

UNIT SUMMARY

What is the unit about?

This unit is about ensuring that your organisation puts customers first. The organisation's vision, values, processes and systems, for example, should all be clearly driven by and geared to satisfying customer needs.

In this unit, 'customer' refers to both internal and external customers.

For the purposes of this unit, 'organisation' can mean a self-contained entity such as a private sector company, a charity or a local authority, or a significant operating unit, with a relative degree of autonomy, within a larger organisation.

Who is the unit for?

The unit is recommended for senior managers.

Links to other units

This unit is linked to unit **B9. Develop the culture of your organisation**, **F9. Build your organisation's understanding of its market and customers**, **F12. Improve organisational performance** and **F17. Manage the delivery of customer service in your area of responsibility** in the overall suite of National Occupational Standards for Management and Leadership.

There is also a suite of National Occupational Standards for Customer Service which is aimed at those in customer service roles or whose roles have a significant customer service component. You can obtain further information from the Institute of Customer Service (ICS) on tel. 01206 571 716 or at the ICS website (www.instituteofcustomerservice.com).

If your organisation is a small firm, you should look at unit *C1 Look after your customers*, which has been developed by the Small Firms Enterprise and Development Initiative (SFEDI) specifically for small firms and which **may** be more suitable to your needs. You can obtain information on the unit from SFEDI on tel. 0114 241 2155 or at the SFEDI website (www.sfedi.co.uk).

Skills

Listed below are the main generic 'skills' that need to be applied in developing a customer-focused organisation. These skills are explicit/implicit in the detailed content of the unit and are listed here as additional information.

- Communicating
- Thinking strategically
- Thinking with a focus on customers
- Evaluating
- Monitoring
- Motivating
- Leadership

- Empowering
- Building consensus
- Reviewing

OUTCOMES OF EFFECTIVE PERFORMANCE

You must be able to do the following:

1. Establish a shared vision and understanding of how staff in your organisation will work with customers.
2. Establish a set of customer-based values and beliefs which develops suitable skills, behaviours and attitudes leading to an environment that puts the customer first.
3. Ensure that customer-focused sustainable processes and systems exist throughout the organisation.
4. Ensure that there are schemes in place that maintain staff loyalty and commitment to providing a level of service that beats customers' expectations.
5. Establish partnerships, where appropriate, with other organisations to maintain and improve services to customers.
6. Ensure that joint activities are undertaken with customers in order to identify and make improvements to the level of customer service provided by your organisation.
7. Measure, periodically, the level of customer service your organisation is providing.

BEHAVIOURS WHICH UNDERPIN EFFECTIVE PERFORMANCE

1. You constantly seek to improve performance.
2. You find practical ways to overcome barriers.
3. You show a clear understanding of different customers and their needs.
4. You give people opportunities to provide feedback and you respond appropriately.
5. You develop systems to gather and manage information and knowledge effectively, efficiently and ethically.
6. You articulate a vision that generates excitement, enthusiasm and commitment.
7. You model behaviour that shows respect, helpfulness and co-operation.
8. You advocate customers' interests within your organisation.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING

You need to know and understand the following:

General knowledge and understanding

1. The principles of effective customer service.
2. The factors that make customers satisfied.
3. The importance of achieving customer satisfaction.
4. How to measure the level of customer service being provided.
5. The benefits of forming partnerships to maintain and improve customer service.
6. Best practice in customer service outside your own sector.
7. Techniques and reward strategies for motivating staff.
8. Sustainable process/systems design and management.

Industry/sector specific knowledge and understanding

1. Current and emerging trends that are likely to affect your products and/or services.
2. Developments in technology.
3. Where to make effective strategic partnerships.
4. The legal and regulatory framework within which you work, including customer and consumer rights, relevant codes of practice and ethical codes.

Context specific knowledge and understanding

1. Your organisation's products and/or services.
2. The overall vision, objectives and associated plans of your organisation.
3. Your organisation's customers.
4. The strengths and weaknesses of your organisation in terms of satisfying customers.
5. How a change in your market, structure, products or services will affect your customers.
6. The activities and services of your competitors or similar organisations, and how this may affect your products, services and processes.