

An illustration on a teal background shows a central female customer service representative in a black blazer and white shirt sitting at a grey laptop. To her left, a male customer in a black suit is handing her a white document. To her right, another male customer in a black suit is pointing at the laptop screen while holding a white document. In the top right corner, the word 'Brilliant' is written in large blue letters with a red exclamation mark, and below it, 'CUSTOMER SERVICE' is written in white on a red rectangular background.

**Brilliant**  
CUSTOMER SERVICE

# Complaint Handling Skills

This highly practical one-day workshop will ensure that customer comments, concerns and complaints are dealt with appropriately.

# Introduction



This highly practical one-day workshop will ensure that customers' comments, concerns and complaints are dealt with appropriately. Good complaint handling matters because it is an important way of ensuring that customers receive the service they are entitled to expect. Complaints are a valuable source of feedback. They provide an audit trail and can be an early warning of failures in service delivery.

The workshop looks at three main areas:

- How to respond to customer complaints and feedback formally and informally
- The correct way to deal with customer complaints – on the telephone and in writing
- Presenting feedback internally, reviewing and changes to customer processes

When handled well, complaints provide an opportunity to improve your service, systems and reputation. Whilst there is often a balance to be struck between responding appropriately to complaints. Efficient complaint handling can save time and money by preventing a complaint from escalating or mistakes being repeated.

# Objectives

Participants in this workshop will learn the skills to manage the process, making feedback handling clear and straightforward, and readily accessible to customers.

Key points include

- Getting it right first time and having a plan B for when you don't
- Using prompt sheets and a structured approach to phone calls
- Being customer focused at all levels and training people in how to respond to feedback and complaints
- Being open and accountable and encouraging ownership of issues
- Acting fairly and proportionately whilst still being flexible
- Putting things right – fast, fully and with applied common sense
- Seeking continuous improvement – making changes to prevent or avoid future problems.

# Who will benefit?

All customer-facing staff, whether they are dealing with internal or external customers.

The course is suitable for all sectors – large and small organisations, private and public sector, not-for-profit, UK and international.





# Training Methodology

Our customer complaint handling training is very practical and objective. Very clear and specific skills, models and techniques are covered. The focus is on improving things that are already working, not going over old ground. Participants will discuss and plan new approaches to real-life examples taken from their own situations.

Each element of the course includes:

- High-quality training presentations
- Group exercises and team activities
- High degree of participation and interaction

The course includes regular discussion, planning and other practical exercises to develop and practice the skills and methods presented. Presentation and exercises can be tailored to specific situations from participants' work. The style is upbeat and motivational.

# Course Outline

The course includes a questionnaire which we ask participants to send to the trainer before the course. This enables the trainer to assess your needs in advance.

## Identifying the best response to complaints

- The importance of complaints – to the customer and to your organisation
- Understanding the seven elements that are the cause of every complaint – the SPECIAL model
- Using the PACES model for complaint handling
- How to ask for things without starting a long sequence of replies to replies
- How to give bad news – being up-front and empathising
- Regain the customer's goodwill and how to measure it
- Left brain and right brain customer complaints!
- Case studies and examples from real life experiences

## Handling complaints on the telephone

- The four C call structure
- Opening the call while being tactful and diplomatic, and some useful phrases
- Questioning and listening techniques – three listening modes and their impact
- How to control the control and know what can prevent you from hearing the whole story
- Putting the customer at ease – some things you should never say or do!
- Handling unhappy customers – practical things you can say and do
- Putting things back on a positive track and ending the telephone call
- Telephone skills best practice
- Role play and practice sessions



# Course Outline

## Choosing the right words on the telephone

- Eight principles to help you get to the point and avoid waffle
- Finding the right level of formality in your service style
- Learning to phrase difficult messages – using prompt sheets
- Getting the right voice tone and pitch
- Tuning in to what the customer is really saying
- Using the GREAT FUN model for upset customers
- Negotiating solutions when you are at fault
- Practical examples and exercises



## Responding to complaint emails

- What is email etiquette and why the correct email style counts
- Choosing the right structure for your content and objectives
- Sending the right message – what your email could be saying about you
- How to respond to customer emails – and when to use the telephone – examples and exercises
- Best practice complaint handling in writing – including the top 10 good and bad things to do or avoid

## Pulling it all together

- Action plans
- Personal learning summary



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