

# Overview of Apprenticeship Standard Customer Service Specialist Level 3



**Ofsted 'Good' grade and respected training provider, specialising in developing core organisational capabilities, supporting business strategy and increased operational performance.**

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# Developing Managers, Growing Leaders

Deere Apprenticeships is built on the principle of delivering excellence via online, blended learning or face to face training models.

As our team of Professional Work Coaches (PWC's) deliver brilliant training via private, personal, developmental learning conversations and interactive online workshops.

Whether you're an existing learner ready to make the next steps in your education journey or you are considering joining us for the first time, we are ready to support you and your organisation.

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# Customer Service Specialist

The main purpose of a customer service specialist is to be a 'professional' for direct customer support within all sectors and organisation types. You are an advocate of Customer Service who acts as a referral point for dealing with more complex or technical customer requests, complaints, and queries. You are often an escalation point for complicated or ongoing customer problems.

As an expert in your organisation's products and/or services, you share knowledge with your wider team and colleagues. You gather and analyse data and customer information that influences change and improvements in service. Utilising both organisational and generic IT systems to carry out your role with an awareness of other digital technologies. This could be in many types of environment including contact centres, retail, webchat, service industry or any customer service point.

**Duration:** The apprenticeship will take typically 15 months to complete depending on experience.

**Entry Requirements:** Organisations will set their own entry criteria and are more likely to select individuals with more advanced inter-personal skills, experience of working with customers in some capacity. You must achieve level 2 English and maths prior to taking the end point assessment.

**Link to professional registration:** Completion of this apprenticeship will lead to eligibility to join the Institute of Customer Service as an Individual member at Professional level. Should you choose to progress on a customer service career path, you may be eligible for further professional membership including management.

**Review:** The apprenticeship should be reviewed after a maximum of 3 years.

# Knowledge

Customer Service Specialists have the Knowledge of:

- ✔ Understand continuous improvement
- ✔ Understand your service provision
- ✔ Understand current business strategy
- ✔ Understand principles and benefits
- ✔ Understand customer journeys
- ✔ Understand customer issues
- ✔ Understand business processes
- ✔ Understand commercial factors
- ✔ Know your internal / external customers
- ✔ Understand a range of information
- ✔ Understand what drives loyalty
- ✔ Understand customer expectations
- ✔ Knowledge of regulatory considerations
- ✔ Understand business environment
- ✔ Understand your organisation structure
- ✔ Understand and use best practice

# Skills

Customer Service Specialists have the following Skills:

- ✔ Demonstrate continuous improvement
- ✔ Resolve complex issues
- ✔ Find solutions to meet organisations needs
- ✔ Negotiate mutually beneficial outcomes
- ✔ Manage challenging / complicated situations
- ✔ Use clear explanations
- ✔ Provide options and solution
- ✔ Interpret the customer experience
- ✔ Inform / influence customer satisfaction
- ✔ Demonstrate a cost conscious mind-set
- ✔ Identify highs / lows of customer journey
- ✔ Proactively gather customer feedback
- ✔ Analyse your customer types
- ✔ Maintain positive relationships
- ✔ Analyse the end to end service experience
- ✔ Make recommendations for improvement
- ✔ Make changes for industry best practice

# Behaviours

Customer Service Specialists demonstrate the following Behaviours:

- ✔ **Develop self**
- ✔ **Keep to service, industry best practice**
- ✔ **Take action towards personal goals**
- ✔ **Take actions to resolve customer issues**
- ✔ **Exercise proactivity and creativity**
- ✔ **Identify solutions to customer issues**
- ✔ **Make realistic promises and deliver on them**
- ✔ **Work effectively and collaboratively**
- ✔ **Recognise colleagues as internal customers**
- ✔ **Share knowledge and experience**
- ✔ **Adopt a positive and enthusiastic attitude**
- ✔ **Be adaptable and flexible to customer needs**
- ✔ **Demonstrate brand values and beliefs**
- ✔ **Ensure positive personal presentation**

# End Point Assessment

End point assessment (EPA) is an assessment of the knowledge, skills and behaviours that your apprentice has learned throughout an apprenticeship, which confirms that they are occupationally competent.

Assessments have been designed by employers in the sector and are conducted by independent bodies known as end point assessment organisations (EPAOs).

The apprentice will only get their apprenticeship certificate after they have passed all the elements of their EPA, including any required standards in English and maths.

