



Certified Customer Service  
Sample Material  
VS-1333

**Vskills Certifications**

**Vskills Reading Material**



## 1. CUSTOMER SERVICE

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Customer service can be defined as ‘a series of activities designed to enhance the level of customer satisfaction – the feeling that a product or service has met customer expectations.’

Poor service costs money, as it can take five times as much to go out and get a new customer as to retain existing customers.

### 1.1. Who is Customer

Customers, buyers and clients want to pay a fair price for quality service or products, and feel satisfied they have paid for a service/product and received what they have paid for in return. They also want someone to take care of them. They need someone to understand their needs and help answer them. They need someone to hold their hands and walk them through a process. Customer service starts with the ability to listen to the customer and find out through polite questioning what he/she needs or wants.

Customer service and contact with a client mean that the customer will be heard and his/her problems will not go unanswered or ignored. It also means getting to know your client, his/her likes-dislikes, ideas, background, etc.

The other most important aspect to do is to listen to what the customer is saying. If people do not understand what is motivating the customer, they will not be successful in handling them. Do research on customers, their habits, and what they want and expect.

Most customer service is defined by how a company or organization treats “external customers,” but there is “internal customer service” as well. While this manual mainly addresses “external customers,” expanding your definition of customer service to include co-workers will lead toward even greater success. Remember, the internal customer chain is just like the external, we are all customers both inside and outside the company or organization. As a Wall Street Journal article succinctly put it, “Poorly Treated Employees Treat Customers Just as Poorly.”

### 1.2. Customer Service Basics

Customer service is the act of taking care of the customer's needs by providing and delivering professional, helpful, high quality service and assistance before, during, and after the customer's requirements are met.

Customer service is the provision of service to customers before, during and after a purchase. The perception of success of such interactions is dependent on employees "who can adjust themselves to the personality of the guest". Customer service concerns the priority an organization assigns to customer service relative to components such as product innovation and pricing. In this sense, an organization that values good customer service may spend more money in training employees than the average organization or may proactively interview customers for feedback.

From the point of view of an overall sales process engineering effort, customer service plays an important role in an organization's ability to generate income and revenue. From that perspective, customer service should be included as part of an overall approach to systematic improvement.

One good customer service experience can change the entire perception a customer holds towards the organization.

As mentioned earlier, customer service means providing a quality product or service that satisfies the needs/wants of a customer and keeps them coming back. Good customer service means much more – it means continued success, increased profits, higher job satisfaction, improved company or organization morale, better teamwork, and market expansion of services/products.

Think about it places where you enjoy doing business – stores, petrol stations, suppliers, banks, etc. Why, aside from the actual product or service they provide, do you like doing business with them? You probably find them courteous, timely, friendly, flexible, interested, and a series of other exemplary qualities. They not only satisfy your needs and help you in your endeavors but make you feel positive and satisfied. You come to rely on their level of service to meet your needs and wants.

On the other hand, let's review a business you dislike patronizing maybe even hate utilizing but in some cases do so out of necessity. Maybe it is the Police when you need a new driver's license or maybe it is the local store that carries a product you need but who offers lousy service when you purchase. In both of these cases we are willing to hypothesize that the customer experience is marred by long lines, gruff service, inefficient processing, impolite and unfriendly clerks or salespeople, lack of flexibility, and no empathy for your customer plight. In these cases you feel abused, unsatisfied, and taken advantage of – in essence, your experience is wholly negative.

Unfortunately, in the cases we outlined above there is no competition for the services/products offered or you would gladly not consider using either the Ministry of Transport or the rude department store. This is the advantage of a monopoly on a good or service because in a competitive marketplace, the unsatisfied customer shops elsewhere. Remember, good customer service results in consumer satisfaction and return customers and growth in business. Poor customer service, except for monopolistic strongholds, generally results in consumer dissatisfaction, lack of returning customers and dwindling business.

## 2. CUSTOMER HANDLING

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### 2.1. Understanding Customer Behaviour

Various theories have been developed explaining customers behavior and its sociological aspects. According to consumer psychology, consumer's choice and preferences are usually considered as problem-solving and decision making sequence of activities, the outcome of which is principally determined by the buyers intellectual functioning, rational behavior and the goals directed towards processing of information. These consumer behavior theories invest consumer with extensive capacities to handle considerable quantities of information and thereafter engage in processing that information to compare, contrast and evaluate alternative information for meeting the consumer's objectives.

There has been a growing competition in the markets, henceforth generating immense information in these markets due to which no one individual nor organization, can encompass the information flow by rational means. There has been a major evolution over the past few decades, computers and information systems have replaced activities of individuals in the decision making roles. Organizations have developed computer and information systems to facilitate rational decision making, which was previously required human effort.

The companies have to not only understand the consumer but also the system that needs to be built upon the understanding of the consumer. There is a huge amount of investment involved in terms of time and money in the formation of such an information system within the system, but as per the current business environment, the information flow of a computer can better deal with the sophisticated information flows and intricate details by compiling all the information much faster than these systems. The information within the system can be processed at a higher rate of speed and return results in a more accurate and efficient manner.

A customer's behavior encompasses many attributes and differentials. These differences are not only due demographical barriers, groups or preferences. The consumer's market experiences a complex development of consumer's behavior. The unpredictable and spontaneous human nature causes variations in the demand for a product in the market.

As a vendor you can always influence the customer but there are ways to modulate the product to create relationships with the customer and force an oblique confidence of the customer in the product. Once the needs of the consumer are identified an outline of the product can be designed.

