**UNIT 6. CUSTOMER CARE**

**Task 1. Work with a partner. Discuss:**

* What kind of customer service do you expect from businesses as a customer?
* What is important for you as a customer?
* Have you ever received bad service in a bank, café, etc.? What happened? Did you tell others about your experience?
* Tell about a really good customer experience you had. What happened? Did you tell others about your experience?
* Do you talk more about good or bad customer experience?

**Task 2. Read the text and answer the questions.**

1. Why is customer care important for a company?

2. How can loyal customers promote your business?

3. What is a good customer service about?

4. How should businesses create satisfied customers?

5. Why do businesses have to work on customer relationships?

6. What should be done to handle customers’ complaints?

7. Why is regular customer contact important?

***CUSTOMER CARE***

“Customer care is at the heart of all successful companies. It can help you develop a loyal customer base and improve relationships with your customers.

In a competitive market, it can be tempting to chase new business. However, to boost revenue and profitability in your business, your best bet is to focus on customer retention and build up customer loyalty.

Loyal customers come back time and again; they will also promote your business through word-of-mouth recommendation. By building a long-term customer base, you can reduce the costs of looking for new customers and improve your bottom line.

Good service helps turn customers into ambassadors for your business – they will buy your products and services regularly and give you valuable feedback on your performance as well as supporting you through good times and bad.

To turn a satisfied customer into an enthusiast you need to offer great service based on a deep understanding of your customers’ needs. Price and product are important but it is service that gives you the edge over your competitors.

**Customer satisfaction**

Good customer service is about managing the perceptions of your customers and giving them a positive experience of doing business with you. Are your staff friendly and professional? Are your products and services up to scratch[[1]](#footnote-2)? Do you deliver what you promise?

Getting this right is vital. To create satisfied customers, you need to establish a relationship with them based on understanding their needs. Then you need to exceed their expectations at every turn[[2]](#footnote-3).

Every business makes promises to its customers, whether tacit[[3]](#footnote-4) or implied[[4]](#footnote-5). Make sure you are delivering results. A good rule of thumb is to under-promise and over-deliver.

**Customer relationships**

Even the smallest business needs to plan and control its customer communications. Customer relationship management (CRM) is not the preserve of big corporations. To succeed, every business needs to take a customer-centric approach and build good relationships with their customers based on trust.

You have to work at customer relationships. Never take your best customers for granted. Keep communicating with them so you can respond as their needs change and reward them for their loyalty.

Customers don’t usually complain; most just go elsewhere. Others not only complain, but demand action and possibly compensation. Most businesses handle complaints badly. Set up a customer complaints procedure and respond promptly. Resolve the issue so that you don’t make the same mistake twice and tell the customer how you have dealt with it.

At the same time, don’t wait until someone complains. Encourage continuous feedback and be prepared to make improvements. Regular customer contact is vital and customer satisfaction surveys are a good way to find out how your business is seen by others. Regular surveys should elicit[[5]](#footnote-6) real responses, so ensure they can tell you in words as well as tick boxes.

Loyalty schemes allow you to focus on your best customers. These customers buy more and are more profitable than those who may only respond to discounts.”

(www.marketingdonut.co.uk)

**Task 3. Match the words or word combinations from the text with their definitions.**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1. Bottom line | the continued use, existence, or possession of something or someone | 1- ... |
| 2. Complaint | A task or operation seen in terms of how successfully it is performed | 2- ... |
| 3. Edge | Fail to properly appreciate (someone or something) | 3- ... |
| 4. Performance | The final total of an account or balance sheet | 4- ... |
| 5. Retention | Improve or increase something | 5- ... |
| 6. Rule of thumb | A quality or factor which gives superiority over close rivals | 6- ... |
| 7. Boost (v.) | A statement that something is unsatisfactory or unacceptable | 7- ... |
| 8. Take for granted | A broadly accurate guide or principle, based on practice rather than theory | 8- ... |

 **Task 4. Use the terms from task 3 in the sentences.**

1. One of the effective ways to improve your customer service \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is to make it easy for the customer to reach you.

2. If you can deal effectively and efficiently with customer \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_-s you have the perfect opportunity to convert dissatisfied customers into the best promoters of your business.

3.The \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in customer service is that “the customer is always right.” That is the saying, but not always the truth.

4. Small and medium-sized companies have an \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ over larger companies in today’s competitive environment because of their ability to act very fast.

5.  High-quality customer service is essential to a growing or established company’s \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

6. Outstanding customer service ensures your customers’ experience is one that they will never forget and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_-s customer loyalty.

7. Sometimes companies \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ a customer \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, particularly when that customer has done business with them for a long time.

8. Employee \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is strong at this company because the company owner pays the employees fairly.

**Task 5. a) Make word combinations.**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Bottom  | complaints | 1. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |
| Competitive  | customer | 2. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |
| Customer  | for granted | 3. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |
| Handle  | issues | 4. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |
| Loyal | line | 5. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |
| Resolve  | market | 6. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |
| Respond  | of thumb | 7. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |
| Rule  | promptly | 8. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |
| Take  | retention | 9. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |

**b) Use the word combinations in your sentences.**

1. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Task 6. Use your dictionaries. Find the antonyms for the words and expressions used in the text**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 1. Loyalty | \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |
| 2. Improve | \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |
| 3. Reduce | \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |
| 4. Encourage | \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |
| 5. Promptly | \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |
| 6. Succeed | \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |

**Task 7. a) Read the tips on how to deal with customer complaints**

#### 1. Actually listen to what your customer is trying to say to you. Prove that you were listening by repeating back to them what you heard.

