

BSBOPS505

**MANAGE
ORGANISATIONAL
CUSTOMER
SERVICE**

BSBOPS505

Manage organisational customer service

Release 1

Learner Guide

Aspire Version 1.1



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Before you begin

This Learner Guide is based on the unit of competency *BSBOPS505 Manage organisational customer service*, Release 1. Your trainer or training organisation must give you information about this unit of competency as part of your training program. You can access the unit of competency and assessment requirements at: www.training.gov.au.

How to work through this Learner Guide

This Learner Guide contains a number of features that will assist you in your learning. Your trainer will advise which parts of the Learner Guide you need to read, and which Practice Tasks and Learning Checkpoints you need to complete. The features of this Learner Guide are detailed in the following table.

Feature of the Learner Guide	How you can use each feature
Learning content	Read each topic in this Learner Guide. If you come across content that is confusing, make a note and discuss it with your trainer. Your trainer is in the best position to offer assistance. It is very important that you take on some of the responsibility for the learning you will undertake.
Examples	These highlight key learning points and provide realistic examples of workplace situations.
Practice Tasks	Practice Tasks give you the opportunity to put your skills and knowledge into action. Your trainer will tell you which practice tasks to complete.
Summaries	Key learning points are provided at the end of each topic.
Learning Checkpoints	There is a Learning Checkpoint at the end of each topic. Your trainer will tell you which Learning Checkpoints to complete. These checkpoints give you an opportunity to check your progress and apply the skills and knowledge you have learnt.

Foundation skills

As you complete learning using this guide, you will be developing the foundation skills relevant for this unit. Foundation skills are the language, literacy and numeracy (LLN) skills and the employability skills required for participation in modern workplaces and contemporary life.

The following table provides definitions for each foundation skill.

Foundation skill area	Foundation skill description
Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interprets and analyses textual information from a variety of sources and applies the knowledge that has been gained to evaluate standards for organisation's products and services
Writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produces a range of text types to convey information, requirements or recommendations matching style of writing to purpose and audience
Oral communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clearly articulates systems and standards in a team environment using language suitable to diverse audiences Uses listening and questioning techniques to obtain feedback and confirm understanding
Numeracy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interprets and comprehends mathematical information in organisation's business and customer service plans
Planning and organising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognises and applies organisational protocols and meets expectations associated with own work
Teamwork	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifies and uses appropriate conventions and protocols when communicating with colleagues and customers Collaborates with others, taking into account their strengths and experience, to achieve desired outcomes Provides support in field of expertise to team
Enterprise and initiative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develops and implements plans using logical processes and monitors and evaluates progress against stated goals
Problem solving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accepts responsibility for addressing complex or non-routine difficulties, applying problem solving processes in determining a solution
Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses digital technology to access, organise and present information in a format that meets requirements

What do you already know?

Use the following table to identify what you may already know. This may assist you to work out what to focus on in your learning.

Topic	Key outcome	Rate your confidence in each section
Topic 1: Establish customer requirements	1A Consult with customers	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	1B Integrate feedback into business plan	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	1C Obtain resources needed to address customer requirements	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
Topic 2: Deliver quality products and service	2A Deliver products and services according to customer specifications	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	2B Monitor and assess team performance	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	2C Support colleagues to overcome difficulties	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
Topic 3: Evaluate customer service	3A Monitor progress against product and service targets and standards	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	3B Obtain customer feedback on products and services	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	3C Adapt delivery of products and services	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	3D Manage records, reports and recommendations	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident



Topic 1 | Establish customer requirements

- 1A Consult with customers
- 1B Integrate feedback into business plan
- 1C Obtain resources needed to address customer requirements

1A Consult with customers

The process of consultation allows you to understand the needs and preferences of different customer groups.

Customer service is a multi-dimensional concept. Each potential customer has different needs, and different perceptions of quality regarding the types of products or services they are interested in. People who purchase products or seek services from your organisation also fall under the category of 'customer', because you need to provide a form of customer service to them. These people may include internal and external customers, stakeholders, co-workers, suppliers and other groups.

Managers need to consult with customers to ensure the individual needs of each customer category are addressed accordingly. The process of consultation involves discussing the customers' needs to identify their requirements for service.

Customers may include:

- board members
- senior managers
- co-workers, peers and frontline managers
- members of the general public who make contact with the organisation, such as prospective purchasers
- traditional customers and contacts
- potential funding bodies
- referring organisations
- investors/shareholders
- suppliers of goods and services
- contractors providing goods and services.

Specific customer needs

Different customer segments will have different service needs and perceptions as to what forms quality service.

Each customer group will have specific needs and part of your consultation process is to determine the needs, preferences and service level expectations of your customer groups. You also need to examine whether your organisation is currently meeting those needs.

Typical needs of some customer groups are outlined below. As you will see, the needs of internal customers, such as senior managers, are very different to those of external customers, such as end users. The perception of effective customer service, and whether your organisation is delivering it, will also differ.

Typical needs of some customer groups	
Board members and senior managers	<p>The needs of senior personnel usually relate to sourcing information, on which to make decisions at the corporate level.</p> <p>When planning to achieve a quality service relationship with senior personnel, presentation, relevance and speed are the key factors.</p> <p>Tools for providing quality service in an organisation may include knowledge management systems, customer relationship management systems and accounting software.</p>
Colleagues	<p>Your colleagues require prompt, consistent service. This is because your contact with them may be more frequent and they may require information and direction from you in order to complete their tasks.</p> <p>Planning a quality service approach for colleagues must include attention to timeliness, quality of work, organisational policies and procedures, and personal interaction.</p> <p>Quality service to colleagues means:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ prompt replies to queries and other communications ▪ commitment to the task, role and organisation ▪ friendliness and courtesy.
External customers	<p>External, traditional customers have a range of needs. Staff need to be polite and helpful, prompt and efficient, knowledgeable and presentable when providing service to external customers. They also need to be able to identify customer needs and maintain a flexible approach.</p> <p>Products and services need to be available, with suitable warranties or guarantees. Products should be of good quality, priced competitively and with a wide selection to choose from.</p> <p>Delivery (where appropriate) should be prompt with items delivered safely and in good condition. The organisation should be accessible at reasonable hours and have systems in place to manage feedback, queries and complaints.</p>
Investors, shareholders and donors	<p>Stakeholders, such as investors and other external funding bodies, are also customers of your organisation. They supply money and may expect recognition, a share of the profits or to be aligned with your company.</p> <p>Measures of quality service for these customers include return on investment and other financial indicators, as well as prompt, accurate and relevant supply of information. This may include prospectuses and company reports as required and authorised. Stakeholders also expect a willingness and openness in dealings between the entities.</p>

Typical needs of some customer groups	
Suppliers	<p>Every organisation has inputs and outputs. Inputs provided by the suppliers are required to create the necessary environment for outputs provided by the organisation. Suppliers' needs vary greatly but usually include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ compliance with payment terms and other contractual terms of trade ▪ honesty ▪ willingness to achieve a win-win relationship ▪ consistency. <p>Consistency here refers to the suppliers' desire to meet the terms of the contract and not be unwittingly forced into a bidding war, over-supply, or reduction in orders under the control of their customer.</p>

Customer behaviour

Customer behaviour is driven by a combination of personal, psychological and social factors, all of which combine to influence perception of quality customer service.

A customer's perspective on purchasing a product or receiving or service will be affected by personal, psychological and social factors. A customer-service provider must be aware of these aspects of customer behaviour, as they help to define customers' expectations and also assist in defining the level of customer service required.

Personal factors

Personal factors influencing customer behaviour may include:

- demographic factors, such as sex, race and age
- level of responsibility for the decision-making to purchase or receive a product or service
- age, as young people have different customer service expectations to those of older people
- other factors unique to a particular customer.

Psychological factors

Psychological factors influencing customer behaviour may include:

- motive – an internal energising force that orients a person's customer service expectations towards satisfying a need or achieving a goal
- perception – the process of selecting, organising and interpreting customer service information to produce meaning
- knowledge and ability – involves familiarity with the product or service and the capacity to increase this familiarity through learning
- attitudes – involves positive and negative feelings about a product or service
- personality – encompasses the internal traits and behaviours that make a customer unique
- lifestyles – involves consistent patterns that people follow in their lives.

Social factors

Social factors influencing customer behaviour may include:

- opinion leaders – perception based on endorsement of a product or service by respected or popular people
- roles and family influences – perception of a product or service based on family background, or your position in a group
- reference groups – individuals identifying with the group to the extent that they take on customer service values, attitudes or behaviours of the group members
- social class – an open group of individuals who have similar social rank, which determines to some extent the types, quality and quantity of products and services that a person buys or uses
- culture and sub-culture – the set of customer service values, ideas and attitudes that are accepted by a homogenous group of people and transmitted to the next generation.

Customer research processes

You can conduct research with your customers using a variety of methods. The most appropriate methods will be determined by considering the information to be collected and the customer group from which you wish to collect it.

Conducting customer research includes seeking feedback on the needs of customers with respect to the products and services you offer. It may also extend to include seeking input on the methods, processes and efficiencies that surround your product and service delivery. This can be done in discussion with a specialist department or by arranging an external organisation to conduct customer research. You may be asked to be involved in writing a brief on the type of information you are wanting to collect, which will then be used to generate the survey.

Commonly used research methods are outlined below.

<p>1:1 consultation</p>	<p>This method is often used for determining the needs of individual customers or a representative of groups of customers. 1:1 consultation may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ consultation at the customer's point of interaction with your organisation – e.g. meeting with a new client in a law firm ▪ a telephone discussion with a representative of an organisation who may refer their customers to your business – e.g. an accountant referring customers to your financial planning organisation ▪ an email exchange with a manager to determine the information they need in a report. <p>Pros: information collected is very specific to the customer's needs, and it is easy to customise questions and ask for follow-up comments.</p> <p>Cons: 1:1 consultation can be time consuming, especially where consultation with a number of people is preferred.</p>
<p>Surveys</p>	<p>Surveys are often used to collect information from large numbers of people. Survey questions are often structured numerically, where those completing the survey are asked to provide a rating (e.g. on a scale of 1–10).</p> <p>Pros: by using a standard scale throughout it is easy to determine areas performing well or requiring improvement in the eyes of customers.</p> <p>Cons: surveys may not reveal underlying reasoning behind the opinions; nor do they offer the opportunity to ask follow-up questions.</p>
<p>Focus groups</p>	<p>Focus groups, particularly groups of 8–15 people, are an efficient way to consult with customers, explore opinions and identify needs.</p> <p>Pros: it is easy to ask follow-up and exploratory questions.</p> <p>Cons: you need to gather people in one place at the one time, and not everyone may be comfortable expressing opinions in a group.</p>

Social media/ online reviews	<p>Online reviews and social media allow organisations the opportunity to interact with existing and potential customers and determine their requirements.</p> <p>Pros: this method is easy to use.</p> <p>Cons: it can be difficult to establish the legitimacy of the information provided.</p>
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When planning to consult with customers, you should firstly plan the information you wish to collect and the customer segment from whom you wish to collect it. These two points will help define the most suitable consultation processes.

