in contact with.

Internal customers	External customers

Think about a positive and an unsatisfactory customer experience you have had and answer the questions below.

**Positive customer experience:**

Describe when you had a positive customer experience.


What made this a positive experience?


How did it make you feel?


What did you do after this experience?




## ***Unsatisfactory customer experience***

Describe when you had an unsatisfactory customer experience.


What made this an unsatisfactory experience?


How did it make you feel?


What did you do after this experience?


## Greeting and acknowledging customers face to face

We can greet customers in person, over the telephone or by writing to them.

The initial interaction is the most important. The greeting must be welcoming and professional.

The example below represents a standard greeting between an employee or a receptionist and a customer.

<b>Employee:</b>	<i>Good morning, how can I help you?</i>
<b>Customer:</b>	<i>Good morning. My name is Abdulla Ahmad and I have an appointment with Mr Hussan at 9.30 am.</i>
<b>Employee:</b>	<i>Certainly. He is expecting you. I'll just let him know you're here. It won't be long. Please take a seat.</i>

If you know the customer's name, use their correct title and name during your conversation with them. Company's policy may require you to offer a cup of tea or coffee or water while the customer waits.

- Be courteous.
- Smile at the customer and make eye contact
- Treat the customer in a professional manner.
- Use a friendly tone.
- Use the customer's name and title if known.
- Be willing to help.

## Greeting and acknowledging customers over the telephone

The telephone could be the first contact a customer has with an organisation, so the initial greeting must be professional and cour-

teous. Organisations will usually have set procedures for answering the telephone. These procedures could include the following.

- Answer the phone within a set number of rings, eg no more than three rings.
- Use a set of greetings, such as 'good morning' or 'good afternoon.'
- Identify the name of the organisation and your name.
- Offer to help.



*Initial greetings over the telephone must be professional and courteous*

The example below represents a standard telephone greeting between an employee or a receptionist and an incoming call from a customer.

<b>Employee:</b>	<i>Good morning Regency Travel. This is Ali. How can I help you?</i>
<b>Caller:</b>	<i>Hello, this is Wayne Mason. Can I please speak to Mr Rashid?.</i>
<b>Employee:</b>	<i>Mr Rashid is unavailable at present. Can I please take a message and have Mr Rashid call you back?</i>

<b>Caller:</b>	<i>Yes thank you, My contact number is 1234 3367.</i>
<b>Employee:</b>	<i>So that is 1234 3367?</i>
<b>Caller:</b>	<i>Yes,that is correct.</i>
<b>Employee:</b>	<i>I will have Mr Rashid return your call as soon as he is available.</i>
<b>Caller:</b>	<i>Thank you. Goodbye.</i>
<b>Employee:</b>	<i>Goodbye Mr Mason. Thank you for calling.</i>

## Greeting and acknowledging customers in writing

There are few things worse in the business world than receiving a letter containing an inappropriate greeting, or other errors. This immediately conveys the impression to the recipient that the business sending the letter is unprofessional in its methods. Again, that original impression can be damaging for a business. It is important that all style guides, form letters and other organisational templates are followed when communicating with customers by mail.

## Greeting and acknowledging customers according to organisational requirements

Organisations realise how important customers are to their businesses. They will ensure their staff provide the highest levels of customer service.

An organisation's customer service standards can often be found in the vision or mission statement.

A customer service charter is another statement some businesses will expect their staff to follow.

Organisational policies and procedures may also include reference to customer service.



## Practice

### Practice activity 2

Read the customer service policy below. Highlight the key words that indicate the company's service policy.

#### *Customer service policy*

*We regard every person who contacts us, for any reason whatsoever, to be a valued customer.*

*We are committed to providing the best customer service possible and will endeavour to process each enquiry as quickly as possible.*

*We are committed to providing our customers with high quality service which meets their reasonable expectations.*

*We recognise that our customer's needs are as unique and varied as the individuals themselves. Business will be fair and completed in an appropriate time frame and our customers will be treated with honesty and integrity at all times.*

*We recognise that by providing high quality customer service we are helping to serve our customers in the best possible way.*

*We will listen to our customers and try to provide the services that they really want. We will not assume that we know what they want; we will really find out and listen to the facts.*

*We will not give any customer the «run around». If an individual cannot directly help a customer, it is their responsibility to ensure that they find someone who can and then put them in contact with the customer. If the person who is able to help the customer is unavailable, it is the responsibility of the person who receives the call to ring back the customer and advise them of a time when the appropriate person will help them.*

*Answers to any enquiry or complaint will be easy to understand. They will be clear, concise and straight to the point, and directly address the original enquiry or complaint.*



*All telephone enquiries or complaints will receive at least an initial response by the next working day.*

*All employees dealing with customers will identify themselves either verbally, or in writing, and when answering the phone will give their first name.*

*In its aim towards efficiency and in the interest of customers, we reserve the right to limit the use of staff and resources on false or unreasonable demands.*

## Organisational policies and procedures may also refer to the following.

- Industry Code of Conduct or Code of Practice.
- Customer service principles and guidelines.
- Occupational health and safety (OHS) procedures for dealing with customers.
- Anti-discrimination policies.
- Access and equity principles and practices.
- Continuous improvement processes and quality assurance principles.

## Greeting and acknowledging customers according to legislative requirements

Certain legislative requirements will also affect how we perform our customer service role. The following legislation has been discussed in other units. They apply to how we interact with our customers also.

