

Horticultural Crops Production Level-IV

Based on March 2019, Version 2 Occupational
standards



**Module Title: - Coordinating customer service
and networking activities**

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LG #71

Lo #1- Contribute to Quality Customer Standards

Instruction sheet

This learning guide is developed to provide you the necessary information regarding the following content coverage and topics:

- Accessing, interpreting, applying and monitoring customer service standards
- Making contribution of service policies, standards and processes.

This guide will also assist you to attain the learning outcomes stated in the cover page.

Specifically, upon completion of this learning guide, you will be able to:

- Access, interpret, apply and monitor customer service standards in the workplace in accordance with enterprise policies and procedures.
- Contribute to make the development, refinement and improvement of service policies, standards and processes.

Learning Instructions:

1. Read the specific objectives of this Learning Guide.
2. Follow the instructions described below.
3. Read the information written in the “Information Sheets”. Try to understand what are being discussed. Ask your trainer for assistance if you have hard time understanding them.
4. Accomplish the “Self-checks” which are placed following all information sheets.
5. Ask from your trainer the key to correction (key answers) or you can request your trainer to correct your work. (You are to get the key answer only after you finished answering the Self-checks).



Information Sheet 1- Accessing, interpreting, applying and monitoring customer service standards

1.1 Introduction

Customer service standards are established by organizations to provide procedures and guidelines for employees when dealing with customers. The image presented to customers, the ways employees communicate and treat customers and their knowledge of products, services and customers' needs all have an enormous effect on the success of an organization.

As a manager, team leader or supervisor, you must be able to access, interpret, apply and monitor customer service standards in the workplace according to organizational standards, policies and procedures. This allows you to plan and prepare customer service strategies and accurately communicate these to your team members.

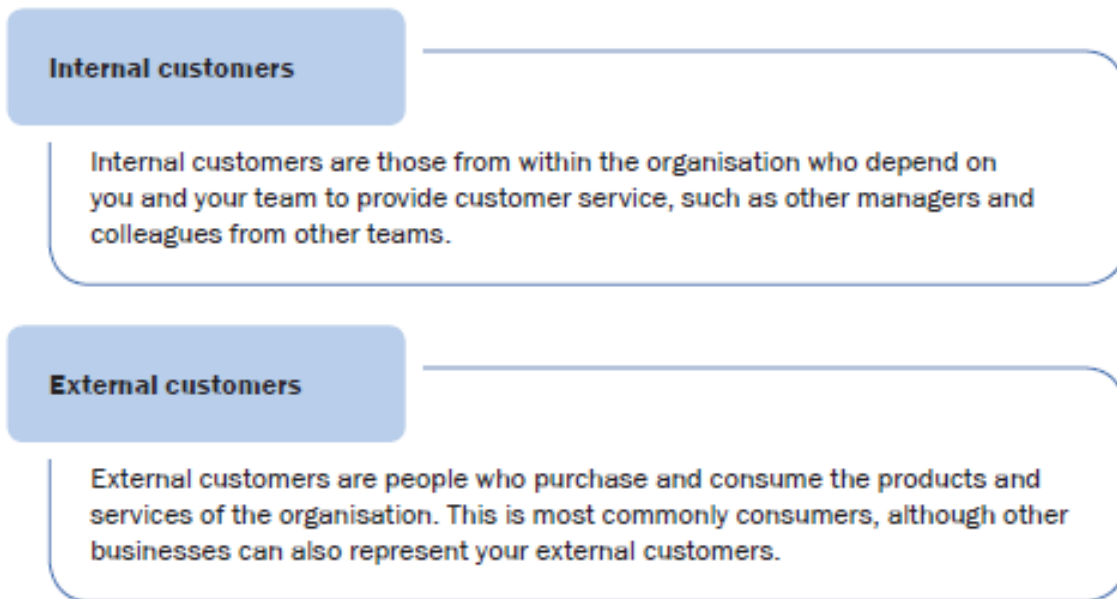
1.2 Identify customers

Customer service extends beyond those people who purchase your products and services. From a management viewpoint, customers may represent a variety of people.

Customers may be new, existing or previous clients of your organization. Their requests for goods or services may be routine or special, depending on the nature of your business and the customers' specific needs.

During your work, you are likely to meet people with different interests, backgrounds, cultures and experiences. You may deal with customers who do not speak English very well. Some customers may be angry, aggressive or annoyed. Some may have a disability

Here is a list of customer types that organisations may encounter.



1.3 customer service models

A customer service model demonstrates how an organization manages the various elements of customer service. It is generally presented as a flow chart or similar representation.

Customer service models often focus on strategies to increase customer satisfaction while reducing costs and conflict. Implementing an organizational model that focuses on service improvement is essential for achieving wider organizational goals and objectives.

Successful customer service models require the continual updating of standards, policies and procedures to meet customers' needs.

These models take many forms and can be represented in a variety of ways.

Here is an example of a customer service model.



1.4 Customer service documentation

Customer service standards, policies and processes allow you to set benchmarks that your team members must meet. For example, if you have a standard for serving customers that involves being courteous or completing transactions within a certain time; you can provide a positive experience to your customers, suppliers and distributors in their dealings with you. Customers who have a positive experience are more likely to become repeat customers and are less likely to complain about your organization.

Having formalized customer service processes in place can save you time and money by increasing efficiency. Your team members will be more productive and efficient if



there is a set of processes to follow and, as a manager, you can spend less time overseeing the day-to-day running of the business. Processes can also improve the consistency of product and service delivery by your team.

Role and responsibilities of customer service managers

- Identify and understand who the organization's customers are.
- Analyze customer service needs.
- Have thorough understanding of products and services.
- Be familiar with the customer service charter, standards and best practice.
- Resolve customer complaints.
- Coach, mentor and train team members in customer service skills.
- Review customer satisfaction.

1.5 Access customer service standards

As a manager, you should be familiar with your organization's customer service standards as a framework for developing and maintaining an acceptable level of customer service.