Information to be collected	Customer segment	Suitable consultation methods
Employee satisfaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employees as a whole • Employees at certain level/grade • Departments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey • Forums • 'Town hall' style meetings • Department meetings • Anonymous feedback box/form
External customer satisfaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paying customers • Referring partners • Suppliers • Contractors • Shareholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey (online or face-to-face) • Exit survey • Mystery shopper • Social media • 'Town hall' style meetings • Returning customer sales data
Management needs/insight/professional input	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior managers • Board members • Supervisors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1:1 feedback or discussion • Forums/board meetings • Request for written submission
Investor needs/perception/satisfaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shareholders • Funding bodies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forums/board meetings • Request for written submission • Online survey • 'Town hall' style meetings

Elements of effective customer service

Effective customer service occurs when a number of factors come together to provide informed, ethical advice and service in a timely manner.

High-quality customer service occurs when an organisation meets expectations in three key areas.



Managing quality customer service involves planning, implementing, monitoring, controlling and reviewing all customer service processes to achieve a high standard of customer engagement. It is essential that each customer is regarded as an individual and a long-term relationship is established to keep the customer returning.

According to reports from primary industry groups, quality is still the main driver for purchase decisions in the business-to-business sector. Consumers or end users are driven more readily by perceived value.

In a highly competitive business environment customers often have a choice between many organisations offering a similar type of product or service. Customer service can sometimes be the only significant point of difference between these organisations.

Example

Reliability of data from market research companies

Market research company CL and Co. is contracted to provide customer research data to a national electrical retailer whose managers are interested in establishing customer needs. Performance across various aspects of the retailer has decreased and the reasons have not been determined. It is identified that customer needs may have been assumed and not known.

The research provides data that shows that young people are not associating the brand with technology, possibly contributing to low sales of computers and high-tech consumer electronics.

The company uses the data to develop a new national advertising and branding campaign. Despite a reworking of the company's image, including an updated logo and jingle, follow-up research shows very little change in consumer perception. Senior managers decide that the data is either not an accurate reflection of consumer sentiment or is not relevant to the company's objectives.

Practice Task 1

Question 1

Draw a line to match each customer research method to its definition.

- | | |
|-----------------|---|
| » 1:1 meeting | » Meeting with a small group of people to discuss predetermined topics |
| » Focus group | » A number of questions with defined responses, e.g. yes or no, ranking 1–10 |
| » Survey | » Customer's response to an experience or service |
| » Online review | » Speaking directly to a customer about their specific needs, preference and experience |

Question 2

Which of the following statements are correct? Select yes or no for each one.

- | | | |
|--|-------|------|
| a) Customers should only be considered as those who pay for your products or services. | » Yes | » No |
| b) All customers have the same service requirements. | » Yes | » No |
| c) Effective customer service combines knowledge, integrity, timeliness and cost. | » Yes | » No |
| d) Shareholders have differing service needs to referring organisations. | » Yes | » No |
| e) Customers can be divided into internal and external customers. | » Yes | » No |
| f) Effective customer service means providing a prompt response, even if the information provided is inaccurate. | » Yes | » No |
| g) Customer behaviour is driven by a combination of personal, psychological and social factors. | » Yes | » No |

Question 3

Which of the following are appropriate methods for consulting the needs of external customers of a large utilities company? Tick all that apply.

- Online survey
- 1:1 meeting
- Mystery shopper
- Social media
- 'Town hall' style meetings
- Returning customer sales data

1B Integrate feedback into business plan

Feedback received from customers during the consultation should be evaluated and integrated into the organisation's business plan and associated policies and procedures.

An organisation's business plan details its overall goals and objectives and the actions to be taken to meet those business objectives. Customer insights and feedback obtained during consultation be considered and evaluated to shape and inform aspects of an organisation's business plan.

Evaluating feedback

Once feedback has been received from customers it should be evaluated and reviewed to highlight customer service areas requiring attention.

The feedback received during consultation should be evaluated and measured against your organisation's existing plans, policies and procedures. By doing this, you will be able to identify where your existing plans and practices do not meet with customer expectations. The evaluation process should involve people from across your organisation so that a well-rounded, holistic picture of operations (and potential solutions) from across the business can be evaluated and discussed.

Examples of customer service requirements not meeting service expectations are outlined below.

Product or service quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Product range not offered by organisation Product configuration (e.g. product groupings/service duration/locations serviced) not meeting customer requirements Service or complaint-handling method (e.g. live chat) not meeting with customer preference Customer service standards (e.g. refunds/complaint-handling process) not meeting with customer preference
Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Response to customer enquiries not handled in preferred time frame Time taken to complete transaction or receive service too long Order/service lead time too long
Cost	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poor perception of product/service value Similar product or service available elsewhere Associated costs (e.g. postage/booking fee) considered excessive

Developing and managing organisational systems

Following the evaluation phase, the next step is to determine how the feedback should be addressed and integrated into the organisation's plans and systems.

Once feedback has been evaluated to determine where service elements are not meeting customer requirements, you should consider what actions need to be taken in order to integrate the feedback into the organisation's business plan and systems.

Discussions should be held in conjunction with relevant managers and colleagues to explore potential solutions to the problems suggested by the customer service feedback. It is important that all parties to any introduction of systems or procedures (or modifications to existing ones) are consulted so as to avoid any unintended or unforeseen consequences of changes. Points to be considered during this systems phase are outlined below.

Developing or modifying internal systems

- Does the feedback from customers require integration into the business plan and/or development of new systems? If so, how?
- Who should be consulted before integrating the feedback into the business plans? Does the required addition/improvement have knock-on effects or impact existing processes and policies?
- What teams or individuals would be impacted by new or revised systems plans? Should they be consulted to explore knock-on effects or ramifications of procedural change?
- Do the feedback and resultant modifications require advising to investors/customers/shareholders?
- Is further consultation with customer groups needed before taking further action?
- What internal approvals are required before making changes based on customer feedback?

The type of business plan and how it is communicated and implemented depends on the size and nature of the business. Some organisations have an overarching business plan developed by senior management. Executives are then charged with the responsibility of ensuring each department has its own operational plans that align with the objectives stated in the business plan. Your organisation's business plan should clearly highlight the buying preferences of your target market, or at least recommend further research to develop market intelligence. This is the goal of market-orientated organisations.

Elements typically appearing in a business plan are outlined below.

Executive summary	Usually a summary of the contents of the plan that highlights key objectives and goals – may include details of a company's values, points of difference and key offerings
Company description	Includes key information about the business, its goals, its market positioning and customer segments
Market analysis	An overview of the market in which the organisation operates, key competitors, challenges and opportunities for the company and industry as a whole
Operational detail	Includes a description of how the company is structured, a summary of key operational aspects including customer service, product and service delivery and key measurements of organisational performance
Service/product offering	A summary of the main products and/or services offered by the organisation
Budgets/financial goals	A summary of the incomings and outgoings projected for the period covered by the business plan

Public relations and product promotion

Methods and plans for promoting an organisation's products and services form a key part of business plans. Your role as a customer service professional includes maintaining understanding of these plans.

Promotional strategies are an important feature of an organisation's business plan. These are a public relations tool to increase market awareness and ensure clients understand the quality of the products and services, as well as the organisation's pricing and time line policies.

You should be familiar with all current campaigns and the information developed to promote the products and services. Identify ways to increase the effectiveness of all informative material both inside and outside of your existing customer base. The aim of a public relations tool is to keep customers aware of the organisation's products and services, and keep them satisfied with their purchases so they will return as repeat customers. Develop your knowledge and expertise in this area through professional development and networking.

Example

Modifying internal processes

LAMT Medical Consumables supplies specialist medical devices and consumable products to be used in hospitals. LAMT has recently appointed a new customer service manager to help address an increased number of complaints and negative feedback from customers.

Customer service manager, Lauren, has sought feedback from customers in a number of ways. This has included surveys and asking customer service representatives to have 1:1 meetings with representatives from the company's key customers.

Having reviewed the feedback, Lauren has learned that one of the main customer complaints is that they can't access specialist advice on how to use highly technical products in an acceptable time frame. Customers complain that when they have a patient ready to go into theatre, they cannot wait for an email response from LAMT's product specialists.

Lauren has identified that modifying LAMT's internal systems so that customers can make urgent product enquiries by telephone will help to resolve this issue. Lauren has spoken with the Marketing Manager who has agreed that this is a good idea and will ensure that this new method is documented and distributed to everyone concerned.

Practice Task 2

Question 1

Which of the following statements are correct? Select yes or no for each one.

- | | | |
|--|-------|------|
| a) A business plan provides an overall guide as to what a business wishes to achieve and how it will go about pursuing its objectives. | » Yes | » No |
| b) Approval and input from management will be required before making changes to operational plans. | » Yes | » No |
| c) Shareholders and customers may need to be advised of some changes to business plans. | » Yes | » No |
| d) Team members and operational staff should be consulted regarding procedural changes. | » Yes | » No |
| e) Competitive pricing is an element of quality customer service. | » Yes | » No |
| f) Public relations keeps customers informed about products and services and helps to promote repeat business. | » Yes | » No |
| g) Public relations is only relevant to sales and marketing teams. | » Yes | » No |

Question 2

Draw a line to match each of the following examples of customer service feedback to either quality, time or cost related factors.

- | | |
|--|-----------|
| » Comparative product available elsewhere | » Quality |
| » Returns processing delay | » Quality |
| » Customer service telephone number not answered | » Time |
| » Preferred appointment time options not offered | » Time |
| » Consultant late for meeting | » Cost |
| » High priced processing fee | » Cost |

1C Obtain resources needed to address customer requirements

Meeting the identified needs of your customers may require the procurement and use of resources that do not already exist in your organisation. A gap analysis can be used to identify disparity between required and existing resources.

Having identified the needs of your customers and determined how these needs will be integrated into your business's plans and procedures, the next step is to determine the resources required to service the needs of your customers.

Resources will vary widely according to the nature of your business and its customer service needs, but can be broadly categorised as follows.

Human resources	Human resources are the people and skills required to meet the needs of your customers. Examples include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ extra people required to complete order despatch or process customer enquiries more quickly ▪ people with particular skill sets to meet specific needs, e.g. providing expert advice on a particular subject.
Financial resources	Financial resources relate to approvals to make purchases or allocate money in order to meet identified needs. Examples include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ approval to spend money on staff training ▪ approval to purchase tools or equipment ▪ staff overtime approval.
Physical resources	Physical resources relate to tools, equipment or facilities required in order to meet customer needs. Examples include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ access to office space, e.g. to conduct customer interviews, or for confidential consultation ▪ IT systems to better track customer interactions ▪ sample products to demonstrate usage to customers.

Identifying required resources

Identifying required resources can be undertaken using a gap analysis; a three-step process that measures the gap between required and existing resources.

Analysis of the information gathered during consultation with customers and the methods by which these needs will be met (as defined and integrated into the business plans) will help to determine the resources required in order to meet your customers' needs.

Tools such as a gap analysis can help streamline this process and identify any disparity between resources required and those currently available. A resource gap analysis comprises the following steps.

