



Ethiopian TVET-System



customer contact works support LEVEL-II

Based on August 2012GC Occupational standard

Module Title: Processing to Customer Complaint

TTLM Code: EIS CCS2 TTLM 0919v1

This module includes the following Learning Guides

LG15:Referring complaints

LG Code: EIS CCS2M05 LO1-LG-15

LG16:Responding to complaints

LG Code: EIS CCS2M05 LO2-LG-16

LG17:Exercising judgment to resolve customer service issues

LG Code: EIS CCS2M05 LO3-LG-17

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Instruction Sheet	LG15:Referring complaints
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This learning guide is developed to provide you the necessary information regarding the following **content coverage** and topics –

- Identifying complaints requiring referrals
- Making **referrals** for follow-up
- Forwarding all documents and investigation reports
- Following-up to gain prompt decisions

This guide will also assist you to attain the learning outcome stated in the cover page. Specifically, upon completion of this Learning Guide, **you will be able to –**

- Identify complaints requiring referrals
- Make **referrals** for follow-up
- Forward all documents and investigation reports
- Follow-up to gain prompt decisions

Learning Instructions:

1. Read the specific objectives of this Learning Guide.
2. Follow the instructions described in number 3 to 20.
3. Read the information written in the “Information Sheets 1”. Try to understand what are being discussed. Ask you instructors for assistance if you have hard time understanding them.
4. Accomplish the “Self-check” **in page-**.
5. Ask from your instructor the key to correction (key answers) or you can request your teacher to correct your work. (You are to get the key answer only after you finished answering the Self-check).
6. If you earned a satisfactory evaluation proceed to “Information Sheet 2”. However, if your rating is unsatisfactory, see your instructor for further instructions or go back to Learning Activity.
7. Submit your accomplished Self-check. This will form part of your training portfolio.

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Information Sheet-1	Identifying complaints requiring referrals
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1. Identifying complaints requiring referrals

Up to this point in the learning guide we have talked about problems and complaints that are able to be handled “in house” by workers / managers in the business. Not all complaints will be able to be dealt with appropriately in this way. Can you think of reasons why a complaint needs to be handled by a third party? Reasons could include such issues as:

1. Warranty claim being disputed
2. Complaint is a police matter
3. Customer is not receiving appropriate service from the business

Generally speaking a complaint is not escalated to an external body until resolution has been attempted between the customer and the business. A tiered approach to resolution is the most effective as it ensures the complaint is appropriately managed from tier to tier as needed.

Tier 1: Initial complaint handling

- Complaints should be lodged and resolutions sought by staffs that are in daily contact with the customer and are familiar with the problem
- Staff should be empowered with clear delegations to resolve complaints, wherever possible, at first contact
- Complaints should be logged for later analysis or for escalating to Tier 2 if needed.

Tier 2: Internal review or investigation

- If the customer is still dissatisfied, unresolved complaints should be reviewed or investigated by more senior staff or a designated complaint officer who will consider options such as conciliation, mediation or direct negotiations.

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Tier 3: Refer unresolved complaints for external review

- Complaints that are not resolved internally may be dealt with by:
 - an alternative dispute resolution procedure (eg mediation)
 - referring the complaint to external agency (eg ombudsman)
 - informing the complainant of appeal procedures or other legal remedies

In ensuring that complaints are fairly heard and correctly recorded, every business must consider a number of factors.

Read the following lists.

- User friendly procedures for lodging complaints
 - A complaint system must be visible and easily accessed by the public
 - The process must be simple to understand
 - Customers must be able to lodge complaints in a number of ways

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Self-Check -1	Written Test
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Directions: Answer all the questions listed below.

1. How complaints that are not resolved internally may be dealt with?

Note: Satisfactory rating - 3 points

Unsatisfactory - below 3 points

Score = _____

Rating: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____

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Information Sheet-2	Making <i>referrals</i> for follow-up
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2.1 Making referrals for follow-up

It is always preferred that you can resolve the complaint at the time it is received. However, this will not always be possible. As you learn more about your organization's policies and procedures, you should be able to resolve more complaints. However, complaints that you do not know how to resolve or that require decisions outside of your responsibilities will need to be referred.

You may need to refer a complaint when:

- The customer is persistence and will not accept your solution
- the customer specifies that they do not want to deal with you
- the customer asks to speak to a manager
- you do not have enough experience to handle the compliance
- you do not have the authority to resolve the compliance
- there is a risk of media attention or legal action
- there is a significant risk of damage to the organization reputation
- there has been breach of legislation or regulation
- the customer is becoming aggressive or violence
- the customer is particularly valuable to the organization

PEOPLE THAT YOU MAY REFER TO

If a serious allegation has been made, you may need to refer the complaint to an external body. This may include:

- Police.
- Ombudsman.
- Independent Commission Against Corruption.

Before referring the complaint to an external body, it is advised that you speak to a manager. You should be able to find some information about when to refer complaints in your organization's policies and procedures.