Customer service standards, incorporating protocols, policies and procedures, may be documented and stored in a paper-based manual, electronic file or an organization's intranet. You should be familiar with the methods and technology your organization uses to collect and distribute its customer service standards to ensure you can accurately direct your team members to the information. For example, each customer service officer should have a copy of the customer service charter handy for quick reference when needed.

1.6 Interpret customer service standards

It is important that your team members are involved in the setting of standards to be applied in their particular work area. This will ensure they know what the standards are and how to apply them.



Managers should regularly review the customer service standards that have been set and determine where improvements could be made.

Assist your team members to interpret customer service by:

- being a role model in terms of behavior, attitude and compliance with standards and systems
- recognizing and applying organizational protocols
- encouraging fair and ethical practices in customer service
- encouraging non-discriminatory work practices
- providing strategies for achieving both work and personal goals
- Providing feedback and encouragement to team members in applying the standards.

1.7 Apply customer service standards

Customer service standards, protocols and procedures should be applied to all areas that have customers, whether they are internal or external. Team members working within public contact areas and, where applicable, internal service delivery areas should implement strategies that demonstrate the organization's customer service standards and organizational protocols.

Here are the areas in which customer service standards commonly apply.

i. Business hours

Customer service policies should outline the hours when the organization is open for business, as well as the hours when customers can contact it.

ii. Separation of responsibility between departments

Outline which person; team or department is responsible for which areas of customer service. This is particularly important for larger organizations where collaboration between people or departments is required when serving customers.

For example, the charter could state which person, team or department is responsible for:

- receiving customer inquiries
- serving customers in the ordering process
- taking customer orders



- processing customer orders
- resolving customer complaints and disputes

iii. Pricing policy

The pricing policy outlines the organization's overall pricing policy. This is usually done broadly in terms of where the business prices itself in the market (high-end versus low-end) and may include a commitment to guarantee the lowest cost, or to match or beat competitors' offerings.

iv. Refunds, returns and exchanges policy

The refunds, returns and exchanges policy outlines the circumstances under which the organization allows customers to return or exchange items and under what conditions refunds are issued. This needs to be clear and specify things like the time frame in which products can be returned, any purchase amount limits that apply, staff/manager approval required and presentation of receipt conditions.

v. Guarantees and warranties in effect

A guarantees and warranties policy outlines the guarantees and warranties that the organization provides on its products and services. These need to be specific and clear to meet legal guidelines and to provide the customer with an accurate view of any conditions or restrictions that may apply in order to prevent misunderstandings later on.



Self-check 1	Written test
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Name..... ID..... Date.....

Directions: Answer all the questions listed below. Examples may be necessary to aid some explanations/answers.

Test I: Short Answer Questions

1. What is the word customer? (1points)
2. Write down an example of a customer service model. (2 points)
3. Write the of Role and responsibilities of customer service managers (3points)
4. What are the areas in which customer service standards commonly applied (3 points)
5. What do we mean by external customers? (3points)
6. What do we mean by internal customers? (3points)

Note: Satisfactory rating - 15 points Unsatisfactory - below 15 points

You can ask you teacher for the copy of the correct answers.

Answer Sheet

Score = _____
Rating: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____



Information Sheet 2- Making contribution of service policies, standards and processes

2.1. Contribute to quality customer standards

Customer service standards formalize the level of customer service you aim to provide and what practical things you must do to achieve this. The standards set a target for organizations to meet customer needs through the use of its people, systems and technology.

Establishing quality customer service standards in your organization requires commitment from yourself and your team members to plan, develop, implement and sustain the standards. It also involves training and feedback.

An important aspect of your role is to make contributions to your organization's customer service operations to better meet the needs of the organization and its customers.

2.2 Contribute to developing the customer service model

The customer service model, plan or program within your organization should be regularly monitored and reviewed to ensure it continues to meet customer needs and remains in line with customer service trends and customer expectations.

The customer service standards, policies and processes that make up an organization's customer service model are generally developed as an exercise involving all staff, and further refined by a specific team responsible for development and implementation.

Here are some ways that you can contribute to a customer service plan.

i. Gather feedback to gain customer insight

Interview customers to gain better understanding of their experiences with your organization and with your competitors. Ask customers to describe their expectations for your type of business and try to discover any unmet needs. Use a variety of survey



methods to gain customer insight, including in-person interviews, online surveys, focus groups and customer satisfaction forms.

ii. Analyze current operations

Create a thorough analysis of your current operations, focusing on the customer service element. Draw process flow charts and service-area diagrams to visualize the ways your team members interact with customers and with each other. Write a process narrative describing an average customer experience from your customers' and team members' points of view. Ask fellow team leaders, managers or other colleagues to assist you by providing details of their own experiences in frontline management.



Self-Check – 2	Written test
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Name..... ID..... Date.....

Directions: Answer all the questions listed below. Examples may be necessary to aid some explanations/answers.

Test I: Short Answer Questions

1. Write ways of contribution to a customer service plan? (2-points)
2. What is the purpose of establishing quality customer service standards in the organization? (3-points)

Note: Satisfactory rating - 5 points Unsatisfactory - below 5 points

You can ask you teacher for the copy of the correct answers.

Answer Sheet

Score = _____
Rating: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____



LG #72

LO #2- Implement customer service systems

Instruction sheet

This learning guide is developed to provide you the necessary information regarding the following content coverage and topics:

- Encouraging all personnel
- Reviewing customer feedback
- Identifying and adjusting customer service complaints
- Communicating adjustments
- Coordinating and managing delivery of services/products

This guide will also assist you to attain the learning outcomes stated in the cover page.

Specifically, upon completion of this learning guide, you will be able to:

- Encourage all personnel to consistently implement customer service systems.
- review Customer feedback with appropriate personnel
- Identify and adjust customer service complaints
- Communicate Adjustments to all those involved in service delivery within appropriate time frames.
- Coordinate and manage delivery of services/products

Learning Instructions:



1. Read the specific objectives of this Learning Guide.
2. Follow the instructions described below.
3. Read the information written in the “Information Sheets”. Try to understand what are being discussed. Ask your trainer for assistance if you have hard time understanding them.
4. Accomplish the “Self-checks” which are placed following all information sheets.
5. Ask from your trainer the key to correction (key answers) or you can request your trainer to correct your work. (You are to get the key answer only after you finished answering the Self-checks).

