CUSTOMER FOCUS
Competency Development Guide

BIZ ▶ LIBRARY

Customer Focus Defined:

Customer service is the orientation of an organization toward serving its clients' needs. Having a customer focus is usually a strong contributor to the overall success of a business and involves ensuring that all aspects of the company put its customers' satisfaction first.

Source: BusinessDictionary.com

"Great organizations consider EVERYONE to be a potential customer, that means that everyone you deal with-- clients, suppliers, partners, competitors, you name it--is, in a way, a customer."

Source: Who is Your Customer?, The BizLibrary Collection

Being customer focused is an effort put forth by the entire organization. It combines the associated soft skills (being nice and friendly to customers and making them feel important) with meeting customer expectations about your products and services.

Having customer focus is a skill that comes naturally to some, but is largely an attitude that trickles from the top down. It's not only a competency your employees need to embrace, but it's a defining factor that could make or break your business.

How focused you are on your customers directly correlates to how your organization rates on people and jobs. In general, there are four types of customer service – **Don't Care, Assembly Line, Happy Confusion and Quality.**

Don't Care – Organizations that don't care rate low on people and on jobs. They provide poor products and services, and they also don't treat customers well.

Assembly Line – These organizations rate low on people, but high on job. They don't treat you well, but their products and services are okay. Think about the typical doctor's office experience.

Happy Confusion – These organizations rate high on people, but low on job. They take care of you as a person, but they don't know what they're doing, and things don't work the way they should.

Quality – These organizations rate high on people and high on job. They treat you right. And the products and services work the way they're supposed to. And for the relatively low percentage of problems that do occur, the resolution process also works. You can get things fixed in a timely fashion, with a reasonable amount of effort.

"It takes 20 years to build a reputation and five minutes to ruin it. If you think about that, you'll do things differently."

- Warren Buffett, Investor and Philanthropist

"If we can keep our competitors focused on us while we stay focused on the customer, ultimately we'll turn out alright."

- Jeff Bezos, Founder of Amazon.com

"Customer experience needs to be a competence, not a function. The end game is to have a customer-centric culture and a set of customer-centric processes, at which point customer-centricity becomes self-sustaining."

- Harley Manning Author

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT
Competency Development Guide

Development Activities and Suggestions

Learn to LOVE your customers. Whether it's a "good" or "bad" customer they're still paying you money for a product or service. They are the reason you have a job.

Welcome complaints. Many companies and individuals within them fail at this point specifically. It's so important to receive complaints well as a company, not only to improve your products and services based on feedback, but also to protect your most important asset, your reputation.

### 6 TIPS TO MANAGE CUSTOMER COMPLAINTS

1. Make sure the customer knows how or where to complain. Make them aware of any numbers, email addresses, etc. they need to make you aware of their complaint.

2. It should be easy to get your voice heard. This sounds counter-intuitive, but customers often don't complain because the process is lengthy and difficult. This process results in angrier customers complaining to other potential customers.

3. Let the customer know you care about their complaint and that action will be taken. Often customers are fatalistic about getting results and think it won't do any good.

4. Foster an environment where all feedback is welcome, positive and negative.

5. Eliminate the fear of retribution. Often customers are treated rudely when complaining.

6. Ensure your complaint procedure works. Simplify your processes and test to see that they're functional from the customer side and the employee side.

Understand where the customer is coming from. Often times in order to have true customer focus, you'll need to put yourself in their shoes. Customers will often seem to overreact with you because of the pre-existing attitude they're bringing to the transaction. You're being punished not for what YOU'VE done, but what's gone on beforehand.

Don't focus on exceeding the customer's expectations, focus on meeting them. According to research from the Corporate Executive Board, customer loyalty has a lot more to do with how well you deliver on your fundamentals, than how much you dazzle people with your surprises.

Seek ongoing training and development. Companies who are renowned for their customer service also make Learning and Development a priority. Think, Disney, Amazon, Apple...all of these organizations seek extensive training for their employees.

CUSTOMER SERVICE FACTS

70%
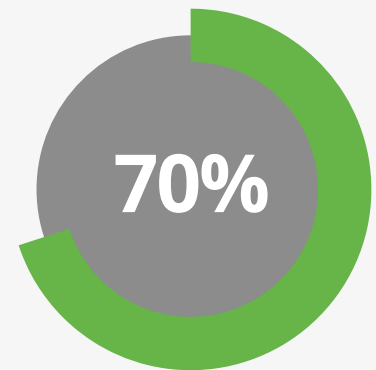
of buying experiences are based on how customers *feel* they're being treated.

For every person who complains, there are **26 other customers** who don't. So even though unhappy customers will tell **16 other people**, they tend to not tell you, the vendor, for a variety of reasons.

SOURCE: Fundamentals of Customer Service Series, from the BizLibrary Collection

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT
Competency Development Guide

BIZ ▶ LIBRARY

Summary

While Customer Focus and Customer Service aren't exactly the same, you can't have good Customer Service without being Customer Focused. The best companies do everything with the customer in mind.

When it comes to Customer Focus, attitude is everything. There needs to be a culture of communication where feedback is welcomed and employees know not to take negative feedback personally. Extensive customer service training and a positive culture can both help develop Customer Focus as an organizational core competency.

Recommended Resources from the BizLibrary Collection

Fundamentals of Customer Service Series

Customer Service Communication Skills Series

Creating a Customer Service Culture

Essential Elements of Internal Customer Service

To watch these courses and more within the BizLibrary collection, request a demo today!

About BizLibrary

BizLibrary is a leading provider of online learning for growing organizations. Our award-winning microlearning video library engages employees of all levels, and our learning technology platform is a progressive catalyst for achievement. Partnered with our expert Client Success and Technical Support teams, clients are empowered to solve business challenges and impact change within their organizations.

Learn more at www.bizlibrary.com.

BIZ ▶ LIBRARY

SUPPORTING BEHAVIOR STATEMENTS

MEETS EXPECTATIONS:

Is dedicated to meeting the expectations and requirements of internal and external customers.

CARES ABOUT FEEDBACK:

Gets first-hand customer information and uses it for improvements in products and services.

SEEKS RELATIONSHIPS AND TRUST:

Acts with customers in mind. Establishes and maintains effective relationships with customers. Gains customer trust and respect.

KNOWS THE CUSTOMER:

Considers everyone a customer or a potential customer.