



# Learn Customer Service & Selling Skills

Written to support the Travel & Tourism Industry

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# Introduction to Customer Service

Customer service is...

**“the sum total of what an organisation does to meet customer expectations and produce customer satisfaction.”**

There are different types of customer service delivered at different stages. We can identify customer service delivered before the sale of a product or service, during the sale and after the sale. At all these times, standards need to be set.

The key aspects of customer service as cabin crew and how you are measured include:

- Ensuring that your appearance and behaviour are professional at all times
- Being able to communicate with customers in a way that maintains goodwill, organisational image, and standards of quality and customer care
- Being able to predict customers' needs and do all you can to meet them
- Considering customers' comfort and wellbeing, when carrying out all activities
- Assessing customers' condition and whether they are fit to fly
- Helping customers whenever asked or needed
- Promoting organisational facilities, services, products and image at all appropriate times
- Acknowledging customers' comments politely and take action/pass them on where appropriate.



# Uniforms

In order to encourage good personal presentation, some organisations provide staff with a uniform. This is usual for staff in roles dealing directly with customers such as an overseas representative, airline crew or in travel agency.

Uniforms can serve a lot of different purposes:

- They make it easy for customers to recognise members of staff in a shop or identify someone with a particular job role -like a member of the cabin crew!
- They make a statement about the person's job and an organisation's image .e.g. the police wear a dark, rather severe looking uniform which reflects the serious role they play, while uniforms for people in the leisure and tourism industry are often colourful, relaxed and fun
- They reflect the type of tasks that a job involves and the work environment e.g. for a physical role or for working in a hot climate people might require looser clothing
- They can help to inspire confidence. Imagine how you would feel if you were about to get on a plane and saw that the pilot was wearing ripped jeans, a crumpled shirt and looked tired and unshaven. Would you feel that you were in safe hands?

Now that we've considered the subject of personal appearance, it's time to think about some other aspects of creating a positive personal image.



# Body Language

Understanding simple body language is important if you're to make a good first impression on customers and develop your meet and greet skills. This is because over 50% of communication relies on body language rather than the actual words we speak or the tone of voice we use.

So what exactly is body language? Body language is what we convey to other people, either consciously or sub-consciously by our:

- **Posture** - how we hold ourselves
- **Gestures** - movements, usually of our hands or head e.g. nodding
- **Mannerisms** - a gesture we make often, the way we generally speak or behave
- **Facial expressions** – e.g. smiling or frowning
- **Eye contact** - whether we hold the other person's gaze, or look away

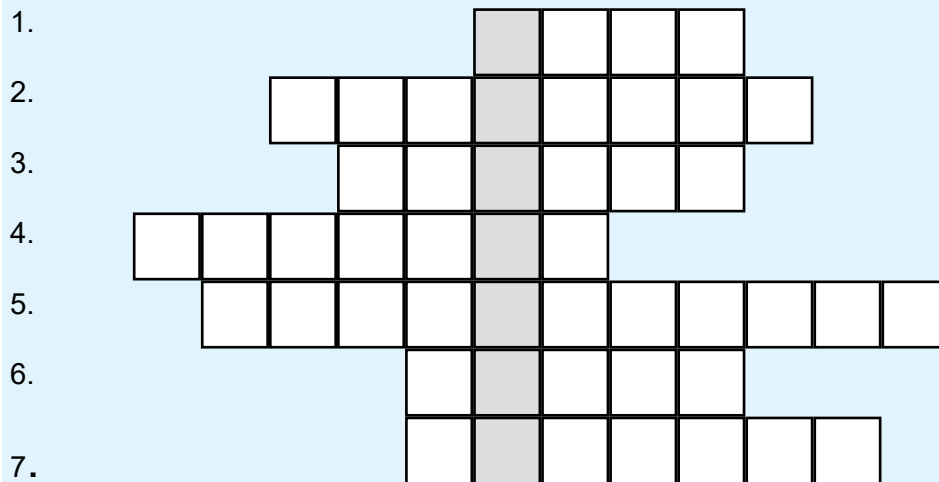
You may not realise it, but you're already something of an expert on body language - everyone is! We all read each other's expression, posture and gestures to gauge how the other person is feeling and what they're thinking. However, body language should always be read in conjunction with what someone is saying and the situation as a whole. A gesture or a particular facial expression can mean a number of different things.

