

Why is customer service so important?

- In the long run, good customer service is the only way to grow a successful business. Satisfied customers come back to buy more and also tell other potential customers about your service
- Good customer service forms a virtuous circle with employee satisfaction. People like to work for a business that they can be proud of and they like being able to make customers happy
- Poor service will produce the opposite effects and eventually destroy a business

What are the key elements in good customer service?

- Communication
 - o Understand your customer categories and the benefits they seek
 - o Engage customers in product development and service improvements
 - o Respond quickly and effectively to enquiries via the people who can provide the best solution to their need
 - o Agree with each client up-front what is to be delivered and how success will be measured
 - o Be accessible to customers at all their preferred times and using all their preferred channels
 - o Measure customer satisfaction regularly, publish the results and make sure the results provide a basis for action – then take it
- Culture
 - o Make explicit your values that tell everyone the customer is the top priority
 - o Train all employees in customer service and your values and then empower them to do what it takes to deliver great customer service
 - o Have an accessible complaints procedure focused on resolving the issue for all customers and all time
 - o Measure customer service and reward or acknowledge individuals who excel
 - o Do not tolerate poor customer service
- Processes and outcomes
 - o Define how you measure good customer service in your business and what key performance indicators (KPIs) are relevant for controlling the end-to-end process
 - o Include targets for these measures for all staff and review performance monthly and annually. Include them in your incentivisation scheme if you run one
 - o Publish actual performance figures against target
 - o Carry out regular and post-project reviews. Learn from mistakes and successes and capture improvements in revised processes
 - o Benchmark against the best performers inside and outside your industry