

Customer Service Specialist Apprenticeship Level 3

The main purpose of a customer service specialist is to be a 'professional' for direct customer support within all sectors and organisation types. Learners will be an advocate of Customer Service who acts as a referral point for dealing with more complex or technical customer requests, complaints, and queries. Often an escalation point for complicated or ongoing customer problems. As an expert in the organisation's products and/or services, they will share knowledge with the wider team and colleagues, gathering and analysing data and customer information that influences change and improvements in service.

Learners will utilise both organisational and generic IT systems to carry out your role with an awareness of other digital technologies. This could be in many types of environment including contact centres, retail, webchat, service industry or any customer service point.

The knowledge, skills and behaviours that the learner will develop as part of this programme are detailed below.

Knowledge	
Business Knowledge and Understanding	Understand your organisation's current business strategy in relation to customers and make recommendations for its future.
	Understand the impact your service provision has on the wider organisation and the value it adds.
	Understand what continuous improvement means in a service environment and how your recommendations for change impact your organisation.
	Understand the principles and benefits of being able to think about the future when taking action or making service related decisions.
	Understand a range of leadership styles and apply them successfully in a customer service environment.
Customer Journey knowledge	Understand and critically evaluate the possible journeys of your customers, including challenges and the end-to-end experience.
	Understand the reasons why customer issues and complex situations sometimes need referral or escalation for specialist attention.
	Understand the underpinning business processes that support you in bringing about the best outcome for customers and your organisation.
	Understand commercial factors and authority limits for delivering the required customer experience.
Knowing your customers and their needs/customer Insight	Know your internal and external customers and how their behaviour may require different approaches from you.
	How to analyse, use and present a range of information to provide customer insight.
	Understand what drives loyalty, retention and satisfaction and how they impact on your organisation.
	Understand different customer types and the role of emotions in bringing about a successful outcome.
	Understand how customer expectations can differ between cultures, ages and social profiles.
Customer service culture and environment awareness	Keep current, knowledge and understanding of regulatory considerations, drivers and impacts in relation to how you deliver for customers.
	Understand your business environment and culture and the position of customer service within it.
	Understand your organisation structure and what role each department needs to play in delivering Customer Service and what the consequences are should things go wrong.
	Understand how to find and use industry best practice to enhance own knowledge.

Customer Service Specialist Level 3 - Employer Fact Sheet

Skills	
Business focussed service delivery	Demonstrate a continuous improvement and future focussed approach to customer service delivery including decision making and providing recommendations or advice.
	Resolve complex issues by being able to choose from and successfully apply a wide range of approaches.
	Find solutions that meet your organisation's needs as well as customer requirements.
Providing a positive customer experience	Through advanced questioning, listening and summarising negotiate mutually beneficial outcomes.
	Manage challenging and complicated situations within your level of authority and make recommendations to enable and deliver change to service or strategy.
	Use clear explanations, provide options and solutions to influence and help customers make choices and agree next steps.
	Explore and interpret the customer experience to inform and influence achieving a positive result for customer satisfaction.
	Demonstrate a cost-conscious mind-set when meeting customer and the business needs.
	Identify where highs and lows of the customer journey produce a range of emotions in the customer.
	Use written and verbal communication to simplify and provide complex information in a way that supports positive customer outcome in the relevant format.
Working with your customers/ customer insights	Proactively gather customer feedback, through a variety of methods. Critically analyse, and evaluate the meaning, implication and facts and act upon it.
	Analyse your customer types, to identify or anticipate their potential needs and expectations when providing your service.
Customer service performance	Maintain a positive relationship even when you are unable to deliver the customer's expected outcome.
	When managing referrals or escalations take into account historical interactions and challenges to determine next steps.
Service improvement	Analyse the end to end service experience, seeking input from others where required supporting development of solutions.
	Make recommendations based on your findings to enable improvement.
	Make recommendations and implement where possible, changes in line with new and relevant legislation, regulations and industry best practice.
Behaviours/Attitude	
Develop self	Proactively keep your service, industry and best practice knowledge and skills up-to-date.
	Consider personal goals related to service and take action towards achieving them.
Ownership/ Responsibility	Personally commit to and take ownership for actions to resolve customer issues to the satisfaction of the customer and your organisation.
	Exercise proactivity and creativity when identifying solutions to customer and organisational issues.
	Make realistic promises and deliver on them.
Team working	Work effectively and collaboratively with colleagues at all levels to achieve results.
	Recognise colleagues as internal customers.
	Share knowledge and experience with others to support colleague development.

Equality	Adopt a positive and enthusiastic attitude being open minded and able to tailor your service to each customer.
	Be adaptable and flexible to your customer needs whilst continuing to work within the agreed customer service environment.
Presentation	Demonstrate brand advocacy, values and belief when dealing with customer requests to build trust, credibility and satisfaction.
	Ensure your personal presentation, in all forms of communication, reflects positively on your organisation's brand.

Once the programme of learning is complete and the learner, employer and Intec agree the necessary **Knowledge, Skills** and **Behaviours/Attitude** have been met, learners will be put forward to the **Assessment Gateway** and this will trigger the **End Point Assessment**. This assessment will be carried out with an independent body to ensure the apprentice can demonstrate they have achieved the required standard, this will consist of the following:

Assessment Method	Requirements	To achieve a Pass	To achieve a Distinction
Practical observation with Q&As	<p>Practical observation - Covered in one session, lasting 1 hour and must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflect typical working conditions. • Allow the apprentice to demonstrate all aspects of the standard being assessed. • Take a synoptic approach to assessing the overall competence. • Be carried out on a one-to-one basis. <p>Q&As - Questions must be open questions and supplementary questions asked as required to seek further clarification.</p>	100% of pass criteria	After achieving all of the pass criteria you must ALSO achieve a further 2 distinction criteria.
Work based project, supported by an interview	<p>Project - Submission of a written report, on a project the learner has carried out which must be 2500 words (+/- 10%), excluding annexe. This should cover a specific high-level challenge the learner has dealt with and explaining what it was, actions taken, solutions offered, details of recommendations and any feedback.</p> <p>Interview - Will last for 60 minutes (+/- 10%) tolerance either way and will focus on the written project and any supporting annexes.</p>	100% of pass criteria	After achieving all of the pass criteria you must ALSO achieve a further 9 distinction criteria.
Professional discussion supported by portfolio evidence	<p>Professional discussion - Will last for 60 minutes (+/- 10%) tolerance either way with a review of the evidence from the on-programme portfolio of evidence.</p> <p>Portfolio evidenced - This evidence will consist of a minimum of 10 to a maximum of 15 pieces and related to the standards which apply to the professional discussion. The portfolio of evidence is not directly assessed.</p>	100% of pass criteria	After achieving all of the pass criteria you must ALSO achieve a further 3 distinction criteria.

Duration: The apprenticeship will take a minimum of 15 months to complete dependant on experience. Plus an additional 3 months to complete the **End Point Assessment**.

Entry requirements: Organisations will set their own entry criteria and are more likely to select individuals with more advanced interpersonal skills, experience of working with customers in some capacity. Learners must achieve level 2 English and maths prior to taking the end point assessment.

Link to professional registration: Completion of this apprenticeship will lead to eligibility to join the Institute of Customer Service as an Individual member at Professional level. Should learners choose to progress on a customer service career path, they may be eligible for further professional membership including management.

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