
Overview

To make sure that your customers are satisfied with the service you provide, your business needs to be meeting and exceeding their expectations. However, even if your service to customers is excellent, some customers will experience problems. How you respond to problems is particularly important because many customers judge the service of your business by the way in which their problems are dealt with. Improving relationships with your customers involves delivering consistent and reliable service to them, making sure everyone involved is committed to providing good customer service and also to finding ways to improve it.

You might do this if you:

1. are concerned about the quality of the service you deliver to customers
2. have problems with customer service
3. want to review and improve your levels of customer service

Delivering a good service to customers involves:

1. trying to meet and exceed customer expectations
2. responding to problems
3. reviewing what you are doing and how well it is working
4. thinking about how it could be done better
5. improving services by making changes

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Performance criteria

You must be able to:

- P1 monitor the service customers get from your business
- P2 regularly check that customers are satisfied and identify if you can offer any additional service
- P3 make changes to improve customer service where necessary
- P4 evaluate feedback on the effects of changes and use it to identify opportunities for further improvement
- P5 identify and deal with repeated problems before they begin to affect your customers
- P6 negotiate and agree solutions with customers to problems they have raised or complaints they have made
- P7 make sure solutions to problems and complaints satisfy customers and are acceptable to your business
- P8 make sure any problems or complaints are dealt with quickly and effectively, and that they have been resolved to the customer's satisfaction
- P9 keep your customers fully informed about what is happening to resolve problems, taking the initiative to update them when things are not going to plan or when you require further information
- P10 give clear reasons to your customers when problems have not been resolved to their satisfaction and suggest other ways that they may be resolved

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Knowledge and understanding

You need to know and understand:

Customer service

- K1 how and when to check on work activities to make sure staff are dealing with customers correctly
- K2 how to collect, analyse and present customer feedback
- K3 what customer service targets have been set, and the implications for your business if those targets are not met
- K4 how service improvements affect the balance between overall customer satisfaction, the costs of providing service and regulatory requirements
- K5 how to take action to correct anything that is going wrong
- K6 any contractual agreements that your customers have with your business
- K7 what your customers' rights are and how these rights limit what you are able to do for your customer

Communication

- K8 how to communicate in a clear, polite, confident way and why this is important

Managing change

- K9 how to prepare for changes to your service
- K10 how staff can help support changes
- K11 how and when to let your customers know about the changes you are making
- K12 how to judge the effect that changes will have (for example a certain position in the market, customer satisfaction, increased sales or repeat business)
- K13 how to measure the impact of change (for example numbers of sales, number of customers or feedback from customers)
- K14 how to assess the business case for making changes in the products or services you offer

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Additional Information

Links to other NOS

1. WB1 Check what customers need from your business
2. WB2 Plan how to let your customers know about your products or services
3. WB11 Decide how you will treat your business customers

Links to other standards

If your business grows and develops a management team it may be appropriate to consider the following units from the Management and Leadership Standards.

4. F5 Resolve customer service problems
5. F6 Monitor and solve customer service problems
6. F10 Develop a customer focussed organisation
7. F11 Manage the achievement of customer satisfaction

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