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2.2. INFORM CUSTOMER

When an investigation into a complaint is completed and decisions made, the customer needs to be informed of the outcome. Even if some parts of the complaint are being finalized, the customer should be informed of any decisions reached.

You can inform the customer verbally or in writing. It is usually recommended that you respond verbally for smaller complaints and in writing for more complex complaints. If the complaint was lodged in writing then it is customary to respond in writing.

Always explain the outcome in a way that the customer can understand. Ensure you respond to each point made by the customer. This will help them to see that you have investigated their complaint in full. A thorough explanation of any decisions reached should be provided, as well as an outline of the next course of action to be taken. This may include an offer to negotiate a resolution, or referral to other personnel/workers or external bodies.

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Self-Check -2	Written Test
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Directions: Answer all the questions listed below.

1. What types of complaint need to referral?

Note: Satisfactory rating - 3 points

Unsatisfactory - below 3 points

Score = _____
Rating: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____



Information Sheet-3	Forwarding all documents and investigation reports
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3.1 Forwarding all documents and investigation reports

OBTAIN AND REVIEW REPORTS

Once you have identified the nature of a customer complaint, you will need to gather any relevant documentation and reports. Some organizations require that customers make their official complaint in writing this is usually done by asking the customer to fill in a complaint form. You will need to gather any other relevant documentation.

. This might include:

- Recordings or transcripts of telephone
- Conversations with the customer.
- Receipts.
- Invoices.
- Contracts or agreements.
- Previous complaint forms that have been lodged.
- Product guarantees or warranty information.
- Customer history or records of previous
- Transactions.
- Product or service specifications.
- Organization refund policy or terms of sale.

If you are unsure of any of this information, you may need to ask a manager or supervisor to review it. To finalize your response, you will need to be clear on what the evidence is telling you.

PREPARE A REPORT

Once you have finished analyzing the information and finding suitable evidence, you may need to prepare a report for your manager or supervisor. To do this, you will need to consider the following steps:

- .Determine the scope of the report
 - Outline what the report is going to cover.
- Understand your audience
 - Determine who you are writing the report for and what they are going to do with it.
- Gather your information
 - The information you have collected and analyzed should be sorted and grouped into topics or themes.

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- You do not need to put everything in the report. Stick to the critical aspects of the customer service and the key areas for improvement.

➤ Get evidence

- Determine your evidence for the points you are making, ensure you have suitable evidence to support your arguments.
- Write your report
- Use short sentences and keep to one topic per paragraph

.Use strong words to convey your message Managers are busy and may not have time to read it thoroughly, so use lots of bullet points, headlines and subtitles.

- Proofread your report

Read your report to check its clarity, spelling and grammar. If possible, ask someone else to read through it. You need to proofread the document to ensure it meets your requirements. To do this:

- Read through the document first to check it meets your requirements.

Check through the document more thoroughly for errors or inaccuracies.

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Self-Check -3	Written Test
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Directions: Answer all the questions listed below.

1. What is the relevant document that you gather to prepare report?

Note: Satisfactory rating - 3 points

Unsatisfactory - below 3 points

Score = _____
Rating: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____



Information Sheet-4	Following-up to gain prompt decisions
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4.1 Following-up to gain prompt decisions

Once you have created and reviewed the reports and documentation related to the customer complaint, you can then make an informed decision regarding the complaint. In making a decision, you will need to take into account the legal and regulatory requirements that your organization operates under, as well as your organization's procedures and standards. You will also need to take into consideration the implications of the complaint for the customer and organization, as well as whether the complaint requires referral to other personnel/workers. Bear in mind you may not be the one making the decision regarding the complaint, or you may need to come to an informed decision in consultation with other personnel/workers. If you are directed by management to resolve the complaint in a particular way, ensure that you follow your directives exactly.

If you are working in collaboration with others to make the decision, ensure that all personnel /workers are provided with the opportunity to have input into the decision-making process, as well as the final outcome.

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Self-Check -4	Written Test
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Directions: Answer all the questions listed below.

1. In making a decision, what will need to take into account?

Note: Satisfactory rating - 3 points

Unsatisfactory - below 3 points

Answer Sheet

Score = _____
Rating: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____



Instruction Sheet

LG16: Responding to Complaint

This learning guide is developed to provide you the necessary information regarding the following **content coverage** and topics –

1. Processing **customer complaints** using **effective communication**
2. Obtaining **document** and reviewing reports
3. Making decisions about customer complaints
4. Negotiating resolution of the complaint and obtaining agreement
5. Maintaining register of complaints/disputes
6. Informing customer

This guide will also assist you to attain the learning outcome stated in the cover page.