### **Anti-discrimination**

As a general principle, customers must be treated equally regardless of race, religion, gender, age, social status, or any disability they may suffer. Equal respect should be shown to all. This means you must not discriminate between customers as to how and when you interact with them.

## Privacy

Customers have a right to privacy of information.

If a person provides private information to a business for the purpose of obtaining goods or services, the person has a right to expect that the business will not use the private information, other than for the purpose of providing the particular goods or services.

## Occupational health and safety

You must always take care of the health and safety of yourself and others. Others means not only your co-workers, but also customers.

Whilst your employer has a duty to provide a safe workplace, you also have a duty towards others, including customers, to contribute to safety in the workplace.

You should always be alert to potential or actual hazards and bring them to the attention of the responsible person. If, whilst waiting for the responsible person to remove the risk, you can minimise the risk without danger to yourself, you should do so. An example of this might be alerting a supervisor to a shelf that appears in danger of falling and in the meantime, blocking customer access to that area with appropriate signage and/or barriers.



*A potential hazard*

## Maintaining personal dress and presentation

Business organisations may have guidelines for personal dress.

Employees may be obliged to wear uniforms. This has the effect of helping the business or organisation 'brand' itself. Alternatively, a uniform requirement might be imposed because of the nature of the work – in a beauty salon, the workers might all wear a particular article of clothing which is resistant to staining from cosmetics or dyes.

In many respects, uniform requirements make life a lot easier – we know how we are expected to dress, and we do not have to choose what to wear each day.



*Many business organisations will have specific uniforms*

While there may not be a specific uniform, there may be a particular type of presentation that is expected of you, eg a dark suit, white shirt and tie.

You may live in a state or a country which prescribes certain modes of dress for its citizens, and of course, these rules are what you must observe in the first place when considering any organisational requirements.

However, bearing in mind any rules of your state or country, and any organisational requirements, 'business' is the key word here. If you work in any type of business, you must look businesslike.



## Practice

### Practice activity 3

List below some of the branded uniforms you see people wearing in Qatar.


Whatever the industry or profession is, you should always aim to look professional, conveying an image of a person who is ready to engage in business activities and who will act appropriately and serve the customer well.

If you look sloppy or dirty, customers will generally be reluctant to deal with you.

Customers want to deal with people who look neat and clean and generally 'smart', and who convey a professional image to others.



## Practice

### Practice activity 4

Think of a situation when someone's appearance affected your view of their organisation, product or service. In the space below, give details of this situation.


Look carefully at the two pictures included below. Indicate which person looks more businesslike and why.



*Which image gives a more professional impression?*



Well-dressed and presented	Poorly dressed and presented

## Interpersonal skills

Business organisations may have guidelines for personal dress. Interpersonal skills are those skills used in the interaction between two or more individuals. The customer service role requires individuals to be aware of the importance of interpersonal skills.

## Speaking technique



*Always use a professional and courteous speaking technique when speaking to customers*

Your voice expresses happiness, sadness, apathy, interest, etc. If you speak with a customer and you do not vary your pitch or your pace, then the customer will feel as though you do not care about them or your job. However, if your voice is active and enthusiastic, the customer is more likely to want to become engaged in a conversation with you.

### Using appropriate non-verbal behaviour

Effective communication also requires the use of appropriate non-verbal behaviour.

The way we stand or the way we sit, the way we look at the other people taking part in the conversation, and what we do with our arms, can affect our communication with others. It cannot only affect the way we feel, but also the way in which others perceive us.



*Body language plays an important part in your communication with others*

Consider the following non-verbal actions you should keep in mind when talking with a customer.

- Maintain eye contact. This will assist you to engage the customer in conversation. Staring in the distance or not looking at the customer gives the impression of a lack of interest in the person you are talking to.
- Keep your arms comfortably by your side. Crossing your arms can be seen as conveying a negative and disinterested image.
- Maintain a pleasant expression on your face. Smile. A frown on your face can give the impression that you are interested in the person you are talking with.
- If you are standing, keep a comfortable distance from the customer. It is important for the person you are talking with to have their 'personal space'.
- If you are sitting, lean forward in your chair to show interest. It is important to seem interested in what the other person has to say.

## Active listening

Effective communication also requires the use of appropriate non-verbal behaviour.



*Always listen carefully to what your customers are saying*

Listening carefully to what your customer is saying is probably the most important aspect of effective customer service. The ability to 'listen' and not just 'hear' your customer allows you to ask the right questions or handle telephone calls effectively. Active listening ensures you understand what has been said and prevents any misunderstanding.

Let the customer know you are listening and understand what is being said by nodding or smiling. If you are talking on the telephone, acknowledge what has been said by saying 'yes', or some other appropriate words or phrases.

•

## Questioning



*Use open questioning techniques to determine your customer's needs*

Sometimes a customer is unable to explain exactly what it is that they want. You will have to ask appropriate questions to get the right information from the customer.

Use closed questions when you want a simple 'yes' and 'no' answer. For example, 'Would you like the red or green model?'

Use open questions to find out more information. For example, 'What functions do you require the model to perform?'





## Practice

### Practice activity 5

Give three examples of open and closed questions that you think you could use to assist you to deliver effective customer service.

Open questions


Closed questions


Don't interrupt the customer with your questions. Show respect to the customer by waiting until they have finished talking before you start asking questions. It may be that the customer will provide you with all the information you require and your question is not necessary.

