



# Customer Service Skill

## Important Skills for Customer Service Jobs

A company that relies on customers or clients to keep it in business will want to know what customer service experience and skills you have to offer. Before you fill out a job application, research the company and the position you are applying for.

Contrary to popular belief, giving good customer service does not require being an enthusiastic people-person, though that can help. Some types of customer-facing jobs do require an outgoing personality, but others do not. An honest desire to help other people is probably the one indispensable characteristic. Without that drive to help people, you may be able to act the part, but you will not enjoy it.

It doesn't matter how great your product is: If your customer service is poor, people will complain about it, and you'll lose customers.

The good news: It's not impossible to turn things around. Transforming your customer service from mediocre to great won't happen overnight, though. It requires a serious commitment to meaningful change, a team of rockstar support professionals, and work across the entire organization.

## What is customer service?

*Prepared by Cheryl Y.*

Customer service is the act of providing support to both prospective and existing customers. Customer service professionals commonly answer customer questions through in-person, phone, email, chat, and social media interactions and may also be responsible for creating documentation for self-service support.

Organizations can also create their own definitions of customer service depending on their customer service philosophies and the type of support they want to provide. For example, at Help Scout, we define customer service as the act of providing timely, empathetic help that keeps customers' needs at the forefront of every interaction.



*Any time an employee must engage a customer and properly represent the organization, they are exercising customer service skills.*

## Why is customer service important?

When 86% of customers quit doing business with a company due to a bad experience, it means that businesses must approach every support interaction as an opportunity to acquire, retain, or up-sell.

Good customer service is a revenue generator. It gives customers a complete, cohesive experience that aligns with an organization's purpose.

According to a variety of studies, U.S. companies lose more than \$62 billion annually due to poor customer service, and seven out of 10 consumers say they've spent more money to do business with a company that delivers great service.

Understanding that customer service is the cornerstone of your customer experience helps you leverage it as an opportunity to delight customers and engage them in new, exciting ways.

## 21 key customer service skills

While delivering consistently good customer service requires work and alignment across your entire organization, a good place to start is your support team. It's

important to hire people who genuinely want to help your customers succeed — and to pay rates that are attractive to skilled professionals.

Finding the perfect hire for a support team can be challenging. No particular checklist of job experiences and college diplomas adds up to the perfect candidate. Instead, you're looking for qualities that can't necessarily be taught.

These folks thrive on one-on-one interactions within their community. They love problem solving. They're warm, approachable, and great at teaching other people how things work.

Here are the 21 customer service skills that every support professional should seek to develop and every leader should look for when hiring new team members.

## 1. Patience

Patience is crucial for customer service professionals. After all, customers who reach out to support are often confused and frustrated. Being listened to and handled with patience goes a long way in helping customers feel like you're going to alleviate their current frustrations.

It's not enough to close out interactions with customers as quickly as possible. Your team has to be willing to take the time to listen to and fully understand each customer's problems and needs.

## 2. Attentiveness

The ability to truly listen to customers is crucial to providing great service for a number of reasons. Not only is it important to pay attention to individual customers' experiences, but it's also important to be mindful and attentive to the feedback that you receive at large.

For instance, customers may not be saying it outright, but perhaps there is a pervasive feeling that your software's dashboard isn't laid out correctly. Customers aren't likely to say, "Please improve your UX," but they may say things like, "I can never find the search feature" or "Where is (specific function), again?"

You have to be attentive to pick up on what customers are telling you without directly saying it.

### 3. Emotional intelligence

A great customer support representative knows how to relate to anybody, but they're especially good with frustrated people. Instead of taking things personally, they intuitively understand where the other person is coming from and they know to both prioritize and swiftly communicate that empathy.

Think about it: How often have you felt better about a potential grievance simply because you felt immediately heard by the other person involved?

When a support rep is able to demonstrate sincere empathy for a frustrated customer, even just by reiterating the problem at hand, it can help to both placate (the customer feels heard) and actively please (the customer feel validated in their frustration).

### 4. Ability to communicate clearly

Your customer support team is on the front lines of problem solving for the product itself, and serves as a kind of two-pronged bullhorn.

On one side, they'll be the voice of your company to your customers. That means they have to have a practiced grasp on how to reduce complex concepts into highly digestible, easily understood terms.