Specifically, upon completion of this Learning Guide, **you will be able to –**

1. Process **customer complaints** using **effective communication**
2. Obtain **document** and reviewing reports effectively
3. Make decisions about customer complaints in workplace
4. Negotiate resolution of the complaint and obtain agreement
5. Maintain register of complaints/disputes of customer
6. Inform customer

Learning Instructions:

8. Read the specific objectives of this Learning Guide.
9. Follow the instructions described in number 3 to 20.
10. Read the information written in the “Information Sheets 1”. Try to understand what are being discussed. Ask your instructors for assistance if you have hard time understanding them.
11. Accomplish the “Self-check” **in page -**.
12. Ask from your instructor the key to correction (key answers) or you can request your teacher to correct your work. (You are to get the key answer only after you finished answering the Self-check).
13. If you earned a satisfactory evaluation proceed to “Information Sheet 2”. However, if your rating is unsatisfactory, see your instructor for further instructions or go back to Learning Activity #1.
14. Submit your accomplished Self-check. This will form part of your training portfolio.

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Information Sheet-1	Processing customer complaints using effective communication
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1.1. Processing **customer complaints**

WHO IS THE CUSTOMER?

Customers may be either internal or external. An internal customer is someone in your workplace to whom you provide a service. An external customer is the person traditionally viewed as a customer. It is the outside person who comes into your store or business and may include customers with routine or special requests, regular and new customers, people from a range of social, cultural or ethnic backgrounds, or people with varying physical and mental abilities.

Every customer has the potential to be satisfied or dissatisfied with your service. It is human nature that if a person is satisfied they won't tell anyone. However if they are dissatisfied, they will complain to at least 5 of their friends. Of course telling 5 friends will ensure that they also tell 5 friends each and so the bad service story is constantly repeated. In addition there are some other "bad news" facts that relate to dissatisfied customers:

- ✓ only 5% of dissatisfied 'customers' complain to the business the remainder complain to their friends
- ✓ dissatisfied people tell five times more people than satisfied ones
- ✓ most people have no idea who to complain to in an organization

So what do people want? It is not difficult to improve services related to customer complaints. People want to be taken seriously, they want to know that their complaint is being listened to and will be acted upon. It is also very sensible to apologize to the customer and assure them that the problem will be fixed. <http://www.workawesome.com/>

So from a complaint come some "good news" facts:

- ✓ Speedy responses to complaints can significantly increase customer loyalty
- ✓ customers who complain and are satisfied by the complaints process are more loyal than those who had no problem initially
- ✓ resolving complaints on first contact can cut complaint handling costs in half

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- ✓ a strong link exists between good complaint management processes and business improvement

The major advantage of an effective and speedy complaint resolution process is that you will gain a reputation for resolving a complaint quickly, efficiently and fairly. The complainant will certainly talk to other people who are likely to become customers, therefore, you will spend less time and money attracting new customers. It's also worth remembering that it costs about five times more to attract a new customer than to keep an existing one

What Is a Customer Complaint?

Customer complaints may seem like a downer or a negative reflection of your company, which they can be, but they're also loaded with useful information and customer insights that you can use to your advantage. When customers submit a complaint about your service or product, you'll be able to use their feedback to make improvements where needed. One of the **disadvantages of customer complaints is hearing negative reviews** about a product that you've put your all into and are passionate about. However, while it's not always a good feeling to receive complaints, remember that no business is ever perfect no matter how many changes they make, and that there are a ton of **benefits of customer complaints**. Looking past the initial negativity associated with complaints can help you realize what a blessing in disguise they can be—think of them as free customer insights, without you having to invest in feedback surveys or something else of the same nature.

The first step in using complaints to your advantage is to ask: **what is a customer complaint?** There could be a variety of reasons for customer complaints, but the most common one is that they're dissatisfied in some way with your product or service. Not all customers will take the time to call and tell you about their disappointment, but the ones that do are usually passionate about what they're calling to tell you or are loyal to your brand. There may be a way to remedy the issue the customer calls about, but sometimes there's nothing you can do. www.optimonk.com

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How do you process customer complaints?

While every complaint is different, it is very sensible for a business to have a clear process for complaint handling. The process should be structured around a concise complaint handling policy and simple procedures for the most likely situations.

The best way to gain staff ownership of a process is to involve all workers in the development and updating of policies and procedures. It is very sensible to have a brainstorming session at least annually and definitely after dealing with any significant complaints. During this session workers should be encouraged to:

Think of all the possible things that could happen and work out potential solutions

- Record changes to policies and procedures
- agree on what training is required to effectively implement new processes
- discuss ideas for informing customers how to provide feedback or make a complaint
- Work out the most effective way to gather information
- develop a method of handling complaints that is non-punitive where individuals can be supported to prevent recurrence

All of the above points reflect what should occur in any workplace. However to make sure everything happens correctly, you need appropriate record keeping forms, technology and administration. <http://www.workawesome.com/>

1.2. EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATIONS FOR RESOLVING COMPLAINTS?

There are definitely effective and ineffective communication methods for dealing with complaints. A base level rule is that “personal is better”. If it is at all possible, you are better to resolve a complaint by talking to the person face to face.

Workers must be able to demonstrate some essential skills before being given any role in a complaint resolution process.