Make sure you really know what the customer has said.

To ensure you really do understand what it is the customer is after, summarise what they have said and repeat it back to them. Paraphrasing reassures the customer that they are being

listened to and allows you to confirm that you do understand what they want.

Ask the customer for feedback or give them the opportunity to confirm their request. This will assist you to confirm your understanding of their needs.

### **Maintaining sensitivity to customer needs**

It is important to be aware of the specific needs of customers and be sensitive to individual differences such as cultural, language and physical disability.

**Specific needs of customers could include the following.**

- A customer may be elderly, and cannot stand at a counter for a long period of time – that customer's specific need will be for a chair.
- A customer may wish to consider buying undergarments, and will not do so in front of other persons – that customer will need a private booth.
- Another customer may need to discuss financial issues, and will certainly not wish to do so within hearing of other customers – that customer will need a private area in which to discuss these matters with the staff member concerned.

We need to be alert to the physical disabilities of our customers. Usually they will not tell us of their disability. It may become apparent during our conversation. To allow for these disabilities, you may have to speak more clearly to someone who has a hearing impairment. You may have to move furniture or make some other provision for a person in a wheelchair.

Be aware of what you may have to deal with regarding people from different cultures. Within some cultures or family arrangements, only the male person may speak or convey information about the goods or services required. This might be taken further, and the male person may only wish to speak with another male person, or, alternatively, a female person may only wish to speak with another female person.

## Establishing rapport

Rapport is a relationship of mutual understanding or trust and agreement between people. All customers need to feel they are dealing with someone who understands their needs and who they can trust.

It does not matter how good our active listening and active questioning techniques are. If the customer does not feel comfortable with us, they are unlikely to respond by purchasing products from us or using our company's services.

Establishing a rapport means to 'be human', and sympathetic or empathetic, depending on the situation.



*Establishing strong customer relationships is an important part of business*

Let's imagine that you work at a small food store. Your job is to stock the shelves and generally help out where needed. At this point in time, you are waiting to be given your next task. An elderly lady on a walking frame arrives at the store and needs to buy some milk, butter and bread. Would you:

- tell her the aisle number in which the bread can be found, and point to the refrigeration unit for the milk and butter?

**or**

- show her to a seat, check on what she needs, and offer to bring the products to her?

It is your job to ensure the a customer feels:

- welcome
- important
- understood
- comfortable.

By expressing a genuine interest in the customer's needs or equirements, you are able to establish a positive rapport.



## Identify customer needs

Once you have established contact with your customers, you must identify their needs.

### Active listening and active questioning

We have previously identified the importance of active listening and questioning.

For example, if you listen to someone else speaking, you may or may not learn from this – it depends on how you listen. Active listening means that your senses are not only hearing the sound of someone speaking, but you are also listening and using your cognitive processes to understand and evaluate what is being said.

Think about this example. You are reading at home and you have the television turned on at the same time. You hear the sound made by the television. You hear the sound made by the programs on the television, but unless a speaker mentions something which is of particular interest to you, and which catches your attention, you do not really actively listen.

The same thing applies to effective speaking and active questioning. If we speak positively for the purpose of communication with another person, for example, to exchange information, we can say we are actively speaking. If we ask questions for the purpose of aiding better communication, then we are actively questioning.





*Listening and answering questions*

Let's look at the following two scenarios between a customer and salesperson, and consider which scenario has the most effective listening and questioning techniques.

### **Scenario 1**

<b>Salesperson:</b>	<i>Good morning Sir, can I help you with anything?</i>
<b>Customer:</b>	<i>I'd like to look at some bags please.</i>
<b>Salesperson:</b>	<i>Bags, certainly Sir. What type of bags were you looking for?</i>
<b>Customer:</b>	<i>Something quite large.</i>
<b>Salesperson:</b>	<i>So you need a bag, not a briefcase?</i>
<b>Customer:</b>	<i>Yes, that's right.</i>
<b>Salesperson:</b>	<i>Very well Sir. If you will walk down aisle number 3, you will see a display of large bags on your left.</i>
<b>Customer:</b>	<i>Thank you.</i>
<b>Salesperson:</b>	<i>You're welcome</i>

The customer looks at the display in aisle number 3, and leaves without purchasing anything.

## Scenario 2

<b>Salesperson:</b>	<i>Good morning Sir, can I help you with anything?</i>
<b>Customer:</b>	<i>I'd like to look at some bags please.</i>
<b>Salesperson:</b>	<i>Bags, certainly Sir. What type of bags were you looking for?</i>
<b>Customer:</b>	<i>Something quite large.</i>
<b>Salesperson:</b>	<i>So you need a large bag, not a type of briefcase?</i>
<b>Customer:</b>	<i>Yes, that's right.</i>
<b>Salesperson:</b>	<i>Can I ask Sir, what you will use the bag for? We have a display of large bags in aisle number 3, but if you can tell me a little more I might be able to help you find exactly what you are looking for.</i>
<b>Customer:</b>	<i>Well, I need a bag that I can put a lot of documents in, as well as a pocket at the front for a writing pad and pens.</i>

<b>Salesperson:</b>	<i>A bag to put a lot of documents in, and a front pocket. It sounds as though it will be quite heavy. Will you need to carry it very far?</i>
<b>Customer:</b>	<i>I'm taking it overseas with me next week, so yes, I guess I will need to carry it through the airport, and back and forth to ticket counters.</i>
<b>Salesperson:</b>	<i>In that case Sir, could I show you some briefcases before you look at the bags? We have some very large briefcases which come with a removable support trolley, and one of those might be more suitable for you, rather than a bag.</i>
<b>Customer:</b>	<i>Thank you so much. That sounds like just the thing I'm looking for. I'll look at the briefcases first.</i>
<b>Salesperson:</b>	<i>You're very welcome, please come this way.</i>

The customer looks at the large briefcases and purchases one of them. On his way out of the store, he thanks the salesperson again and says he will be returning soon to make another purchase, 'I like the way you help customers in this store.'

