

CUSTOMER SERVICE SPECIALIST APPRENTICESHIP

The main purpose of a customer service specialist is to be a 'professional' for direct customer support within all sectors and organisation types. You are an advocate of Customer Service who acts as a referral point for dealing with more complex or technical customer requests, complaints, and queries. You are often an escalation point for complicated or ongoing customer problems.

As an expert in your organisation's products and/or services, you share knowledge with your wider team and colleagues. You gather and analyse data and customer information that influences change and improvements in service. Utilising both organisational and generic IT systems to carry out your role with an awareness of other digital technologies. This could be in many types of environment including contact centres, retail, webchat, service industry or any customer service point.

ENTRY

Organisations will set their own entry criteria and are more likely to select individuals with more advanced inter-personal skills and experience of working with customers in some capacity.

DURATION

The apprenticeship will take a minimum of 15 months to complete depending on experience.

LEVEL

This apprenticeship standard is set at level 3.

PROGRESSION

Completion of this apprenticeship will lead to eligibility to join the Institute of Customer Service as an Individual member at Professional level. Should you choose to progress on a customer service career path, you may be eligible for further professional membership including management.

FUNCTIONAL SKILLS

If the employee does not have maths and English GCSE passes at grade C or above, they will need to pass maths and English Functional Skills level 2 during their apprenticeship.

END ASSESSMENT

To achieve this apprenticeship standard, the employer, training provider and apprentice will agree when the apprentice is competent and ready to undertake the independent end point assessment.

EDN PROFESSIONAL TRAINERS

Alongside the apprentice they will agree on a personal learning and development plan, setting a timetable of learning activities in preparation for the End Point Assessment (EPA).

The EDN Training Consultant will meet with the apprentice regularly either online or face to face to complete and review assessments, provide further coaching where required and agree the next steps of learning.



FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT US AT:

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REQUIREMENTS: KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND BEHAVIOURS

KNOWLEDGE

What is required (in-depth knowledge of organisation and wider business environment)

Business Knowledge and Understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Understand what continuous improvement means in a service environment and how your recommendations for change impact your organisationUnderstand the impact your service provision has on the wider organisation and the value it addsUnderstand your organisation's current business strategy in relation to customers and make recommendations for its futureUnderstand the principles and benefits of being able to think about the future when taking action or making service related decisionsUnderstand a range of leadership styles and apply them successfully in a customer service environment
Customer Journey knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Understand and critically evaluate the possible journeys of your customers, including challenges and the end-to-end experienceUnderstand the reasons why customer issues and complex situations sometimes need referral or escalation for specialist attentionUnderstand the underpinning business processes that support you in bringing about the best outcome for customers and your organisationUnderstand commercial factors and authority limits for delivering the required customer experience
Knowing your customers and their needs/ Customer Insight	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Know your internal and external customers and how their behaviour may require different approaches from youUnderstand how to analyse, use and present a range of information to provide customer insightUnderstand what drives loyalty, retention and satisfaction and how they impact on your organisationUnderstand different customer types and the role of emotions in bringing about a successful outcomeUnderstand how customer expectations can differ between cultures, ages and social profiles
Customer service culture and environment awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Keep current knowledge and understanding of regulatory considerations, drivers and impacts in relation to how you deliver for customersUnderstand your business environment and culture and the position of customer service within itUnderstand your organisation structure and what role each department needs to play in delivering customer service and what the consequences are should things go wrongUnderstand how to find and use industry best practice to enhance own knowledge

SKILLS

What is required (advancing key skills to support progression to management)

Providing a positive customer experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Through advanced questioning, listening and summarising negotiate mutually beneficial outcomesManage challenging and complicated situations within your level of authority and make recommendations to enable and deliver change to service or strategyUse clear explanations, provide options and solutions to influence and help customers make choices and agree next stepsExplore and interpret the customer experience to inform and influence achieving a positive result for customer satisfactionDemonstrate a cost conscious mind-set when meeting customer and the business needsIdentifying where highs and lows of the customer journey produce a range of emotions in the customerUse written and verbal communication to simplify and provide complex information in a way that supports positive customer outcome in the relevant format
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SKILLS

What is required (advancing key skills to support progression to management)