Those essential skills should include the ability to:

- ✓ let the customer know they have your full attention

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- ✓ listen and develop a clear understanding of what the complaint is about
- ✓ acknowledge the problem and be empathetic and calm to help alleviate the customer's stress
- ✓ take notes without filtering or interpreting the information
- ✓ ask questions to clarify or expand knowledge of the complaint
- ✓ Give the customer opportunities to ask questions.
- ✓ Tell the customer you want to help improve the situation. Ask how they would like to proceed
- ✓ explain how the complaint procedure works
- ✓ Ensure the customer is comfortable with the process. Decide what can be done to fix the problem and tell them
- ✓ contact the customer within an agreed time-frame to ensure the problem was resolved
- ✓ maintain a courteous and professional approach

1.3. Improve Communication with Customers

Communicating effectively with customers is a huge part of running a successful business. When customers call to make a complaint, and they see that their feedback was actually taken into account and that changes were made, they'll appreciate that their voice was heard. Many customers refrain from making complaints or voicing their concerns altogether because they believe companies don't care and won't take action. When you do the opposite and show them that you've listened and that their satisfaction is important to you, customers will realize that your lines of communication are actually open, and not just there to simply be there. <http://www.workawesome.com/>

Complaints may be about:

- Service Content, Delivery or Quality
- Personnel
- Requests
- Communication
- Response Time
- Documentation

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- Billing
- Follow-Up

1.4. Resolve Customer Complaints

Evaluating customer complaints is time consuming and can use up a lot of your resources—unless you have a complaint handling call center. **3C Contact Services** is the [top customer call center in Toronto](#) and is able to handle all of your customer complaints with ease. Our highly trained customer care agents can answer, resolve, and evaluate all customer feedback for your company. By allowing us to field your customer complaints and evaluate them on your behalf, you'll get all the beneficial insight without having to do any of the work yourself. [Contact us today](#) to learn more about [our services](#) and how we can help you grow your business. www.optimonk.com

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Self-Check -1	Written Test
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Directions: Answer all the questions listed below.

1. How do you handle customer complaints?
2. Write types of customers

Note: Satisfactory rating - 3 points

Unsatisfactory - below 3 points

Score = _____
Rating: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____

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Information Sheet-2	Obtaining document and reviewing reports
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1.1. Obtaining **documents**

Document Review

Document Review involves the process of examination of reports, files, and other written articles, analyzing and deciding on the relevancy of the documents to a particular case. during the discovery process of any legal proceeding or litigation. It includes a phase where various evidence is exchanged between both the parties in a case so that it can establish the basis on which the case will turn. Time is a crucial factor which makes it a challenging task to review bundles of documents, either being medico-legal or web pages or technical documents. One has to go through all of them and review systematically.

Based on types of documents there are different categories; one involving little or no reviewing, e.g., examination of police report or intake; and the other involving review by expertise to help attorneys extract relevant information on the case. In the process of document review, documents are analyzed and marked for relevant subject matters. Reviewers discuss the different aspects of documents based on its relevance to the case and can change or approve or reject it. In the final step legal professionals consider which document should be withheld from production. <http://www.workawesome.com/>

Customers want their complaints to be easy to report, acknowledged, and dealt with quickly, fairly and sensitively.

A written complaint handling policy is a good way to ensure that complaints are taken seriously and dealt with appropriately and consistently. It also helps to support staff, so be sure you understand your businesses policy.

Here are some tips for developing a customer complaint policy.

- make it easy for all customers to complain
- Decide which staffs have the authority to resolve a complaint, and make sure they know what to do. The more a complaint is escalated to someone higher in the business, the more dissatisfied the customer may become

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- Set a time frame to respond to a complaint. Taking too long makes the problem worse
- Give one person responsibility for managing the complaint from beginning to end, so the customer does not have to repeat their complaint to different staff.
- Ensure staffs know your policy and how to treat complaints fairly. Poor complaint handling, for example blaming the customer for the problem or marginalizing them by saying no one else has complained, will only worsen the problem

A complaint handling policy can:

- state why your business welcomes complaints, listing the benefits to customers, staff and the business
- state who the policy covers and who is authorized to resolve complaints
- define a complaint
- Commit to quick, fair and confidential complaint handling
- State who is responsible for taking, recording, resolving, analyzing and reporting on complaints
- explain how to log complaints
- explain the complaint procedure and what to do about complaints
- set timelines for complaint handling and keeping customers informed
- List acceptable ways to resolve complaints
- be reviewed regularly for effectiveness and updated
- state where people can get further help

Clearly the policy is the broad outline of how a complaint is handled. The next step is to develop procedures. There may be a number of different procedures used by a business eg:

- For a verbal complaint
- For a written complaint
- For a product complaint

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Self-Check -2	Written Test
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Directions: Answer all the questions listed below.

1. What is document review?

Note: Satisfactory rating - 3 points

Unsatisfactory - below 3 points

Score = _____
Rating: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____

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Information Sheet-3	Making decisions about customer complaints
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3.1. Making decisions

Why is the complaints procedure important?

An effective **complaint procedure** helps organizations deal with **complaints** quickly, fairly and consistently and is an **important** part of an equal opportunity policy. Employers may decide to: develop a specific **procedure** to resolve **complaints** of discrimination and sexual harassment.