You can see that in Scenario 1, the exchange was limited. The customer and salesperson have spoken with each other and heard each other and the exchange was courteous. However, the customer left the store empty handed as his needs were not met.

Contrast the situation in Scenario 2. The salesperson has used active listening techniques in identifying what the customer may need, has used active questioning techniques to ask for further information, and the parties have engaged in exchanging information. The customer has left very satisfied with the service offered in that store, and has indicated he will return to make further purchases.

### **Assessing customer needs**

The urgency of customer requests will vary. The need for a repair can be extremely urgent because someone's health and safety relies upon it, or the economic effects, such as loss of production and revenue will have a major impact on the customer.

In some cases, the customer may be satisfied immediately because you are able to supply them with the information they require, eg price of goods, availability of products, delivery times etc.

However, there will also be those occasions when you cannot get the information for the customer immediately. When this happens, you may need to prioritise. This means you will have to decide which tasks you need to complete first. Prioritising will not take place on the basis of who we might want to serve first or who appears to be the 'easier' customer. It will be managed on the basis of the needs of the customer.



## Practice

### Practice activity 6

An employee at an electronic repair shop is confronted with managing the following tasks. See if you can rate the tasks are related in order of urgency. The most urgent tasks are rated 5 and the least urgent 1. Some tasks may be rated the same.

Task	Urgency
<i>The remote control for a large TV needs repair.</i>	
<i>The bulb on an electronic projector needs to be replaced, the projector is required in two days.</i>	
<i>A customer requires a visit from a specialist to advise on what size screen is most appropriate for a staff</i>	
<i>The filter on an electronic projector needs to be cleaned.</i>	
<i>A projector required a new part, the customer has a second projector they are able to use.</i>	

Let's imagine that you are employed at the same electronic repair shop. There is one full-time service technician available to attend to faults with equipment sold to customers. It is your task to assess and prioritise customer needs, and allocate daily jobs to the service technician.

**Today, Monday, the following customers call:**

- **Customer A** – The business has five computers and printers and all of these are connected to one another. Two of the business's printers have broken down.
- **Customer B** – the business has one large laminator which has broken down.
- **Customer C** – The business has one large volume photocopier, and two smaller photocopiers. The large volume photocopier has broken down, and the business is using the two smaller photocopiers for the time being.

What will you do to determine how you are going to allocate the jobs? You could simply send the service technician out to each customer in turn, on the basis of the order in which the calls were received: A, B and then C. Is this really the best way to prioritise?

You must assess the needs of the various customers in terms of priority. After using your active questioning techniques to determine the exact nature of each customer's needs, you discover the following information.

- **Customer A** – You are told that one of the employees who operates a computer and a printer is away on sick leave until Wednesday and that there is urgent work, which needs to be completed by Thursday, which will require the use of all five computers and printers.



- **Customer B** – The business has a large job to complete, requiring the use of the laminator, which must be completed by early Tuesday afternoon. The job will take at least five hours to complete.
- **Customer C** – Instructions for a large, urgent job are expected on Tuesday afternoon or Wednesday morning, which will require the use of the large volume photocopier.

### How does this additional information change the order of priority?

Assuming all of the businesses are located at an equivalent distance from your organisation, the priority in which you would allocate these tasks to the service technician could now be as follows:

- **Customer B** has the greatest priority – The equipment needs to be operational by Tuesday morning so that the business has the time in which to complete its job by early Tuesday afternoon. The service technician needs to attend today. The technician should also attend as early as possible in case parts are needed.
- **Customer C** has the next greatest priority – Instructions for an urgent job requiring the use of the large volume photocopier are expected on Tuesday afternoon or Wednesday morning, so the photocopier needs to be repaired by then.
- **Customer A** has less of a priority than Customers B and C – One of the inoperative printers cannot be used until Wednesday when the sick worker returns and the other person with an inoperative printer can connect to someone else's printer for the time being. This business requires repair on Wednesday.

### Providing information to the customer about available options

Sometimes customers will require answers to a range of questions. You will need to use your knowledge of the organisation's full range of products and services to be able to offer suggestions and options to the customer.

## The material available to you will include:

- product brochures
- catalogues
- order forms
- policy documents
- price lists
- leaflets and brochures detailing company services
- website links.



## The information contained in these materials will include:

- your business details.
- descriptions of the range of products and services offered.
- policy statements including service charters, refunds and exchange policies, complaints policies.
- price lists.
- technical specifications.
- user manuals.
- instruction guides.
- rules and regulations.
- advertising.

## You will use this information and material to answer customer enquiries.

A new product may be released but it may be considerably more expensive than the previous product. You would need to research product brochures and specifications to determine what additional features the new product has.

If it becomes apparent that a customer is not prepared to pay the increased price, be aware of options that you can present so that you do not lose the customer.