1. Identify the resources required to perform the task.

Firstly, you should identify the resources you will need to perform the customer service tasks identified and documented in your organisational plans.

2. Identify which of those resource you already have.

You may already have some of the resources you have identified in Step 1. Some may be incomplete or require improvement/upscaling.

3. Compare the required resources against the resources you have.

Comparing your required resources against your existing resources reveals 'the gap'.

Once you have identified your gap, your next task is to determine how you will procure or access the resources required.

Procuring required resources

Once you have identified the resources you require to service your customers' needs, you should take steps to procure these resources in line with your organisation's policies and procedures.

After identifying the resources needed, you will have to determine how to source them. Your organisation's policies and procedures will largely determine this, as each organisation has its own requirements in terms of preferred suppliers, procurement channels and approval processes.

Procuring resources does not just refer to financial transactions like paying for overtime or purchasing equipment. Examples of resource procurement not incurring direct costs may include things such as access to space in your office, secondment of people from other departments, or creation of a new page on your website.

When seeking approval for access to resources you should consider the following points.

Quotations	It is always good practice to seek price quotations from a number of suppliers when making purchases. Review of these quotations should not be based on price alone; reliability, quality and after sales service may also be appropriate, depending on the nature of the resources required.
Your organisation's procedures	Considerations here may include whether all purchases are to be fed through a central procurement team, whether your organisation has entered into preferred supplier arrangements, the approvals process and how the resource integrates with existing resources. The latter is especially relevant when looking at IT hardware or software resources.
Submissions	All internal requests for resources should be presented in a manner that supports your request. The need for the resources, the benefits to be achieved by using the resources and how the proposed procurement meets with the business plans and objectives should all form part of any submission.

Example

Procuring customer relationship management (CRM) software

Aisha has identified that her organisation's current software is contributing to the ineffective tracking of interactions with customers. This is leading to her customer service team failing to follow through on customer enquiries, as the current software does not have the facility to log customer discussions and flag follow-up telephone calls.

After discussion with her organisation's procurement team, Aisha discovered that her organisation has a relationship with a particular software vendor. Aisha has spoken with the vendor who has given her a price and specification for a customer relationship management (CRM) software tool that will allow her team to record details of customer interaction and send a reminder when a follow-up phone call is due.

In order to test the validity of the quote received, Aisha has also sought quotations from two other software vendors. She will now present her findings and recommendation for purchase in a formal submission to the Customer Service Manager.

Practice Task 3

Question 1

Draw a line to match each resource type with its example.

- | | |
|-------------|---|
| » Financial | » Approval to hold offsite team training event |
| » Human | » Customer relationship management software |
| » Physical | » Staff temporarily moving across from another department |

Question 2

List the three steps of the gap analysis process.

Question 3

Which of the following statements are correct? Select yes or no for each one.

- | | | |
|--|-------|------|
| a) An organisation's preferred supplier relationships should be considered when procuring resources. | » Yes | » No |
| b) Approval to procure resources may be defined in your organisation's policies and procedures. | » Yes | » No |
| c) Policies and procedures will cover financial resource procurement only. | » Yes | » No |
| d) Requests for resources should include a statement as to how the resources will support objectives detailed in the business plans. | » Yes | » No |

Summary

- Customers can include board members, colleagues, end users, potential funding bodies, supervisors and suppliers of goods and services.
- You need to research what your customer base requires in relation to the products and services your organisation offers. Generally, this includes high quality, value for money and prompt delivery.
- Consultation can occur in a variety of ways including 1:1 meetings, forums, surveys and focus groups. The method of consultation will be determined by the customer segment you are consulting with and the information you wish to collect.
- Effective customer service encompasses three broad areas – provision of quality products, services and interaction with customers, goods and services offered at a competitive price and delivery and response to enquiries in a timely manner.
- Feedback gathered should be evaluated and incorporated into a company's plans. Evaluation of information should be undertaken in conjunction with relevant team members and departments to determine the most appropriate response and action.
- Once information has been evaluated, the next step is to consider how modifications impact organisational systems and plans. It may be that existing systems need modification or new systems need to be developed.
- You should examine what resources are needed in order to meet the customer service requirements of your customers. A gap analysis can be used to determine what resources are required versus what is already available in the organisation.
- Resources can be categorised as being either human, financial or physical. Your organisation may have specific procedures and policies in place for procuring or sourcing resources. You should follow all relevant procedures when seeking approval to source and implement new resources.

Learning Checkpoint 1

Establishing customer requirements

Part A

1. Identify two methods for obtaining feedback and research information in each of the following situations. Briefly outline why these methods are appropriate.

a) Employee job satisfaction

b) Satisfaction levels of customers of a financial institution

2. List five groups that may be considered customers of an organisation.

3. Which of the following statements are steps in a resource gap analysis? Tick all that apply.

- Identify organisation's existing resources
- Obtain quotations for required resources
- Identify resources required to meet customer needs
- Compare existing resources against required resources
- Implement resources and complete actions

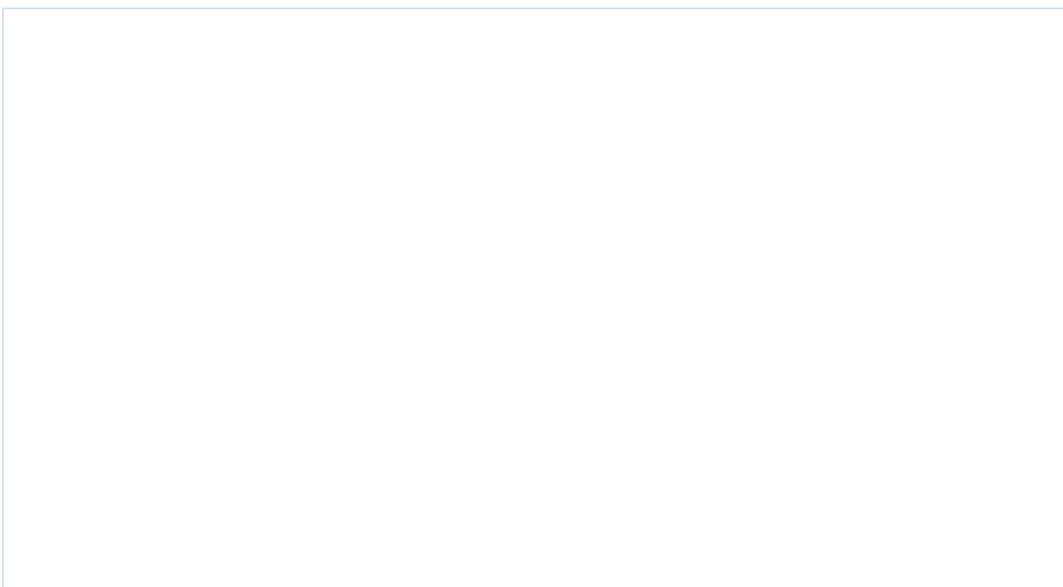
4. Which of the following statements are correct? Select yes or no for each one.

- a) Effective customer service includes prompt response to enquiries. » Yes » No
- b) Evaluating customer feedback reveals how existing procedures may not be meeting customer needs. » Yes » No
- c) Evaluation of customer feedback should be undertaken by the customer service team. » Yes » No
- d) Integration of new organisational plans should be discussed with those impacted at the operational level. » Yes » No
- e) Customer feedback should not impact existing plans, policies and procedures. » Yes » No

5. Provide two examples of different resources that may help address customer service requirements.
- Physical
 - Financial
 - Human



6. Identify how quality, time and cost impact effective customer service.



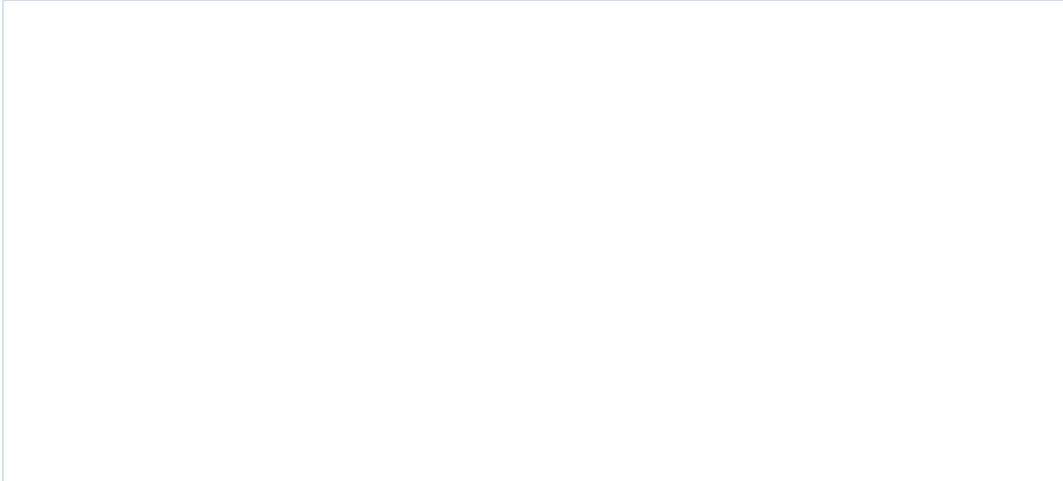
7. Which of the following statements relate to public relations? Tick all that apply.

- Public relations helps build repeat customers by keeping people up to date with products and services.
- Public relations and product promotion will not form part of an organisation's business plan.
- Customer service professionals do not need a working knowledge of promotional activities.
- Customer service professionals are positioned to provide advice and input to public relations activities.
- Professional development activities can help improve knowledge of public relations principles.

8. Draw a line to match each customer to examples of their specific service needs.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Board members and senior managers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Looking for consistency in dealings » Willingness to achieve a mutually beneficial outcome » Honesty and adherence to payment terms |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Colleagues | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Looking for return on investment » Seeking evidence that organisation is being managed soundly |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Traditional customers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Needs information on which to make corporate decisions » Requires timely access to accurate information |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Investors, shareholders and donors | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Reliable, consistent service delivered in a professional and friendly manner » Service to be delivered in line with internal policies and procedures |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Suppliers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Prompt, accurate, informed service » Products and services to be of quality and at a competitive price |

9. Identify three examples of how psychological, personal and social factors influence customer behaviour.



Part B

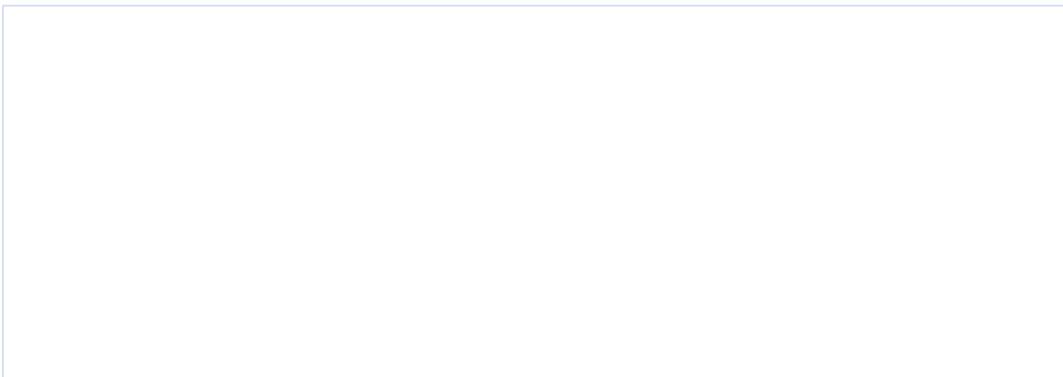
Read the case study then answer the questions that follow.

