⚫ **UNIT 6: Recognise and deal with customer queries, requests and problems**

**I**

**n this unit you’ll learn to deal with day to day customer queries, problems and requests. When a customer comes to you for help they want a fast response so you need to decide whether or not you can deal with the customer personally or if you need to pass on the customer’s request to one of your colleagues who may be better able to help them.**

**NEED TO KNOW**

Before you can deal with a request of any kind you need to know:

1. What the customer expects from you.

2. The timescale in which they expect it to be done.

If you can deal with the query or problem yourself, you need to do so in a professional manner.

A professional member of staff will:

* Always be smart, polite and courteous.
* Be an excellent communicator at all times both to customers and colleagues.
* Have a full knowledge and understanding of the organisations structure and the good and services it provides.
* Show a positive helpful attitude at ALL times
* Be motivated at all times.
* Be aware of your business market so that you have a good knowledge and understanding of your competitors
* products and services.
* Behave responsibly and maturely
* Show a great sense of initiative.
* Have a strong sense of loyalty to both the organisation and its customers.
* Demonstrate good team spirit.
* Understand the importance of putting a customer first.

**DEALING WITH A RANGE OF CUSTOMERS AND THEIR NEEDS AND ISSUES**

If the customer needs help that you can’t provide you need to decide on your next step : which of your colleagues can resolve the problem if you can’t? You therefore need to be familiar with the structure of your organisation so that you’re familiar with each member of staff’s job description and responsibility.

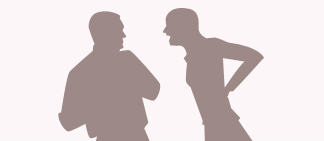
If you behave professionally, have a full understanding of the services and goods your organisation provides and know how to delegate a customer’s query or concern you will find that customers leave the premises happy and satisfied and therefore inclined to re-visit your organisation.

However, occasionally you will encounter a problem and find that you will have to deal with a dissatisfied customer. The customer may appear irritated, annoyed, angry or even violent. When this happens there are a number of things you must do to ensure that you resolve the problem.

**DON’T PANIC**

* Keep calm and be polite. Listen carefully to the customer’s complaint and show them that you are concerned and take them seriously. Talk to them gently and quietly. If you raise your voice they will probably raise theirs even higher.
* Make sure that you fully understand exactly what they’re unhappy about, angry people can often come across as muddled and confused; you cannot even begin to resolve the complaint unless you fully understand what it is.
* Acknowledge that you understand their problem and tell them that you’re there to help.
* Apologise. You do not have to admit that they’re right but an apology can often calm an angry customer down and shows them that you care and want to help.
* Don’t try to make excuses-instead try to offer positive solutions and a way of resolving the issue.
* Be aware of your body language-make sure that you are showing no signs of anger or aggression.
* Take responsibility for the issue and reassure the customer that it can be resolved. If you cannot resolve the problem personally
* assure the customer that you are doing all you can to help.
* Never promise the customer something that you may not be able to deliver.
* Find out from your line manager if your organisation has a specific policy on appeasing disgruntled customers. You may find there is something you can offer them whilst the issue is being dealt with, but always make sure that you have the authority to make an offer.
* Thank the customer for bringing the problem to your attention.
* Always follow up any customer complaint personally. Once a complaint has been dealt with, go the extra mile and ask the customer if they feel satisfied that their issue was properly handled. Reassure them that itt will not happen again and make them feel valued within your organisation.
* Even if you were able to resolve the problem quickly and easily, make sure that you report it to your line manager. If it happened once, it may happen again and you have a responsibility to ensure that your organisation is fully aware of the situation.
* If you feel that you are losing control of the situation and failing to calm the customer, ALWAYS ask for help.

**UNIT 6 Assessment Activities**



**This unit examines your expertise at dealing with customers**

**Providing service to customers** generally involves routine jobs that you do so it is important to add that ‘personal touch’ that makes each customer feel special. Sometimes customers ask different questions and request special treatment. You may be able to help them yourself and you certainly need to know who to ask for help if necessary. Some customers may be dissatisfied with the service and may present a problem. Your job is to recognise that there is a problem and make sure that the appropriate person deals with it.