Let's revisit our three customers in the electronic repair shop and change the facts a little.

The service technician repairs Customer B's laminator, but has a minor accident when returning to work. The service technician will be away from work for the next two days. It is your role to manage customer service appointments.

Because you are familiar with your organisation's services and its operational manuals, you will know that the steps you can take in respect to Customers A and C will be as follows.

- Explain that the organisation's service technician is currently not available to repair the equipment because of an unforeseen incident, but you can still attend to the client's needs by:
  - telephoning a business with which our organisation has a relationship and obtain a technician  
or
  - arranging for removal of the inoperative equipment and delivery of replacement equipment, until repairs have been completed.

Discuss with the customer which option would best suit his or her needs, and which is preferable.

## Identifying personal limitations and seeking assistance from designated persons

There will always be times when we do not know the answers to customer enquiries or because of circumstances beyond our control, we cannot satisfy customer needs.

If we go back to the previous situation in the electronic repair shop where we had offered the two options to the customer, we could arrange for a company we have a relationship with to service their needs, or we could supply them with a replacement while their equipment was repaired.

What happens if we subsequently discover that the other company we have a relationship with is not able to assist and we do not have any replacements available?

You are now in a situation where you require assistance. Neither option is available, so you need the assistance of other people within your organisation. Who will you turn to for help?

The person or persons from who you can obtain assistance will depend upon the structure of your business or organisation.

In some cases, you might seek assistance from a co-worker. For example, if the customer does not speak your language well and you are unfamiliar with his native language, a co-worker may speak that language and help to ascertain the customer's needs.

In some cases, a customer might try to use unacceptable bullying tactics and the presence of a co-worker may cause the customer to adopt a more acceptable manner of communication.

Alternatively, in other cases, you may have simply reached your limitations in assisting the customer and will need the direction or assistance of a supervisor or a manager.

**The most important aspects of reaching your limitations are to:**

- identify that you have reached your personal limitations and need assistance
- seek that assistance as quickly as possible
- identify what you can learn from the experience, such as the best way to deal with a similar situation in the future, or additional training which might be of benefit to yourself and customers.





## Deliver a service to customers

### Providing prompt customer service

Good and prompt service gives you satisfied customers. Satisfied customers are loyal and will recommend your organisation to others. This is the best form of advertising. It is also the least expensive. Organisations can spend a great deal of money on advertising, but unless the customer service experience is satisfactory, the money will be wasted.

We have already looked at how the organisational requirements will assist us in establishing contact with customers and identifying customer needs. Delivering a prompt service to customers will also be included as part of the customer service policy or charter.

Think of the last time you purchased something from a store.

Did the assistant serve you promptly, leaving you to go about your daily business within a short period of time, or was the process very slow, causing you to become frustrated and wanting to walk out of the store without purchasing?

Let's imagine you visit two stores selling similar products. The service in one store is slow, and prompt in the other. Which one would you likely return to next time?

There are some customers who like to browse and others who know exactly what they want and want it promptly. There are yet other types of customers who enjoy discussing the various merits of products and using this as a way of identifying exactly what it is they are seeking.

We can serve all kinds of customers in terms of being 'prompt'. We can serve the customers who like to browse by ascertaining that they wish to look at products for a while and letting them know we are available to assist when they need us to do so.

If the customer is of the kind who wishes to conduct business quickly, we can be efficient in identifying their needs and meeting those needs.

Alternatively, if the customer wishes to discuss his or her needs before deciding upon a product, we can meet those needs by engaging in a relevant conversation.

The key here is to identify the customer's personal needs, as well as identifying the customer's needs in terms of purchasing a product or a service. Once we have met these two levels of identification, we can then know how to best serve the customer. Assume 31 March is the end of the fin.

**For many organisations, the telephone is their opportunity to deliver prompt customer service.**

### ***Calling customers***

- Know who you want to talk to (person's name or title)
- Know what you want to say (what is the reason for the call?)
- Have notes or a list of the information you require in front of you
- Have a pen and a paper ready

### ***Answering customer calls***

- Greet the customer politely
- Identify your organisation and name
- Offer assistance

### **Other telephone techniques**

- **Putting a customer** on hold – get back to the caller regularly if they are on hold for a long time.
- **Transferring** a customer – explain what you are doing to the customer and then describe the caller's enquiry etc, before transferring the call
- **Screening a call** – explain that the person required is unavailable and ask if you can take a message or transfer the call to someone else
- **Ending a call** – always be polite

### **Providing information about problems and delays**

It is inevitable that problems or delays will occur and it will be your responsibility to convey this information to the customer.

This is never an easy conversation. People will often delay informing the customer because they do not want to be the ones to give them the bad news.

When this happens, ensure you let the customer know as soon as possible. The sooner the customer knows there is a problem, the sooner the customer can make alternative arrangements and plans.

**The following should be observed when dealing with problems and delays:**

- Treat customers with genuine empathy, courtesy, patience, honesty and fairness.
- Inform the customer of the problem or delay as soon as you are aware of the problem.
- Inform the customer in person – do not leave a message.

- Be aware of the impact that the problem or delay will have on the customer and gather all the appropriate information before you talk to the customer.
- Tell the customer how the delay or problem will be handled and when you expect it to be solved.
- Tell the customer that you are taking responsibility for dealing with the delay or problem and arriving at a solution.
- Keep the customer informed of the progress.
- Work according to government regulations and your organisation's customer service policy or charter.