On the other, they'll represent the needs and thoughts of customers to your company. For example, it doesn't behoove the customer to receive a long-winded explanation on the ins-and-outs of solving a particular bug.

The ability to communicate clearly when working with customers is a key skill because miscommunications can result in disappointment and frustration. The best customer service professionals know how to keep their communications with customers simple and leave nothing to doubt.

### 5. Problem solving skills

Customers do not always self-diagnose their issues correctly. Often, it's up to the support rep to take the initiative to reproduce the trouble at hand before navigating a solution. That means they need to intuit not just what went wrong, but also what action the customer was ultimately after.

A great example? If somebody writes in because they're having trouble resetting their password, that's ultimately because they want to log into their account.

A good customer service interaction will anticipate that need and might even go the extra mile to manually perform the reset and provide new login details, all while educating the customer on how they can do it for themselves in the future.

In other situations, a problem-solving pro may simply understand how to offer preemptive advice or a solution that the customer doesn't even realize is an option.

## 6. A methodical approach

In customer service, haste makes waste. Hiring deliberate, detail-oriented people will go a long way in meeting the needs of your customers.

One, they'll be sure to get to the real heart of a problem before firing off a reply. There's nothing worse than attempting a "solution," only to have it miss the mark entirely on solving the actual issue.

Two, they'll proofread. A thoughtfully written response can lose a lot of its problem-solving luster if it's riddled with typos.

Three, and this one may be the most important, it means they'll regularly follow up. There's nothing more impressive than getting a note from a customer service rep saying, "Hey! Remember that bug you found that I said we were looking into? Well, we fixed it." That's a loyal, lifetime customer you've just earned.

An important side note: The best hires are able to maintain their methodical grace under regular fire.

Since the support team is often tasked with the tough work of cleaning up other people's messes, it's especially important they understand how not to internalize the urgency — and potential ire — of frustrated customers. Instead, they know how to keep a cool head and a steady, guiding hand.

## 7. Creativity and resourcefulness

Solving the problem is good, but finding clever and fun ways to go the extra mile — and wanting to do so in the first place — is even better.

It takes panache to infuse a typical customer service exchange with memorable warmth and personality, and finding a customer service rep who possesses that natural zeal will take your customer service out of "good enough" territory and straight into "tell all your friends about it" land.

## 8. Ability to use positive language

Effective customer service means having the ability to make minor changes in your conversational patterns. This can truly go a long way in creating happy customers.

Language is a crucial part of persuasion, and people (especially customers) create perceptions about you and your company based on the language that you use.

For example, let's say a customer contacts your team with an interest in a particular product, but that product happens to be back-ordered until next month.

Responding to questions with positive language can greatly affect how the customer hears the response:

- *Without positive language: "I can't get you that product until next month; it is back-ordered and unavailable at this time."*
- *With positive language: "That product will be available next month. I can place the order for you right now and make sure that it is sent to you as soon as it reaches our warehouse."*

The first example isn't negative per se, but the tone it conveys feels abrupt and impersonal and could be taken the wrong way by customers — especially in email support when the perception of written language can skew negative.

Conversely, the second example is stating the same thing (the item is unavailable), but it focuses on when and how the issue will be resolved instead of focusing on the negative.

## 9. Product knowledge

The best customer service professionals have a deep knowledge of how their companies' products work. After all, without knowing your product from front to back, they won't know how to help when customers run into problems.

All new Help Scout employees, for example, are trained on customer support during their first or second week on the job; it's a critical component of our employee onboarding process.

According to Help Scout's Elyse Roach, "Having that solid product foundation not only ensures you've got the best tricks up your sleeve to help customers navigate

even the most complex situations, it also helps you build an understanding of their experience so that you can become their strongest advocate."

## 10. Acting skills

Sometimes your team is going to come across people who you'll never be able to make happy.

Situations outside of your control (such as a customer who's having a terrible day) will sometimes creep into your team's usual support routine.

Every great customer service professional needs basic acting skills to maintain their usual cheery persona in spite of dealing with people who are just plain grumpy.