**Key words and phrases for this unit:**

• personal touch

• recognise problems

• deal with queries

• deal with requests

• obtain help

• pass on a problem

• check understanding

• ensure a clear resolution

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| **⮛ START HERE ⮛** |

1. **Give 3 examples of how you demonstrate the kind of professional behaviour that your customers’ expect?** *6.ku.c; 6.ku.f*

2a. **Who do you generally go to in your organisation for help with a customer enquiry or request?** *6.ku.a*

**2b.** **Explain what the limits of their authority is and what kind of circumstances might involve more senior staff.** *6.ku.a; 6.ku.b*

3. **How do you recognise a problem from what a customer says or does?** *6.ku.g*

**4. What types of behaviour make a problem worse?** *6.ku.h; 6.ku.j;*

**5. WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT. A customer is dissatisfied with your service/product. In a face-to-face situation they are angry and demanding a resolution. In no less than 100 words write down what you would do to handle this difficult situation and what you would say to help resolve the problem.** *6.ku,d; 6.ku,e*

6. **CASE STUDY. This is an exercise designed to demonstrate your ability to deal with difficult customer service situations. In this case study you must describe step by step an incident in the past when you had to deal with an angry or hostile customer in your existing job. You have to be describing a real situation because your description of events will need to be confirmed and signed with the relevant manager or supervisor**

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| Case study | |
| Use the space below to record a situation where you have dealt with a customer complaint or problem. Please tick all of the following that apply and then describe the situation. | |
| Was the problem:  Brought to your attention by your customer  Identified first by you and/or your colleague | 🞏  🞏 |
| Was the problem:  A difference between customer expectations and what is offered by your organisation  A problem resulting from a system or procedure failure  A problem resulting from a shortage of resources or human error | 🞏  🞏  🞏 |
| Did you consider the options for dealing with the problem from the point of view of:  Your customer  The potential benefits to your organisation  The potential risks to your organisation | 🞏  🞏  🞏 |
| Did you deal with the problem:  Yourself  Working with close colleagues  Referring to more senior colleagues with authority to act | 🞏  🞏  🞏 |
| In your narrative make sure you describe:  a) what the problem was (from the customer’s point of view); b) what you said to keep the situation under control; c) who you involved to help and what information you gave them and; d) how the situation was resolved. *6.p1; 6.p2* | |

I confirm that the above is an accurate description of the learner’s experience

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| Name of manager/ supervisor: |  | Signature: |  | Date of signature: |  |

7. **List your organisation’s main policies and procedures which you must follow in dealing with customer problems or complaints such as that described in Question 6.** *6.ku.i*

The knowledge and understanding from unit 6 has been satisfactorily completed

Assessor’s Name: Signature:

Learner’s Name: Signature: Signature:

Date:

Assessor Feedback:

**Below are the standards for Unit 6.**

**Working with your assessor you will need to provide evidence that you are competent in each standard**

***UNIT 6*** *Customer Service Standards*

***When you recognise and deal with customer queries, requests and problems you must consistently:***

*6.p1.a) deal with queries and requests from customers in a positive and professional way*

*6.p1.b) seek information or help from a colleague if you cannot answer your customer’s query or request*

*6.p1.c) obtain help from a colleague if you are not able to deal with your customer’s request*

*6.p1.d) always tell your customer what is happening*

*6.p2.a) recognise when something is a problem from the customer’s point of view*

*6.p2.b) do not say or do anything which may make the problem worse*

*6.p2.c) deal with a difficult customer calmly and confidently*

*6.p2.d) recognise when to pass a problem on to an appropriate colleague*

*6.p2.e) pass the problem on to your colleague with the appropriate information*

*6.p2.f) check that the customer knows what is happening*

*6.p2.g) check that your colleague is dealing with the situation*

***To be competent at recognising and dealing with customer queries, requests and problems you must know and understand:***

*6.ku.a) who in the organisation is able to give help and information*

*6.ku.b) limits of what they are allowed to do*

*6.ku.c) what professional behaviour is*

*6.ku.d) how to speak to people who are dissatisfied*

*6.ku.e) how to deal with difficult people*

*6.ku.f) what customers normally expect*

*6.ku.g) how to recognise a problem from what a customer says or does*

*6.ku.h) what kinds of behaviours/actions would make situations worse*

*6.ku.i) the organisational procedures you must follow when you deal with problems or complaints*

*6.ku.j) understand the types of behaviour that makes a problem worse*

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**On-programme administration checklist**

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| **Activity to be completed at the end of this unit** | **Assessor’s initials** |
| 1) Complete Action/Review Plan with learner |  |
| 2) Forward copy of assessment plan/review to Administration |  |
| 3) Update Skillwise |  |

All administration for the end of Unit 6 is complete

Signed…………………………………………. Date…………………