A. Acknowledging the Complaint

A complaint is required to be acknowledged, in writing, either by letter or email, within 5 business days of the complaint being received.

B. Deciding whether to investigate a complaint

The following factors must be considered by the Determining Officer when deciding to investigate a complaint—

- the seriousness and/or systemic nature of the issue/s raised;
- the level of risk to the complainant, the department and/or the engaged service provider;
- the history or level of the department’s involvement;
- recommendations from external agencies;
- consequences for current case involvement;
- the likelihood of a productive investigation

C. Investigative approach

A standard approach to investigating a complaint may include:

- a review of any relevant legislation or internal policies and procedures;

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- gathering of necessary information, consultation with relevant persons and assurance of a thorough understanding of the issues;
- observance of natural justice;
- establishment of facts, including analysis of any evidence for quality, corroboration or contradiction;
- consideration of relevant policies and procedures and assessment criteria;
- Consideration of the merits of the original decision making process, if relevant.

D. Review Documentation

For complaints, the assigned officer must detail in a brief (for example a Complaints Review Record) for the determining officer how his or her recommendation was arrived at.

This may include reference to:

- the documents used to inform the decision (these should be attached)
- a background
- How the conclusion was determined.

This will provide a record of the process applied to inform the review decision. This also provides a record should the complaint be subject to an external review e.g. the Ethiopian Ombudsman.

All documentation should be recorded in the Complaints Management Register, and placed on file after the complaint review has been finalized. www.optimonk.com

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Self-Check -3	Written Test
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Directions: Answer all the questions listed below.

1. How employers Make decisions about customer complaints

Note: Satisfactory rating - 3 points
Answer Sheet

Unsatisfactory - below 3 points

Score = _____
Rating: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____



Information Sheet-4	Negotiating resolution of the complaint and obtaining agreement
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4.1. *Negotiating resolution of the complaint*

How you will commit to resolving the complaint?

Complaints happen every day. When a customer complains, it is usually for a good reason or genuine concern. They usually have made a purchase that did not meet their expectation—a product, service, or may be a combination of the two. In the customer service industry, we cannot avoid complaints. We must take care of the customer by listening to the complaint, and resolving it, to ensure a happy customer.

Fewer than half of unhappy customers will bring a complaint to your attention. Those who never say anything will tell an average of 11 other people about their bad experience. It is important that we recognize complaints as opportunities, so we can sway these averages, one resolved complaint at a time.

Customers want to know someone is listening and they are understood, and they are hoping you are willing to take care of the problem to their satisfaction. No matter what the situation is, when a customer brings a complaint to your attention—even if they do it in a less-than-desirable way—be thankful. As the old saying goes, “We can’t fix it, if we don’t know it’s broken.” Moreover, we must realize that improper handling of a customer complaint can be costly to the business. www.optimonk.com

Here are five strategies that will help you handle a customer complaint in a smooth and professional manner:

1. **Stay calm.** When a customer presents you with a complaint, keep in mind that the issue is not personal; he or she is not attacking you directly but rather the situation at hand. “Winning” the confrontation accomplishes nothing. A person who remains in control of his or her emotions deals from a position of strength. While it is perfectly natural to get defensive when attacked, choose to be the “professional” and keep your cool.

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2. **Listen well.** Let the irate customer blow off steam. Respond with phrases such as, “Hmm,” “I see,” and “Tell me more.” Do not interrupt. As the customer vents and sees you are not reacting, he or she will begin to calm down. The customer needs to get into a calm frame of mind before he or she can hear your solution—or anything you say, for that matter.
3. **Acknowledge the problem.** Let the customer know you hear what he or she is saying. If you or your company made a mistake, admit it. If you did not make a mistake and it is a misunderstanding, simply explain it to the customer: “I can see how that would be incredibly frustrating for you.” You are not necessarily agreeing with what the customer is saying, but respecting how he or she perceives and feels about the situation. An excellent phrase for opening up this particular conversation would be, “So, if I understand you correctly...” After the customer responds, follow up with, “So, if I understand you correctly, we were to resolve the problem by noon today. I can see how that must be frustrating for you.” Then be quiet. Usually, the customer will respond with “That’s right” or “Exactly.” By repeating to the customer what you think you heard, you lower his or her defenses, and win the right to be heard.
4. **Get the facts.** After listening, take the initiative in the conversation. Now that the customer has calmed down and feels you have heard his or her side, begin asking questions. Be careful not to speak scripted replies, but use this as an opportunity to start a genuine conversation, building a trusting relationship with your customer. To help you understand the situation, get as many details as possible.
5. **Offer a solution.** This happens only after you have sufficient details. One thing to keep in mind: Know what you can and cannot do within your company’s guidelines. Making a promise you cannot commit to will only set you back. Remember, when offering a solution, be courteous and respectful. Let the customer know you are willing to take ownership of the issue, even if it was out of your control. Take charge of the situation and let the customer know what you are going to do to solve the problem.