Case study

Andrea works for Corrigan Recruiting, a consultancy specialising in recruiting to the legal industry. Corrigan's has recently undertaken a satisfaction survey with their corporate clients which revealed that enquiries made via the website are often going unanswered. Having spoken with some clients directly, Andrea has become aware that this is reflecting poorly on the organisation and building a perception that Corrigan's does not value its clients.

Andrea feels that changes to internal processes are required in order to make sure that all enquiries are being responded to in a set time frame.

1. List two other methods Corrigan Recruiting could have used to consult with its customers about their service requirements.



2. Which of the following are appropriate next steps for Andrea to take? Tick all that apply.
- Consult with those currently responsible for responding to messages, their managers and other staff members to determine changes to processes.
 - Go ahead and make the changes and advise those affected once made.
 - Examine existing procedures and see what modifications might be appropriate.
 - Examine existing practices to see what might be causing the delay in responding.
 - Wait and see if there are any further complaints before taking action.
3. Andrea has identified that 15 hours per week are required to monitor and respond to customer enquiries. Number each step from 1 to 5 in the order you would follow to identify existing procedures and procure additional manpower resources.
- Identify organisation's procedures and processes for requesting additional resources
 - Evaluate existing man hour allocation or capability
 - Examine possible solutions for sourcing additional personnel/allocation of hours
 - Identify gap between required and existing man hours
 - Prepare submission or written proposal for additional resources



Topic 2 | Deliver quality products and service

- 2A Deliver products and services according to customer specifications
- 2B Monitor and assess team performance
- 2C Support colleagues to overcome difficulties

2A Deliver products and services according to customer specifications

Delivery of products and services to customers should reflect their definition of effective customer service, as well as referencing relevant legislative requirements.

As we saw in Topic 1, customers can be segmented into groups, each with its own service needs, priorities and understanding of what it means to receive quality customer service. Different groups also need different products or services. For example, to an end user customer you will be supplying your actual product or service. To a senior manager, your product will be supplying information or advice to help them make their decisions.

Just as perceptions of quality service differ, the delivery of products and services needs to differ in order to meet specific customer requirements and behaviours.

Effective customer service hinges on quality, time and service. Your customer consultation process will have revealed how your customer perceives effective customer service with respect to each of these requirements. Your role now is to ensure you deliver in line with those expectations.

Examples of ways in which high-quality customer service can be delivered to your customers (in line with their requirements established during consultation) is outlined below.

Board members and senior managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery of information, e.g. providing new customer enquiry figures in a format that meets with their needs and usage • Delivery of information in the required time frame • Accessibility for follow up or to provide clarification • Professional interaction • Professional presentation of materials
Colleagues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistent interaction and provision of information in line with their specific needs • Timely responses • Accessibility in case of follow up or clarification needs • Friendliness and courtesy
External customers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of informed, knowledgeable advice and service • Prompt response to enquiries • Friendly, approachable manner • Provision of high-quality product, appropriate lead/delivery times and follow-up service

Investors, shareholders and donors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of timely, well-presented performance information • Provision of timely, well-presented plans • Business activities that deliver a return on investment • Ethical and transparent behaviour
Suppliers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistent interactions and orders that meet with suppliers' procedural requirements • Compliance with payment and contractual terms

Planning to deliver quality customer service

Business plans should include policies, processes and procedures that detail how the organisation will deliver customer service that reflects customer specifications.

In addition to overarching strategic goals, your business plan should provide broad objectives and methods by which customer service is to be delivered, in line with the specifications of your customer groups.

To meet customer expectations, you will need to examine the three main elements of effective customer service and consider ways to meet identified expectations.

Factors that fall into the parameters of each of the three elements of effective customer service are outlined below.

Product or service quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the product or service needs of each customer group? • What is their preferred method of receiving goods or services? E.g. online, face to face delivery, collection from a store or pick-up point, home delivery • What is their preferred contact method? E.g. telephone, email • Do existing internal processes address these needs and preferences, and if not, what new processes are required? • Who is the person or people best positioned to meet the needs?
Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the time frame expectations of each group? • What time factors apply to different aspects of service? E.g. response to initial enquiry, delivery of goods or services, response to complaints/ feedback • Do current internal processes support these time frames and if not, what actions should be taken to address this?

Cost	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is your current product or service pricing perceived as good value by your customers? Are any additional costs acceptable to your customers? E.g. handling fees, booking fees, credit card usage fees What actions can be taken to remedy poor perception? E.g. marketing/promotional activity, pricing restructure, cost cutting
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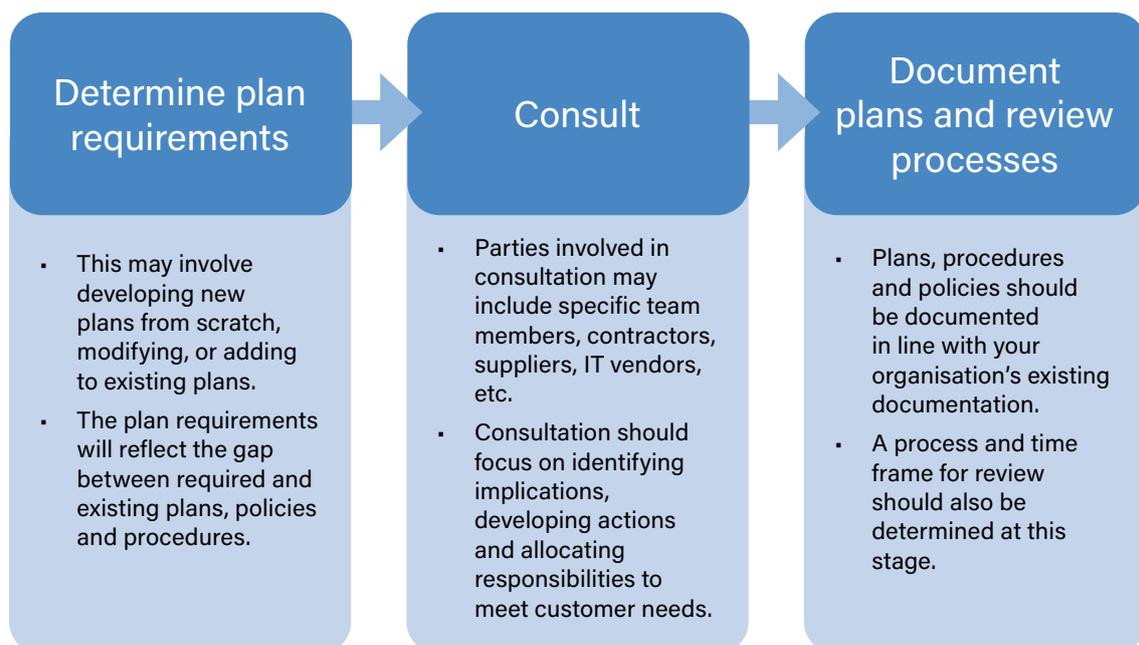
Developing and reviewing plans, policies and procedures

Effective service delivery should be documented in your organisation's plans, policies and procedures. Existing documentation should be reviewed, and new processes developed if necessary.

The gap analysis process discussed in Topic 1 is a useful method of reviewing existing processes and procedures, and evaluating whether they are fit to service customer needs. You can use a gap analysis to identify policies and procedures that are required, review existing ones, and reveal the gap between them. This gap can then be addressed by modifying existing plans, policies and procedures, or developing new ones .

When developing or modifying such plans you should play close attention to the information gathered during the consultation phase to ensure the plans align with the needs of your customers.

Follow the steps below when developing new plans or modifying existing ones.



Legislative requirements

There are a number of legislative requirements that apply to the delivery of customer service and it is essential that your organisation details adherence to these in its plans and policies.

All team members must be familiar with key provisions of legislation that may affect customer service delivery. As a manager, you need to keep up to date with legislation and disseminate information promptly to team members to ensure they understand their obligations and responsibilities. Regularly monitor your team's performance.

Competition and consumer protection laws set out customer rights and guarantees that must be met.

Legislation contained in the *Competition and Consumer Act 2010* (Cth) deals with ensuring the quality of products and services, behaviour when dealing with complaints, return of goods, etc.

The Australian Consumer Laws [previously known as the *Trade Practices Act 1974* (Cth)], exists to:

- 'enhance the welfare of Australians through the promotion of competition and fair trading and provision for consumer protection'.

Core competition law provisions are contained in Part IV of the Act, including restrictive trade practices, price monitoring and disclosure, and false or misleading representations. The federal, state and territory governments also have regulating bodies to help Australians be responsible and informed businesses and consumers.

Organisations such as the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) offer advice to consumers about how to make and resolve complaints they may have with a business or organisation.

Other crucial areas of legislation that need to be incorporated into service delivery are listed below.

<p>Equal employment opportunity</p>	<p>Ensures that practices are in place for hiring the best applicants to support the delivery of quality services to customers. It also ensures that all employees have fair access to appropriate training and development to support better service provision for customers.</p> <p>Example:</p> <p>Older people should not be discriminated against in seeking employment as sales assistants where customers are predominantly younger people.</p>
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Anti-discrimination	<p>Anti-discrimination principles support respect for the social and cultural backgrounds of all customers and ensure fair and unbiased services to all customers.</p> <p>Example:</p> <p>No customers should be discriminated against in promotional material or when dealing with customers.</p>
Privacy	<p>Privacy legislation sets out customer protection concerning privacy. This may include requirements for what customer information is collected, how it is collected, how it is stored, how it may be used and when it can be used.</p> <p>Example:</p> <p>Ensuring personal information is kept secure.</p>

Example

A flexible approach to customer needs

A leading Australian technology finance company provides a business technology rental solution through various Australian retailers. The company approaches its clients with an open, collaborative view to meeting requirements. Their business model involves direct dealings with end users as well as partnering with the technology retailers. To ensure their product is meeting the needs of both the end users and their business partners, the company develops several sales tools to demonstrate the repayment and tax benefits over time (for end users) and to assist sales people in recommending their product.

The technology finance company also needs to address the 'What's in it for me?' aspect for the retailer. To maintain the interest and business of each retailer, the company creates several promotions throughout the year and awards significant financial incentives to the retailer and to salespeople. This depth of customer interaction results in the organisation becoming the largest provider of consumer rental finance in Australia.

Practice Task 4

Question 1

Draw a line to match each legislative requirement for customer service to its definition.

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| » Equal employment opportunity | » Protects customer personal information |
| » Privacy | » Ensures customers receive accurate product information |
| » Consumer law | » Protects customer personal information |
| » Anti-discrimination legislation | » Ensures all staff have access to training and work roles |

Question 2

Which of the following statements are correct? Select yes or no for each one.