For example, someone biting their nails could be nervous, but they could just as easily be bored or it may simply be a bad habit that they're not even aware of. To make a good first impression on a customer you have to be aware both of what your own body language is telling them, and what their body language is telling you.



# Exercise 11.1

Fill in the grid, using the clues below. This will reveal the word in the shaded boxes, which is the key to greeting customers.



1. This word is to do with temperature - it's also the type of reception your customers deserve.
2. Another way of saying kind, pleasant and amiable.
3. If someone is this, they have good manners and are courteous towards others.
4. You should always treat your customers with this.
5. How you want all your customers to feel - in other words, relaxed.
6. The first thing you do when you meet someone you like - it's also the key to positive body language!
7. Being ready and willing to assist.

# Exercise 2.2

Identify your own strengths and areas for improvement when listening. For each of the following statements, give yourself a mark out of 5.

5 = very well, 1 = I need to improve this a lot

I concentrate fully on the person who is talking and avoid all other distractions	1	2	3	4	5
I ask questions only after listening carefully to what I've been told	1	2	3	4	5
When people are irritated or angry, I listen carefully to find out their reasons	1	2	3	4	5
I listen very carefully when people have a different accent to mine	1	2	3	4	5
I use body language to demonstrate I am listening to them	1	2	3	4	5
I never interrupt when someone is talking	1	2	3	4	5
I acknowledge my own and other people's emotions	1	2	3	4	5
I make my own points only when someone has finished talking	1	2	3	4	5
I summarise what has been said so the person knows that I have understood	1	2	3	4	5

Write down what you intend to do to make the improvements that you need.



# Positive Impressions

By being positive, asking good questions and demonstrating good listening skills will ensure that you create and maintain good relationships with customers. If you were to ask a customer to list the qualities in you which were most important to them, the list would probably include the following:

- A professional manner
- A positive attitude
- Politeness
- Efficiency
- Accuracy
- Good product knowledge
- Taking responsibility as the salesperson

Every point on the list is important to the customer but they are all building blocks which enable the customer to hand over responsibility to you as the salesperson. Once you begin to talk in more depth, there are a number of points which the customer will be looking for subconsciously as signs of your professional integrity – confidentiality, your trustworthiness, your loyalty to your company and to the industry, and your general conduct.



## Exercise 2.3

Think about what kind of additional help each of the following types of customer may require when travelling or in their holiday destination.

a) A couple with young children.

b) A customer with special needs (e.g. mobility, dietary)

c) An elderly person travelling alone.

d) A customer with learning difficulties.

e) A large group of young people.

f) A customer from another culture.

g) A customer who is non-English speaking Research the following questions on aspects of flying the internet.

# Customers who Complain

Customers who complain can be put into three distinct categories – angry, experienced and hesitant. Each type is motivated by different beliefs, attitudes, and needs. Consider the following definitions of the types of complainers:

**Angry:** The customer who feels they have been 'wronged' and are determined to vent their emotions on someone

**Experienced:** This customer is very knowledgeable about their rights and the procedures of complaining. They will have complained to other companies invariably on a number of occasions previously, with some success

**Hesitant:** The customer who is reluctant to make a fuss and generally will not complain. They are surprised and disappointed that the service they have had has given them reason to raise a complaint.

When you approach a customer who is angry or upset do:

- Listen to your customer
- Take responsibility and show urgency
- Avoid instinctive reactions
- Encourage the customer to tell you what is upsetting them.
- Show that you understand.
- Stay calm.
- Involve the customer in the solution.
- Provide solutions.
- Involve others if necessary
- Stay assertive
- Recognise the limits to your own authority – refer a complaining person onto the appropriate person when necessary on any formal complaints beyond the initial contact with the customer.

# Deliver Reliable and Consistent Customer Service

Customer service is...

**“the sum total of what an organisation does to meet customer expectations and produce customer satisfaction.”**

There are different types of customer service delivered at different stages. We can identify customer service delivered before the sale of a product or service, during the sale and after the sale. At all these times, standards need to be set.

## Setting standards

It is important to set standards in order to exceed customer expectations. If standards are not set, each member of staff will govern the customer's attitude to the company. Customer satisfaction cannot be left to chance. Standards must be set on individual tasks.

