



UNIT 220

DELIVER CUSTOMER SERVICE TO DIFFICULT CUSTOMERS

This unit is all about dealing with customers who present difficulties. The unit sits within the customer service theme of Handling Problems. This theme covers the behaviours, processes and approaches that are most effective when handling customer service problems.

WHY CUSTOMER SERVICE MATTERS TO... A CUSTOMER SERVICE COMPLAINTS ADVISER

When handling complaints it is likely that the customers will be difficult to placate. The adviser will be required to remain calm and see the situation from the customer's point of view. Advisers will express empathy but they have to balance customer satisfaction with the needs of their organisation.

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What this unit is about

Many organisations have a significant proportion of difficult customers. The customers' attitude may be difficult simply because they believe that a threat or problem exists before they contact the organisation. They may become difficult or even aggressive when they discover that their expectations are not going to be met by the organisation. They may be very concerned or nervous about the outcome of dealing with the organisation. Overall, they are difficult to deal with and need your understanding of their problem or complaint.

This unit is about dealing directly with these customers and trying to reach a resolution that satisfies everybody or at least reduces the risk of dissatisfaction.

AN EXAMPLE

You work on an airport check-in desk. When flights are delayed a large number of the passengers become angry. You recognise it is important to put yourself in the passengers' position and see the problem from their point of view. However, you are aware of the limits of customer behaviour that your organisation will tolerate and when customers become aggressive inform them, politely but assertively, of the organisation's policy.

What have you done in your workplace that is similar?
Write your answer in this space...

...now talk to your assessor about how this could be turned into observed evidence.

Elements in this unit

When you have completed this unit, you will have proved that you:

- 220.1** can recognise when customers may be difficult to deal with

- 220.2** can deal with difficult customers

- 220.3** understand how to deliver customer service to difficult customers.

Key words and phrases for this unit

- customer behaviour

- signs and signals

- customer's point of view

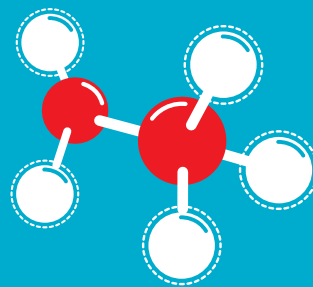
- limits of difficult customer behaviour

- use direct and factual questions

- express empathy

- agree a way forward

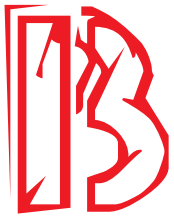
- enlist help



Evidence from this unit could possibly be cross-referenced to standards within other units, e.g. **101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 202, 203, 209, 210, 211, 212, 216, 218, 219, 310** or **312**.

You should note

- 1 Wherever possible, your evidence should be based on a real job, whether paid or voluntary, and when dealing with real customers, whether internal or external to the organisation. However, for this unit, evidence based on a realistic working environment or a work placement is permissible. Simulation is not allowed for any performance evidence within this unit. (Guidelines for a realistic working Environment can be found in the Assessment Strategy for Customer Service S/NVQs at Levels 1, 2, 3 and 4 – February 2010.)
- 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.



is for balance

We all want to ensure our customers are satisfied. Giving them what they want isn't always possible. You need to balance what the customer wants with what the organisation can give.

Assessed evidence

You need to show that you understand and are able to complete all the elements in this unit over a sufficient period of time, with different customers, on different occasions. Evidence may be gained through direct observation or products of work, recorded by your assessor and then referenced in the box below. On the next pages, these evidence references can be written in the relevant boxes of 'What you must cover', 'What you must do' and 'What you must know'.

Evidence reference	Evidence title	Assessment method

Assessment method key

O Observation **Q** Questioning **PE** Product Evidence
WT Witness Testimony **PD** Professional Discussion

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What you must cover

Evidence reference should be entered in the shaded areas below. You must cover **all** the points listed.