## Communicating with customers

Communicating with customers may be in person, over the telephone, by email, letter, fax or text messages.

You may be serving a customer in a shop, providing a service, offering advice on a technical issue or explaining why a delivery will be late.

Your customers may be internal or external.

Regardless of the situation, you should always adopt the following effective communication skills.

Five Cs of effective communication are:

**C**lear

**C**oncise

**C**orrect

**C**ourteous

**C**ulturally sensitive

Business



## Identifying opportunities to enhance the quality of service and products

Employees should always be looking for opportunities to improve the quality of their organisation's services or products. Because the customer service staff are the ones dealing with both internal and external customers, they are in the best position to identify these opportunities.

### Customer service staff should be aware of the following opportunities.

- Warranties, guarantees or support services available – the customer will be grateful to know about his or her options if the product does not perform its purpose or needs repair.
- Different packaging options, such as gift wrapping or bubble wrap for protection.
- Different pricing options, such as adjusting the price for quantity purchases, discounts for long-term customers or a reduced price for a product which is slightly shop-soiled.
- Delivery procedures can be tailored to meet the requirements of the customer – express courier or normal freight.
- Providing extensive product knowledge – often the customer will appreciate any additional hints or tips provided by customer service staff with regard to using the product or service.
- Offering the customer opportunities for feedback - sometimes customers want to complain, sometimes they want to pay a compliment and at other times, they may just want to offer a suggestion about improvement.



Customer service personnel are also in the best position to offer suggestions for product or service improvement. Because they are the staff interacting with customers and the products and services, they observe first hand any improvements in design or processes etc, that could be implemented.

These suggestions should be formally presented to their respective managers.



## Process customer feedback

### Recognising customer feedback

Feedback refers to the comments an organisation receives from its customers about their service or quality of products.

Customer feedback can be about damaged goods or delivery problems, delays, invoicing errors, quality of customer service or quality of service provision.

Constructive feedback could be described as feedback, whether negative or positive, which includes detail about how we do, or can provide, an excellent service.

There are times when we will receive feedback which is not constructive. Look at the following two comments.

➤ 'I can't stand this store, it's hopeless and you're all so unhelpful!'

**or**

➤ 'This copying business is terrible.'

These comments could indicate that the person complaining is simply not having a good day and there is nothing wrong with this particular business. Alternatively, it could be an indication that there is a problem with the organisation.

When comments such as these are received, active listening and questioning techniques will assist you to determine if there really is a problem. Responses such as:

➤ 'I am sorry you are not satisfied with our store. Please tell me how we have not helped you so that we can correct the problem.'

or

- 'I am sorry you have not been happy with our service. Could you please tell me what we did wrong? We pride ourselves on providing a good service. Were there problems with the photocopying we prepared?'

If there really is a problem with service, this provides the customer with the opportunity to be more specific. This will enable us to address their particular concerns or problems.



When we think about feedback, we often think about complaints and criticisms. However, feedback can be both positive and negative.

It is much easier to deal with positive feedback. Generally, it means we are doing something well and are being complimented.

However, negative feedback is sometimes more difficult to deal with. We often interpret this as a personal attack and become defensive as a result. Once we become defensive, we are less likely to take feedback on board or accept it gracefully.

Let's look at a situation which could arise.

<b>Customer:</b>	<i>I have to tell you, I am extremely dissatisfied with your service.</i>
<b>Salesperson:</b>	<i>Oh.</i>
<b>Customer:</b>	<i>You have been most unhelpful.</i>
<b>Salesperson:</b>	<i>Right, well I'm sorry about that.</i>

<b>Customer:</b>	<i>You should be sorry.</i>
<b>Salesperson:</b>	<i>Silence..</i>
<b>Customer:</b>	<i>I have a good mind to report you to your manager.</i>
<b>Salesperson:</b>	<i>(Turning away defensively), You do that. It's not my fault!</i>

Now let's look at the situation again, where the salesperson uses active listening and questioning techniques to get to the bottom of the problem.

<b>Customer:</b>	<i>I have to tell you, I am extremely dissatisfied with your service.</i>
<b>Salesperson:</b>	<i>Oh, I'm really sorry. I try to do a good job. What was it you didn't like?</i>
<b>Customer:</b>	<i>You have been most unhelpful.</i>
<b>Salesperson:</b>	<i>I am sorry. Can you please tell me how I didn't help so I can help you properly in future?</i>
<b>Customer:</b>	<i>Well, you should be sorry. I needed a thorough explanation of the different features of those sound systems and you just gave me some basic information. I nearly bought the wrong thing. I thought this was a specialist store!.</i>

<b>Salesperson:</b>	<i>I am really sorry. I'm usually in the computer department, and I'm filling in today for the salesperson from this area. I was trying to help, but I should have explained that I was from another department.</i>
<b>Customer:</b>	<i>Oh, I see. Well, in that case, I can understand why you weren't particularly knowledgeable about these systems. You should let people know in future, so they can come back and see the usual salesperson or someone else if they need a specialist's advice.</i>
<b>Salesperson:</b>	<i>Yes, I'll definitely do that. Thank you.</i>
<b>Customer:</b>	<i>Thank you for trying to help me.</i>

The problem has been resolved. The salesperson has found out exactly why the customer was unhappy, the customer understands the situation and is quite supportive, and the salesperson now knows how to avoid this situation occurring again in the future. A positive result for all concerned.