Business focused service delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Demonstrate a continuous improvement and future focussed approach to customer service delivery including decision making and providing recommendations or adviceResolve complex issues by being able to choose from and successfully apply a wide range of approachesFind solutions that meet your organisations needs as well as the customer requirements
Working with your customers/customer insights	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Proactively gather customer feedback, through a variety of methods. Critically analyse, and evaluate the meaning, implication and facts and act upon itAnalyse your customer types, to identify or anticipate their potential needs and expectations when providing your service
Customer service performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Maintain a positive relationship even when you are unable to deliver the customer's expected outcomeWhen managing referrals or escalations take into account historical interactions and challenges to determine next steps
Service improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Analyse the end to end service experience, seeking input from others where required, supporting development of solutionsMake recommendations based on your findings to enable improvementMake recommendations and implement where possible, changes in line with new and relevant legislation, regulations and industry best practice

BEHAVIOURS / ATTITUDE

What is required (Role-model behaviours and positive contribution to culture)

Develop self	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Proactively keep your service, industry and best practice knowledge and skills up-to-dateConsider personal goals related to service and take action towards achieving them
Ownership/ Responsibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Personally commit to and take ownership for actions to resolve customer issues to the satisfaction of the customer and your organisationExercises proactivity and creativity when identifying solutions to customer and organisational issuesMake realistic promises and deliver on them
Team working	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Work effectively and collaboratively with colleagues at all levels to achieve results.Recognise colleagues as internal customersShare knowledge and experience with others to support colleague development
Equality	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Adopt a positive and enthusiastic attitude being open minded and able to tailor your service to each customerBe adaptable and flexible to your customer needs whilst continuing to work within the agreed customer service environment
Presentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Demonstrate brand advocacy, values and belief when dealing with customer requests to build trust, credibility and satisfactionEnsure your personal presentation, in all forms of communication, reflects positively on your organisation's brand

INDEPENDENT END POINT ASSESSMENT

The end point assessment will only commence once the employer, apprentice and EDN Training Consultant are confident that the apprentice has developed all the knowledge, skills and behaviours defined in the apprenticeship standard and clearly evidenced by the on-programme progression review meetings and records.

The independent end point assessment ensures that all apprentices consistently achieve the industry set professional standard and can commence at any point once the apprentice is competent after the 15 months minimum period of learning and development. Prior to independent end point assessment the functional skills English and maths components of the apprenticeship must be successfully completed.

SUMMARY OF INDEPENDENT END POINT ASSESSMENT PROCESS

The apprentice will be assessed to the apprenticeship standard using three complementary assessment methods adjacent. The assessment is synoptic, i.e. takes a view of the overall performance of the apprentice in their job. The assessment activities will be completed by the independent end point assessment organisation.

INDEPENDENT END POINT ASSESSMENT ORGANISATIONS

Approved assessment organisations are registered on the SFA Register of apprenticeship assessment organisations. Assessment organisations are responsible for ensuring assessments are conducted fairly and that assessments are valid, reliable and consistent. To access the list and find an assessment organisation visit:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/using-the-register-of-apprentice-assessment-organisations>

The employer will approve and appoint the assessment organisation to undertake the independent end point assessment of the apprentice.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATION

The practical observation is covered in one session, lasting 1 hour. The apprentice must be observed, by an independent assessor, undertaking a range of day to day workplace activities. The observation should involve activities which allow the apprentice to demonstrate the full range of their knowledge, skills and behaviours required. The observation must include questioning to clarify knowledge and understanding is being applied.



WORK BASED PROJECT (SUPPORTED BY INTERVIEW)

The interview will take place with an independent assessor and will last for 60 minutes (+/- 10%). It will focus on the written project and any supporting annexes.



PROFESSIONAL DISCUSSION

The professional discussion will be a structured discussion between the apprentice and the Independent Assessor, following the observation, to establish the apprentice's understanding and application of knowledge, skills and behaviours.



COMPLETION

Independent end assessor confirms that each assessment element has been completed. The apprenticeship includes Fail, Pass and Distinction grades which are awarded at the end point assessment. The final grade is based on the overall performance in the Practical Observation, Work Based Project and Professional Discussion. If an apprentice fails any part of the end-point assessment, then it is a fail.



Divisions of HIT Training Ltd.



Course sheet for Customer Service
Specialist Apprenticeship
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