- | | | |
|---|-------|------|
| a) Customer service processes should be documented in business plans. | » Yes | » No |
| b) Customer service processes can be developed with reference to the three pillars of effective customer service. | » Yes | » No |
| c) Existing policies and procedures should be reviewed against customer needs to determine requirements for new or amended policies and procedures. | » Yes | » No |
| d) When developing plans consultation should focus on required actions and implications of change. | » Yes | » No |
| e) Only senior managers need to be aware of legislative requirements. | » Yes | » No |

Question 3

Which of the following are examples of customers' specifications for effective service delivery?
Tick all that apply.

- Organisation's internal staffing structure
- Time frame for response to enquiries
- Method by which information is to be provided to customers
- Service booking charges
- Method by which information is shared between colleagues
- Quality of products supplied

2B Monitor and assess team performance

A team manager is responsible for monitoring and assessing team performance. This may include formal review processes or less formal observation of team members' performances.

A team's performance relies heavily on the abilities of its leader. As a manager of a team, your role is to guide, support and monitor team members to achieve the team's goals and, in turn, the organisation's objectives. You need to make sure each member understands the organisation's standards for customer service. You also need to regularly monitor performance by observing team members, checking their results, analysing feedback from others, and arranging team meetings to discuss progress.

Your organisation may have formal processes for monitoring and assessing team performance. These may include:

- numerical indicators, such as:
 - having a certain number of customer interactions in a set time frame
 - responding to customer complaints in a time frame
- formal review processes such as:
 - appraisals or observations
 - completion of task checklists
 - individual performance feedback such as at the end of a telephone interaction.

Points to consider when evaluating team performance

- Is the team member following the policies, procedures and plans defined by the organisation?
- Is the team member meeting the needs of customers?
- Is the team member displaying the organisation's values and ethics?
- Is the team member responding to the individual needs and behaviours of customers?
- Is the team member meeting their own personal requirements, such as working on areas for development?

Service standards and best practice models

There are a number of internationally recognised service standards applying to the delivery of quality customer service. Your organisation may wish to subscribe to one of these or develop its own internal measures.

Your business plan and service procedures should include reference to the service standards and models for best practice that your organisation follows. Adherence and adoption of these standards should be communicated to your customer and form the basis for your internal monitoring activities.

Many organisations develop service charters, also known as customer service policies, that provide a framework from which all staff can work. A service charter usually includes statements of service expectations and standards. As a company policy, it generally underpins employment standards and work performance. This charter often forms a baseline against which employee performance can be monitored and assessed.

The International Organization for Standardization (ISO) has created many guidelines to address the various dimensions of customer service. They include:

- ISO 9004:2000 Quality Management Systems – Guidelines for performance improvements
- ISO 10001:2007 Quality management – Customer satisfaction – Guidelines for codes of conduct for organizations
- ISO 10002:2006 Quality management – Customer satisfaction – Guidelines for complaints handling in organizations
- ISO 10003:2007 Quality management – Customer satisfaction – Guidelines for dispute resolution external to organizations.

The International Customer Service Standard (ICSS) is an Approved Standard of the International Standards Accreditation Board (ISAB). The Customer Service Institute of Australia (CSIA) has adopted the International Customer Service Standard (ICSS) for application throughout its membership.

Supporting a team to meet standards

As a manager, you should ensure your team members are aware of, and have the skills to, follow relevant standards.

Once standards are implemented and legislative requirements identified, you need to conduct organisational learning and monitor team performance to ensure everyone understands and applies them in their work practices.

Methods include:

- formal training: presented by managers or trainers
- informal training: peer-group meetings, role-modelling
- trial and review: to ensure standards and legislation are being adhered to
- opportunities for feedback and improvement: formal or informal.

Example

A service charter

A New South Wales training organisation is developing its network of writers. The writers' role is to create quality training materials for the organisation as needed, and for external organisations as the opportunities arise. As a part of the organisation's quality management system, the manager develops a set of writing project management standards. The standards, by which the organisation measures performance for both internal and external clients, include the following:

- meets the style guide provided to the writers (an all-inclusive document)
- first draft grammatically correct and +/-10 per cent of the word count
- provided by close of business on the day of the defined deadline.

To monitor performance, the training company's manager requires regular updates on a provided form and samples of the work submitted at periodic intervals. The system allows the organisation to effectively manage client expectations of both quality and timeliness.

Practice Task 5

Question 1

Which of the following points do you need to consider when evaluating team customer service performance? Tick all that apply.

- Is the team following the organisation's policies and procedures relating to customer service delivery?
- Is the team working well as a whole?
- Is the team responding to individual customer needs and behaviours?
- Is the team managing their administrative load?
- Is the team meeting customers' needs?

Question 2

Which of the following statements are correct? Select yes or no for each one.

- | | | |
|---|-------|------|
| a) International Organization for Standardization (ISO) issues guidelines relating to customer service standards. | » Yes | » No |
| b) Best practice models define what is considered effective customer service. | » Yes | » No |
| c) Team members should be supported and trained to follow best practice models and standards. | » Yes | » No |
| d) Monitoring and assessing of performance should consider adherence to organisational policies and procedures. | » Yes | » No |
| e) Effective customer service responds to individual customer needs. | » Yes | » No |

2C Support colleagues to overcome difficulties

Your role as a team leader or manager includes supporting members of your team to overcome customer service difficulties.

Customer service issues can range from personality conflicts and disagreement over price through to physical threats and legal action. Managing staff in a customer service role requires the ability to recognise the source of customer service problems and ways of addressing them through effective leadership, supervision, coaching and mentoring.

Customer relations management

Customer relations are the relationships a business has with its customers and the way it treats them. It is not only the processes it uses to establish a relationship but also how it monitors and maintains it.

Effectively managing customer relations requires skills and knowledge in two main areas – communication skills for customer contact, and the ability to access, manage and communicate information relevant to the needs of your customers.

Difficulties in customer service will often fall into one of two areas:

- customer communication and direct customer exchanges
- lack of relevant knowledge (product, procedural or information management knowledge).

Some of the more common difficulties related to customer contact and information management are listed below.

Customer contact	Information management
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Handling customer complaints ▪ Addressing customer behaviour ▪ Relating to customer needs using empathy ▪ Relaying product knowledge ▪ Obtaining customer feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Product knowledge ▪ Record-keeping and management methods ▪ Understanding customer enquiries ▪ Aligning products and services with needs

Communication skills for managing customer relations

Communication skills are key to providing effective customer service. Training in techniques and strategies can help avoid difficulties in communication and clarify customer expectations.

The ability to communicate effectively is key to effective customer service. Difficulties can arise when language, literacy, physical abilities or cultural habits prevent the accurate transfer of information. Barriers to effective communication may be reduced through understanding, knowledge and experience.

Coaching and mentoring your staff on communication skills and techniques such as effective verbal and non-verbal language, questioning techniques and ways to develop rapport with customers can help avoid and overcome communication difficulties.

Key elements of effective communication are outlined below.

Understanding customer enquiries

- Effective customer questioning can help determine customers' needs. This may involve paraphrasing the query, asking further questions, then rephrasing for confirmation. For example, sometimes a salesperson will offer the cheapest product or service line if they think the customer is being indecisive because of the cost. In many cases, the cheapest option may not be what the customer wants; you can quickly clarify this by asking a few questions.
- To match a product/service with a customer, the salesperson needs to find out what is driving the customer towards a decision; for example, it may be cost, aesthetics, safety, performance, social acceptance or after-sales service.
- To train new staff, provide a range of situations to role-play, or ask them to shadow you or another experienced person to observe techniques to identify what the customer wants.

Aligning products and services with customer needs

- Once client expectations are clarified, staff members need to use their knowledge of the products/services to determine what will meet the customer's specific needs. This is a crucial aspect of customer service, as a customer may never return if they feel their needs are not being met.
- Encourage effective communication. A staff member may align their service with the customer's needs by asking about priorities. For example, product knowledge and after-sales service may be more important to the customer than price.
- It is important for staff to complete training in questioning, interpreting and paraphrasing.
- Make sure staff members have access to brochures, price lists and catalogues to increase their knowledge of products/services.
- Share knowledge to maintain high customer service standards.

Information management skills for managing customer relations

In-depth knowledge of products and services is essential for effective customer service. Ensure that your team has the required level of knowledge.

A crucial aspect of customer service is being knowledgeable about the product or service offered so queries can be answered promptly and accurately. Being proficient in a customer service role means that the person:

- understands the request
- can answer questions about the product or service
- knows where to source the information if it is not readily available
- supplies appropriate information that meets the customer's needs.

A number of ways that information management difficulties can be kept to a minimum are shown below.

Product and service knowledge

- Induction and initial job training should cover most product knowledge requirements. However, ongoing training can be offered using coaches or peers to assist. Some organisations have intranet product training tutorials and include training in key performance indicators (KPIs). Strategies can also include maintaining a file of product brochures, price lists, features and benefits.

Internal processes and policies

- Staff members need to have current information on products, services, customers, and organisational policies and procedures relating to pricing, delivery, payment, refunds and return of goods. It may be your responsibility to purchase a customer management software application and train staff in its use, or develop a policy for damaged goods.
- As well as knowing where to find information, staff members need to know who to refer a query to if it is outside their level of expertise.
- Retrieval of important information at the time it is needed improves service quality. If the customer has to wait, staff need to explain the delay and the reasons for it. In more complex business contexts, product or process information may be more difficult to obtain. Training in the knowledge management systems of the organisation is vital.

Supporting staff to address complaints

Part of your role as a manager is supporting your staff to recognise, respond to and overcome difficulties such as customer complaints.

You should ensure that your team are familiar with general customer complaint handling processes, as outlined below, and the specific requirements of your organisation.

Pass on your knowledge and techniques for solving problems and dealing effectively with customer enquiries, complaints or difficulties. Many organisations have specific processes and levels of responsibility for addressing customer complaints. It may be that your team are required to refer all complaints to you as their team leader, or they may be able to respond to routine issues, only referring to yourself in certain instances.

Team member customer complaint processes

1. Allow the customer to speak and explain their concerns. If the customer cannot be understood clearly, e.g. if English is their second language, seek the help of experienced staff or those familiar with the person's language, so these constraints don't hamper resolution of the issue.
2. Acknowledge and apologise for the customer's difficulty and show concerns for their feelings.
3. The team member should refer the issue to you as their manager, or another appropriate staff member, if the issue is beyond their ability or scope of authority to resolve.
4. Negotiate and aim for a win-win outcome that meets the needs of the customer and the organisation.
5. Provide a clear resolution to the customer and check that the customer understands the agreement.
6. Complete relevant paperwork or administrative requirements.

Improving customer service through training

Effective, thorough and ongoing staff training can avoid recurring difficulties and ensure your organisation provides uniformly outstanding service.

As a manager, you need to have well-developed communication skills to ensure you:

- provide clear and accurate information
- can implement strategies such as coaching, mentoring and counselling
- effectively pass on customer service techniques to others.

Here are some suggestions to assist staff in perfecting their customer service roles by providing a range of training and support options, especially when dealing with complex and non-routine difficulties.