We have looked at how individuals can recognise customer feedback and act upon it. It is important for the organisation as a whole to be able to identify customer feedback and have procedures in place to be able to implement changes that will address shortcomings in customer service.

Organisations should incorporate the feedback into its operations. Responding to feedback should lead to improved products, more efficient processes, improved services and satisfied customers.

It is generally accepted that it takes a great deal more effort to win a new customer than it does to keep an existing customer.

**There are many different types of feedback:**

•



- formal feedback forms
- compliments
- testimonials
- advice, suggestions and opinions
- surveys and questionnaires
- focus groups complaints and criticisms.

## Recording feedback

Many organisations have established specific customer feedback forms. Can you think of the last time when you or your family was asked to complete a feedback form?

**Maintaining accurate customer feedback forms can help achieve the following:**

- resolve customer concerns promptly
- be a useful record of what has been done to assist the customer.
- identify where an organisation is performing well.
- identify where an organisation needs to improve its performance.
- be useful if the matter needs to be followed up.
- contribute to a good relationship between the customer and the organisation.

In some cases, there can be serious consequences if accurate records are not maintained. For example, if a customer injures themselves on the premises of the organisation, they may decide to sue the company. The company will require documentary evidence of the report of the incident, including customer statement, witness statements, photographs, etc.

## Identify unmet customer needs

We have previously looked at how we can satisfy customer needs and what steps we need to follow when a customer need cannot be met. Remember the example of the electronic repair shop where we had to suggest options to customers because our service technician could not call on them.

Read the following example where the unmet needs of a customer could have resulted in the loss of a sale.

*A customer contacts our electronics repair shop and asks if we deliver after 6.00 pm because that's the only time someone will be at home to take delivery. Jassim, the customer service officer, explains that our last delivery is 5.30 pm.*

*But instead of hanging up, Jassim continues to ask the customer questions to identify exactly what they want. The answer is that they want the electronic repairs delivered when they are home.*

*So Jassim explains that we have an early delivery starting at 7.30 am. The customer says that this is suitable, but explains that they must come exactly at this time.*

This sale could very easily have been lost. Jassim actively listened to the customer and further questioning identified what the customer really wanted – an alternative time that met their needs.

**Your responsibility for dealing with unmet needs could be as follows:**

- advise and recommend alternative products to customers.
- suggest alternatives and then ask the customer if they need to talk

to anyone else.

- referring customers to someone else in the organisation who will be able to explain more fully what your organisation can offer
- referring the customer to another company if your organisation is unable to supply products or services.



## Practice

### Practice activity 7

In the table below write down some options you could offer for the unmet needs.

Unmet needs	Options
<i>You can't supply the product the customer needs at the time they require.</i>	
<i>You can't arrange a meeting with the person requested</i>	
<i>You can't accept returns</i>	
<i>You can't visit a customer</i>	
<i>You can't give a refund</i>	

## Assisting customers to make contact with otherservices

No organisation ever wants to send their customers to alternative suppliers. However, when you are unable to meet the needs of the customer, you can direct them elsewhere. The customer will appreciate your honesty and will most likely be a return customer. Should you lose the customer, it is not because of poor customer service. The customer will still be able to talk positively about your organisation.

When recommending other companies, be aware of any policies and procedures that your organisation has about referring customers elsewhere.





Semester 1

# **Employability Skills**

## **Activities**



# Introduction

## Activity 1

**A** What Is a customer?

**B** What are the types of customers?

Type	Meaning
1	
2	

## Activity 2

**A** What is Customer service?

**B** What is customer service representative/employee?

### Activity 3

Match the following terms to the definitions below.

Communication	Customers/clients	Customer service representative
Customer service	Interpersonal skills	Recording information
Personal presentation	Customer feedback	Help desk

Term	Definition
	<i>Good or bad comments received from customers regarding the product or service.</i>
	<i>Is the provision of service to customers before, during and after a purchase.</i>
	<i>A person, either internal or external to a business, who needs assistance with information or purchasing goods or services.</i>
	<i>Skills that facilitate the accurate and relevant exchange of information between an employee and a customer.</i>
	<i>A person interacts with customers on behalf of an organization.</i>
	<i>The exchange and understanding of information between two or more people.</i>
	<i>The image an employee presents by the type of clothes worn, level of personal hygiene and grooming, attitude and etiquette displayed.</i>
	<i>Service providing information/support to people, will often be a place to contact for a customer when they need assistance.</i>
	<i>All details must be accurately recorded to enable effective follow-up, particularly when a customer is lodging a complaint.</i>

## Activity 4

Complete the comparison table between goods and services?

Basis for Comparison	Goods	Services
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Meaning		
Nature		
Transfer of ownership		
Evaluation		
Return		



# Establish contact with customers

## Activity 5

**A** Define word of mouth?

**B** Why is it important?

**C** Read the following instructions for greeting and handling customer enquiries and put them in the correct order.

- Provide information or product required.
- Farewell the customer.
- Ask customer how you can help them.
- Greet customer according to organizational procedures.
- Listen carefully to customer's needs.

## Activity 6

**A** What are the types of contact between customers and customer service Representatives?


**B** Write four tips of greeting and acknowledging customers face to face?


## Activity 7

**A** What do interpersonal skills mean?

--

**B** What are interpersonal skill types?


**C** What are the skills/ technique included in verbal skills?


**D** What are the five key active listening techniques you can use to help you become a more effective listener?


**E** What do non-verbal interpersonal skills mean?

--

**F** List some instructions related to non-verbal behavior when dealing with customer?


**G** True / false

Statements	T	F
1 Communication is the exchange of information between a sender and a receiver.		
2 Feedback is the receiver's response to the sender's message.		
3 Communication must include a verbal component.		