Information Sheet 1- Encouraging all personnel

1.1 Identify relevant personnel

The designated individuals and groups to whom you must promote your customer service systems will vary depending on the nature and size of your organization. Customer service systems must be promoted to all people whose support and input is required to implement them.

Here is a list of the types of personnel required to implement customer service systems.

	<p>Sales practices</p> <p>Organisations are required to provide proof of transactions to customers for goods or services valued at \$75 or more, such as a tax invoice, a cash register receipt, a credit card or debit card statement, a handwritten receipt, a lay-by agreement or a receipt number provided for a telephone or internet transaction.</p> <p>It is illegal to request payment for goods or services that the customer has not agreed to buy or to use referral selling, pyramid schemes, unconscionable conduct, or harassment and coercion to persuade a customer to purchase a product or service.</p>
	<p>Product safety</p> <p>Under ACL, the relevant Commonwealth, state and territory ministers can regulate consumer goods and product-related services.</p> <p>They can do this by issuing safety warning notices, banning products on a temporary or permanent basis, imposing mandatory safety standards or issuing a compulsory recall notice to suppliers.</p>

1.2 Consult and seek input from appropriate personnel

Review customer feedback in consultation with appropriate personnel and seek their input when addressing problems. The benefits of a consultative team culture include



additional insights and ideas from different perspectives, an increase in staff satisfaction levels and stronger commitment to their jobs. Members of a team feel their opinions are valued and that they are playing an important role in the context of the organization.

All teams benefit from understanding and managing agreed methods of gathering and reviewing customer feedback and measuring service delivery performance. While agreement can be partly determined by the team during collaborative strategy sessions or planning meetings, managers can also use their judgment to make final decisions on solutions that have mutual benefit.

Here are some tips for promoting consultation:

- Conduct team meetings to review customer feedback.
- Invite personnel to brainstorming sessions so they can contribute and strategies about how to address issues in service delivery.
- Use email and intranet services to facilitate communication between teams and other personnel.
- Share professional and personal skills, knowledge, experience and insights.
- Build consultation mechanisms into people's workplaces so they are encouraged to implement customer service systems.
- Provide feedback to personnel on the results their ideas have generated and the usefulness of these results.
- Promote and encourage personnel to share their thoughts and ideas and to communicate clearly and freely within the team.



Self-Check – 1	Written test
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Name..... ID..... Date.....

Directions: Answer all the questions listed below. Examples may be necessary to aid some explanations/answers.

Test I: Short Answer Questions

1. List the types of personnel required to implement customer service systems (3points).
2. Write down all the tips used for promoting consultation (3points).
3. What are your views on Identifying relevant personnel (3points)

Note: Satisfactory rating - 9 points Unsatisfactory – below 9 points

You can ask you teacher for the copy of the correct answers.

Answer Sheet

Score = _____
Rating: _____

Name: _____ Date: _____



Information Sheet 2- Reviewing customer feedback

2.1 Implement a customer feedback system

There are several formal and informal information sources that organizations can implement to access data on customer service needs in order to provide quality customer service, such as a website form for comments, a feedback form inserted with products or a question put to customers from staff after a purchase to seek a comment on their opinion of the service. Implement a customer feedback system that collects reliable and useful data that helps your team to identify service delivery areas in need of improvement and make adjustments as necessary.

2.2 Utilize customer relationship management (CRM) systems

Customer relationship management (CRM) is an approach to managing your organization's interactions with existing and potential customers. It involves using technology to organize, automate and synchronise sales, marketing, customer service and technical support. As well as improving the service you provide to customers, CRM can reduce costs, wastage and customer complaints by streamlining customer service processes to make the experience efficient and engaging. CRM also reduces staff stress, as it opens lines of communication with customers and simplifies market research efforts.

2.3 Promote customer service to customers

It is not just the quality of your products and services that keeps customers coming back to your organization with their business. Promoting your organization's commitment to quality customer service and fulfilling promises by doing what you say you will do are effective marketing strategies and improve the organization's service delivery reputation. Use strategies such as newsletters, media releases and community work.



Self-Check – 2	Written test
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Name..... ID..... Date.....

Directions: Answer all the questions listed below. Examples may be necessary to aid some explanations/answers.

Test I: Short Answer Questions

1. What is Customer relationship management mean (CRM) (3 points)
2. Write down the importance of CRM? (3 points)
3. What are the common ways of Promoting customer service to customers? (4 points)

Note: Satisfactory rating - 10 points Unsatisfactory - below 10 points

You can ask you teacher for the copy of the correct answers.

Answer Sheet

Score = _____
Rating: _____

Name: _____ Date: _____



Information Sheet 3- Identifying and adjusting customer service complaints

3.1 Identify customer service problems

Reviewing and analyzing your customer feedback allows you to identify any developing problems that are negatively affecting the quality of your customer service. There are a number of common issues that customers make relating to customer service delivery. Having procedures in place to find solutions to common problems helps you resolve quality service issues quickly and improve work practices accordingly.

3.2 Methods of Customer Complaints

I. Letters

Letters are a very common form of complaint; they are generally seen as the most official way of complaining. This means that most customers will only use a letter of complaint where they feel there is a serious dissatisfaction, and where the business has a separate address for complaints or head office.

Letters have an advantage to your business, as they allow you time to look at a problem, solve it, and reply to the customer; hopefully ensuring they are satisfied enough to remain a customer.

II. Spoken Word to Employees

The most common form of complaint, particularly in retail businesses; is face to face with an employee (usually the front line staff). This could take the form of a passing word or gesture, and can be for small or large problems.

Typical comments include things such as: "This is not the first time...", "I can't believe that..." or even a 'tut' noise in a sentence. They are generally informal complaints or comments, only occasionally do they turn into full scale complaints.