The market is characterized by continuous changes in market composition, business practices and the structure. Moreover, as a vendor the more information you are able to extract about your customer the better you are in serving the customer.

### 2.2. Customers Expectations

There is a two-way relationship between the vendor and the customer in a service industry that needs to be maintained and monitored on a regular basis. The primary focus of any organization is to understand the perception of the customer, recognition of the needs and wants of the customer, together with knowledge of the changes required to be made such as capacity, outlook, availability

etc. It is very crucial to evaluate and express the changes in the current practices followed by any organization. Also it is necessary to assess the requirements of the customer prior to the engagement of any project, since incorporation of any changes in the middle of the project can cost heavily. An incomplete picture presented at the beginning of the project can even fragment the previous efforts leading to encapsulation of the whole system.

A method of designing of the project and its management involves thorough understanding of the customer's perception and matching the system around these perceptions. The reason for failure of many projects is due to the belief of the system developer that users have no say in the development of the system.

In order to visualize the system as a whole, a list of priorities must be met for facilitating the development of customer's expectations, such as

- ✓ Customer service requirements must be measured internally
- ✓ Identifying the types of requirement to be established
- ✓ Conducting interview and gathering information
- ✓ Designing survey techniques used inside the clients business
- ✓ Establishing customer service standards by analyzing previous records
- ✓ Realizing the constraints and defining acceptable ranges
- ✓ Setting goals to meet the customer service requirement

Once all the requirements of the customers have been reviewed, they must then be acknowledged to keep the customer well informed. The objective is to keep the requirements of the customer properly documented for a clear picture of the demand that may arise in the future. The purpose is to resolve the differences between the customer and the vendor relating to issues of requirements and specifications.

An agreement is designed to define the standard procedures as guidelines to enable the relationship a record of what is to be expected. The agreement therefore facilitates a contractual record of the vendors offering and the level of expectation of the customer.

Outsourcing projects often present a conflicting strategy in vendors business. The client always wants well developed systems, but in order to maintain control of this there must be an option to work under.

Vendor must therefore define the level of service explicitly at the beginning of the project and informing the clients about any type of changes that can cause delay in the completion of the project. Therefore, a clear set of performance measures must be defined at the start of the project to which both the parties (vendor and the client) agree upon. One of the reasons of dispute is when the management does not feel that the supplier is providing the level of service promised at the beginning of the project, which may ultimately lead to termination of the relationship and may also impose litigation.

Alternatively, the company and the supplier should take the decision based on performance measure that have been verified and approved.

### 2.3. Building Customer Relationship

In order to retain the customer, it is very important for you as a service provider to build a healthy relationship with the customer. It is very important to be passionate about what you are selling, the company you are working for and your customer. You must be willing to help the customer and solve their problems. A customer always prefers to buy from a salesperson that overtly shows the belief in the product they are selling and the company for which they work.

In order to perform well and to build an excellent reputation amongst your customer it is very essential to be honest, open and concerned about the customer's need. Following are some points that must be taken into account

- ✓ You must be considerate about the needs and wants of your customer
- ✓ You must ask questions, take notes and learn in to show that you are engaged in their answers
- ✓ You must take interest in meeting your customer requirement
- ✓ Share you network of contacts with your customer, give things that increase your value, like referral to a partner, solution to a business problem or even helping in locating a place.
- ✓ You must always express your true intent by telling the customer upfront if you are able or unable to meet their requirements
- ✓ You must take approval from the customer to move ahead in increasing increments, don't jump way ahead of the customer's prospected buying curve. This may cause disinterest amongst the buyer
- ✓ Don't try to impress the customer by using extensive vocabulary as it may sound artificial, instead use simple and friendly words
- ✓ Be very careful in using the prospects name such as whether to use the first name only or title and last name. You must not overuse the their name
- ✓ You must ask the right question, where a question is right when you are able to move the prospect from an intellectual position of knowing they have a problem that needs to be solved, to an emotional state of trusting you to solve the problem in a way that will satisfy him

The amount of efforts you put into the system and the way people perceive you is amongst the crucial factors in determining your growth curve. These variables can be a changing point in your career, a strong relationship with your customer is the essence of a successful career.

It is a very important and difficult task for any business to retain its customer's. But an effective salesperson can sell any type of product or service together with a strong marketing relationship with the customers.

#### Building Marketing relationship with the Customer

Following are some of the qualities that a salesperson must possess to build a strong marketing relationship with their customers.

- ✓ In order to maintain a good relationship with the customer, make sure you deliver what you promise
- ✓ You must listen to the problems of the customer patiently and then provide appropriate suggestions
- ✓ You must always answer your customer without keeping them waiting for long, since no customer wants to listen to a recorded messages

- ✓ The complaints of the customer must be handled with utmost care and dedication. It is very important to keep your customer happy as a happy customer is a loyal customer

As a service provider you must concentrate on some of the key components in building relationship for obtaining fruitful results.

- ✓ You must communicate frequently to reach out to your customers, to keep your prospect moving through the sales cycle without deviating from the motive of increasing sales
- ✓ Your communication must focus on product offered and sales services
- ✓ You must ensure that your customer is rewarded to remind your customer about your company and the services being offered
- ✓ You must use every tool and opportunity to create interaction with your customers
- ✓ Enhance your customer service by assisting the prospect in every possible manner

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- Certified Advertising Sales Professional

### ➤ Sales, BPO

- Certified Sales Manager
- Certified Telesales Executive

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