## 11. Time management skills

On the one hand, it's good to be patient and spend a little extra time with customers to understand their problems and needs. On the other hand, there is a limit to the amount of time you can dedicate to each customer, so your team needs to be concerned with getting customers what they want in an efficient manner.

The best customer service professionals are quick to recognize when they can't help a customer so they can quickly get that customer to someone who can help.

## 12. Ability to read customers

It's important that your team understands some basic principles of behavioral psychology in order to read customers' current emotional states.

The best support pros know how to watch and listen for subtle clues about a customer's current mood, patience level, personality, etc., which goes a long way in keeping customer interactions positive.

## 13. Unflappability

There are a lot of metaphors for this type of personality — "keeps their cool," "staying cool under pressure," and so on — but it all represents the same thing: The ability some people have to stay calm and even influence others when things get a little hectic.

The best customer service reps know that they can't let a heated customer force them to lose their cool. In fact, it is their job to try to be the "rock" for

customers who think the world is falling apart as a result of their current problems.

#### 14. Goal-oriented focus

Many customer service experts have shown how giving employees unfettered power to “wow” customers doesn't always generate the returns many businesses expect to see. That's because it leaves employees without goals, and business goals and customer happiness can work hand-in-hand without resulting in poor service.

Relying on frameworks like the [Net Promoter Score](#) can help businesses come up with guidelines for their employees that allow plenty of freedom to handle customers on a case-to-case basis, but also leave them priority solutions and “go-to” fixes for common problems.

#### 15. Ability to handle surprises

Sometimes, customers are going to throw your team curveballs. They'll make a request that isn't covered in your company guidelines or react in a way that no one could have expected.

In these situations, it's good to have a team of people who can think on their feet. Even better, look for people who will take the initiative to create guidelines for everyone to use in these situations moving forward.

#### 16. Persuasion skills

Oftentimes, support teams get messages from people who aren't looking for support — they're considering purchasing your company's product.

In these situations, it helps to have a team of people with some mastery of persuasion so they can convince interested prospects that your product is right for them (if it truly is).

It's not about making a sales pitch in each email, but it is about not letting potential customers slip away because you couldn't create a compelling message that your company's product is worth purchasing!

#### 17. Tenacity



Call it what you want, but a great work ethic and a willingness to do what needs to be done (and not take shortcuts) is a key skill when providing the kind of service that people talk (positively) about.

The most memorable customer service stories out there — many of which had a huge impact on the business — were created by a single employee who refused to just follow the standard process when it came to helping someone out.

### 18. Closing ability

Being able to close with a customer as a customer service professional means being able to end the conversation with confirmed customer satisfaction (or as close to it as you can achieve) and with the customer feeling that everything has been taken care of (or will be).

Getting booted before all of their problems have been addressed is the last thing that customers want, so be sure your team knows to take the time to confirm with customers that each and every issue they had was entirely resolved.

### 19. Empathy

Perhaps empathy — the ability to understand and share the feelings of another — is more of a character trait than a skill. But since empathy can be learned and improved upon, we'd be remiss not to include it here.

In fact, if your organization tests job applicants for customer service aptitude, you'd be hard pressed to look for a more critical skill than empathy.

That's because even when you can't tell the customer exactly what they want to hear, a dose of care, concern, and understanding will go a long way. A support rep's ability to empathize with a customer and craft a message that steers things toward a better outcome can often make all the difference.

### 20. Writing skills

Good writing means getting as close to reality as words will allow. Without an ounce of exaggeration, being a good writer is the most overlooked, yet most necessary, skill to look for when it comes to hiring for customer support.

Unlike face-to-face (or even voice-to-voice) interactions, writing requires a unique ability to convey nuance. How a sentence is phrased can make the difference

between sounding kind of like a jerk (“You have to log out first”) and sounding like you care (“Logging out should help solve that problem quickly!”).

Good writers also tend to use complete sentences and proper grammar — qualities that subtly gesture toward the security and trustworthiness of your company.

Even if your company offers support primarily over the phone, writing skills are still important. Not only will they enable your team to craft coherent internal documentation, they signify a person who thinks and communicates clearly.

## 21. Willingness to learn

While this is probably the most general skill on this list, it’s also one of the most important. After all, willingness to learn is the basis for growing skills as a customer service professional.

