

UNIT 3: THE TRAVEL AND TOURISM CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

LEARNING AIM B

Internal Customers

Definition: "Those who you directly or indirectly work with to ensure excellent service is given to external customers."

- Colleagues and staff with whom you work closely
- Supervisors and managers.
- Directors and Owners.
- Staff at other locations.
- Suppliers



Important to remember:

Customer service is only possible if everyone in the organisation (whether or not they have direct contact with the external customer) aims to give customer satisfaction. It is like a chain



New customers

- If the organisation is new, then customers are new. You need to keep them coming back for more!
- The organisation will also be unfamiliar with the needs, wants and desires of new customers



TYPES OF CUSTOMER

Existing Customers

- If the new customer is happy, they will come back.
- The organisation must continue to deliver products and services which the customer wants.
- External changes may also impact on customer wants such as technology or new destinations etc.



Individuals

- Discover whether they will know someone else on the holiday
- If they want to be on their own?
- If they are on holiday, they might want to check in from time to time with a holiday rep.
- Some might want to be left alone.



Groups

- Customers might be an in organised group (usually have a leader)
- If the group has a leader work with them to fully understand the groups needs.
- Be alert to individual needs if the group doesn't have a group leader as people may want to ask questions



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Special Interests

- They usually have special interests.
- Find out more about their hobbies to get to know their interests and dislikes to then cater the holiday around them.



Families

- Huge part of the travel industry
- Normally have one family member who leads the holiday.
- Talking to the children will also help and allows them to share their excitement of their holiday.



Couples

- Couples may be travelling just as couple or as part of a group.
- They may want to have privacy or to join in with others.
- We as travel experts need to find this out and cater to their needs.



TYPES OF CUSTOMER CONTINUED...

Business Travellers (Corporate Customers)

- Want quick and efficient service
- They need facilities and support to allow them to do their job.
- They might also want something that reflects that of a leisure traveller i.e. jet lagged customers



Age Groups

- You will meet different ages of people from the young to the old
- Some adults will want child free zones
- Parents will appreciate help with their infants and young children.
- Older generations might appreciate a more formal style of delivery i.e. sir or madam.



Culture and Ethnicity

- Prevalent in the inbound sector
- Different ethnicities have different needs and wishes.
- Respect their values and wishes
- Ignorance can lead to people taking offence



Additional Physical Needs

- Not every disability is visible
- Make sure that their needs are catered for and their disability (physical or mental)
- Can also include dietary requirements.



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Needs of different types of customer

Accurate Information



Customers expect accurate information. They need to know that the product/ service meets their needs and how. Examples might be...

- Can you give me directions to...?
- At what time is the next show starting?
- What is the weather forecast for this afternoon?

Safety



The Health and Safety at Work Act (1974) places a responsibility upon employers and employees to ensure the safety of ourselves and others. Hotels must have evacuation procedures in every bedroom and coach drivers must remind customers to wear seat belts.

Security

Bag checks are now more prominent than ever before due to recent terrorist activities. There is a increase in CCTV, security guards and body and baggage searches. If you are working in the industry, we need to be extra vigilant and reporting anything suspicious



Assistance

People might require assistance with different things such as...

- Baggage in their holiday destination
- Elderly customers climbing stairs and many more



Health



The customers rely on you to be kept safe, secure and healthy whilst in your care.

You need to alert customers to overseas health requirements. These are usually available from the FCO

SARS, Avian Flu, Swine Flu and Coronavirus has had restrictions on travel, each time this information was shared through the WHO (World Health Organisation)

Advice



Customers will look to you for advice. You are considered the expert. Examples might be...

- A train manager might be asked which side to sit on for the best views
- A hotel receptionist is asked how to get to a venue by a customer who missed their coach

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Products and Services

- Make sure you know what products and services your organisation offers and what the benefits of them are.
- Learn about your competitors' products and services so that they can emphasise to your customers what your organisation offers that your competitors don't.
- The customer expects the product or service they purchased delivers what your organisation promised.
- Remember your 3P's (Product, Process and Personal Behaviour)
- It is not just about the flight and hotel that is booked, it is about the personal service you're providing. Are you knowledgeable, friendly and responding appropriately to what they have to say?



Needs of different types of customer continued...



Specific Needs

Some customers have special needs. It may be because of a disability. They may need help to an easy access room or a wheelchair to take them to and from their transport. They may need an induction loop to help them hear in public areas, or an escort because they are partially sighted. They might have a dietary issue.



Special Requests

Special requests may also increase a customer's enjoyment e.g. a bottle of champagne in a bridal suite for a honeymoon couple or a birthday cake arranged for a child's birthday.



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Written Requests

Much communication in Travel and Tourism is done via email or websites. However, some customers still prefer to communicate by letter and written booking form.



- The style and sometimes the information can differ depending on method of communication.
- Make sure that dates are correct
- Make sure you sign the letter off correctly e.g. yours sincerely, yours faithfully.

Booking Forms

Many tour operators are now offering online booking forms. We must make sure that they are...



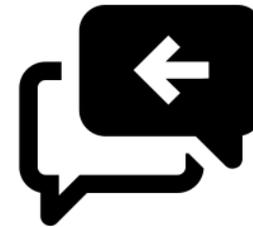
- Easy to read
- Ask all the questions which the organisation needs to be answered.
- Provide the information the customer needs
- Is clear and unambiguous

Verbal Requests

- Verbal requests might be face to face
- They might also be over the telephone
- Staff must listen carefully to what the customer is saying or asking and be prepared to respond helpfully, knowledgeably and clearly.



Responding to customer needs



Recognising unstated needs

Sometimes a customer doesn't realise they have a need, so it is our job to identify those unstated needs. Some examples might include...

A family with children booking a holiday at a travel agent might want a kids club option.

Cabin crew reminding someone to fasten their seatbelt

A cruise ship waiter noticing someone not eating their meal because they are in fact vegetarian and are too shy to request a change.



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Meeting Expectations

- Your customer has been convinced to buy your product or service.
- You have given them expectations of what that product or service will provide.
- They will also have expectations based on previous customer service experiences and what their culture and ethnicity expects.
- Customers expect the information you provide them to be timely and accurate
- They expect their journey to be punctual.
- They expect their room to be clean
- They expect their family to be looked after (if applicable)



Exploring expectations of different types of customers in the travel and tourism sector



Exceeding Expectations

- Anticipate the customers needs before they ask for it.
- Personalise the experience for the customer, get to know them
- Solve problems imaginatively.
- Think of the halo effect, you might bend down to talk to a child, so that they can be at your eye level. You might ask them the name of the toy they're holding. The child will enjoy this experience and other people will be impressed by what you are doing.

