

NCFE Level 2

Certificate in Understanding Excellence in Customer Service for Hospitality

CUSTOMER NEEDS AND EXPECTATIONS

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

CUSTOMER FEEDBACK

EFFECTIVE TEAMWORKING

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Workbook 1

Section 1: Principles of customer service in the hospitality sector

In this section, you will learn about different types of customer and the needs and expectations of customers. You will consider how to develop good customer relationships and how to deal effectively with complaints. You will also learn how to collect customer feedback and how this can be used to prevent problems occurring in the future.

Different customer types

Please read the following as it will help you to answer question 1.

The obvious customers of the hospitality sector are individuals who use the services such as restaurants and hotels, but our definition of customers is much wider than this. Anyone that you come into contact with in your role should be considered as a customer. This means that the same levels of customer service should be provided to all those you interact with in your work role.

Customers can be grouped into two different types:

- **Internal** – people who work for the same organisation or other departments within your organisation, including support and administration staff and departments, managers and colleagues.
- **External** – the individuals using the service for food, drink or accommodation.

External customers using hospitality services include:

- individuals
- couples
- groups
- families
- businesses



Did you know?

The term 'customer expectations' is used to refer to the things that people expect from a service. To provide high quality service, one of the things you need to consider is how to meet customer expectations.

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Customer needs and expectations

Please read the following as it will help you to answer question 2.

Customers have expectations and generally want:

- **efficient and polite service** – before, during and after buying or using a product or service
- **good quality products and services** – in line with the standards promised in catalogues, brochures, websites, customer charters, company policies, etc.
- **complaints and problems to be dealt with properly** – politely and quickly, with an effective outcome
- **their opinion to matter** – when dealing with staff, when giving feedback or when discussing a problem

Customer needs

Customer needs can be described as problems that customers intend to solve with the purchase of goods or services. Here are some examples of customer needs:

- Iqra works for a registered charity and needs an event for a fundraising dinner for 100 people. There will be varying food preferences and dietary needs, so she needs a menu offering at least three choices. There will also be some disabled guests, so she needs to be sure that there will be wheelchair access and that staff can offer appropriate support for visually and hearing impaired guests.
- Helga has a nut allergy and needs to be sure that there are dishes that are prepared without nuts and away from any possible contamination from nuts.
- Sophie and Andrew have a limited budget but need a meal for themselves and three children on their journey to meet family. They need a children's menu and family-friendly surroundings, including a highchair.

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Did you know?

Many organisations will set out their own values or require staff to work to a published set of values, such as those identified in this section. These values will form a part of your work responsibilities.

How cultural factors can affect customers' expectations

Please read the following as it will help you to answer question 3.

Culture is a set of beliefs and values that are shared by most people within a group. Culture determines how an individual behaves and has a significant effect on an individual's buying habits and choices. Culture includes beliefs, habits and principles which are developed from family status and background.



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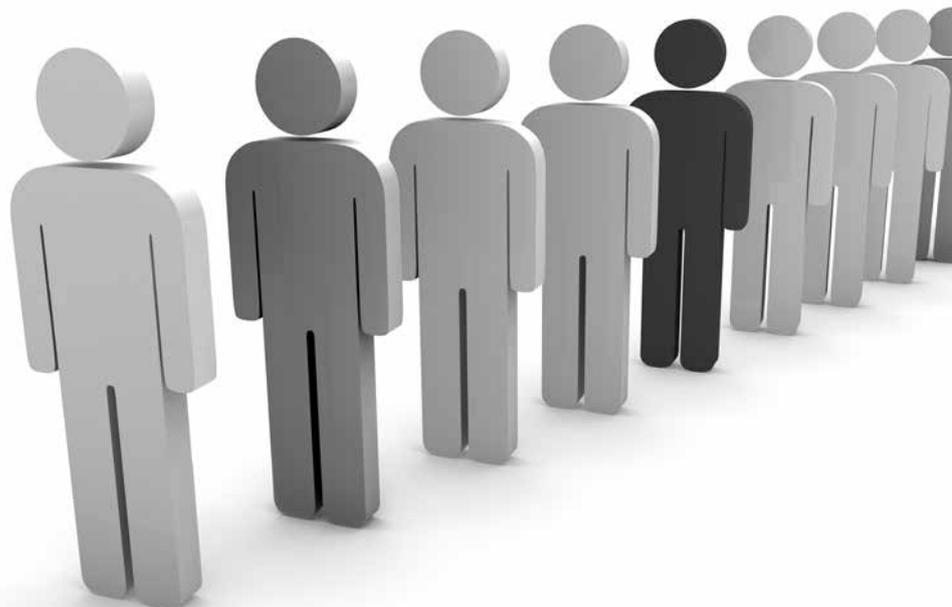
Cultural

Customers' expectations can be heavily influenced by cultural experience, and organisations take this into account when delivering their service offer and managing expectations.

Cultural factors that need to be considered include, for example:

- **language** – e.g. English not being the first language; different traditions about tone of voice; cultural traditions about the formality of language communication styles
- **nationality** – e.g. established traditions that reflect national culture
- **age** – e.g. cultural traditions about how people of different ages treat each other
- **religion and beliefs** – e.g. affecting food and drink choices; different holy days; religious festivals; fasting periods
- **social attitudes and behaviours** – e.g. the formality and type of greeting
- **body language** – e.g. personal space; touching and gestures; showing feet
- **values** – e.g. ethics and perception of right and wrong; lifestyle; attitudes to environmental and animal welfare issues

As we know, customers all expect good quality products and services, and excellent customer service. In addition to these expectations, we need to add cultural awareness as it is an important part of treating each customer as an individual.



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The following table gives some examples about topics that may affect customers' expectations and how an organisation might address these:

Cultural factor	Possible effects on customers' expectations	When considering cultural values, organisations might:
Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> unable to check if needs can be satisfied not understanding the details about the service offer, leading to disappointment or surprise finding communication with customer service staff difficult and embarrassing fear about asking questions offended by the words and tone of voice used 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> print product information in different languages train staff to speak slowly and clearly and be prepared to repeat encourage staff to use gestures and diagrams to communicate when necessary have access to translation services use a formal approach when greeting customers – if their culture expects this reassure staff that customers from certain cultures do not use 'please' and 'thank you' as we do in the UK – although considered rude here, this is seen as normal in many countries
Nationality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> want to find familiar products and services that reflect their nationality and traditions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> do different versions of products for different nationalities – e.g. flags and souvenirs sold at international sporting events offer national dishes and drinks – e.g. haggis for a Scottish New Year party offer imported products and brands – e.g. Polish tiger bread or German bratwurst sausages
Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> expect to be treated in a certain way for their age might have preconceptions about staff being much older or younger than them – and unable to deal with their queries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> treat older customers more formally – if their culture expects this use formal forms of address for adults amend their service offer for children and young people research a person's cultural expectations for different age groups

FOOD HYGIENE

COMPASSIONAL STANDARDS

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