Your team members have to be willing to learn your product inside and out, willing to learn how to communicate better (and when they’re communicating poorly), willing to learn when it’s okay to follow a process — and when it’s more appropriate to choose their own adventures.

Those who don’t seek to improve what they do — whether it’s building products, marketing businesses, or helping customers — will get left behind by the people who are willing to invest in their own skills.

## Attributes of the Service Staff

To make the guest satisfied the restaurant staff must have some attributes which are absolutely fundamental to good service.

The first attribute is cleanliness!

The second attribute is conscientiousness!

That means to be conscientious in your work and to always know what has to be done without having to get a special order from your superior.

The third attribute is a methodical mind! In situations where you will meet problems, you need this attribute. It’s a kind of fast thinking to help you to solve a problem quickly to the satisfaction of your guest.

Your personal bearing is very important and the staff should show always a certain dignity without being haughty. Despite the burden of work, despite heavy exertions sometimes, it's desirable that the facial expression always shows friendliness.

A strict discipline of course is indispensable. For this it needs inner and outer attributes.

### The inner attribute:

- ✓ A good memory
- ✓ Conscientiousness
- ✓ Always in the same good mood
- ✓ Service mind and genuine pleasure in serving others
- ✓ Hardworking
- ✓ Honest

### The outer attribute:

- ✓ Personal bearing
- ✓ Hygiene & well-groomed appearance
- ✓ Technical skill
- ✓ Approachable and friendly facial expression and body language
- ✓ Resourceful 足智多谋
- ✓ Good listener
- ✓ Salesmanship (Sales ability)
- ✓ Lots of common sense



*Prepared by Cheryl Y.*

## Determine furniture and fixture conditions

The equipment forms an inevitable part of food and beverage service. It plays an important role to build the mood of the guests, to complement the outlet theme, and to elevate guest experience. Right from the largest commodities used for food preparation and interior decoration such as chandeliers or ovens to the smallest piece of cutlery, furniture, or linen participate in creating overall ambience of the outlet.

Let us discuss in detail the equipment used in food and beverage services -

## Familiarize with the outlets' furniture and fixtures

### Furniture in F&B Services

Furniture is an important part of any F&B Services outlet. It needs to be strong, easy to use and clean. The furniture plays an important role in bringing the look and creating an ambience of the outlet. The furniture, fixtures, and fittings are fixed commodities.

#### Indoor Furniture

It mainly consists of tables, chairs, push-down chairs, racks, and lockers.

#### Outdoor Furniture

It needs to be sturdy as well as attractive. It includes coffee tables and chairs, bar chairs, dining sets, day beds, loungers, hammocks, and swings.

#### Fixtures and Fittings

A **fixture** is any item bolted to the floor or walls. For example, air conditioners, electric plugs, sinks and toilets, art pieces, and television screens mounted on wall are fixtures.

A **fitting** is any free standing item or an item that can be hung by a nail or hook. For example, paintings, mirrors, curtain rails, and lamps are fittings.



# Carry out work area cleaning activities

Outlet cleanliness maintained using proper cleaning tools and chemicals -  
Cleaning schedule/ guidelines



*Prepared by Cheryl Y.*

## Cleaning Procedures and Schedules

As a food manufacturer it's important you maintain a suitable level of cleanliness throughout your site. The easiest way to achieve this is with a detailed cleaning schedule alongside procedures that establish how the cleaning will be carried out. While documentation systems on their own do not give a clean production facility, documented cleaning procedures which are efficiently implemented will ensure the cleaning is completed in a consistent and effective manner, and this is a key tool to maintain product integrity and in the production of safe products.

## Requirements of Global Standard for Food Safety

In Global Standard for Food Safety, clause 4.11.1 states:

Documented cleaning procedures shall be in place and maintained for the building, plant and all equipment.

Cleaning procedures shall as a minimum include the:

- responsibility for cleaning
- item/area to be cleaned
- frequency of cleaning
- method of cleaning, including dismantling equipment for cleaning purposes where required
- cleaning chemicals and concentrations
- cleaning materials to be used
- cleaning records and responsibility for verification

The frequency and methods of cleaning shall be based on risk. The procedures shall be implemented to ensure appropriate standards of cleaning are achieved.