A quick follow-up phone call a few days later to make sure everything is OK is icing on the cake. Even a small gesture of apology can turn this interaction from disaster to legendary.

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The cost could be minimal—maybe a simple upgrade on the customer’s next purchase or a small gift certificate. A simple gesture like this could result in a future referral or a positive word-of-mouth marketing recommendation.

When you resolve customer complaints successfully, you will better understand their needs, retain them as loyal customers, and enhance your business.

- Thank the customer.
- say why you appreciate the customer feedback
- apologize as soon as you understand the nature of the problem (don’t apologize beforehand, as this can look insincere)
- affirm that the complaint will be resolved to their satisfaction
- ask for information to solve the problem
- take immediate action. Speedy resolution of a problem is one of the best ways to retain customer loyalty
- check if the customer is satisfied - even if this requires follow-up action
- take action to prevent recurrence of the problem and make appropriate changes to your products or your procedures

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Self-Check -4	Written Test
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Directions: Answer all the questions listed below.

1. How do you resolve conflict in negotiation?

Note: Satisfactory rating - 3 points

Unsatisfactory - below 3 points

Answer Sheet

Score = _____
Rating: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____



Information Sheet-5	Maintaining register of complaints/disputes
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5.1. Maintaining register

Once an effective resolution is reached to the complaint you will need to complete your Organization's complaint registers.

A complaint register is a document that records all complaints received and how they were handled. The register acts as a quality control mechanism and can be reviewed by management in order to identify areas for improvement.

The compliant register should includes

- The date the complaint was made.
- Description of the complaint.
- The product or service the complaint is about.
- Any persons involved in the complaint.
- The person who received and logged the complaint.
- Any actions taken to resolve the complaint.
- The status of the complaint.
- The date the complaint was referred (if required).
- Who the complaint was referred to (if required).

Each organization will have their own procedures and format for the register. Usually it is kept on a spreadsheet. In some cases, the organization may have a special database for complaints. At this point we have discussed the different stages required to achieve resolution of a customer complaint. This has been specifically related to complaints that can be dealt with by workers in the workplace.

Every good business manager and person who has excellent customer service skills, will tell you that there is a basic "customer satisfaction formula" that follows the simple rule :

Doing the job right the first time + Effective customer contact handling = Increased customer satisfaction/brand loyalty.

However we are all human. Problems will occur and customers will complain. It is well documented that there are many benefits to be derived from welcoming complaints and handling them well.

The benefits include:

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- Fewer mistakes in the future and less time spent fixing them
- improved product quality
- better understanding of customers' needs
- happier customers
- greater customer loyalty
- more customers through word-of-mouth advertising
- better understanding of your business
- less time and money spent attracting customers
- improved business reputation
- more repeat business

All of the above points can be achieved by effectively solving customer problems along with keeping an accurate register of complaints, the actions taken and the outcomes. The record keeping process is important. A person's memory is not enough to maintain an accurate record.

If you questioned the people in a business who had been involved in a particular complaint, they are likely to have a different memory of the complaint, the process and the outcome.

Some businesses or workplaces believe that if they don't receive many complaints, their customers must be satisfied. However, if the business is not keeping a formal record of complaints received, how would they know if performance is improving, worsening or staying the same!www.optimonk.com

How do you maintain a registered complaint?

5.2. Handling customer complaints

At some stage your business is likely to receive a customer complaint. Dealing with it in a positive and constructive manner will help to keep your customers.

In general customers who are unhappy with your product or service will not complain to you – but they will complain to others and take their business elsewhere. Managing customer complaints and resolving them quickly will result in improved business processes and repeat business.

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Complaints handling policy

Develop a complaints handling policy. It should include reassuring customers that you value their feedback and you are committed to resolving their issues in a fair, timely and efficient manner. It should also:

- explain how customers can make a formal complaint
- identify the steps you will take in discussing, addressing and resolving complaints
- indicate some of the solutions you offer to resolve complaints
- inform customers about your commitment to continuous improvement

Complaints handling procedure

Once you have developed a policy you can create a procedure for handling complaints. A procedure will ensure complaints are dealt with the same way, every time. The procedure should be easy to understand and follow by all your staff.

Your procedure could include the following steps.

1. **Listen to the complaint** - Thank the customer for bringing the matter to your attention. Apologize and accept ownership, don't blame others and remain courteous.
2. **Record details of the complaint**- Go through the complaint in detail so you can understand exactly what the problem is. Keep records of all complaints in one central place or register. This will help you identify any trends or issues.
3. **Get all the facts** - Check that you have understood and recorded the details of the complaint correctly. Ask questions if necessary.
4. **Discuss options for fixing the problem** - Ask the customer what response they are seeking; it could be a repair, replacement, refund or apology. Decide if the request is reasonable.
5. **Act quickly**- Aim to resolve the complaint quickly. If you take a long time they tend to escalate.
6. **Keep your promises** – Keep the customer informed if there are any delays in resolving their request. Don't promise things that you can't deliver.

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7. **Follow up** – Contact the customer to find out if they were satisfied with how their complaint was handled. Let them know what you are doing to avoid the problem in the future.

