

<b>Unit Title: Customer Service Skills</b>	<b>Unit Code: CSS</b>
<b>Level: Diploma</b>	<b>Learning Hours: 160</b>
<b>Learning Outcomes and Indicative Content:</b>	
Candidates will be able to:	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. Understand and explain the growing significance of customer service as a key dimension of organisational performance</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.1 Acknowledge the various purposes of customer service, both reactive (problem-solving) and proactive (relationship-building)</li> <li>1.2 Distinguish between the key concepts in the vocabulary of customer service, e.g. 'customer', 'user' and 'purchaser'</li> <li>1.3 Recognise what is meant by the key terms used in the application of customer service, e.g. 'customer satisfaction', 'service quality' and 'customer delight'</li> <li>1.4 Appreciate the significance of customer service as a source of organisational advantage, through the service/profitability cycle (Reichheld) and the importance of the lifetime customer, leading to enhanced levels of customer loyalty, customer retention, customer repurchasing and customer acquisition</li> <li>1.5 Examine the dangers and disadvantages likely to result if customer service is ignored or neglected (even for businesses that compete primarily on the basis of price)</li> </ol> </li> <li><b>2. Describe and assess the ways in which the power of the customer continues to grow and evolve</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2.1 Evaluate the economic influences on the power of the customer, e.g. increasing levels of discretionary income and the impact of the globalised economy</li> <li>2.2 Evaluate the political influences on the power of the customer, e.g. privatisation and the deliberate creation of more competitive environments</li> <li>2.3 Evaluate the social influences on the power of the customer, e.g. higher levels of education leading to a more sophisticated set of expectations, the impact of diversity and equal opportunities, and the expansion of consumer groups</li> <li>2.4 Evaluate the technological influences on the power of the customer, e.g. the Internet and e-commerce</li> <li>2.5 Evaluate the legal influences on the power of the customer, e.g. consumer protection, awareness of consumer rights and the effect of regulatory agencies</li> <li>2.6 Evaluate the ethical and moral influences on the power of the customer, e.g. the degree to which authentic levels of reciprocal trust can be created between organisations and customers</li> </ol> </li> </ol>	

- 3. Understand the ingredients involved in the 'customer experience'**
  - 3.1 Describe the principal factors that create customer satisfaction, customer dissatisfaction and customer delight
  - 3.2 Appreciate that the customer experience represents a combination of customer expectations, the service transaction itself, and the service outcomes (as perceived by the customer)
  - 3.3 Explore the concept of the 'moment of truth' in its customer-service setting, i.e. the content of the service transaction
  - 3.4 Show how the best-managed and led organisations create positive customer experiences from a mixture of efficient infrastructure (processes, systems and technology) plus effective differentiators (primarily through committed people)
- 4. Recognise how organisations can generate a world-class level of customer service and a resultant reputation for world-class service excellence**
  - 4.1 Define what 'world-class' means in a customer service context, with special reference to the four elements of 'world-class' customer service (Johnston)
  - 4.2 Distinguish organisations that justify the label 'world-class' and analyse what they do that sets them apart from others
  - 4.3 Outline and justify the benefits arising from 'world-class' customer service – for the organisation, its employees, its customers and its other stakeholders
- 5. Show how service leadership and strategy drive service performance in the organisation**
  - 5.1 Create appropriate high-level standards promoting service excellence, through a 'Big Idea', a mission, vision and core values
  - 5.2 Encourage a climate of continuous improvement and restless dissatisfaction with the status quo, through role-modelling, benchmarking and the development of positive approaches to learning
- 6. Resolve issues concerning the organisation and delivery of customer service in the organisation and the creation of a customer-centred culture**
  - 6.1 Assess ways of ensuring that there is effective co-operation with other corporate functions, especially those that are also customer-facing (Marketing and Sales)
  - 6.2 Consider the factors for and against the establishment of a specific Customer Services function
  - 6.3 Develop methods for generating customer-focused attitudes and behaviours throughout the organisation, with special reference to the performance of customer service internally

6.4 Evaluate the risks and benefits associated with outsourcing and offshoring for service support roles or directly customer-interactive facilities

**7. Design relevant HRM policies, strategies and practices for the service-focused enterprise**

- 7.1 Develop recruitment and selection approaches that enable the organisation to identify people with appropriate attitudes and capabilities for the effective performance of service/support roles
- 7.2 Create induction, learning, training and development schemes that inculcate the organisation's central customer service values, its 'Big Idea' and its required service behaviours
- 7.3 Produce reward and recognition systems that acknowledge and celebrate success and progress in the customer service arena, for both individuals and teams
- 7.4 Build service priorities into all aspects of the organisation's performance management and appraisal mechanisms

**8. Describe and evaluate ways to manage and motivate people for service excellence**

- 8.1 Understand the pivotal position of the customer service manager and/or team leader in stimulating high levels of commitment and engagement among customer-facing staff, and the techniques used to achieve this outcome
- 8.2 Evaluate the principles of job design in a customer service context: standardisation and 'scripting' versus empowerment, discretionary behaviour and role autonomy
- 8.3 Recognise the importance of career patterns and structures for customer service

**9. Understand the significance of Information Technology (IT) as an enabler of efficient service delivery**

- 9.1 Describe and explain the contribution of IT to the design, maintenance and improvement of customer service systems
- 9.2 Examine the current status and future potential of e-service and other forms of remotely-administered customer service

**10. Assess various mechanisms for managing and improving the organisation/customer interface**

- 10.1 Describe and discuss the various ways in which customer categories may be classified (segmented) and the implications for customer service
- 10.2 Understand the importance of creating and implementing efficient and effective procedures for encouraging, managing and responding to customer complaints

- 10.3 Consider the benefits of personalised service customisation (tailoring customer service to each specific customer)
- 10.4 Appreciate the range of mechanisms for handling difficult customers and for resolving customer/supplier conflict

**11. Describe the ways in which organisations may communicate with their customers, and customers may communicate with organisations**

- 11.1 Acknowledge the benefits of measuring the organisation/customer relationship through 'the lens of the customer' (Johnson and Gustafsson)
- 11.2 Discuss and evaluate a range of methods through which organisations may communicate with customers: published service commitments and promises, product/service information etc
- 11.3 Discuss and evaluate a range of methods through which customer feedback may be solicited and utilised by organisations: questionnaires, interviews, focus groups etc

**12. Assess the application of customer service values in specific contextual settings**

- 12.1 Compare the application of customer service between business-to-business (B2B) and business-to-consumer (B2C) organisations
- 12.2 Determine the degree to which any special considerations affect the implementation of customer service values in the public sector as opposed to private enterprise
- 12.3 Evaluate the practice of customer service across differing distribution channels, with special reference to Internet-based and 'virtual' product/service suppliers

**Assessment Criteria:**

- Assessment method: written examination
- Length of examination: three hours
- Candidates should answer four questions from a choice of eight, each question carrying equal marks

**Recommended Reading**

Johnston R and Clark G, *Service Operations Management* (2005), FT/Prentice-Hall, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition

Faulkner M, *Customer Management Excellence: Successful Strategies from Service Leaders* (2003), Wiley

Shaw C, *Revolutionize Your Customer Experience* (2004), Palgrave  
Macmillan

Shaw C and Ivens J, *Building Great Customer Experiences* (2004), Palgrave  
Macmillan