## How this short guide can help

This short guide will help you put procedures in place to ensure your cleaning activities are carried out consistently and thoroughly. This will prevent potential risks including microbiological, allergen or chemical contamination, which you may otherwise get from dirty equipment or an unclean manufacturing environment.

You'll need to document all the cleaning carried out, as this will help you to:

- ensure all relevant areas and equipment are included within the schedule
- make sure the required standard of cleaning is clearly defined so you have consistent completion of cleaning activities
- ensure there is continuous compliance with relevant hygiene legislation
- train staff effectively

It's important to note that your cleaning schedule is not a standalone document: it must be used in conjunction with food hygiene legislation, risk assessment and other records, for example, chemical use information, verification activity and cleaning records.

## Developing an effective cleaning procedure

In order for your cleaning to be effective it's important that the procedures are designed for the specific item, area or site. A generic, off-the-shelf procedure probably wouldn't guarantee a sufficient standard of cleaning. For example, an identical work surface in an area handling bakery products may need to be treated differently to one in a meat handling area. This would need to be assessed during the development and risk assessment stage.

In addition, you need to think about the complexity of the process/equipment, types of products manufactured, and how easy it is to remove debris, and the need to manage specific hazards e.g. specific micro-organisms or allergens.

Developing your cleaning procedure can be done in a few simple steps:

Step 1: Set the required standard of cleaning (Clause 4.11.2) Consider legislation, customer requirements, industry or category best practice, etc. Your risk assessment should consider the prevention of contamination from previous

products, as well as address potential microbiological, chemical or allergen concerns.

Step 2: Develop the draft procedures. Ensure all items/areas/equipment are defined and included within the procedures. Think about the order of cleaning too so that cleaned equipment isn't re-contaminated by subsequent cleaning activity.

Step 3: Validate the draft procedures (Clause 4.11.2). Validation is used to confirm that the required level of cleaning (Step 1) is met.

Step 4: Finalise procedures and associated documentation (e.g. cleaning records and sign off)

Step 5: Train relevant staff

Step 6: Complete ongoing monitoring and verification (Clauses 4.11.1 and 4.11.4)

### What's included in a cleaning procedure?

- The equipment, plant or building that needs cleaning, how often and using which methods. Particular attention is needed where there are identical or similar items to ensure they're all cleaned to the correct schedule.
- Clear instructions outlining the step-by-step process which staff responsible for cleaning need to follow.
- Instructions on the correct/safe dismantling of equipment or other pre-cleaning activity (e.g. disconnecting the electric supply) where this is required.
- The frequency of cleaning e.g. daily, weekly, monthly or annually. Think also about when the activity should be completed, for example a daily clean might be overnight, at the end of a shift or between products.
- Where equipment requires different levels of cleaning e.g. a clean between products, a routine daily clean and a weekly deep clean. Each set of requirements should be detailed separately.
- The chemicals used for cleaning should be fully detailed and should include any relevant handling instructions or dilutions.
- The equipment or utensils used during the activity e.g. mops, brushes or cloths.

- The staff responsible for completing the cleaning, supervision (sign off) and verification activity

## Additional items for your cleaning procedure

In addition, a good cleaning instruction may include:

- A unique method reference that can be quoted on paperwork e.g. cleaning records.
- Photographs of equipment, which is useful for identifying equipment and for highlighting areas that are difficult to clean or key check/verification points.
- The appropriate protective clothing/equipment that should be worn when cleaning or handling cleaning chemicals.

## Keeping records

You'll need to keep records that show what type of cleaning was completed, when it was completed, who did the cleaning and who checked and signed off the cleaning as acceptable

## Ongoing checks

Verification is the application of checks or tests, at regular intervals, to ensure the cleaning procedure is still working and continues to deliver the required level of cleaning. Verification of cleaning may include internal audits, record reviews, swabs or tests of the cleaned equipment and the assessment of staff to ensure they have a clear understanding of the cleaning procedure.

Cleaning procedures should be reviewed whenever there are changes to the area, equipment or processes including the introduction of new products or the use of new ingredients.



- ✓ *Ensure all equipment and areas are included*
- ✓ *Discuss cleaning needs with equipment and chemical suppliers*
- ✓ *Remember that validation and verification is needed for cleaning activities*