Although there is no official complaint in most cases, spoken word comments can provide information on the everyday problems that customers are experiencing, and



provide an opportunity for your employees to solve these problems, both for these customers, and for future ones.

II. Phone calls

These are another common form of complaint, generally used for informal minor complaints, but can also be used by a highly dissatisfied customer who does not wish to write. The frequency of phone complaints generally depends on how much your business uses the phone; a call center will receive many more complaints than a basic office line.

Phone complaints allow you to look into a problem, but do not usually give you as much time to solve it as a letter or email.

III. Email

Emails are similar to letters; however they tend to describe smaller problems that are expected to be solved in a much quicker time. The number of email complaints you receive will depend mostly on how widely you use email, and whether there is a specific enquiry or complaints email address.



Self-Check – 3	Written test
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Name..... ID..... Date.....

Directions: Answer all the questions listed below. Examples may be necessary to aid some explanations/answers.

Test I: Short Answer Questions

1. Write down all the Methods of Customer Complaints.(5 points)
2. What is the difference between customers complains using E-mail or letters? (5 points)

Note: Satisfactory rating - 10 points Unsatisfactory - below 10 points
You can ask you teacher for the copy of the correct answers.

Answer Sheet

Score = _____
Rating: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____



Information Sheet 4- Communicating adjustments

4.1 Communicating with a Complaining Customer

Step One: Listening

- Listen to the complaint: Let the customer get it off his/her chest. Don't interrupt. Make sure you hear the full story. Ask open questions to encourage the customer to tell you as much as s/he wants to. Don't argue and don't explain
- Communicate warmth and understanding: Use body language which shows understanding: don't cross your arms, lean slightly towards the customer, nod, have a pleasant but serious expression. It is not a laughing matter - don't paint a fixed smile on your face. Say things that encourage the customer to speak: "Ah- ha", "Mmmmm", "Right", "Gosh", "How awful" and so on.
- Use the customer's name
- Imagine what you would feel like in the same situation as you concentrate on listening to what the customer is saying
- Don't commit the company to any action. Don't admit liability. Action is for a later stage
- Don't take it personally. The customer is not angry with you, but with the company and the service or product

Step Two: Calm the Customer

- Apologies and acknowledge the customer's feelings e.g. "I am so sorry. You must have been annoyed. I would have been."
- Summarize the complaint in your own words to show the customer that you have really listened and understood: "As I understand, this is what happened Is that right?"

Step Three: Take Responsibility

- Check with your supervisor. Summarize the complaint to him/her. Do not have a dig at the customer when you tell the supervisor the tale. If you are two-faced, you can be sure it will come out in some way



- Communicate as soon as possible to the customer what the store proposes to do
- Explain (don't excuse) what went wrong if you need to. By now the customer is relaxed because you are going to rectify the problem and will listen and probably even understand
- Check that the customer agrees with the course of action. If s/he does not, then ask the customer what their expectations are. Relay this to whoever it is that makes decisions. At this stage if the customer is still unhappy, it is probably best for a senior to take over

Step Four: Follow Up

- Check that what you promised actually happens, and that it happens by the time you said it would. You should keep a diary note

Ring the customer up after the complaint has been rectified and make sure s/he is happy (or check at the end of the conversation)

Employees receiving customer complaints should always be friendly, polite, and helpful; and try their best to resolve the problem if they can. Even if a problem cannot be totally solved, the fact that your business did everything you could to help will make the customer feel much less negative about your business, hopefully enough to keep them with you (so you can ensure they are fully satisfied next time around!).

Sometimes it can be difficult for an employee to feel like helping an angry customer, particularly if the problem is not their fault; however it is crucial that they remain polite and helpful at all times.

Remember that body language is a large part of communication, so listening while looking away will just make the customer think you are ignoring them.



4.2 adjusting a complaining customer

4.2.1 Target markets

The organization's primary target market/customer must be kept firmly in mind when developing any strategies to improve customer service. Any potential strategy must be reviewed to ensure it will be effective at meeting the needs of your target market. A particular strategy may sound excellent in theory, but you should ensure it will not alienate or disappoint your ideal customer.

4.2.2 Organizational structure

The organization's structure ensures various departments and people within it have responsibility for various areas of the organization's operations. Any potential customer service strategies must be developed in conjunction with those whose responsibility it is to develop, produce, market and sell products and services, as well as the people responsible for interacting with customers and providing customer service

4.2.3 Organizational goals and objectives

Organizational goals and objectives are the most important consideration when developing customer service strategies. All departments within an organization must be working together to achieve wider organizational goals. Customer service strategies must align with these goals and objectives, and the organization's overall market position.

4.2.4 Existing customer service policies and procedures

Many organizations have formalized policies and procedures in place that operate as guidelines for all team members when interacting with customers. An organization's existing customer service policies and procedures need to be referenced and kept in mind when proposing strategies and improvements to customer service.



4.2.5 Resource considerations and restrictions

In formulating any strategy designed to improve customer service, the resources at your disposal must be kept firmly in mind to ensure funds are available to implement any proposed strategy. For example, if you have identified that customers are demanding longer business hours, then a strategy aimed at opening for an extra hour each day needs to factor in whether the organization has the staff and money available to be able to implement the strategy.



Self-Check – 4	Written test
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Name..... ID..... Date.....

Directions: Answer all the questions listed below. Examples may be necessary to aid some explanations/answers.

Test I: Short Answer Questions

1. Write down all the ways of Complaining Customer (5 points).
2. What are the main purpose of organization’s structure to ensures Complaining Customer (2 points)
3. Write down some of the adjusting a complaining customer. (3 points)

Note: Satisfactory rating - 10 points Unsatisfactory - below 10 points

You can ask you teacher for the copy of the correct answers.

Answer Sheet

Score = _____
Rating: _____

Name: _____ Date: _____



Information Sheet 5- Coordinating and managing delivery of services/products

5.1 Coordinate and manage delivery of services and products to ensure they meet quality standards

A key responsibility for managers is to coordinate and manage the delivery of products and services to ensure they meet agreed quality standards.