#### 2. Ask questions in a concerned and caring manner.

#### 3. Put yourself in their shoes.The customer must know that you’re on their side and that you understand their frustration.

#### 4.  Apologize, but don’t blame anyone. Just calmly say “I’m so sorry this happened” or “I’m sorry about that”.

#### 5. Ask “What can we do that would be an acceptable solution to you?” Have ready a couple of solutions that may resolve the problem.

#### 5. Resolve the problem quickly. If you can’t, then find the person who can. Most customer complaints are very simple to resolve, so resolve them there and then.

**b) Work in pairs. Discuss the situation.**

**What was the situation?**

**What were the consequences for the business?**

**What should a company/clerk do?**

**How should a customer be treated?**

**What would you do/say?**

“I was shopping in a local national discount retailer. I purchased several items but when I got to the car I realized that the clerk had not given me the discounted price of 25% off as was indicated on the yellow stickers on some of the items.

I returned to the store, patiently waited in line again, and when it was my turn politely explained to the clerk what had happened and simply asked that my card be credited for the discount that should have been included. To my surprise the clerk looked at me and said the following:

“No. How do I know you did not just stick these yellow sales stickers on the items yourself?”

Without missing a beat I simply smiled and said “You’re right, I’ll return everything. Thank you.”

Upon seeing this exchange at least one other customer waiting in line put down her items, and said audibly so that other customers could hear her “I don’t need to be treated like that” and walked out of the store.”

**c) Work with a partner. Choose and simulate one of thefollowing situations.**

1. Reaching a checkout in the supermarket and the cashier refusing to serve you as he is “just closing the aisle”.

2. The clerk was rude and pretended not to see you.

3. Slow replies to your emails when you’ve just purchased a product online.

4. Waiting too long to be served at a restaurant.

**Use the following phrases:**

***Student A (a customer)***

I’d like to make a complaint.

I’m sorry, but I am not satisfied with... / I am very dissatisfied with ...

Unfortunately, there is a problem with ...

I’d like to know why ...

If you don’t replace ..., I’ll complain to the manager.

That’s very kind of you.

Thank you.

***Student B (a clerk)***

How can I help you?

Could I ask your name?

I am so sorry about that. / I apologize for ...

Could you tell me exactly what happened?

Could I offer you ... ?

I understand. / I see what you mean.

I’ll take care of this at once for you.

Thanks for bringing this to our attention.

You’ll receive a refund / replacement by (tomorrow).

**Task 8. a) Answer the questions.**

1. What is the best way to make a complaint?

2. Have you ever written a complaint letter?

**b) Read a sample letter of complaint.**

Dear Sir or Madam,

I wish to express my dissatisfaction with the above iron, which I purchased from The Electrical Store in Newtown on 10 October, 2015. On using it for the first time, I found that the temperature control was faulty; it was not possible to set it for any temperature apart from the highest, for cotton.

When I attempted to return the iron to the store, the cashier said that the store was unable to replace it or offer me a refund but advised me that it could be sent away for repair. As I need an iron on a daily basis, and it was not clear how long a repair would take, this option was unsatisfactory. As the iron clearly does not function as it should and therefore does not comply with the legal standards of product quality, I am writing to you to ask for a full refund of the £35.99 retail price.

I look forward to hearing from you within the next two weeks.

Yours truly,

Jenny Hawkins

**c) Work in pairs. Think of a situation. Gather the information you will need to include in your complaint. Fill in the email complaint template.**

Dear *(title)* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_,

I wish to complain about \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ *(name of product or service, with serial number or account number)* that I purchased on \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ *(date and location of transaction)*.

I am complaining because \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ *(the reason you are dissatisfied)*. To resolve this problem I would like you to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ *(what you want the business to do)*.

When I first learned of this problem, I contacted \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ *(name of the person, date of the call)* at your company, and was told that nothing could be done about my problem. I believe that this response is unfair because \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ *(the reason you feel the company has an obligation to you).* I would like a written statement explaining your company’s position and what you will do about my complaint.

I look forward to hearing from you as soon as possible to resolve this problem. If I do not hear from you within \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ days I will file complaints with the appropriate consumer agencies and consider my legal alternatives.

I am attaching copies of my receipt or \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ *(other proof of payment or documentation of complaint).*

You may reply to me at this email or call me at \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ *(phone number).*

Sincerely,

*(your full name)*

(Source: Consumer Action, www.consumer-action.org)

**d) Respond to the complaint email above**

Dear.........

I am writing with reference to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (situation or complaint) of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (date).

Firstly I apologise for the inconvenience/distress/problems created by our error/failure.

We take great care to ensure that important matters such as this are properly managed/processed/implemented, although due to\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (give reason), so on this occasion an acceptable standard has clearly not been met/we have clearly not succeeded in meeting your expectations.

In light of this, we have decided to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*(solution or offer)*, which we hope will be acceptable to you, and hope also that this will provide a basis for continuing our relationship.

I will call you soon to check that this meets with your approval/Please contact me should you have any further cause for concern.

Yours,

...................................

(Source: www.businessballs.com)

**Task 9. Topic for discussion:**

**Is the customer always right?**

1. Up to the required standard; satisfactory [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. On every occasion; continually [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. Understood or implied without being stated [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. Suggested, but not directly expressed [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. Evoke or draw out (a reaction, answer, or fact) from someone [↑](#footnote-ref-6)