

CFACSB5 SQA Unit Code – F943 04

Deal with customers across a language divide



Overview

This Standard is part of the Customer Service Theme of Delivery. This Theme covers Customer Service behaviours and processes that have most effect on the customer experience during Customer Service delivery. Remember that customers include everyone you provide a service to. They may be external to your organisation or they may be internal customers.

Customer service is frequently delivered across a language divide. Customer service centres may be located in one country but deal mainly with another. In a multi-cultural society many customers may have a different first language from those who are delivering customer service. This language divide can present a challenge to those who deliver customer service. This Standard is about preparing to deliver customer service across a language divide and seeing through that delivery. The Standard covers the steps that are needed to deal with customers with different language preferences without having full access to your customer's first language. You should choose this Standard if you frequently deal across a language divide. Do not choose this Standard if you come across customers who do not share your first language only occasionally.

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Performance criteria

Prepare to deal with customers with a different first language

You must be able to:

- P1 identify the language or languages other than your own that you are most likely to come across when dealing with customers
- P2 learn a greeting, an expression of thanks and a farewell phrase in the language you expect to encounter
- P3 identify a source of assistance with a language you expect to encounter when delivering customer service
- P4 agree with colleagues informal signing options that may be used for key aspects of your services or products when dealing with somebody with a different first language
- P5 log useful words and phrases to support your dealings with a customer with a different first language
- P6 learn an appropriate phrase to explain to your customer in their first language that you do not speak that language fluently

Deal with customers who speak a different first language from your own

You must be able to:

- P7 identify your customer's first language and indicate to them that you are aware of this
- P8 establish the expectations of your customer regarding whether they expect to deal in your first language or theirs
- P9 speak clearly and slowly if using a language which is not the first language for either you or your customer
- P10 maintain a consistent tone and volume when dealing with somebody across a language divide
- P11 listen closely to your customer to identify any words they may be using in a way that differs from the way you would generally use the same words
- P12 check your understanding of specific words with your customer using questions for clarification
- P13 seek appropriate assistance from colleagues if you are unable to complete a customer transaction because of language barriers
- P14 reword a question or explanation if your customer clearly does not understand your original wording
- P15 use a few words of your customer's first language to create a rapport

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Knowledge and understanding

You need to know and understand:

- K1 which languages you are most likely to encounter among groups of your customers
- K2 how to greet, thank and say farewell to customers in their first languages
- K3 the importance of dealing with customers in their first language if possible
- K4 how to explain to a customer that you cannot hold an extended conversation in their first language
- K5 the importance of tone, pace and volume when dealing with customers across a language divide
- K6 possible sources of assistance to use when a language barrier demands additional language skills

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Deal with customers across a language divide

Suite

Customer Service (2013)

Key words

Meeting; greeting conversation; language barrier; language; first language; language divide; words; phrases; tone; volume; customer service; communication; problem solving; behaviours; work with others; teamwork