

Welcome to Top Mark Customer Care Professional

This course is intended for those who have little or no experience of the subject matter, either starting up their enterprises, or having worked for a while without having to deal with Customer Care.

To help you to understand the reasons for customer care, as well as their practical applications, you will come across a number of challenging questions, and unit assessments. The principles have been illustrated with as many examples as possible. You'll find them highlighted. In the Assessments you have the opportunity to test how the principles work in practice, to apply what you've learnt in a down-to-earth way.

Objectives of the Top Mark Customer Care Course

In the sequence of six units you are going to cover the following topics:

- How to make customers feel appreciated
- How to turn customer complaints into customer satisfaction
- How to see yourselves (and your company) as others see you
- Why listening is a lost art, and how to re-discover it
- Three ways to calm down difficult customers
- What to do when the customer is wrong, but believes he is right
- Ways to recognise and handle internal and external customers
- When it's OK to say 'no'
- What you need to know to solve customers problems

When you have worked through the units, you will be better able to:

- know why Customer Care helps to keep customers
- apply proven communications techniques
- know more about ourselves, and how to change the way we relate to other people
- handle customer complaints and deal with them confidently
- prepare and follow action plans for continuous improvement

Experience has shown that the course will take about 12 hours to complete. Don't be concerned if it takes you longer than this average time.



Unit 1 What is Customer Care?

Customer Care Checklist

Time guide: 10 min.

Please answer the following questions, to the best of your ability, and as honestly as you can. There are no right or wrong answers - we need to know what you think to measure your progress at the end of this course.

1. How many external customers do you have some kind of contact with in an average week?

2. How many internal customers do you have contact with in an average week?

3. Write down what product/service they are buying from the company/department

4. What customer service standards do you know about? Please list them here, and then rate the company (in your opinion) out of 10 in meeting these standards.

Standard

Score

a

b

c

d

e



Question 1

Time guide: 2 min.

In your own words, write down what you think Customer Care means.

Typical definitions of Customer Care include

- giving value for money
- exceeding people's expectations
- meeting their perceived needs
- delighting the customer
- going above and beyond the norm
- making a good first impression

Question 2

Time guide: 5 min.

Why does Customer Care matter in your organisation?

If you answered, it costs less to keep the customers you have than to find new ones, Customer Care is often the only difference between competing products or services, a bad reputation spreads fast, happy customers buy more, and tell their friends, or people buy from people they trust- you were right.

Here are some other reasons:

“It costs you five times as much to get a single new customer as it does to keep one you already have.”



“No matter what your business is, you’re probably overspending on customer acquisition and understanding on customer retention.”

“Most businesses lose about 25% of their customers annually... cut just 5% of that customer loss... add 100% to your bottom line.”

From **‘The One-to-One Future’ by Don Peppers/Martha Rogers,**

By building customer goodwill and trust, they not only come back to you for repeat business, but they tell their friends.

Examples

Banks generally get a poor press, but one bank who opened an account made a series of phone calls, following the opening of the account, just to see that the service being provided was as expected. This is in sharp contrast to another bank whose only follow-up was to attempt to sell inappropriate products.

A printing company was supplying a marketing organisation with literature. The literature was due to be delivered to a third party, who called to say that it had not arrived. On investigation by the marketing company the printer said he had had problems and probably wouldn’t be able to deliver it for another three days. If he had communicated his problems sooner, and managed both the client and the third party’s expectations, he would have demonstrated a positive service incident, and not lost valuable further business.

Feargal Quinn is the managing director of Ireland’s Superquinn supermarket chain. In his book ‘Crowning the Customer’ he talks about the ‘boomerang’ principle; i.e. getting the customer back. He demonstrated that if he looks after getting the repeat business, the profit would largely look after itself.

Customer service is a competitive battleground for today’s business. As goods and services become more sophisticated, Customer Care becomes the area in which businesses can differentiate themselves from their competition.

Identifying customers

Customers are not necessarily people from outside the business. Many other departments with whom you work need to be treated like customers too. Companies often forget this, and treat fellow employees as just part of the family who have to put up with bad service, misinformation, lack of information.

