

**Strand:** Office Administration

**Substrand:** Customer Service

**Content Learning Outcome:**

- Demonstrate the ability to deal with difficult customers and complaints.

Your first impression to a customer plays a vital role in dealing with them and your main role is to provide them your high quality of service and in as short a time as possible.

**Way to provide high quality customer**

- Immediately acknowledge the customer and show empathy
- Listen actively and effectively and provide feedback.
- Use appropriate verbal and non-verbal communication.
- Use conflict resolution techniques to solve problems.
- Make sure you follow up the measures you have taken to solve conflicts to ascertain whether your customer is satisfied.

**Different types of customers**

We are all customers, but in any business there are basically three different types of customers:

**1. Regular Customers.**

- People who are happy with your service package and like your corporate image.
- Repeat customers and are the basis of your business and never take them for granted or you may lose them.

**2. Change Customers (passing trade).**

- Equally important to your business.
- Usually live in the area.
- Entered your business because they may have been attracted by your window display or your advertisement in the Yellow Pages, or you have been recommended by a regular customer.

**3. Visiting Customers.**

- People from another town, another state or another country.
- Also important to build up your business

**Identifying customer needs/ WANTS/DEMANDS**

**Identify customer needs.**

- Basic needs for food, clothing, warmth and safety.

**Identify customer wants.**

- Something that is really not essential to your survival or happiness.

**Identify customer demands.**

- A want becomes a demand when a person is able and willing to buy the object she/he desires.
- Marketing creates a demand in customers.
- Product or service is something that is viewed as being capable of satisfying a customer's need or want.

**customer complaints**

1. **Justified**
2. **Unjustified.**

### **Justified customer complaints**

- Deal with a justified complaint by using negotiation and conflict resolution skills.

The PAIR approved method

- Placate by listening, empathizing and responding with concern.
- Attend to the complaint.
- Investigate the circumstances and details of the incident.
- Resolve by deciding on the action to be taken, with the approval of the customer

### **The five-step method**

1. Listen – Be open-minded. Do not take the complaint personally.
2. Respond - Show concern and empathy and apologies for any inconvenience. Put yourself in their position.
3. Decide on action – What action will influence you here? Is the complaint justified? What is company policy? You may need to seek advice from your supervisor.
4. Take action – Whatever action you decide to take (with the approval of the customer), make sure you act promptly.
5. Follow up – Always follow up the action you have taken and confirm that the customer is happy with results.

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### **Unjustified customer complaints**

- Deal using negotiation or conflict resolution.

### **Activity Questions**

1. Differentiate between different types of customers.
2. List and explain the PAIR approved method.
3. Explain the 5 step method for solving a conflict.

The End

Sangam SKM College - Nadi

Lesson Notes - Week 2

Year 13

Office Technology

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**Four steps for Problem solving and conflict resolution.**

- Establish the criteria for the solution of the problem. Brainstorming several ideas for solving the problem or discuss suggestions with several other people.
- Select the best alternative
- Implement the decision
- Evaluate the decision over time.

This applies in both personal and group/team situations

**Identifying and resolving problems (conflict-resolution)**

\*Sometimes you may not be able to resolve a problem despite using the above techniques and you then have a conflict situation.

Five types of conflict situations in an organization have been identified:

1. Conflict between individuals
2. Conflict between individuals and groups
3. Conflict between individuals and the organization
4. Conflict between groups in the same organization
5. Conflict between organization

**List the Problems [conflict] which arise between people in three different ways.**

1. **Interpersonal conflict**- Two or more people disagree over an issue or when they experience emotional opposition from one another.
2. **Substantive conflict**- Disagreements over resources, rewards, policies and procedures and allocation of roles.
3. **Emotional conflict**
  - When there are feelings of anger, dislike, resentment and distrust resulting in personality clashes'.
  - Experience the feeling of liking some people better than others.
  - Often meet someone for the first time and either like them a lot or instinctively dislike them.
  - In a work situation there is always at some point conflict between people and this has to be solved through conflict resolution.

## conflict resolution

- Conflict resolution solves interpersonal conflict in three ways, through lose-lose strategy, win-lose strategy or win-win strategy. How this operates is shown in the table below:

<b>Conflict type</b>	<b>Possible solutions</b>	<b>Results</b>
Lose-lose	Avoidance of conflict. <b>Smoothing</b> – recognizing both sides of conflict. <b>Compromise</b> – each party gives up something of value.	Conflict may appear to have been solved, disagreements are smoothed over; future conflict over the same issue will arise again.
Win-lose	<b>Competition</b> – conflict resolved through forces by someone with superior skill. <b>Authoritative command</b> – someone with authority specifies the outcome.	Only one person has gained anything and the problem is not resolved; future conflict over the same issue may arise again or lead to related conflict.
Win-win	Confrontation of the issues. Problem-solving to resolve the conflict issues on both sides.	Conflict has been resolved on both sides; each person or side has won something and the conflict is unlikely to arise again.

### List the steps to resolve conflict on win/win basis [ both sides win].

1. Explore the problem
2. Search for mutually acceptable solutions
3. Evaluate the solution with the customer
4. Decide together whether the solution is mutually acceptable
5. Follow up and evaluate the solution after it has been put into operation.

### four points to remember when dealing with a conflict situation

- ❖ If customer is aggressive, try not to be aggressive in return.
- ❖ Do not take criticism personally and try not to get upset.
- ❖ Try to stay calm and in control of the situation.
- ❖ Use the boomerang principle‘ (what you send out you receive back). If you are pleasant, calm down and usually appreciate what you are trying to do. Customers who are pleased with what you have done for them become ambassadors for you and your organization by telling potential new customers how you have helped them and solved their problems.

### Activity Questions

1. List 5 types of conflict situations in an organization.
2. Identify the conflict type where the conflict is resolved on both sides?
3. Briefly state the four points to remember when dealing with conflicts.

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Lesson Notes - Week 3

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Office Technology

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**Dealing with difficult customers and solving problem**

1. Recognize that their anger is not directed at you personally.
2. Remain calm and helpful.
3. Ask questions and listen for facts such as
  - Use the rules of effective listening.
  - Make notes of all the facts.
4. Use the correct non-verbal signals such as
  - Sound cheerful and positive and smile.
5. Acknowledge their feelings of anger (empathize).
  - Use verbal encouragers
  - Use their name often.
  - Show empathy by understanding their point of view.
  - Say 'Thank you for letting us know about this problem' to defuse the situation.
6. Agree to a course of action.
7. Follow that course of action.
8. Never become emotionally involved, or the situation will get out of hand.
9. Follow up the action.

**Four Negotiation skills**

- Listening.
- Questioning.
- Calling the process.
- Closing the Deal.

### **Importance of effective listening**

- Prevents misinformation.
- Improves morale, rapport and trust levels with other people.
- Improves teamwork.

Write down what has been agreed to and get both parties to sign copies for each.

A simple handshake or a celebration, depending on the magnitude of the negotiation, is then called for.

### **two main concerns when people are in conflict**

1. Achieving personal goals (needs).
2. Keeping a good relationship.

### **Three aspects of Conflict.**

1. Emotions.
2. Values and Needs.
3. Needs.

#### **1. Emotions**

- When feelings are strong, we cannot be rational and calm.
- Conflict resolution method is meant to overcome this barrier.
- We must treat one another with respect

#### **2. Values and Needs**

- It is usually impossible to agree with one another if our values are widely different.
- This covers such values as religion, ethics and politics.

### **Activity Questions**

1. List the points in dealing with difficult customers and situations.
2. List four negotiation skills.
3. What are the two main concerns when people are in conflict?

THE END.