Making it easy and enjoyable for your customers to purchase your goods and services is an important customer service strategy for your organization. This is particularly important when customers place orders or apply for goods and services not immediately available or to be delivered on a future date.

By receiving fast and efficient service, satisfied customers will return to your organization to buy your products or use your services, and are also likely to recommend your organization to others.

5.2 Manage service and product delivery

Organizations should have developed and implemented strategies to coordinate and manage efficient and effective delivery of goods and services.

Be confident that you and your team understand the procedures for taking customer orders, confirming what has been ordered, confirming the order status (that is, pending, ordered, processed or delivered) and receiving customer payments.

Here are typical steps for confirming orders, billing, delivery, credit and lay-by, and ensuring there is clear communication at all times.

5.2.1 Confirm orders

Confirming orders gives the customer confidence that their order will proceed as expected. Depending on your organization, confirming an order may be done via a phone call; however, written confirmation should be included in your documentation process. Written confirmation may include emails, order forms, faxes, text messages, purchase orders or a unique order number provided over the phone. Not only does



order confirmation allow you to finalize your customer service records, it also shows your customers that you care about their business.

Example: coordinate and manage service and product delivery

The following example demonstrates how a manager coordinates the delivery of products and services to meet agreed quality standards.

Task	Quality standard	Coordination and management
Describe product to customer	Product described accurately	Ensure information sheets are supplied to team members
Process customer order	Order processed successfully	Ensure ordering system is efficient and easy to use
Confirm customer order	Order confirmation sent to customer	Ensure customer receives accurate order confirmation details
Process customer payment	Payment processed successfully	Ensure correct payment is taken and payment system is running efficiently
Deliver product to customer	Product delivered safely within agreed time frames	Ensure team members are trained in delivery procedures
Manage return of faulty product	Customer guarantee honoured, product returned and customer refunded	Ensure returns, refunds and exchanges policy is accurate and up to date



Self-Check – 5	Written test
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Name..... ID..... Date.....

Directions: Answer all the questions listed below. Examples may be necessary to aid some explanations/answers.

Test I: Short Answer Questions

1. Write three importance of confirming orders? (3 points)
2. What are the responsibilities of managers to delivery services/products? (4 points)
3. Write down some of methods to Manage service and product delivery. (3 points)

Note: Satisfactory rating - 10 points Unsatisfactory - below 10 points

You can ask you teacher for the copy of the correct answers.

Answer Sheet

Score = _____
Rating: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____



LG #73

LO #3- Manage networks to ensure customer needs are addressed

Instruction sheet

This learning guide is developed to provide you the necessary information regarding the following content coverage and topics:

- Establishing effective regular communication
- Establishing ,maintaining and expanding relevant networks
- Putting procedures
- maintaining records of customer interaction

This guide will also assist you to attain the learning outcomes stated in the cover page. Specifically, upon completion of this learning guide, you will be able to:

- Establish effective regular communication with customers
- Establish ,maintain and expand relevant networks
- Putting procedures of the assessment of customer needs and availability of products/services
- maintain records of customer interaction

Learning Instructions:

1. Read the specific objectives of this Learning Guide.
2. Follow the instructions described below.
3. Read the information written in the “Information Sheets”. Try to understand what are being discussed. Ask your trainer for assistance if you have hard time understanding them.
4. Accomplish the “Self-checks” which are placed following all information sheets.
5. Ask from your trainer the key to correction (key answers) or you can request your trainer to correct your work. (You are to get the key answer only after you finished answering the Self-checks).
6. If you earned a satisfactory evaluation proceed to “Operation sheets
7. Perform “the Learning activity performance test” which is placed following “Operation sheets” ,
8. If your performance is satisfactory proceed to the next learning guide,
9. If your performance is unsatisfactory, see your trainer for further instructions or go



back to “Operation sheets”.

Information Sheet 1- Establishing effective regular communication

1.1 Introduction

Interpersonal communication is the process by which people exchange information, feelings, and meaning through verbal and non-verbal messages: it is face-to-face communication. Interpersonal communication is not just about what is actually said - the language used - but how it is said and the non-verbal messages sent through tone of voice, facial expressions, gestures and body language.

When two or more people are in the same place and are aware of each other's presence, then communication is taking place, no matter how subtle or unintentional. Without speech, an observer may be using cues of posture, facial expression, and dress to form an impression of the other's role, emotional state, personality and/or intentions. Although no communication may be intended, people receive messages through such forms of non-verbal behavior.



Fig. regular communication

Uses of Interpersonal Communication

Most of us engage in some form of Interpersonal Communication on a regular basis, how well we communicate with others is a measure of our Interpersonal Skills.

Interpersonal communication is a key life skill and can be used to:

- Give and collect information
- Influence the attitudes and behavior of others
- Form contacts and maintain relationships
- Make sense of the world and our experiences in it
- Express personal needs and understand the needs of others
- Give and receive emotional support
- Make decisions and solve problems
- Anticipate and predict behavior
- Regulate power

Barriers to Effective Communication



There are many reasons why interpersonal communications may fail. In many communications, the message (what is said) may not be received exactly the way the sender intended. It is, therefore, important that the communicator seeks feedback to check that their message is clearly understood.

The skills of Active Listening, Clarification and Reflection may help but the skilled communicator also needs to be aware of the barriers to effective communication and how to avoid or overcome them.

There are many barriers to communication and these may occur at any stage in the communication process. Barriers may lead to your message becoming distorted and you therefore risk wasting both time and/or money by causing confusion and misunderstanding. Effective communication involves overcoming these barriers and conveying a clear and concise message.

