Customer Service
within the Business Skills suite

Unit Title:	**Deliver customer service to difficult customers**
OCR unit number:	**48A**
Unit reference number:	T/601/1512
Level:	2
Credit value:	6
Guided learning hours:	40

Unit purpose and aim

Many organisations have a significant proportion of difficult customers. The customer's attitude may be difficult simply because they believe that a threat or problem exists before they contact the organisation. They may become difficult or even aggressive when they discover that their expectations are not going to be met by the organisation. They may be very concerned or nervous about the outcome of dealing with the organisation. In either case, they are difficult to deal with and need the learners' understanding. This unit is about dealing directly with these customers and trying to reach a resolution that satisfies everybody or at least reduces the risk of dissatisfaction. The learner should choose this unit only if they recognise the content as applying to a reasonable proportion of their exchanges with customers. Do not choose this unit if it will be hard to find evidence because the learner only occasionally deals with a difficult customer.

Learning Outcomes *The learner will:*	Assessment Criteria *The learner can:*	Knowledge, understanding and skills
1 Recognise when customers may be difficult to deal with	1.1 Recognise types of customer behaviour that are difficult to deal with 1.2 Identify aspects of their organisation's services or products that make it difficult to deal with customers 1.3 Identify the signs and signals that indicate a customer may be difficult to deal with 1.4 Put themselves in their customer's position and see the situation from the customer's point of view 1.5 Identify reasons why their customers may be behaving in a way that is difficult to deal with	Candidates must have an understanding of different types of difficult customers including: • Identifying behaviours and signs/signals • Organisational products/services that can make it difficult when dealing with them • How to see the customer's point of view • Reasons why their customer is behaving this way • The limit of toleration by the organisation when dealing with difficult customers • Ways to provoke difficult responses from their customer

Learning Outcomes _The learner will:_	Assessment Criteria _The learner can:_	Knowledge, understanding and skills
	1.6 Recognise the limits of difficult customer behaviour that their organisation will tolerate	
	1.7 Identify things that they may do or say that will provoke difficult responses from their customer	
2 Deal with difficult customers	2.1 Listen patiently to what their customer wants to tell them	Candidates must be able to deal with difficult customers by:
	2.2 Use direct and factual questions about their customer's feelings and what has happened to identify what might satisfy the customer	• Using effective listening techniques
		• Using effective questioning techniques
	2.3 Check their understanding of their customer's concerns by describing their view of the situation and options that might be available	• Checking their understanding of the problem/concerns of the customer
		• Empathising without admitting fault
	2.4 Express empathy with their customer without necessarily admitting fault on the part of their organisation	• Explain their organisation's position
		• Agree a mutually agreeable way forward
	2.5 Give clear statements or explanations of their organisation's position	• Limits of authority and who to refer to
	2.6 Agree a way forward that balances customer satisfaction with the needs of their organisation	• Summarise agreed actions
		• Advise appropriate personnel about the possibility of further interaction with the customer
	2.7 Enlist help from colleagues if options for action are outside of their authority	• Take appropriate safety precautions for themselves and others
	2.8 Summarise clearly actions to be taken and reasons for those actions to complete the customer transaction	
	2.9 Advise their manager or the appropriate colleagues if the customer is likely to re-open the matter with them	

Learning Outcomes	Assessment Criteria	Knowledge, understanding and skills
The learner will:	*The learner can:*	
	2.10 Take any necessary action to protect their own safety or that of other customers or colleagues from a difficult customer	
3 Understand how to deliver customer service to difficult customers	3.1 Describe the types of customer behaviour that they personally find difficult to deal with 3.2 Identify reasons why some aspect of their organisation's services or products may provoke difficult behaviour from customers 3.3 Identify reasons why their customer's own actions may cause them to behave in a way that is difficult to deal with 3.4 Explain the meaning of having empathy for a customer's feelings 3.5 Identify who can be asked for help when dealing with a difficult customer 3.6 Explain the difference between assertive, aggressive and passive behaviour 3.7 Describe the importance of not simply quoting their organisation's rules and procedures to counter their customer's difficult behaviour 3.8 State their organisation's limits of what will be tolerated from difficult customers before the transaction or relationship is closed 3.9 Explain the importance of giving their manager or the appropriate colleagues notice of any further approaches from a difficult customer	Candidates must have an understanding of: • The types of difficult customer behaviour they find difficult to deal with • Why some organisational services/products may provoke difficult behaviour from a customer • Why their customer's behaviour may influence their own behaviour • Who to refer to for support • What is meant by the term empathy • The difference between assertive, aggressive and passive behaviour • Why they should not simply quote organisational policies and procedures • Organisational limits for tolerating difficult behaviour • The importance of informing others of potential reoccurrences • When they may need to take action to promote the safety of themselves and others

Learning Outcomes *The learner will:*	Assessment Criteria *The learner can:*	Knowledge, understanding and skills
	3.10 Identify when it might be necessary to take action to protect their own safety or that of other customers or colleagues from a difficult customer	

Assessment

This qualification is internally assessed by centre staff and externally verified by OCR Assessors.

Evidence requirements

1.   Your evidence should be collected when carrying out a real job, whether paid or voluntary, and when dealing with real customers, whether internal or external to the organisation. However, for this Unit, evidence collected in a realistic working environment or a work placement is permissible. Simulation is not allowed for any performance evidence within this Unit. *(Guidelines for a Realistic Working Environment can be found in the OCR Customer Service Centre Handbook which can be downloaded from the OCR website: www.ocr.org.uk).*

2.   You may collect the evidence for the Unit through work in a private sector organisation, a not‑for‑profit organisation or a public services organisation.

3.   You must provide evidence that shows you have done this over a sufficient period of time with different customers on different occasions for your assessor to be confident that you are competent.

4.   You must provide evidence of delivering customer service to difficult customers:

   a   during routine delivery of customer service
   b   during a busy time in your job
   c   during a quiet time in your job
   d   when people, systems or resources have let you down.

Barred combinations: *Business Skills* suite

There are currently no barred combinations for this unit within the Business Skills suite.

Exemptions and equivalencies: *Business Skills* suite

There are no exemptions or equivalencies for this unit.

Guidance on assessment and evidence requirements

Please refer to the OCR Customer Service Centre Handbook available from the OCR website www.ocr.org.uk

National Occupational Standards (NOS) mapping/signposting

This unit maps fully to competences outlined in the Customer Service 2010 (Institute of Customer Service) suite of National Occupational Standards.

Additional information

For further information regarding administration for this qualification, please refer to the OCR document *'Admin Guide: Vocational Qualifications' (A850)* on the OCR website www.ocr.org.uk