Make sure your staffs are trained to follow your procedure when handling complaints and that they have the power to resolve issues as quickly as possible.

Encourage your customers to provide feedback and complaints so that they let you know when there is a problem and give you the opportunity to resolve it. <http://www.workawesome.com/>

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Self-Check -5	Written Test
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Directions: Answer all the questions listed below.

1. Write Complaints handling procedure

Note: Satisfactory rating - 3 points

Unsatisfactory - below 3 points

Answer Sheet

Score = _____
Rating: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____



Information Sheet-5	Informing customer
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5.1 Informing customer

Once you're committed to informing your clients, it is time to decide the best way to go about doing it. There are five ways that are effective:

Provide Regular Updates

A number of ways to communicate information to your client are available, but with most clients, email is the most effective.

If the information represents a monumental shift in the legal terrain for your client, get the information out right away—don't wait to include it in the regularly scheduled email. For important matters, let your clients know that you and/or your colleagues are available by phone or in person to answer any questions they may have. If your firm has a group that directs the firm's knowledge management efforts, use that group as a resource to help set up processes to identify, categorize, and disseminate information more efficiently.

The information you pass on to clients does not have to be groundbreaking opinions or watershed pieces of legislation. If you find an article that generally deals with your client's business, pass it on. Your client will appreciate the information and the fact that you are showing an interest in his or her business and staying abreast of relevant news.

Although the initiative behind these emails is to be applauded, and there certainly is some informational and branding value in them, these mass emails actually miss a tremendous opportunity to connect personally and positively with the client. To maximize the effect of educating your client, it is important that you, the lawyer who owns the relationship with the client, personally send the email to the client. The email should briefly summarize the legal issue being forwarded, and briefly state why the client may find the information important. This is a better means for delivering your message for several reasons:<http://www.workawesome.com/>

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Self-Check -5	Written Test
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Directions: Answer all the questions listed below.

1. Write the ways employees use to inform customers?

Note: Satisfactory rating - 3 points

Unsatisfactory - below 3 points

Score = _____
Rating: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____



Instruction Sheet *LG17: Exercising judgment to resolve customer service issue*

This learning guide is developed to provide you the necessary information regarding the following **content coverage** and topics –

- Identifying implications of issues
- Analyzing, explaining and negotiating options for resolution
- Proposing viable options
- Ensuring matters of non-negotiated solutions are referred

This guide will also assist you to attain the learning outcome stated in the cover page. Specifically, upon completion of this Learning Guide, **you will be able to –**

- Identifying implications of issues
- Analyzing, explaining and negotiating options for resolution
- Proposing viable options
- Ensuring matters of non-negotiated solutions are referred

Learning Instructions:

15. Read the specific objectives of this Learning Guide.
16. Follow the instructions described in number 3 to 20.
17. Read the information written in the “Information Sheets 1”. Try to understand what are being discussed. Ask your instructors for assistance if you have a hard time understanding them.
18. Accomplish the “Self-check” **in page-**
19. Ask from your instructor the key to correction (key answers) or you can request your teacher to correct your work. (You are to get the key answer only after you finished answering the Self-check).
20. If you earned a satisfactory evaluation proceed to “Information Sheet 2”. However, if your rating is unsatisfactory, see your instructor for further instructions or go back to Learning Activity.
21. Submit your accomplished Self-check. This will form part of your training portfolio.

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Information Sheet-1	Identifying implications of issues
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1.1 Identify implications of issues for customer and organization

You need to have a good understanding of the organization you work for. If you are very familiar with the way things are done and understand your level of responsibility, you will find it easier to make decisions about how to process customer complaints.

You must process complaints in the way that your organization would want you to.

Even when you are dealing with an unusual complaint that is not mentioned in the

Organization’s policies and procedures, you should still have a general idea about how the organization might like you to handle it. <http://www.workawesome.com/>

Using your judgment

Aside from following your organization’s policies and procedures, there are times when you must use your best judgment when handling a complaint. Try to gauge the situation – think about how the customer is feeling. Think about what they need to hear. Think about what to tell the customer.

Use your common sense and be sensitive and perceptive. Think about what would be best for the customer and the organization.

Negative implications

When a customer experiences poor service or buys a faulty product, the negative implications for the organization are likely to be:

- a reputation for poor products and services
- lost customers
- Lost money.

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Positive implications

Complaints can provide an organization with the opportunity to identify where they are going wrong and how they can better foster customer relationships. They give organizations a chance to put things right and turn the complaint into a positive experience. Complaints should be seen as a continuous improvement tool that the organization uses to regularly improve and increase customer satisfaction. Responding positively to complaints can actually enhance a organization's reputation. www.optimonk.com

Organizations can use complaints to:

- turn a dissatisfied customer into a happy customer
- improve service and product range
- better understand individual client needs
- Increase client and brand loyalty.

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Self-Check -1	Written Test
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Directions: Answer all the questions listed below.