Common Barriers to Effective Communication

- **The use of jargon.** Over-complicated, unfamiliar and/or technical terms
- **Emotional barriers and taboos.** Some people may find it difficult to express their emotions and some topics may be completely 'off-limits' or taboo
- Lack of attention, interest, distractions, or irrelevance to the receiver. (See our page Barriers to Effective Listening for more information)
- Differences in perception and viewpoint
- Physical disabilities such as hearing problems or speech difficulties
- Physical barriers to non-verbal communication. Not being able to see the non-verbal cues, gestures, posture and general body language can make communication less effective
- Language differences and the difficulty in understanding unfamiliar accents
- Expectations and prejudices which may lead to false assumptions or stereotyping. People often hear what they expect to hear rather than what is actually said and jump to incorrect conclusions
- **Cultural differences.** The norms of social interaction vary greatly in different cultures, as do the way in which emotions are expressed. For example, the



concept of personal space varies between cultures and between different social settings

1.2 Customers' Specific Needs

Customers have different needs. For example, they may need information (e.g. how to enroll in a course), a product (e.g. Fruit), or a service (e.g. a bus trip). Sometimes they may need to complain and are looking for an apology and for someone to take responsibility and action.

Customers can be internal or external to the organization. They may use a service daily or only occasionally. Sometimes their needs are very specific, e.g., they may want a certain product delivered. Sometimes their needs aren't so clear, e.g. they may not know what they want or need and are asking you to provide solutions.

Identifying customer needs or concerns involves:

- Active listening—allowing the customer to explain their need or concern, without trying to solve the problem immediately
- Questioning—using questions such as reflective questioning techniques to draw out the exact need or concern
- Paraphrasing—repeating the need or concern back to the customer in your own words to check you've understood it correctly
- Developing an action plan for a solution when the customer starts to calm down and then repeating what was agreed on as an action plan
- Encouraging customer to propose solution
- Deciding on the urgency of the customer's needs

Do not:

- Take things personally - they're angry at the organization not you for expectations not being met
- Present respond a bureaucratic way - let them see you as a human being doing your best to help



- Ignore difficult customers - problems will escalate

What 'Active Listening' Means

Active listening is a skill that can be acquired and developed with practice. However, active listening can be difficult to master and will, therefore, take time and patience.

'ACTIVE LISTENING' means, as its name suggests, actively listening. That is fully concentrating on what is being said rather than just passively 'hearing' the message of the speaker.

Active listening involves listening with all senses. As well as giving full attention to the speaker, it is important that the 'active listener' is also 'seen' to be listening - otherwise the speaker may conclude that what they are talking about is uninteresting to the listener.

Interest can be conveyed to the speaker by using both verbal and non-verbal messages such as maintaining eye contact, nodding your head and smiling, agreeing by saying 'Yes' or simply 'Mmm hmm' to encourage them to continue. By providing this 'feedback' the person speaking will usually feel more at ease and therefore communicate more easily, openly and honestly.

Listening is the most fundamental component of interpersonal communication skills. Listening is not something that just happens (that is hearing), listening is an active process in which a conscious decision is made to listen to and understand the messages of the speaker. Listeners should remain neutral and non-judgmental, this means trying not to take sides or form opinions, especially early in the conversation.

Active listening is also about patience - pauses and short periods of silence should be accepted. Listeners should not be tempted to jump in with questions or comments every time there are a few seconds of silence. Active listening involves giving the other person time to explore their thoughts and feelings, they should, therefore, be given adequate time for that.

Active listening not only means focusing fully on the speaker but also actively showing verbal and non-verbal signs of listening. Generally speakers want listeners to



demonstrate 'active listening' by responding appropriately to what they are saying. Appropriate responses to listening can be both verbal and non-verbal:

Self-Check – 1	Written test
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Name..... ID..... Date.....

Directions: Answer all the questions listed below. Examples may be necessary to aid some explanations/answers.

Test I: Short Answer Questions

1. What is interpersonal communication?(2points)
2. Write the uses of what is interpersonal communication? (3 points)
3. Write the reasons why interpersonal communications may fail (3 points)
4. what is active listening means (2 points)

Test II: Choose the best answer (5 points)

1. What interpersonal skills do you think you have that can be used when communicating with customers? Please choose all that apply from the list below.
 - a) Good eye contact
 - b) Good listener
 - c) Good at looking like I am listening



- d) Good verbal communicator
- e) Good at conflict resolution
- f) Good body language
- g) Good at arguing
- h) all

Note: Satisfactory rating – 15 points Unsatisfactory - below 15 points

You can ask you teacher for the copy of the correct answers.

Answer Sheet

Score = _____
Rating: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____



Information Sheet 2- Establishing, maintaining and expanding relevant networks

2.1 Introduction

Networking is a matter of creating useful linkages, both within and among communities, organizations, and societies, in order to mobilize resources and achieve various goals. Networking occurs at a variety of levels. At the level of neighborhoods and communities, it is a matter of creating reciprocal relationships with other members of society. In many instances, parties meet informally to share a meal or hold a casual meeting. They often share resources, contacts, and information with one another. As a result of these conversations and newly found connections, individuals often find jobs and freelance work, locate apartments, trade services, and develop cooperative strategies.

Some common examples of networking activities include attending trade or professional association meetings, volunteering for community work, visiting with other members of one's social clubs or religious groups, posting messages on mailing lists, and talking to other people in one's community. Networking contacts are often found through friends, extended family, alumni associations, former bosses, and members of the various clubs, religious groups, or other organizations to which one belongs.

Many professionals have increasingly relied on Internet chat rooms, networking websites, and online forums to discuss recent developments in their occupation or field and ask questions of each other. Those looking for employment typically find that networking is one of the most effective ways to find a job. In many villages in less developed parts of the world, establishing social contacts is important for individuals who need to locate money and resources or seek information about where seasonal workers are needed. This requires that diverse members of the population build relationships, share resources, and work together in an organized way for social change. Networking can occur among members of a single organization or social group, among people from many different communities and identity groups, and among organizations. It is a matter of forging connections with other individuals or groups who



face similar problems and issues and want to work together toward solutions. These social connections allow individuals, groups, and organizations to find allies, access tools, share practical wisdom, and build collaborative strategies. Networking thus helps those working for social change to share resources and information, devise an agenda, and engage in collective action within their society. For example, local activists and those working in the field of peacemaking will find it useful to make contact with other grassroots organizers to coordinate efforts, learn what has already been done on the issue, and discuss what has and has not worked. Likewise, it is important for organizations to make contacts with other agencies, groups, and individuals that might support their work in direct or indirect ways.

