

Unit 26 Improve the customer relationship

This unit sits within the Customer Service Theme of Delivery. This Theme covers Customer Service behaviours and processes that have most effect on the customer experience during Customer Service delivery

What this unit is about

To improve relationships with your customers you will need to deliver consistent and reliable customer service. In addition, customers will need to feel that you genuinely want to give them high levels of service and that you will make every possible effort to meet or exceed their expectations. This will encourage loyalty from external customers or longer-term service partnerships with internal customers.

You need to be proactive in your dealings with your customers and to respond professionally in all situations. You will need to negotiate between your customers and your organisation or department in order to find some way of meeting your customers' expectations. In addition you will need to make extra efforts to delight your customers by giving higher levels of service than they expect.

Customer service standards

When you improve the customer relationship you must consistently:

26.1 Improve communication with your customers

- 26.1.1 select and use the best method of communication to meet your customers' expectations
- 26.1.2 take the initiative to contact your customers to update them when things are not going to plan or when you require further information
- 26.1.3 adapt your communication to respond to individual customers' feelings

26.2 Balance the needs of your customer and your organisation

- 26.2.1 meet your customers' expectations within your organisation's service offer
- 26.2.2 explain the reasons to your customers sensitively and positively when their expectations cannot be met
- 26.2.3 identify alternative solutions for your customers either within or outside the organisation
- 26.2.4 identify the costs and benefits of these solutions to your organisation and to your customers
- 26.2.5 negotiate and agree solutions with your customers which satisfy them and are acceptable to your organisation
- 26.2.6 take action to satisfy your customers with the agreed solution

26.3 Exceed customer expectations to develop the relationship

- 26.3.1 make extra efforts to improve your relationship with your customers
- 26.3.2 recognise opportunities to exceed your customers' expectations
- 26.3.3 take action to exceed your customers' expectations within the limits of your own authority
- 26.3.4 gain the help and support of others to exceed your customers' expectations

Knowledge and understanding

To be competent at improving the customer relationship you must know and understand:

- 26a how to make best use of the method of communication chosen for dealing with your customers
- 26b how to negotiate effectively with your customers
- 26c how to assess the costs and benefits to your customer and your organisation of any unusual agreement you make
- 26d the importance of customer loyalty and/or improved internal customer relationships to your organisation

Key words and phrases for this unit

- improve communication
- adapt communication
- recognise customers' feelings
- exceed expectations
- develop relationships
- balance needs
- costs and benefits
- negotiate

Unit 26 - Improve the customer relationship

1. Your evidence should be collected when carrying out a real job, whether paid or voluntary, and when dealing with real customers, whether internal or external to the organisation. Evidence collected in a realistic working environment or a work placement is not permissible for this Unit. Simulation is not allowed for any performance evidence within this Unit.
2. You may collect the evidence for the Unit through work in a private sector organisation, a not-for-profit organisation or a public services organisation.
3. You must provide evidence that shows you have done this over a sufficient period of time with different customers on different occasions for your assessor to be confident that you are competent.
4. Your evidence must include examples of using:
 - a organisational procedures
 - b exceptions to standard practice that are legal and benefit your organisation.
5. You need to prove that you have dealt with customers who:
 - a have different needs and expectations
 - b appear angry or confused
 - c behave unconventionally.