

CFACSC4 (SQA Unit Code – H9YE 04)

Deliver customer service to challenging customers



Overview

This Standard is part of the Customer Service Theme of Handling Problems. This Theme covers the behaviours, processes and approaches that are most effective when handling customer service problems. Remember that customers include everyone you provide a service to. They may be external to your organisation or they may be internal customers.

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

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Performance criteria

Recognise when customers may be challenging to deal with

You must be able to:

- P1 recognise types of customer behaviour that are challenging to deal with
- P2 identify aspects of your organisation's services or products that make it challenging to deal with customers
- P3 identify the signs and signals that indicate a customer may be challenging to deal with
- P4 put yourself in your customer's position and see the situation from their point of view
- P5 identify reasons why your customers may be behaving in a way that is challenging to deal with
- P6 recognise the limits of challenging customer behaviour that your organisation will tolerate
- P7 identify things that you may do or say that will provoke challenging responses from your customer

Deal with customers who are challenging

You must be able to:

- P8 listen patiently to what your customer wants to tell you
- P9 use direct and factual questions about your customer's feelings and what has happened to identify what might satisfy them
- P10 check your understanding of your customer's concerns by describing your view of the situation and options that might be available
- P11 express empathy with your customer without necessarily admitting fault on the part of your organisation
- P12 give clear statements or explanations of your organisation's position
- P13 agree a way forward that balances customer satisfaction with the needs of your organisation
- P14 enlist help from colleagues if options for action are outside of your authority
- P15 summarise clearly actions to be taken and reasons for those actions to complete the customer transaction
- P16 advise your manager or the appropriate colleagues if your customer is likely to re-open the matter with them
- P17 take any necessary action to protect your own safety or that of other customers or colleagues when dealing with a customer who is challenging or difficult

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Knowledge and understanding

You need to know and understand:

- K1 the types of customer behaviour that you personally find challenging to deal with
- K2 reasons why some aspect of your organisation's services or products may provoke challenging behaviour from customers
- K3 reasons why your customer's own actions may cause them to behave in a way that is challenging to deal with
- K4 the meaning of having empathy for a customer's feelings
- K5 who can be asked for help when dealing with a challenging customer
- K6 the differences between assertive, aggressive and passive behaviour
- K7 the importance of not simply quoting your organisation's rules and procedures to counter your customer's challenging behaviour
- K8 your organisation's limits of what will be tolerated from challenging customers before the transaction or relationship is closed
- K9 the importance of giving your manager or the appropriate colleagues notice of any further approaches from a challenging customer
- K10 when it might be necessary to take action to protect your own safety or that of other customers or colleagues from a challenging customer

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Suite

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