All people in the team must be working towards a goal. This will give your team a clear sense of direction. Service standards are usually established in the following areas:

- Appearance
- Communication
- Organisation & feedback
- Flexibility
- Tact
- Selling skills
- Gracious problem solving

It is possible to measure the success of meeting service standards and at the same time to meet customer needs. Agreeing standards for individual tasks does this.



## Good vs. Exceptional Customer Service

Behaviour/Manner	OK to GOOD Standard	EXCEPTIONAL Standard
Undivided attention.	Concentrates on what person is saying.	ALSO gives listening signals: “yes”, “I understand”, “oh that’s unfortunate”, “Sorry to hear that”, gives a lot of eye contact.
Using person’s name.	Uses it once.	Use it several times during the conversation.
Listening skills.	Concentrates on what person is saying.	Summarises and confirms what the person has said.
Friendly manner (in response to customer/client stating their address).	“Thanks for that, sir”.	“Boddington? Nice village that. Have you lived there long?”
Helpful.	“Let me give you the number of the taxi company – they’re pretty quick”.	“Let me give the taxi company a quick ring for you. Would you like the taxi immediately, Mr. Jones?”

## Exercise 1.7

All of the items below have proved to be important to your customer. Some have been presented as benefits with the use of a selling phrase. Indicate whether or not a selling phrase has been used.

- |   | YES/NO                   |
|---|--------------------------|
| 1. Jetline Airways has an excellent reputation for good service.  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. There is a children's representative at this hotel, which means that your children will be entertained while you are relaxing by the pool. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. All meals at this hotel are buffet style so your children will be able to pick and choose what they want to eat.                           | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. There are two swimming pools at the hotel, one is undercover and heated, the other is outside and unheated.                                | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. The temperature doesn't drop below 18C during the winter months.   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. As you said you enjoyed excursions and sightseeing, this holiday would be ideal because there is a different excursion almost every day.   | <input type="checkbox"/> |

# Sales Closures

There are different ways to close the sale. They are:

- Direct
- Alternative
- Assumptive/Positive
- Fear
- Summary

**Direct:** This is done by asking the customer for the business using a closed question:

“Would you like me to go ahead and book that?”

This will test customer commitment

**Alternative:** Offering the customer the choice of alternatives:

“Which flight should I book - Virgin or British Airways?”

This is not a decision about whether to buy, but which to buy.



## Exercise 8.8

Below are some holidays/products that customers have booked. Which additional products/services could you offer them and give a benefit to your customer for each.

Holidays/products bought

Additional products/services and benefit

1. A holiday to Tenerife

2. A flight to Rome

3. A two night hotel stay in London

4. A holiday in Orlando

5. A Caribbean cruise



# Why Teams Fail

When a team is performing at its best, you'll usually find that each team member has clear responsibilities. Just as importantly, you'll normally see that every role needed to achieve the team's goal is being performed fully and well.

But often, despite clear roles and responsibilities, a team will fall short of its full potential. How often does this happen in the teams you work with? Perhaps some team members don't complete what you expect them to do. Perhaps some team members are not quite flexible enough, so things 'fall between the cracks'. Maybe someone who is valued for their expert input fails to see the wider picture, and so misses out tasks or steps that others would expect. Or perhaps one team member become frustrated because he or she disagrees with the approach of another team members.

## Supporting your Team

There may be occasions when teams have problems for various reasons. Members of the team may become demotivated and not work effectively. If things go wrong people may start blaming other team members for the problems. It is better to share most problems with the team, and gain the support of colleagues to try to solve the problems. In fact, this is one of the key benefits of team working – using others to help you with problems and difficulties.

When teams include individuals who let the side down, there can be animosity and bad feeling within the team. In contrast, a team that is made up of positive and hardworking crew will foster a positive team spirit. Each individual member of the crew has a part to play in making their team a winning team.



# Role Play 3

## Setting the scene

You have decided to take your two children on holiday, it is their first holiday abroad and they are looking forward to swimming, beach activities and going to the shops.

## Holiday

- 1 week in July
- Sunbathing, swimming, beach, activities & games
- Good restaurants to try in the evenings

## Information

You are a single parent family and this is the first time you have been able to take the kids on holiday. Some sort of organised club for the kids would be useful and a child minding service in the evenings would be helpful as you would like to go out occasionally on your own.

## Budget

You are on a fairly tight budget; however you want the kids and yourself to enjoy the break.

## Additional information

As the customer you may add preferences of your own in order to make the role play more realistic and come up with a relevant objection.