Coaching	Organise one-on-one coaching using explanation, demonstration and imitation techniques.
Role-modelling	Role-model effective communication strategies for dealing with difficult customers.
Mentoring	Match the staff member to an empathetic and experienced mentor. Use role-modelling and coaching skills to develop better habits.
Counselling	Provide formal counselling to explain the facts of the role and the requirements of the organisation.
Reminders	Regularly remind staff of organisational policies and procedures to consolidate learning. This can be done informally when observing negative behaviours, through articles on the intranet or in newsletters, or via notices on staff bulletin boards.

Example

Sharing knowledge to maintain customer standards

Colin works in the service department at a car dealership. A customer enquiry regarding an urgent repair is directed to Colin for his attention. The caller explains that her car has been recalled due to an issue with the seatbelts. The recall was announced on a television news report the previous night. Colin has no idea about the recall and is flustered by the caller's persistence that her car be seen immediately.

From a customer service perspective, the caller perceives poor quality service due to the lack of knowledge and inaction on Colin's behalf. She demands to talk to the service manager. The manager explains that the seatbelt issue only relates to the newest model and does not affect her car. Colin is left embarrassed and annoyed that his manager had not relayed this information to him sooner.

The dealership management team decide that a daily meeting will take place in the service centre to share any knowledge regarding the industry or issues in the service department. This will hopefully rectify information gaps and improve team cohesion.

Practice Task 6

Question 1

Which of the following are ways that colleagues can be supported to overcome customer service difficulties? Tick all that apply.

- Coaching and mentoring activities
- Ensure they are aware of relevant policies and procedures
- Support the development of appropriate communication skills
- Undertake disciplinary action
- Ensure they are aware of when and how to refer issues that are outside of their scope to resolve
- Remove them from customer facing roles

Question 2

Number each step from 1 to 6 in the order you would follow to resolve a customer complaint.

- Seek a mutually acceptable outcome
- Allow customer to speak and express their concerns
- Confirm outcome and seek acceptance from customer
- Complete relevant documentation/administrative requirements
- Refer to a more senior team member if appropriate
- Express empathy and understanding

Question 3

Which of the following statements are correct? Select yes or no for each one.

- | | | |
|---|-------|------|
| a) Effective use of communication skills is key to managing customer relations and overcoming difficulties. | » Yes | » No |
| b) It is essential that customer facing employees have in-depth product, service and procedural knowledge. | » Yes | » No |
| c) Your role as a manager is to support your team to effectively manage customer relations. | » Yes | » No |
| d) Team members should have full authority to resolve any issue. | » Yes | » No |
| e) Customer service professionals should never apologise or admit wrongdoing. | » Yes | » No |

Summary

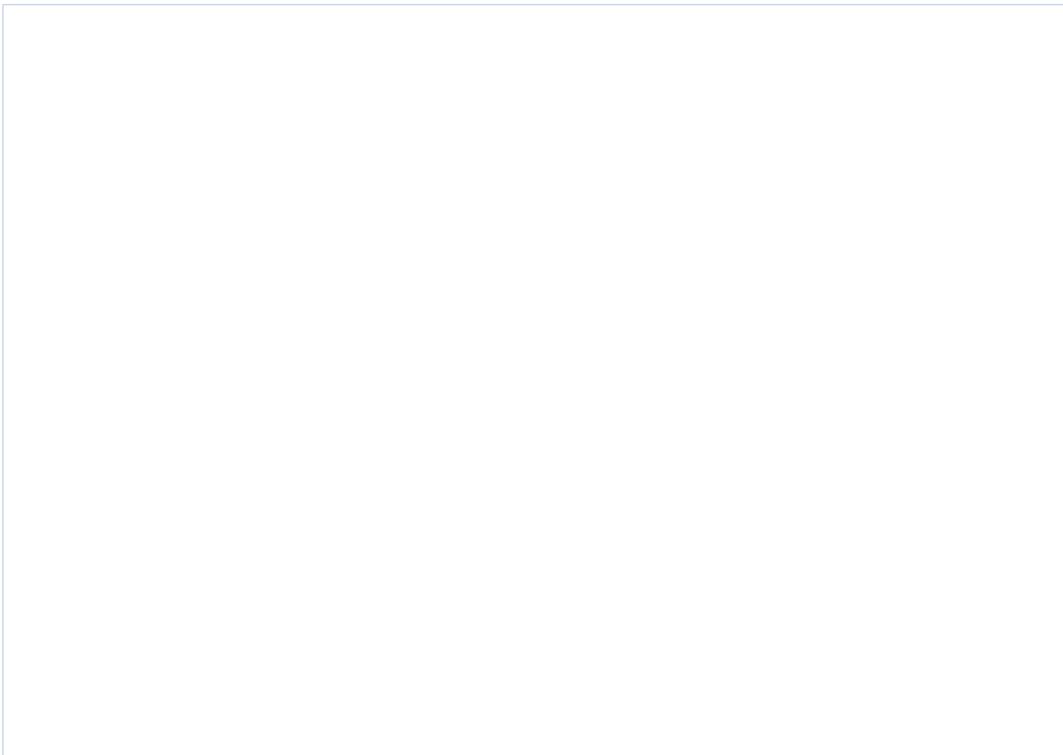
- The ways in which you deliver service to your customers should reflect their definitions of quality service as gathered during the consultation phase. These definitions should form the basis of actions and plans detailed in your organisation's business plan.
- Your organisation's policies and procedures should be reviewed to determine whether they support the delivery of customer service as defined in your business plan. It may be that new documents are required or changes are made to existing documentation.
- Customer service plans should reflect legislative requirements such as privacy, anti-discrimination and consumer law requirements. It is important that all staff are aware of such legislation and how it impacts their roles.
- As a team manager you should monitor and assess the performance of your team against required standards. The measures of effective customer service will vary from one organisation to another. However, performance against internal processes and procedures should be central to this process.
- Internationally recognised service standards, best practice models and service charters can support excellence in customer service delivery. Your team should be aware of these standards and how they are to be adopted and adhered to in your team.
- Managing staff in a customer service role requires knowledge of the various methods of conflict resolution and ways of applying them through effective leadership, supervision, coaching and mentoring.
- Managing customer relations requires excellent communications skills and a thorough knowledge of your organisation's products, services and policies.
- Staff often experience difficulties in the areas of customer contact and/or information management. It is the manager's responsibility to provide assistance in these areas through leadership, supervision, coaching and mentoring.

Learning Checkpoint 2

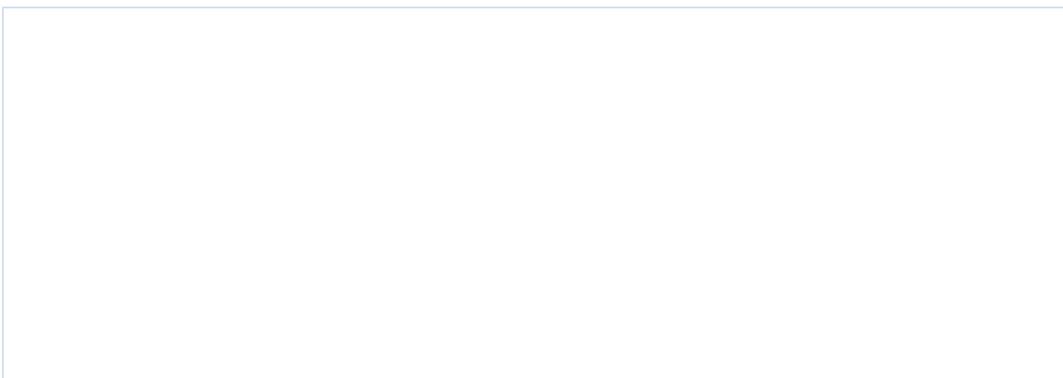
Delivering quality products and services

Part A

1. Explain how each of the following legislation applies to customer service.
 - Privacy Act
 - Consumer Law
 - Anti-discrimination legislation



2. Identify three customer specifications for service delivery that could be detailed in an organisation's business plans.



3. Which of the following statements are correct? Select yes or no for each one.

- | | | |
|---|-------|------|
| a) A gap analysis can identify shortfalls between required and existing policies and procedures. | » Yes | » No |
| b) Consultation to develop new policies and procedures should happen at senior management level. | » Yes | » No |
| c) New policies and procedures should seek to meet the requirements revealed by consultation with customers. | » Yes | » No |
| d) Adherence to new or existing policies and procedures should form part of team performance monitoring activities. | » Yes | » No |
| e) Service standards and best practice models can be used to underpin customer service policies and procedures. | » Yes | » No |

4. Which of the following help ensure products and services are delivered in line with customer and business plan requirements? Tick all that apply.

- Review, update and development of new policies and procedures
- Adoption of best practice models and standards
- Replacement of underperforming staff members
- Staff development and training activities
- Increasing product costs
- Monitor staff performance against standards, policies and procedures

Part B

Read the following case study and then answer the questions.

Case study

Andrew is the Customer Service Manager in charge of repairs, service and consumables distribution for a retailer of small household appliances.

Andrew is in his office one afternoon when he hears one of his team members, Carolyn, speaking in an aggressive manner to a customer. Andrew hears Carolyn telling an elderly customer that she has obviously broken her vacuum cleaner herself and that it is not the company's role to replace the unit just because she is too old and lazy to read the instructions properly.

Andrew comes out to the customer service area and asks Carolyn to take a break in the staff room.

1. Number each step from 1 to 6 in the order Andrew should follow to address the customer's concerns.

- Discuss a mutually acceptable outcome, e.g. repair the machine/offer a refund/replace the machine.
- Check for acceptance.
- Complete relevant documentation/processes.
- Apologise for the inconvenience caused and Carolyn's rude behaviour.
- Ask the customer to explain their concerns.
- Express empathy for their situation.

2. Which of the following are ways in which Andrew can support Carolyn to meet customer service standards? Tick all that apply.

- Provide training on customer service standards and complaint procedures
- Ensure Carolyn is aware of relevant procedures, processes and standards
- Provide mentoring on communication skills
- Threaten disciplinary action
- Congratulate her on trying to save the company money by refusing a refund

3. Give two examples of how system problems may have contributed to Carolyn's poor customer service performance.



Topic 3 | Evaluate customer service

- 3A Monitor progress against product and service targets and standards
- 3B Obtain customer feedback on products and services
- 3C Adapt delivery of products and services
- 3D Manage records, reports and recommendations

3A Monitor progress against product and service targets and standards

Plans to improve products and service delivery should include measures and processes outlining how new standards will be evaluated.

Commitment to ongoing improvement is a feature of the International Customer Service Standard (ICSS) model and should form part of all customer service initiatives. Methods available to managers to make improvements in existing systems include developing effective databases for monitoring purposes, implementing a range of feedback mechanisms, training staff, and developing or amending current policies and procedures.

Managing ongoing product and service quality

Managing product and service quality should include a definition of short- and long-term goals and the measure to be used to evaluate progress.

When choosing a strategy for monitoring the success of your customer service program you should consider the desired short- and long-term results. Objectives for various monitoring strategies should clearly state the time frame for expected changes.