## **What does assessment involve?**

Each apprenticeship includes an end point assessment plan, which describes how the apprentice should be tested against appropriate criteria, using suitable methods. For example, your apprentice may need to complete:

- a practical assessment
- an interview
- a project
- written and/or multiple-choice tests
- a presentation
- professional discussion

We will inform you at the beginning of the apprenticeship what the assessments are involved. This will give your apprentice plenty of time to prepare. For example, they may need to gather evidence to show how they've been working towards the core knowledge, skills and behaviours required.

# Additional description of Customer Service Specialist's Knowledge:

## **Business Knowledge and Understanding**

- Understand what continuous improvement means in a service environment and how your recommendations for change impact your organisation
- Understand the impact your service provision has on the wider organisation and the value it adds
- Understand your organisation's current business strategy in relation to customers and make recommendations for its future
- Understand the principles and benefits of being able to think about the future when taking action or making service related decisions
- Understand a range of leadership styles and apply them successfully in a customer service environment

## **Customer Journey knowledge**

- Understand and critically evaluate the possible journeys of your customers, including challenges and the end-to-end experience
- Understand the reasons why customer issues and complex situations sometimes need referral or escalation for specialist attention
- Understand the underpinning business processes that support you in bringing about the best outcome for customers and your organisation
- Understand commercial factors and authority limits for delivering the required customer experience

## **Knowing your customers and their needs/ Customer Insight**

- Know your internal and external customers and how their behaviour may require different approaches from you
- Understand how to analyse, use and present a range of information to provide customer insight
- Understand what drives loyalty, retention and satisfaction and how they impact on your organisation
- Understand different customer types and the role of emotions in bringing about a successful outcome
- Understand how customer expectations can differ between cultures, ages and social profiles

## **Customer service culture and environment awareness**

- Keep current, knowledge and understanding of regulatory considerations, drivers and impacts in relation to how you deliver for customers
- Understand your business environment and culture and the position of customer service within it
- Understand your organisation structure and what role each department needs to play in delivering Customer Service and what the consequences are should things go wrong
- Understand how to find and use industry best practice to enhance your own knowledge

# Additional description of Customer Service Specialist's Skills:

## **Business-focused service delivery**

- Demonstrate a continuous improvement and future focussed approach to customer service delivery including decision making and providing recommendations or advice
- Resolve complex issues by being able to choose from and successfully apply a wide range of approaches
- Find solutions that meet your organisations needs as well as the customer requirements

## **Providing a positive customer experience**

- Through advanced questioning, listening and summarising negotiate mutually beneficial outcomes

## **Providing a positive customer experience (cont.)**

- Manage challenging and complicated situations within your level of authority and make recommendations to enable and deliver change to service or strategy
- Use clear explanations, provide options and solutions to influence and help customers make choices and agree next steps
- Explore and interpret the customer experience to inform and influence achieving a positive result for customer satisfaction
- Demonstrate a cost conscious mind-set when meeting customer and the business needs
- identifying where highs and lows of the customer journey produce a range of emotions in the customer
- Use written and verbal communication to simplify and provide complex information in a way that supports positive customer outcome in the relevant format

## **Working with your customers / customer insights**

- Proactively gather customer feedback, through a variety of methods. Critically analyse, and evaluate the meaning, implication and facts and act upon it
- Analyse your customer types, to identify or anticipate their potential needs and expectations when providing your service

## **Customer service performance**

- Maintain a positive relationship even when you are unable to deliver the customer's expected outcome
- When managing referrals or escalations take into account historical interactions and challenges to determine next steps

## **Service improvement**

- Analyse the end to end service experience, seeking input from others where required, supporting development of solutions
- Make recommendations based on your findings to enable improvement
- Make recommendations and implement where possible, changes in line with new and relevant legislation, regulations and industry best practice

# Additional description of Customer Service Specialist's Behaviours:

## **Develop self**

- Proactively keep your service, industry and best practice knowledge and skills up-to-date
- Consider personal goals related to service and take action towards achieving them

## **Ownership/ Responsibility**

- Personally commit to and take ownership for actions to resolve customer issues to the satisfaction of the customer and your organisation
- Exercises proactivity and creativity when identifying solutions to customer and organisational issues
- Make realistic promises and deliver on them

## **Team working**

- Work effectively and collaboratively with colleagues at all levels to achieve results.
- Recognise colleagues as internal customers
- Share knowledge and experience with others to support colleague development

## **Equality**

- Adopt a positive and enthusiastic attitude being open minded and able to tailor your service to each customer
- Be adaptable and flexible to your customer needs whilst continuing to work within the agreed customer service environment

## **Presentation**

- Demonstrate brand advocacy, values and belief when dealing with customer requests to build trust, credibility and satisfaction
- Ensure your personal presentation, in all forms of communication, reflects positively on your organisation's brand

**For further information about our  
courses please contact John Sims**

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