3. How do you handle customer complaints?

Note: Satisfactory rating - 3 points

Unsatisfactory - below 3 points

Score = _____
Rating: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____

Information Sheet-2	Analyzing, explaining and negotiating options for resolution
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2.1. ANALYSING CUSTOMER COMPLAINTS AND TRENDS

To review customer satisfaction and identify product trends in your organization you will need to analyze and interpret verifiable evidence

This includes:

- Customer satisfaction questionnaires.
- Audit documentation and reports.
- Quality assurance data.
- Returned goods.
- Service calls and service times.
- Complaints and lapsed customers.
- Performance of competitors.

Reviewing the types of complaints that are made can help you to identify areas for improvement; not only in your products but also in the way customer service is delivered. Records of lapsed customers should be checked to identify opportunities to encourage a return to your organization. You may be able to inform these customers of product promotions or service enhancements. <http://www.workawesome.com/>

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Self-Check -2	Written Test
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Directions: Answer all the questions listed below.

1. List the points that need to analyze and interpret verifiable interest to review customer satisfaction and identify product trends in your organization.

Note: Satisfactory rating - 3 points

Unsatisfactory - below 3 points

Answer Sheet

Score = _____
Rating: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____

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Information Sheet-3	Proposing viable options
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3.1. Proposing viable options

When presenting potential solutions, you can give the customer control by letting them choose from a number of viable choices.

For instance, you could say: “I have a few ideas for how we can make this right. Let’s talk about some of these options together, so we can choose the best course of action together.”

If they continue to reject every solution you propose, you should ask the customer directly what would make them happiest. Either way, you’ve managed to turn the situation from a combative you-vs-them dynamic to a collaborative effort focused on reaching a resolution.

Just because you’ve resolved the issue this time, doesn’t mean it won’t crop up again with another customer. That is, unless you use the negative customer feedback received from this experience to fuel change within your company.

Start by pinpointing the exact cause of the issue. Where did it start? Who was involved? Once you identify what went wrong and how the situation could have been avoided, you can use that information to minimize the chance of a similar problem occurring in the future.

For instance, if the problem was related to customer service, you could consider additional training for your field techs or look for ways to improve employee onboarding. You could also encourage your team members to discuss tips for handling or preventing common customer service issues.

When all is said in done, you should check in one more time to make sure the customer is satisfied with the outcome. Ask if there’s anything else you can do for them and thank them again for their patience <http://www.workawesome.com/>

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Self-Check -3	Written Test
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Directions: Answer all the questions listed below.

1. What are viable options?

Note: Satisfactory rating - 3 points

Unsatisfactory - below 3 points

Score = _____
Rating: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____



What is negotiation?

Negotiation has been defined as any form of direct or indirect communication whereby parties who have opposing interests discuss the form of any joint action which they might take to manage and ultimately resolve the dispute between them. Negotiations may be used to resolve an already-existing problem or to lay the groundwork for a future relationship between two or more parties.

Negotiation has also been characterized as the “preeminent mode of dispute resolution”, which is hardly surprising given its presence in virtually all aspects of everyday life, whether at the individual, institutional, national or global levels. Each negotiation is unique, differing from one another in terms of subject matter, the number of participants and the process used.

Given the presence of negotiation in daily life, it is not surprising to find that negotiation can also be applied within the context of other dispute resolution processes, such as mediation and litigation settlement conferences.

Characteristics of a negotiation

Negotiation is:

- **Voluntary:** No party is forced to participate in a negotiation. The parties are free to accept or reject the outcome of negotiations and can withdraw at any point during the process. Parties may participate directly in the negotiations or they may choose to be represented by someone else, such as a family member, friend, a lawyer or other professional.
- **Bilateral/Multilateral:** Negotiations can involve two, three or dozens of parties. They can range from two individuals seeking to agree on the sale of a house to negotiations involving diplomats from dozens of States (e.g., World Trade Organization (WTO)).



- **Non-adjudicative:** Negotiation involves only the parties. The outcome of a negotiation is reached by the parties together without recourse to a third-party neutral.
- **Informal:** There are no prescribed rules in negotiation. The parties are free to adopt whatever rules they choose, if any. Generally they will agree on issues such as the subject matter, timing and location of negotiations. Further matters such as confidentiality, the number of negotiating sessions the parties commits to, and which documents may be used, can also be addressed.
- **Confidential:** The parties have the option of negotiating publicly or privately. In the government context, negotiations would be subject to the criteria governing disclosure as specified in the *Access to Information Act* and the *Privacy*.
- **Flexible:** The scope of a negotiation depends on the choice of the parties. The parties can determine not only the topic or the topics that will be the subject of the negotiations, but also whether they will adopt a positional-based bargaining approach or an interest-based approach.

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Self-Check -4	Written Test
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Directions: Answer all the questions listed below.

- _____ has been defined as any form of direct or indirect communication whereby parties who have opposing interests discuss the form of any joint action which they might take to manage and ultimately resolve the dispute between them.

Note: Satisfactory rating - 3 points

Unsatisfactory - below 3 points

Score = _____
Rating: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____

Short Answer Questions

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