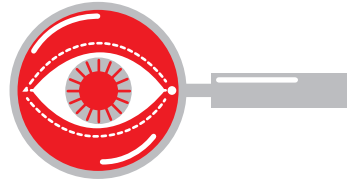
1 Your must provide evidence of delivering customer service to difficult customers:

a during routine delivery of customer service

b during a busy time in your job

c during a quiet time in your job

d when people, systems or resources have let you down.



Get it covered...

Dealing with customer complaints requires that you understand the organisation's policies and procedures. Complaints need to be handled in a consistent manner, and so any policies or procedures need to be followed to ensure you get it right.



T is for tension

Tension is something that can easily be created between you and the customer. Aggressive behaviour can cause tension and it is important that if your customer is aggressive you do not mirror that. Stay calm and work with the customer until they have calmed down and the tension has been replaced by cooperation.

What you must do

Evidence reference should be entered in the shaded areas below. You must do **all** the points listed.

220.1 To recognise when customers may be difficult to deal with, you must:

220.1.1 recognise types of customer behaviour that are difficult to deal with

220.1.2 identify aspects of your organisation's services or products that make it difficult to deal with customers

220.1.3 identify the signs and signals that indicate a customer may be difficult to deal with

220.1.4 put yourself in your customer's position and see the situation from the customer's point of view

220.1.5 identify reasons why your customers may be behaving in a way that is difficult to deal with

220.1.6 recognise the limits of difficult customer behaviour that your organisation will tolerate

220.1.7 identify things that you may do or say that will provoke difficult responses from your customers.

220.2 To deal with difficult customers, you must:

220.2.1 listen patiently to what your customer wants to tell you

220.2.2 use direct and factual questions about your customer's feelings and what has happened to identify what might satisfy the customer

220.2.3 check your understanding of your customer's concerns by describing your view of the situation and options that might be available

220.2.4 express empathy with your customer without necessarily admitting fault on the part of your organisation

220.2.5 give clear statements or explanations of your organisation's position

220.2.6 agree a way forward that balances customer satisfaction with the needs of your organisation

220.2.7 enlist help from colleagues if options for action are outside of your authority

220.2.8 summarise clearly actions to be taken and reasons for those actions to complete the customer transaction

220.2.9 advise your manager or the appropriate colleagues if the customer is likely to re-open the matter with them

220.2.10 take any necessary action to protect your own safety or that of other customers or colleagues from a difficult customer.

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What you must know

Evidence reference should be entered in the shaded areas below. You must know **all** the points listed.

220.3 To understand how to deliver customer service to difficult customers, you must be able to:

220.3.1 describe the types of customer behaviour that you personally find difficult to deal with

220.3.2 identify reasons why some aspects of your organisation's services or products may provoke difficult behaviour from customers

220.3.3 identify reasons why your customer's own actions may cause them to behave in a way that is difficult to deal with

220.3.4 explain the meaning of having empathy for a customer's feelings

220.3.5 identify who can be asked for help when dealing with a difficult customer

220.3.6 explain the difference between assertive, aggressive and passive behaviour

220.3.7 describe the importance of not simply quoting your organisation's rules and procedures to counter your customer's difficult behaviour

220.3.8 state your organisation's limits of what will be tolerated from difficult customers before the transaction or relationship is closed

220.3.9 explain the importance of giving your manager or the appropriate colleagues notice of any further approaches from a difficult customer

220.3.10 identify when it might be necessary to take action to protect your own safety or that of other customers or colleagues from a difficult customer.

Unit sign-off

The evidence for this unit is valid, sufficient and an authentic record of the candidate's current competence and has been assessed under the requirements of the assessment strategy.

I confirm that the evidence provided is a result of my own work.

Signature of candidate	Date
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I confirm that the candidate has demonstrated competence by satisfying all of the criteria for this unit.

Signature of assessor	Date
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Countersignature of assessor	Date
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Signature of IV (if sampled)	Date
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Countersignature of IV	Date
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Signature of EV (if sampled)	Date
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