

COMPETENCIES FOR FRONT-LINE CUSTOMER SERVICE POSITIONS

Communication

Customer Focus

Handling Difficult People

Problem Solving

Adaptability/Flexibility

COMMUNICATION

Clearly conveys and receives information and ideas to individuals or groups. Invites and constructively responds to feedback. Keeps others informed as appropriate. Demonstrates effective written, oral, and listening skills. Maintains a positive attitude consistently, despite difficult or challenging circumstances, and communicates positively when working with others.

Exemplary Performance: Communications are consistently error free, have a positive, professional tone, and are presented with the needs and expectations of the audience in mind.

Below Target Performance: Fails to listen and share feedback. Communication is unclear, disorganized and they have difficulty expressing their thoughts. Fails to communicate or share important information. Consistently has negative tone or attitude when communicating with others.

CUSTOMER FOCUS

Discovers, understands and meets needs of customers (internal and external). Gives customer needs priority and responds quickly to customer concerns. Builds positive customer relationships. Does not allow internal company issues or personal feelings to interfere with customer service.

Exemplary Performance: Consistently goes 'above and beyond' to help customers. Anticipates customers' needs. Owns the problem and is resourceful in finding solutions for customers. Never lets customers see that they are having a bad day.

Below Target Performance: Generates complaints from customers. Does not own customers' issues and/or passes the issue to other staff members on a consistent basis. Is (or appears to be) unfriendly to customer. Lets personal feelings or issues interfere with providing effective customer service. Portrays an unprofessional image or perception to customers.

HANDLING DIFFICULT PEOPLE

Able to constructively deal with customers who are upset or challenging. Listens well and allows the person to vent. Maintains personal and procedural boundaries, moving interaction towards a satisfactory conclusion. Does not allow harsh words or strong negativity to affect his/her composure.

Exemplary Performance: Consistently relates to all kinds of people inside and outside the organization. Able to defuse even high-tension situations comfortably. Never loses composure when dealing with an irate customer and always acts professionally. Continually handles emotions well under pressure and does not let frustration show when dealing with difficult people and situations.

Below Target Performance: Unwilling to handle criticism and complaints from customers (even if unsubstantiated). Does not listen well to customers and becomes defensive when confronted with a difficult customer. Appears to not listen or is too busy constructing his/her own response. Gets caught up in emotional reaction versus trying to understand and listen to the customers' perspective on the situation.

PROBLEM SOLVING

Sees and is able to define problems and find causes. Owns the problem until resolution. Finds workable solutions or works with other resources to resolve the issue. Proactively implements solutions and changes as needed to keep small problems from becoming big problems. Looks beyond the obvious and doesn't stop at the surface symptoms.

Exemplary Performance: Always looks beyond the obvious and doesn't stop at the first answers. Personally follows up with the customer to ensure that the problem is resolved. Once a problem is uncovered, he/she works with internal or external resources to ensure the issue doesn't happen again. Anticipates problems and makes recommendations of how processes or issues can proactively be resolved. Works to find root causes and doesn't just focus on the symptoms and superficial causes. Involves customers or stakeholders when generating new solutions or alternatives. Holds self personally responsible for ensuring new solutions are implemented successfully.

Below Target Performance: Jumps to conclusions without exploring options to resolve the problem. May be a fire-ready-aim type. May miss the complexity of a problem and force-it to what he/she is most comfortable with. Responds quickly without full follow-through or analysis to get it off of his/her desk. May be stuck in the past and what worked before; cannot think creatively to resolve problems in different or innovative ways.

ADAPTABILITY/FLEXIBILITY

Maintains focus and positive attitude amidst change or when under pressure. Able to modify or shift behaviors in response to changing conditions, new information or customers' needs. Accepts and embraces changes in his/her job or in the organization. Maintains productivity and effectiveness in spite of changes. Is able to see the merits of perspectives different than his/her own.

Exemplary Performance: When asked to modify behaviors, always complies without complaint. Proactively steps up to try new ways of doing things and volunteers for new assignments. Is positive about changes and is a change leader in their team or organization.

Below Target Performance: Is unwilling or unable to adapt to changes without being pushed. Resists change and/or undermines/sabotages changes. Becomes agitated when asked to work outside the daily routine or to try something new. Frequently will not change mind, despite new information. Failure or resistance to change has caused issues or delays within the team, department or organization.