## Activity 8

**Choose the correct answer:**

1	<b>Why is Great Customer Service Important?</b>
A	<i>The customer is happy.</i>
B	<i>Improving company image.</i>
C	<i>Stress levels are down.</i>
D	<i>All the Above.</i>
2	<b>Customers who complain want?</b>
A	<i>Something for nothing.</i>
B	<i>To be heard and have their experience validated</i>
C	<i>Entertainment.</i>
D	<i>To be made majority shareholders in the company.</i>
3	<b>When dealing with an aggressive customer, which of the following will help?</b>
A	<i>Taking a deep breath.</i>
B	<i>Not responding with aggression.</i>
C	<i>Ask, and keep asking, for the facts.</i>
D	<i>All the above.</i>
4	<b>An internal customer is a .....</b>
A	<i>Person within the company who uses your output.</i>
B	<i>Person who buys a product or service in person.</i>
C	<i>Employee who acts as a customer spokesperson.</i>
D	<i>Customer who knows top management personally.</i>



5	<b>The way to add value for customers is to</b>
A	<i>Reduce the price of goods.</i>
B	<i>Provide training for using the product or service.</i>
C	<i>Offer a discount for future purchases.</i>
D	<i>All the above.</i>

6	<b>Customers are more easily satisfied if their expectations are effectively managed.</b>
A	<i>True</i>
B	<i>False</i>

7	<b>In responding to a frustrated customer's question, it is a good idea to immediately offer a solution.</b>
A	<i>True</i>
B	<i>False</i>

8	<b>Most annoyed customers will calm down if you offer a sincere apology.</b>
A	<i>True</i>
B	<i>False</i>

9	<b>When dealing with an angry customer face to face, making no eye contact and looking away will feel better for you and the customer.</b>
A	<i>True</i>
B	<i>False</i>

10	<b>Customer satisfaction is the goal in relationships with customers.</b>
A	<i>True</i>
B	<i>False</i>

11	<b>Which is an example of a good?</b>
A	<i>Pizza.</i>
B	<i>Hair cut.</i>
C	<i>Dental visit.</i>
D	<i>Having the oil changed in your car.</i>

12	<b>Which is an example of a service?</b>
A	<i>Pizza.</i>
B	<i>Hair cut.</i>
C	<i>Phone.</i>
D	<i>Laptop.</i>

13	<b>Car insurance and IT consultancy are goods.</b>
A	<i>True</i>
B	<i>False</i>

14	<b>Increases in leisure time are one of the reasons behind the growth of service industries.</b>
A	<i>True</i>
B	<i>False</i>

15	<b>Services do not contribute to a country's economy as they do not result in any net increase in wealth.</b>
A	<i>True</i>
B	<i>False</i>

# Identify customer needs

## Activity 9

- A** Assume you are employed at an insurance company and confronted with managing the following tasks. Rank each according to their priority 4 – 1, where 1 is the most urgent and 4 is the least urgent.

Task	Urgency
<i>A colleague is having trouble printing a document and he wants to print it now.</i>	
<i>A client called yesterday enquiring about the currency of their insurance policy. The client is waiting on someone to call him back today at 6:00 pm.</i>	
<i>You must print an insurance policy in full and get it in the mail today. The closing time for daily mail is 4.00 pm.</i>	
<i>An insurance claim arrived on your desk yesterday. You have not had a chance to even look at it yet. Company's policy is to respond to claims within 48 hours.</i>	

- B** What is the material used by customer service employees to help them answer customer requests?


**C** What is the information contained in the material used by customer service employees to help them answer customer requests?


## Activity 10

- A** What are the reasons that make the employee reach his limits in providing the service to the customer?


- B** What are the factors that affect the structure of an organization?


- C** State «True» or «False» for each of the following statements:

- 1 Organizational chart consists of a series of levels. ( )
- 2 The positions at the bottom level in an organizational chart have the greater authority and responsibility. ( )
- 3 The organization chart can also be used by employees to identify the most appropriate person to answer any question they may have. ( )



# Providing prompt(fast) customer service

## Activity 11

**A** What skills do you think are important for delivering excellent customer service?


**B** Choose the suitable customer service skills for each of the following scenarios:

listening skills	communication skills	problem solving
Statements		Customer service skills
1 Asking the right questions is a certain way to provide a solution.		
2 Determine one's ability to provide the right response to client's request or query.		
3 A positive tone is always helpful especially during the first meeting with customers.		

## Activity 12

- A** What are instructions should be observed when dealing with problems and delays in customer service?


- B** Indicate whether each of the following situation is Good Customer Service (G) or Poor Customer Service (P):

Statements	T	F
1 When the company solves your problem in a timely manner.		
2 When a customer requests for assistance over the phone, and he must wait long periods of time just to talk to an officer.		
3 Customers having to explain the same information to multiple customer service officers.		
4 Feedback is the receiver's response to the sender's message.		
5 The company takes too long to fix the problem.		

## Activity 13

**A** What are the types of questions?


**B** List one example about each type of questions?

Type	Example
Close Question	
Open Question	

**C** List the five C's of effective communication with customer?