Like coalition building, networking is grounded in the notion that people who pool their resources have a greater ability to advance their interests. Connections formed through networking can be useful in broadening the research and knowledge base of social campaigns and generating new resources and backing for their efforts. Establishing alliances also makes it easier for organizations to gain help from support groups and allies who support their goals. Insofar as those who coordinate their activities and share resources have a greater chance of success, networking often empowers groups and helps to give people a real voice in decisions that affect them. Through networking, individuals also may develop relationships with third party neutrals as well as adversaries, which ultimately may make it easier for them to come to some sort of agreement in current or future disputes.

Networking at the National and International Levels

In addition to the networking that takes place among individuals at the local level, there are national networks that bring together local organizations, religious groups, community groups, trade unions, and hospitals. The types of networking that commonly take place at the national level are civic engagement and multi-stakeholder participation. Civic engagement is a matter of interaction between civil society organizations and governments so that they can build constructive relationships and bring about social, economic, and political change. Likewise, rapid advances in media,



telecommunications, and computer technology have facilitated wide sharing of information among multiple civil society stakeholders. Partnerships among these diverse individuals, groups, and organizations have proven to be an effective way to advance development projects and reduce poverty within communities.

Importance of Networking

Networking is important for a variety of reasons, many of which already have been mentioned above. At both the individual and collective level, networking is a strategy of empowerment. As a result of networking, organizations and individuals are able to apply political pressure at the local and global level in support of their goals. Networking aids in organizing and mobilization, empowers civil society groups, and enables poor and powerless individuals to have a stronger voice in the processes of decision-making. This is because having a strong set of social connections helps parties to organize lobbying and advocacy activities at the national, regional, and international level in order to bring about needed social changes. This typically involves challenging adverse laws, restructuring power relations, and bringing about policy changes. Through such joint efforts, parties are often more capable of influencing the future of their communities.

Networking Abilities

The preceding discussion suggests that networking is an important part of collective action at the local, national, and international levels. It serves to empower individuals, communities, and organizations so that they may achieve their goals. It seems clear, then, that the ability to network effectively is an important skill for people to possess. What sorts of capacities are needed for effective networking?

Strong networkers need to be able to develop rapport with a wide variety of people. Typically they have the respect and trust of their fellow citizens so that others listen to them. They demonstrate sincere concern and curiosity and actively seek out information and knowledge. In addition, they have developed an understanding of how groups and institutions relate to each other and are aware of how different sectors of the community function within the social system. They are outgoing and friendly and stay in contact with other people in the network on an ongoing basis. A good networker should be



skilled at calling people "to assembly," have strong listening skills, and be adept at organizing activities.

In addition, they will be proficient at some of the activities that are central to networking. These include collective lobbying, information sharing, coordinated advocacy, and the initiation of innovative educational and media projects. Good communication skills and knowledge about mass media are also helpful

CRM and communications and networking

Communication is central to any successful relationship. In terms of Customer Relationship Management, communication needs to be consistent and high quality; as determined by: on time, focused, relevant, reliable, coherent. Importantly also, for effective communications it's the message and meaning that is received that counts, irrespective of what the communicator thinks they've said, or written. Communications must be judged most vitally by the reaction of the receiver. If the reaction is not good then the communication is poor.

The information contained in a CRM system allows communication to be directed at the correct audience, in the correct way. The communication system must also encourage and facilitate honest and actionable feedback. Feedback from customers especially complaints are essential for good organizational performance and ongoing development. Most organizations avoid, discourage and hide from complaints. Don't. Complaints are free guidance for improving your quality, and free opportunities to increase customer loyalty.

CRM software solutions and ICT (information and communications technology)

Software and ICT play a significant part in enabling an effective CRM capability, especially in large organizations. There are many and various systems available, and it is important to have a clear idea of your requirements during the software solution selection process, which for most organizations will also involve the selection of ICT service provider too, since any software solution, for all but very small companies, generally requires support for specifying, implementation, training and maintenance.



As with any ICT project, ensure you work with reliable and knowledgeable advisors, with access to cost-effective proven solutions, who can help you to build and implement an effective CRM software and ICT capability.

Networks may be with Relevant agricultural or horticultural manufacturers and suppliers, industry associations, internal and external customers, government agencies and departments, specific interest or support groups, advisory committees, lobby groups, and research bodies. Effective regular communication should be maintained with customers through Newsletters, special purchase offers, email, telephone, website, customer satisfaction surveys, reminder notices, demonstration of new equipment and/or materials, personal visits, workshops, promotional materials, exhibition of products at agricultural or horticultural shows.

Relevant networks should be established, maintained and expanded to ensure appropriate referral of customers to products/services from within and outside the organization. Referrals may be made to Supervisor, manufacturer/supplier or technical expert within or external to the enterprise.



Self-Check – 2	Written test
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Name..... ID..... Date.....

Directions: Answer all the questions listed below. Examples may be necessary to aid some explanations/answers.

Test I: Short Answer Questions

1. What is Networking (3 points)
2. Why is Networking Important (3 points)
3. Write the Abilities of Networking (4 points)

Note: Satisfactory rating - 10 points Unsatisfactory - below 10 points

You can ask you teacher for the copy of the correct answers.

Answer Sheet

Score = _____
Rating: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____



Information Sheet 3- Putting procedures and ensuring referrals for customer needs and availability of products/services

3.1 Obtain and retain referrals

Referrals of customers (directed to you) may come from numerous sources. It is good practice when you are aware of a referral from a third party to thank or in some way acknowledge the source.

The best way to ensure continued referrals is to reciprocate where possible. Although some informal referrals may come your way without obligation, if you wish to set up a formal and systematic referral arrangement then you generally need to offer something in return. This could be a commission, a discount, shared use of facilities or a preferred supplier status.

