

Customer Care for FEAFFA Training module

Eastern Africa and Freight
Forwarding Practicing
Certificate

Objectives

By the end of the course participants should be able to:

- Identify a Customer
- Define terms used in Customer Care
- Identify needs of a customer
- Outline the process of handling customer complaints

Definition of Customer

A Customer is someone who:

- Uses our goods or services, or
- Pays for our services

“A Customer is someone who uses our goods and services and pays for them or someone who uses our services or products we are offering but doesn't pay for them” Ted Jones

Types of Customers

There are two types of customers:

- Internal customer
- External customer

It is crucial to understand the different categories of customers so as to know their different needs

Types of customers

Internal customers include:

- Employees of a company who depend on each other to get a job done
- Managing Director of your company
- Subordinates
- Colleagues, etc

Types of customers

External customers

- People who visit your company/businesses to buy goods or services
- Stakeholders
- The Government
- Any external people who are not employed by your organisation

Customer care

“Customer care is the act of responding to customer needs and expectations in a way that will make them have a memorable experience and motivate them to come back and tell others”

Customer Service

Customer service is based on the premise of acceptable customer care principles:

- Understand your customers
- Satisfying customer expectations and delivering excellent service
- Understanding customer needs/wants
- Handling customer complaints
- Managing customer relations

Understanding your customers

- Identify and learn about your customers:
 - Be in tune with your customers
 - Provide the right services to the right people

Understanding your customers

- Know how best to satisfy them
 - Divide the customers into groups to focus more on their unique needs
 - You may group customers by type of business, size or region

Satisfying customers expectations and delivering excellent service

- Keep the promises you make to customers
- Deliver according to the standards of the customer
- Exceed customer expectations

"To exceed customer expectations, you under promise and over deliver" Sarah Cook

Exceeding customer expectations

To provide good service, aim at getting it right the first time, all the time. The service provider must have:

- The right skills
- The right knowledge
- The right attitude
- Maintain the customer's self esteem

Exceeding customer expectations cont.

- Empathy for customers
- Involve the customer in the service process

Customer needs

It is important to understand your customer's needs. They may be practical or emotional. Customer needs include:

- Fair and honest service
- Courtesy
- Respect
- Empathy

Customer needs

- Sympathy
- Counseling
- Consistency in service delivery
- Speed and timeliness
- Accuracy of paperwork
- Value of information

Customer care skills

The first skill in customer care in **S.C.O.P.E.** Having knowledge of:

- **S**elf & staff
- **C**ustomers
- **O**utside world
- **P**roduct & service
- **E**mployer

Customer care skills

Understanding: create understanding and good rapport with the customer.

- Use the customer's name
- Show appreciation for the customer
- Show concern for the customer's feelings

Impressions

Customers form lasting impressions from the first encounter with the service provider. They form impressions on:

- What they see
- What they hear
- What they feel
- What they smell
- What they taste

Impressions

The service provider should take care on dress and grooming and should maintain a professional disposition

Understanding customer needs

- Customers come to us with needs/problems
- They come with expectations
- They come looking for a good experience while consuming our services
- They want to access services easily and conveniently
- Speed, promptness and accuracy are important ways to evaluate service

Managing customer relations

Managing customer relations helps companies gain insight into customer behavior in order to:

- Provide better customer service
- Retain existing customers
- Identify new customers
- Increase profitability and productivity

Handling customer complaints

Customer complaints are feedback that customer needs are not being met. Customer complaints are mainly on:

- Quality of service or product
- Inaccurate information
- Delivery arrangements and packaging
- Lack of assistance
- Turn around

Benefits of customer complaints

- Building long term relationships
- Understand customer needs and wants
- Improvement on customer service
- Create an opportunity to implement innovations from complaints

Handling complaints process

- Record: listen to or write down complaints
- Question: find out details of the situation by asking appropriate questions
- Resolve: propose and agree on a solution that is acceptable to the customer

Handling complaints process

- Implement: carry out an action plan to rectify a situation
- Follow up: ensure complaint has been resolved to the customer's satisfaction

The role of the clearing agent in handling customer complaints

- Accept and welcome complaints as an opportunity for change
- Analyse causes and trends of complaints
- Handle the whole problem with the organisation and plan solutions accordingly
- Encourage clients to point out deficiencies and involve them in finding a solution

The role of the clearing agent in handling customer complaints

- Record complaints to provide insights into what needs to be done to make customers happy

Customer service defined

The value that the customer perceives the service or the product imparts.

Customer value defined

- Customer value is that total profit the business gets on a customer over a given period of time.
- Understanding value enables companies to work out on the investment in attracting and servicing new customers to generate worthwhile profits

Customer loyalty

The measure of a customer's willingness and commitment to continue doing business with you. This is shown by the level of trust in you. Customer loyalty develops when companies build strong business relationships with existing customers

Benefits of building business relationships

- The cost of acquiring new customers is high
- Loyal customers spend more and cost less to serve
- Satisfied customers usually recommend your products and services to others

Customer retention defined

The ability to attract and retain new customers by servicing existing customers and creating a reputation within and across its market

Dimensions of customer satisfaction

Customer satisfaction ranges from functional satisfaction to peripheral issues such as:

- Information received from other customers
- Packaging
- Type of people employed to deliver the service
- Acknowledging and recognising the value of a customer

Benefits of customer satisfaction

- Increased customer loyalty
- Increased customer retention
- Increased productivity
- Improved reputation and image in the eyes of the customer
- Improved profitability for the customer
- Stronger long-term internal and external relationships
- Improvements in the operations of the company

Dangers of customer dissatisfaction

- Increase in complaints
- Bad reputation and company image
- Increased costs
- Reduced profitability
- Bad feeling about the company
- Poor relationships with internal and external customers
- Good target for competition

Tools for tracking customer satisfaction

- Complaints and suggestion systems
- Lost customer analysis
- Customer satisfaction surveys

Complaints and suggestion systems

- Works well if there is an already long standing relationship with the customers.
- Systems should be well managed to promote service improvement in the company

Lost customer analysis

- This tool helps a company find out why customers' defect.
- You will be able to find out which part of service repel customers

Customer satisfaction surveys

- Indicate how well your services are received by your customers and how well you compare with competitors

Survey guidelines

- The opening statement should state clear objectives of the questionnaire
- State benefits to the customers
- It should be brief and easy to complete
- Leave lots of empty space to make documents less intimidating
- Leave space for additional comments

Survey guidelines

- Thank the customer for their participation
- The yes/no questions should appear earlier in the questionnaire

Findings in the survey are useful for continual improvement of services