



BRENTWOOD
OPEN LEARNING COLLEGE

Assignment Cover Sheet

Student Name:	Julia Mills
Student Number:	21962
Course:	Diploma in Customer Services Level 4
Assignment NO:	11 complaints handling

Marking Criteria:

We expect the learners to write minimum one well expressed point in three lines against each allocated mark. This means one needs to write 15 lines with 5 well expressed points to get high grades for a 5 marks question.

For high grades use examples and illustrations where appropriate.

1. Give short answers for the following questions: (15)

I. Why do complains occur?

A complaint usually happens because of either an operational procedure or human interaction. For example a faulty product or the product not arriving on time or at all. It good be that a sales person was rude or ignoring the customer by chatting to another member of staff. It could be that the operational complaint such as "this is too expensive" could be overcome by the salesperson showing all the services on offer for the price, but it could be that the product or service is very good but the service team are rude or ineffectual and therefore a complaint is made.

II. Outline the two factors that influence effectiveness of customer complaint handling.

Firstly the general complaint handling system that the customer will experience, this will be set out in advance and companies will usually have a dedicated team or person who will look into complaints. A good complaints structure within an organisation will influence whether a customer will buy or recommend products and services from the company in the future. Secondly the empathy given, whether the customer is right or wrong, and customers usually believe they are right, they will expect a response that is attentive, sympathetic and quick.

III. What are the widely established response standards for customer services?

The first response standard is an apology. Other response standards could be as follows:

- Telephone answer within 3 to 5 rings
- answering a letter or email with 24 hours and often this is a holding response stating acknowledgment of the complaint and what the next step will be
- Communication update, so for example when a part is waiting for arrival or when on the telephone you are waiting for a response and a customer is on hold.
- Openness and continuity, so for example giving your full name, email address, the name of the ombudsman service if the customer wishes to escalate and to keep the complaint with the same person who took it in the first place and not passing customers on

- Not using a generic signature or email such as “customer service team” but using the a real person
- A simple, jargon free solution
- Fairness, customers are not usually looking for an excessive compensation claim, they just wish to be treated fairly and this can often be done by putting yourself as the customer and seeing what would be fair to you

IV. What are the common reasons for customers’ complaints?

- Bad attitude from customer service personnel. Often this is where an employee ignores the customer or doesn’t try to gain a rapport with the customer or emphasise with them over whatever their issue/comments/complaint may be. So for example, even if the customer is complaining that the weather is too hot, it might be good rapport to agree with the customer and have a joke about Britain not having good air conditioning units as opposed to arguing with the customer that we should be grateful for good weather. Employees that are not great with customer rapport could be put in non-customer facing positions.
- Not wanting to find a solution. Employees might just blag a response to the customer and not pass on the customer comments, so for example stating that they would pass on the comment but in reality doing nothing, or even worst telling the customer that there is nothing that can be done about this, “the hallway is always dirty at this time because the cleaners don;t come in until 10:00am”
- Not giving full product information. Even if the product is the best fit for the customer if the customer does not understand the product then this will not work for them and could cause complaints. Or a product could be too complex and the employee has not explained how the product works, for example a mobile phone with gadgets and options useful to the customer but not explained, like the microphone button for example - extremely useful to the elderly who may find typing a text tricky but do not know how the microphone button can help them.
- Not willing to admit a mistake. Often a quick apology “you are correct I did forget to send you that, my apologies” can often be a quick and simple answer to a complaint and nothing further needs to be done.
- Not keeping the customer up to date. Behind the scenes the problem could be being resolved but unless the customer is informed of progress they may become frustrated and escalate the complaint. It is important to find the correct customer service frontline staff who enjoy getting involved in complaint resolution and talking to customers.
- Broken promises. If someone says they will do something and they do not, this is very frustrating for a customer. If you say you will pass the comment on or post something, make sure you do.

V. Define complaint management.

Effective complaint management is one of the most important areas in ensuring customer satisfaction. It is a formal process for recording and resolving complaints. Customer complaint management is needed for a successful business but also often for regulation. There is also a direct link between complaint resolution and customer loyalty and studies have established that efficiency in resolving a complaint leads to stronger customer loyalty.

In the complaint management process there are five steps: 1) register the complaint 2) classify it 3) analyse and report trends 4) management action 5) review and improve the complaint management process.

2. ‘Proper complaint handling system is vital for running the business successfully’. Discuss (7)
The Legal Ombudsman wrote a complaints handling leaflet and stated the following:

Our research shows that a good company complaints process - one that is well explained and easy to follow - can increase consumer confidence in a firm, especially when they are able to address problems when they arise. It demonstrates that the firm has confidence in the service they offer and that they are committed to offering the highest standards.

The Commonwealth Ombudsman also published a leaflet "Better Practise Guide to Complaint Handling" and stated, "Agencies now accept that complaint handling is a predictable and necessary part of program and service delivery. Errors, misunderstandings, client dissatisfaction and unexpected problems occur in all administrative systems. Complaint handling can be effective in resolving a problem before it becomes worse, providing a remedy to a client who has suffered disadvantage, and nurturing good relations between government agencies and the public. Complaints also provide agencies with information about program weaknesses and service delivery faults. Good administration involves regular review of existing programs, and the lessons learnt from complaints can feed into that process."

Whilst the direct role of an ombudsman service is to deal with complaints I feel that all companies can learn from the role of an ombudsman service to make a customer complaint handling system a priority in order to move the business forward.

3. Wysocki, Kepner and Glasser classified the complaining customers based on their behaviours into five types. What are these? (8)

The chronic complainer - someone who will always complain that the changing rooms are dirty. This customer will always find something to moan about, but this customer is still important and although frustrating we must deal with this type of customer. Often empathy is the best response here.

The high roller customer. This type of customer wishes to have the best service /product but is willing to pay for it, they will not forgive an excuse if they do not get the service or product they have paid for. If they are paying for a first class air ticket, they will expect an airport exclusive lounge with a well stocked bar, metal knives and forks and smiling airline staff etc.

The aggressive customer. This is someone who complains a lot, seriously and in depth. With this type of customer it is best to keep calm and offer a way to resolve the situation and a timescale for when it can be expected to be achieved.

The Meek customer. This type of customer will not complain. If asked whether they are enjoying their meal they may always reply yes, even if the food may be cold, portion too small, the icecream was not served with the apple pie, etc. With this type of customer it is important to ask for comments.

The rip off customer. The goal for the customer here is not necessarily to get complaint resolution or an apology but to get a discount, or freebie or some other gift that they are not entitled to receive. Often complaints are almost made up or not the companies fault at all, for example, extreme wet weather making the entrance hall muddy due to high customer footfall and complaining about that.

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Student Statement:

By submitting this assignment, I confirm that this is my own work.

Student Signature	Julia Mills	Date	18th August 2020
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For Tutor / Assessor Use Only

Total Marks	
Marks Obtained	
Percentage / Grade	