
Overview

This unit is part of the Customer Service Theme of Handling Problems. This Theme covers the behaviours, processes and approaches that are most effective when handling customer service problems. Remember that customers include everyone you provide a service to. They may be external to your organisation or they may be internal customers.

Many organisations have a significant proportion of difficult customers. Your customer's attitude may be difficult simply because they believe that a threat or problem exists before they contact your organisation. They may become difficult or even aggressive when they discover that their expectations are not going to be met by your organisation. They may be very concerned or nervous about the outcome of dealing with your organisation. In either case, they are difficult to deal with and need your understanding. 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. You should choose this unit only if you recognise the content as applying to a reasonable proportion of your exchanges with customers. Do not choose this unit if it will be hard to find evidence because you only occasionally deal with a difficult customer.

SFJCCDA5.1

Deliver customer service to difficult customers

Performance criteria

You must be able to:

Recognise when customers may be difficult to deal with

- P1 recognise types of customer behaviour that are difficult to deal with
- P2 identify aspects of your organisation's services or products that make it difficult to deal with customers
- P3 identify the signs and signals that indicate a customer may be difficult to deal with
- P4 put yourself in your customer's position and see the situation from their point of view
- P5 identify reasons why your customers may be behaving in a way that is difficult to deal with
- P6 recognise the limits of difficult customer behaviour that your organisation will tolerate
- P7 identify things that you may do or say that will provoke difficult responses from your customer

Deal with difficult customers

You must be able to:

- P8 listen patiently to what your customer wants to tell you
- P9 use direct and factual questions about your customer's feelings and what has happened to identify what might satisfy them
- P10 check your understanding of your customer's concerns by describing your view of the situation and options that might be available
- P11 express empathy with your customer without necessarily admitting fault on the part of your organisation
- P12 give clear statements or explanations of your organisation's position
- P13 agree a way forward that balances customer satisfaction with the needs of your organisation
- P14 enlist help from colleagues if options for action are outside of your authority
- P15 summarise clearly actions to be taken and reasons for those actions to complete the customer transaction
- P16 advise your manager or the appropriate colleagues if your customer is likely to re-open the matter with them
- P17 take any necessary action to protect your own safety or that of other customers or colleagues from a difficult customer

SFJCCDA5.1

Deliver customer service to difficult customers

Knowledge and understanding

You need to know and understand:

- K1 the types of customer behaviour that you personally find difficult to deal with
- K2 reasons why some aspect of your organisation's services or products may provoke difficult behaviour from customers
- K3 reasons why your customer's own actions may cause them to behave in a way that is difficult to deal with
- K4 the meaning of having empathy for a customer's feelings
- K5 who can be asked for help when dealing with a difficult customer
- K6 the difference between assertive, aggressive and passive behaviour
- K7 the importance of not simply quoting your organisation's rules and procedures to counter your customer's difficult behaviour
- K8 your organisation's limits of what will be tolerated from difficult customers before the transaction or relationship is closed
- K9 the importance of giving your manager or the appropriate colleagues notice of any further approaches from a difficult customer
- K10 when it might be necessary to take action to protect your own safety or that of other customers or colleagues from a difficult customer

SFJCCDA5.1

Deliver customer service to difficult customers

Developed by	Skills for Justice
---------------------	--------------------

Version number	1
-----------------------	---

Date approved	June 2010
----------------------	-----------

Indicative review date	June 2013
-------------------------------	-----------

Validity	Current
-----------------	---------

Status	Tailored
---------------	----------

Originating organisation	ICS
---------------------------------	-----

Original URN	C4
---------------------	----

Relevant occupations	Public Services; Public Service Professionals; Government and Related Organisations
-----------------------------	---

Suite	NOS for Operational Delivery Contact Centre roles
--------------	---

Key words	Operational Delivery, Contact Centre, Recognise when customers may be difficult to deal with, Deal with difficult customers
------------------	---