Data generated by your organisation's internal systems combined with training activities form a basis for measuring outcomes of short- and long-term goals.

You will also need to consider the methods used to monitor progress – these can be broadly defined as either quantifiable (data based) or qualifiable (observable).

Using data to monitor progress

Your organisation's digital systems provide useful data that can be used to evaluate progress towards desired service standards.

Using data from monitoring tools to monitor the achievement of targets and standards is relatively easy. Your organisation's website, accounting software and customer relationship management software (CRM) will all produce data that shows whether modifications to the delivery of customer service has resulted in changes to customer engagement and interaction. The software will usually allow for the output of reports fitting the criteria you input.

More complex knowledge of performance management systems can allow real-time monitoring of performance measures. The organisation decides upon limits to the areas that may be reported upon – usually functions of time, cost and commercial relevance. Information that can be captured and analysed is shown below.

Website	Analysis of your organisation's website statistics can reveal the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • website visitors • the length of time spent on the website or specific pages • return versus new visitors to the website • pathway travelled on the website.
Accounting software	Analysis of your organisation's numerical data – i.e. sales figures can show the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • purchases or sales made over a period of time • average purchase value • purchase pathway, e.g. through website/social media/direct • new versus returning customers • sales of specific products or services.
Customer Relationship Management database	Your CRM can be used to analyse the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sales performance • customer trends • customer margins (profitability of individual customers or segments) • customer drift (changes in buying habits).

Monitoring progress using training and development activities

Training and development activities are an excellent way in which to monitor progress towards achieving product or service targets and standards.

Training activities can be designed to both support the implementation and evaluate the success of service standards and targets. When run alongside during implementation milestones they can provide real-time assessment of staff progress towards and adoption of service goals.

For example, a new procedure may be implemented over a three-month time frame. During that time, training is conducted after one, two and three months. The assessment activities for each training session are matched against the project's milestones and include demonstration and observation of desired behaviours and skills. Gaps in training can be identified relatively quickly. This is a short-term strategy relating to project implementation.

Training and development may be used as a feedback tool to highlight new opportunities. In the process of conducting induction training, staff feedback may be sought to provide input into the knowledge management system for analysis by service managers.

Example

Feedback surveys leading to improvements in customer service

A university uses feedback surveys from students who attend orientation day. These students are due to start studies in the next 12 months, so their input to future programming is identified as a useful tool for curriculum developers and department heads who schedule staff and classes.

This input provides the university with feedback about its current customer service policies and processes. It highlights areas where contact is lacking and where departments are contacting students in conflict with the university's student services team.

Results from the feedback surveys lead to the streamlining of services and contribute to the regular monitoring of student services programs.

Practice Task 7

Question 1

Which of the following are appropriate methods for monitoring progress against product or service targets? Tick all that apply.

- Evaluation of time spent on company website
- Overtime hours worked
- Demonstration of desired behaviours during development activities
- Sales figures
- Staff retention/turnover figures
- Evaluation of return customer numbers

Question 2

Which of the following statements are correct? Select yes or no for each one.

- | | | |
|--|-------|------|
| a) Quantifiable data is that which is numerically based. | » Yes | » No |
| b) Strategies for monitoring progress towards standards should include the time frame over which monitoring is to occur. | » Yes | » No |
| c) Training activities highlight staff understanding and adoption of standards. | » Yes | » No |
| d) CRM systems do not provide insights to service standard improvements. | » Yes | » No |
| e) Training activities are a useful tool for both development and measuring employee customer service skills. | » Yes | » No |

3B Obtain customer feedback on products and services

Implementation of customer service strategies should incorporate processes to seek feedback from customers regarding the provision of products and services.

As we saw in Topic 1, consultation with customers is essential to determine their specific needs, preferences and definitions of quality customer service. The information gathered during the planning phase should then form the basis on which your product and service initiatives are based.

Equally important is the need to gather feedback from your customers as you roll out and implement your customer service initiatives. The information collected during this process provides additional data on which to base the evaluation of progress made against service targets and product standards.

The methods by which this feedback is collected will be largely driven by the nature and preferences of your specific client groups and you should develop strategies to respond to each of these groups.

Methods of obtaining feedback can be broadly defined in two ways – implicit feedback, that is obtained via monitoring customer behaviour, and explicit feedback, that is specifically offered in response to a request or prompt. Examples of each are outlined below.

Implicit feedback	Explicit feedback
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Customers increasing or decreasing their interaction with the business, e.g. visits to your website or locations ▪ Customers increasing or decreasing their average purchase value ▪ Customers recommending your organisation to their family and friends 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Response to customer surveys ▪ Social media reviews/commentary ▪ Complaints/feedback made about products, services, time frames associated with transactions, pricing etc. ▪ Email/telephone calls following up on service and delivery

Strategies to obtain customer feedback

Strategies to obtain customer feedback should be appropriate to their interaction with your organisation. This includes the nature, method and time frame of gathering the feedback.

Strategies to obtain customer feedback should reflect and be relevant to the nature of their interaction with your business. For example, a training provider seeking feedback on a client's satisfaction with a training event may request feedback at different points in time. The provider may ask for feedback at the conclusion of the training event and then again in a month's time, when the client has had the opportunity to apply and embed their new skills in the workplace.

In contrast, a shareholder's satisfaction with their financial investment in an organisation may be measured over many years.

It should be noted that feedback strategies may combine both implicit and explicit feedback methods. For example, an allied health provider may monitor social media commentary about the organisation and ask its clients to complete an online survey.

When developing feedback strategies, consider policies and procedures that support the strategy. For example, who is to monitor and respond to social media commentary? How is this feedback to be collated and evaluated? Likewise, if customers are to be contacted one month after your organisation has delivered a service, who is to be responsible for the contact and recording of feedback?

Strategies for obtaining customer feedback should consider the following:

- Over what time frame should feedback be collected? Should feedback be collected on one occasion, or periodically?
- What is the most appropriate method/s for collecting feedback? E.g. survey
- How and by whom is feedback to be evaluated?
- How is the feedback process and collection method to be incorporated into operating procedures?

Example

Customer feedback strategy

Organisation name:	Wilson Educational Supplies
Customer segment:	Secondary school purchasing officers
Feedback sought:	Customer satisfaction with and ease of using new online ordering system
Feedback method:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Customer satisfaction survey to be emailed to customers three months after implementation of new system 2. Monitor email and telephone enquiries to determine if any part of the system is causing user difficulty
Feedback evaluation by:	Customer service manager, IT Manager
Operating procedures:	Customer service team to record feedback from emails/ telephone calls

Practice Task 8

Question 1

Number each step from 1 to 5 in the order you would follow to develop and use customer feedback processes.

- Seek feedback from customers
- Evaluate feedback and communicate findings to relevant personnel
- Determine feedback required from specific customer segments
- Modify or introduce policies and procedures to support feedback-seeking processes
- Determine most appropriate method for seeking feedback

Question 2

Tick whether the following feedback collection methods are implicit or explicit.

- Customer leaves Google review for wholesale fruit and vegetable supplier
- Measurement of returning visitors to a website
- Number of cart abandonments on ecommerce site
- Telephone satisfaction survey at end of call
- Monitoring of social media sentiment
- Number of new customers coming from existing customer referrals

3C Adapt delivery of products and services

There are various methods to modify the way in which products and services are delivered to customers. A continuous improvement approach ensures delivery is monitored and modified on an ongoing basis.

The purpose of seeking customer feedback and performing data analysis is to achieve a better outcome for the organisation's customers.

International Organization for Standardization (ISO) recommends use of a continuous improvement model for customer services. A continuous improvement process allows managers to identify areas where small adaptations to products, services or the customer service process may be necessary.

There are many methods that you can use, including the five below.

Lean manufacturing

Lean manufacturing is a process that steadily eliminates wasteful work processes. Waste is defined as any process that does not directly or indirectly add value to the customer experience. This might include streamlining processes such as customer complaints, introducing online payment, improving delivery or providing more comprehensive product information.

Six Sigma

Six Sigma is a system of identifying and removing defects in a given process. In manufacturing, this refers to the production output. In customer service, it could mean reducing the number of customer complaints or other metric control measures, such as speed of answering calls, number of calls on hold or customer satisfaction responses.

Total Quality Management (TQM)

TQM is a strategy of embedding an organisation-wide awareness of quality in all business processes. This covers a range of customer services, such as providing accurate information, ensuring delivery is prompt, managing complaints fairly and in a timely manner, and providing relevant and correct product information to customers.

Agile manufacturing

Agile manufacturing refers to the integration of organisational processes, people and technology in order to remain flexible, agile and fast to market. This process can have an effect on customer service, where resources are pooled and knowledge distributed throughout the organisation.

Kaizen

The Japanese methodology of Kaizen (good change) focuses on continuous improvement in all business activities, or even all aspects of life, depending on the interpretation and usage. From a customer service perspective, this approach must be tempered with business objectives and balanced against short- and long-term gains.

Feedback received from customers should be evaluated against the plans that were made initially to meet customer needs, and a gap analysis should be used to evaluate the gap between the desired and actual performance of customer service initiatives. Evaluation processes should also review actions to be developed to bridge the gap, and implications to existing resources, policies and procedures.

Consulting and collaborating to achieve outcomes

Consultation and collaboration are an important part of successfully evaluating and introducing change to existing initiatives.

In larger organisations, changes are rarely left to one individual to implement. If recommendations for process, product or service changes are made, there should be consultation and collaboration between personnel affected by the changes.

A consultative and collaborative process ensures that relevant personnel are included in any change process and therefore have the opportunity to add value and unique insight to any change. Furthermore, this inclusive approach helps to generate ownership and buy-in to the modifications, thus promoting acceptance and embedding of the change.

Consultation and collaboration processes may include:

- surveys (where consultation with a large group is required, e.g. to identify desired modifications to employee working conditions)
- town hall style meetings – ideal for brainstorming, a broad approach
- 1:1 or small group meetings – to focus on specific aspects of modifications
- call for submissions – where input is sought from customers or the general public
- working groups or project teams that bring together personnel from different parts of an organisation.

Example**The importance of consultation with stakeholders**

A Sydney-based retailer holds meetings with staff during a major cultural change program. These meetings involve hundreds of staff and are facilitated professionally to achieve collaborative approaches to organisational improvement. Ideas are taken seriously and analysed at various levels in the organisation.

Quality of customer service is a focus of the senior managers, and input from customer service representatives is regarded as essential and very useful.

The two-day meeting results in several recommendations for the improvement of the customer service process, including the creation of a lay-by system, which has traditionally been considered not important. The operations manager is asked to implement this procedure throughout all the Sydney-based stores as a trial for the next 12 months.

The trial is successful. Many new customers use the facility and profitability increases, as discounting is not generally entered into during a lay-by sale. The facility is rolled out around the country with great success.

Practice Task 9

Question 1

Which of the following should be considered when adapting delivery of products and services to customers? Tick all that apply.

- Impact and changes required to policies and procedures
- The gap between the desired delivery of products and service and the current state
- What changes can be made without consultation
- How a lengthy collaboration process can be avoided
- How best to consult with stakeholders to the process

3D Manage records, reports and recommendations

Managing documentation surrounding the provision of quality products and services is an integral part of effective customer service procedures.