Good referrals are extremely valuable and should not be treated lightly. Record the source of useful referrals and be sure to thank people and businesses that have assisted you.

Referrals can be obtained from:

- existing customers
- a professional or industry association
- a service or recreational club you belong to
- another professional you do business with
- a complementary business.



Self-Check – 3	Written test
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Name..... ID..... Date.....

Directions: Answer all the questions listed below. Examples may be necessary to aid some explanations/answers.

Test I: Short Answer Questions

1. Define the following terms(4 points)
 - a) Referrals
 - b) CRM
2. Write the source of referrals(3 points)

Note: Satisfactory rating – 7 points Unsatisfactory - below 7 points

You can ask you teacher for the copy of the correct answers.

Answer Sheet

Score = _____
Rating: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____



Information Sheet 4- maintaining records of customer interaction

4.1 introduction

Defining Referral Networks

While a referral system may exist at the national level, referral networks tend to be contained within smaller geographical areas, such as districts. Referral networks consist of a group of service providers that refer clients to one another. Referral networks operate in smaller geographic areas so that clients can readily access the network's services; thus, a national referral system usually comprises various district-level networks. The assessment and monitoring of referral systems focus primarily on these contained (e.g., district-level) networks because of the linkages of services that are being studied. Information can be aggregated across districts to draw larger conclusions regarding the functioning of the referral system as a whole. Occasionally, a referral network may include facilities or service providers in faraway locations (e.g., a tertiary-care hospital in a large city). The program managers will need to decide whether it is necessary and realistic (logistically and financially) to include these remote services and facilities for the purposes of referral system assessment and monitoring. Often, a referral system or network is already established, so identifying the various providers or facilities belonging to the network is straightforward. When the referral network is not clearly defined, perhaps because it relies on informal linkages between providers, then creating a directory of referral services in the network is recommended.

4.2 Principles of good customer service

The key to good customer service is building good relationships with your customers. Thanking the customer and promoting a positive, helpful and friendly environment will ensure they leave with a great impression. A happy customer will return often and is likely to spend more.



To ensure you provide the best customer service:

- know what your customers consider to be good customer service
- take the time to find out customers' expectations
- follow up on both positive and negative feedback you receive
- ensure that you consider customer service in all aspects of your business
- Continuously look for ways to improve the level of customer service you deliver.

The following are some of the main elements of good customer service.

Customer relationships

To build good customer relationships you need to:

- greet customers and approach them in a way that is natural and fits the individual situation
- show customers that you understand what their needs are
- accept that some people won't want your products and concentrate on building relationships with those who do
- help people — even just letting a customer know about an event that you know they're personally interested in is helpful
- Continue to keep customers aware of what's in it for them to do business with you.



Self-Check – 4	Written test
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Name..... ID..... Date.....

Directions: Answer all the questions listed below. Examples may be necessary to aid some explanations/answers.

Test I: Short Answer Questions

1. Define referrals? (3 points)
2. write the Principles of good customer service (3 points)
3. what is needed to build a good customer relationships (4 points)

Note: Satisfactory rating - 10 points Unsatisfactory - below 10 points

You can ask you teacher for the copy of the correct answers.

Answer Sheet

Score = _____
Rating: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____



Operation sheet 1– Techniques of effective communication

Steps

Step 1 - Listening actively

Step 2 - Don't interrupt

Step 3 - Pretend you're listening

Step 4 - Asking closed questions repeatedly

Step 5_ Repeat the customer request



LAP TEST	Performance Test
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Name..... ID..... Date.....

Time started: _____ Time finished: _____

Instructions: Given necessary templates, tools and materials you are required to perform the following tasks within **1** hour. The project is expected from each student to do it.

Task-1 Reflect on situations in your life where you encountered a helpful service provider, eg a shop assistant who gave you explanations of the features of various models of a product and helped you choose the model that would suit you.



WEB ADDRESSES

1. <https://aspire-solidus-production.s3-ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/assets/BXCUS403/samples/BXCUS403.pdf>
2. https://www.flexlearn.edu.au/uploads/1/0/7/4/107485565/4_bsbcus301_deliver_and_monitor_a_service_to_customers_818.pdf.
3. <https://www.business.qld.gov.au/running-business/consumer-laws/customer-service/improving/principles#:~:text=know%20what%20your%20customers%20consider,and%20Negative%20feedback%20you%20receive.>
4. <file:///C:/Users/Get/Desktop/Green%20Founded%20Foundation/MS-13-60.pdf>



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The trainers who developed the learning guide

No.	Full name	TVET	Level of education	A/ background	Email	Mobile
1.	Misgana Belay	Nedjo	MSc	Agronomy	Misbel2020@gmail.com	0911983854
2.	Leta Abebe	Waliso PC	BSc	Plant science	Letaabebe361@gmail.com	0922768274
3.	Deribew Gonfa	Fitche PTC	MSc	Plant Science	gonfad24@gmail.com	0912774688
4.	Chimdessa Wakuma	Bako	MSc	Horticulture	wakumachimdessa@gmail.com	0911359086
5.	Alemayehu Tesfaye	Nedjo	MSc	Plant science	alemayehutesfayem@gmail.com	0913214980
6.	Getenesh Belay	Holeta	MSc	Horticulture	Nebzek2@gmail.com	0911449053
7.	Tamirat Tirfesa	Bako	BSc	Plant science	tirfessatamiru@gmail.com	0926811647
8.	Tesfaye Tekola	Assosa	MSc	Agronomy	ttekola@gmail.com	0910550651
9.	Moti Taye	Bako ATVEVT	MSc	Plant science	Tayemoti12@gmail.com	0912801540
10.	Adisu Shamble	Bako ATVET	BSc	Plant science	Adisushambel2011@gmail.com	0920617572
11.	Hailu Dereje	Bishoftu PC	BSc	Plant science		
12.	Mamo Abdi	OTVETB	MSc	Environmental and sustainable development	Mamoab57@gmail.com	0917812505