Records, reports and recommendations can include a range of documents, such as:

- customer service records
- complaints and complaints handling reports
- customer service reports and recommendations
- customer service policies or procedures
- manuals and training aids.

You need sound literacy skills, to read customer service records, prepare recommendations and reports, and write and modify customer service manuals and training aids for colleagues. Any written material you produce should be easy to read, unambiguous, accurate and free from grammatical errors.

It is always a good idea to ask a colleague to read over a draft before you finalise and present it to others.

Typical documents relating to the provision of products and service to customers are explored below.

Complaints records

- Complaints records are sensitive documents. Complaints regarding customer service may go to an ombudsman or be submitted as legal evidence. Records need to be clear, accurate and sufficient. They are also a useful element of the continuous improvement process.
- Complaints records are often stored with the specific customer file on CRM systems. Search functions or pivot tables can be used to sort and analyse complaints data.

Customer service records

- Customer service records include data recorded during or after customer interactions. Many customer relationship management software systems have features to record this data. The data may include phone conversations, email and other communications, purchase history and personal client details.
- Privacy requirements dictate that any personal information is kept secure and may not be accessed by unauthorised persons. When collecting personal information, including voice recordings, clients must be informed and permission must be obtained either in writing or through an agreed procedural method such as an opt-out option.

Internal reports

- You may need to provide managers and staff with regular reports regarding specific performance indicators in a business. In many organisations this takes the form of a monthly report to supervisors or senior managers.
- A monthly report is usually a summary of the state of play in the section, department or organisation. Monthly reports are often submitted up the chain of command, with each level adding or summarising as required, until the board of directors receives a composite of all the reports via the chief executive officer or other senior manager.
- As customer service is a high-profile feature of most organisations, reports should be considered a high priority, particularly those relating to service of customers and suppliers. It is important that reports be standardised to allow for easy interpretation and identification of trends or changes.

Policies and procedures

- In many organisations, technical, procedural and training manuals are used to guide the performance of tasks for staff in customer service roles. Adhering to the methods detailed in these documents often forms the basis of performance measurement.
- Manuals and training materials (which might include presentation slides, models, handouts and electronic content) should be maintained to ensure the content remains relevant and accurate.
- Changes in customer service procedures must be included in revisions of manuals and training materials.

Recommendations

- Preparing a written recommendation is an effective way to outline changes proposed to product or service delivery mechanisms. A written document allows your recommendation to be discussed with others and evaluated.
- When preparing a recommendation you need to describe the proposed benefits, the resources required in order to implement the change and the impact of the change on existing policies and procedures.
- Just as with all business documents, your recommendation should be concise, structured in a logical fashion and use language and terminology appropriate to your audience. Longer recommendations and reports should include a summary of the key points.

Writing records, reports and recommendations

When writing records, reports or recommendations, you need to ensure your writing is clear and concise, so your audience can quickly grasp key information.

Writing business documentation to a professional standard encompasses using correct terminology. You also need to ensure an appropriate level of detail and complexity to suit audience needs.

For example, a report to management regarding a customer complaint requires a different writing style than you would use when communicating with the customer on that same complaint. People in your organisation will be familiar with terminology, acronyms and industry jargon and therefore it is acceptable to use such language in written communication. Conversely, your customer may not be familiar with such language and therefore it should be avoided or clearly explained.

Business writing requires that you be concise and to the point. When preparing longer reports, consider including a table of contents, an executive summary or introduction that summarises the main inclusions. This allows busy managers to quickly digest the key points of your document.

Factors to be considered when writing records, reports and recommendations are outlined below.

Considerations for writing reports, recommendations and records

- Does your organisation have a specific template or style guide to follow for reports?
- Do you need to use a particular form or format to record details such as customer service complaints?
- If records are to be handwritten, ensure your handwriting is legible and easily understood.
- Avoid using unfamiliar terminology or industry jargon when writing to a broad audience.
- Ensure your document is concise yet complete.
- Ensure your document is free from grammatical and typographical errors.
- Always write acronyms in full in the first instance followed by the acronym in brackets, e.g. automatic teller machine (ATM). It is fine to use the acronym from that point forward.
- What are the time frames that apply to the completed report or record?
- How is it to be stored / distributed? E.g. email, intranet, hard copy

Managing documents in organisation systems and processes

Your organisation may have guidelines that define systems and processes for managing documents. It is essential that you work following such systems.

When managing records, reports and recommendations, it is essential that you work following your organisation's system and processes. Adhering to relevant systems ensures that information can be easily retrieved and accessed by others as appropriate. This is particularly important in the case of customer complaints where legislative requirements apply to privacy, customer rights and standards.

Other organisational system and process factors are outlined below.

Organisational system and process factors relating to records, reports and recommendations

- Following style guides or presentation templates when preparing reports
- Using appropriate forms and processes
- Adhering to time frame requirements for preparation of documents
- Using defined terminology and language
- Storing and sharing documents following defined procedures
- Appropriate use of technology to prepare the record or document, e.g. CRM, spreadsheets or word processing software

Example

Using a customer complaints form

A customer complaints form might look like the following example.

Customer complaints form					
Date: 3/07/20		Received by: (Officer's name) Josh Leyton			
How received:	<input type="checkbox"/> Visit	<input type="checkbox"/> Email	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Telephone	<input type="checkbox"/> Fax	<input type="checkbox"/> Letter
Customer name: Mrs Evelyn Guthridge					
Organisation: -					
Organisation/home address: 25 Bedford Parade Barton QLD 4065		Contact details: Phone: 07 1111 0000 Fax: - Email: -			
Invoice number: 32100		Order date: 28/9			
Product/service: Galvanised iron garden shed Model FA32					
<input type="checkbox"/> Missing goods		<input type="checkbox"/> Overcharged			
<input type="checkbox"/> Damaged goods		<input type="checkbox"/> Wrong goods delivered			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No discount given		<input type="checkbox"/> Service not as specified			
Additional information: Customer said an agreement was made to receive a 15 per cent discount.					
Immediate action: Told customer we will investigate. Thanks for calling. Will get back as soon as possible. Read file for record of transaction.					
Further action required: Contact customer with result.					
Customer service officer: J Leyton					

Practice Task 10

Question 1

Which of the following should be considered when writing records, reports and recommendations? Tick all that apply.

- The audience and their specific needs
- The level to which industry terminology and jargon should be used
- How it can be done in the shortest time
- Whether the complaint is important enough to document
- Organisational policy and procedures

Question 2

Which of the following statements are correct? Select yes or no for each one.

- | | | |
|---|-------|------|
| a) Consideration should be given to including a summary in longer reports or recommendations. | » Yes | » No |
| b) Complaints should be stored securely for future reference if needed. | » Yes | » No |
| c) All records should be documented clearly and fully so that they are easily understood. | » Yes | » No |
| d) Reports provide an opportunity for you to be creative with colour and fonts. | » Yes | » No |
| e) Customer records should be numbered for easy reference. | » Yes | » No |
| f) You should consider audience and purpose when writing reports. | » Yes | » No |

Summary

- Plans to improve the delivery of products and services should include processes for evaluating the success and achievement of new standards.
 - Evaluation may include reviewing data such as sales records, website traffic and staff performance.
- Evaluation plans should consider the time frame over which progress is to be measured. This time frame will be driven by the nature of the changes required and the lead time for introduction of such changes.
- Evaluation strategies should also include processes for collecting and evaluating feedback from your customers. This feedback may be explicit – i.e. provided directly and deliberately – or implicit, i.e. inferred through behaviours such as return visits to your business.
- The methods by which feedback is sought may largely mirror the processes used during initial customer consultation, e.g. surveys, forums and 1:1 meetings.
- You should use customer feedback and measurement against desired standards to adapt the delivery of your products and services.
 - You may use a continuous improvement approach, or other models such as Lean manufacturing, Six Sigma and TQM, depending on the organisation's policies.
- Consultation and collaboration are key to implementing initiatives to improve on your delivery of products and services.
 - Seeking the views of and working with employees and teams affected by change both promotes acceptance of change and provides rich insight from broad perspectives.
- Records, reports and recommendations should be collected, prepared and evaluated in line with your organisation's procedures and policies. The ability to interpret information and write in a clear, succinct manner is essential.
- Prepare written materials with the needs and understanding of your audience in mind. Be mindful of using industry terminology, jargon or acronyms that may not be understood by your audience.
- Follow organisational policies and procedures when preparing reports, records and recommendations.
 - This includes factors such as adhering to organisational style, using appropriate storage and sharing mechanisms and preparing documentation using the appropriate technology.

Learning Checkpoint 3

Evaluating customer service

Part A

1. List three points to consider when developing strategies for monitoring progress against service targets and standards.

2. Which of the following should you consider when developing strategies for collecting customer feedback? Tick all that apply.

- How to encourage customers to provide feedback
- Policies and procedures supporting the feedback collection process
- Whether implied or explicit feedback is required
- Situations where feedback should not be collected
- How to identify unwanted client feedback

3. Describe quantifiable and qualifiable data.

4. Draw a line to match each continuous improvement model to its definition.

- | | |
|----------------------------|---|
| » Kaizen | » A process that steadily eliminates wasteful work processes where waste is defined as any process that does not directly or indirectly add value to the customer experience |
| » Lean manufacturing | » A strategy of embedding organisation-wide awareness of quality in all business processes – may include providing accurate information, ensuring delivery is prompt and managing complaints fairly |
| » Six Sigma | » A system of identifying and removing defects in a given process, e.g. increasing speed of answering telephone calls |
| » Total Quality Management | » A focus on continuous improvement in all business activities – must be tempered with business objectives and balanced against short- and long-term gains |

Part B

Case study

Andrew, the Customer Service Manager at Gintonta Electrical Manufacturing, has recently introduced new service standards for his team following a spate of customer service complaints.

He and the wider Gintonta organisation have worked to develop customer service procedures and complaints reporting mechanisms. The General Manager has instructed Andrew to monitor his staff's performance and provide a monthly report detailing progress against the new standards.

1. Describe three ways in which Andrew can determine whether the new customer service initiatives are working.

After the first month, Andrew notices that there has been little improvement, so he calls a team meeting to discuss his findings.

2. Which of the following may assist in adapting service delivery to meet the required standards? Tick all that apply.

- Explaining his findings and asking for input from the team
- Involving staff in exploring solutions to customer service problems
- Threatening disciplinary action if the standards are not met the following month
- Encouraging staff to work together to seek resolution of problems
- Telling staff to ignore new procedures if they are not working for them

Gintonta currently does not have a centralised customer complaint management system.

3. Which of the following methods would be appropriate ways to log and store customer complaints? Tick all that apply.

- Using a customer relationship management system (CRM)
- Writing complaints on sticky notes
- Logging complaints in a spreadsheet
- Making a mental note
- Completing a customer complaint form and filing it in a central filing system

Andrew is to prepare a written report for the senior management meeting detailing his findings from the first month of customer service improvements.

4. Identify five things Andrew should consider when preparing his report.

