



Job Profiles

Customer Services

The Work

A customer services assistant, or adviser, is often a customer's first point of contact with a company. As a customer service assistant you would deal with customer's enquiries and any complaints. This could be face-to-face, or you might help them over the phone or by e-mail.

As a customer services assistant your day to day tasks could include the following:

- Answering customer enquiries and passing them on to another department
- Arrange services for customers, such as taking bookings
- Selling products or taking orders
- Giving information and helping to solve problems
- Taking payments or giving refunds for goods and services
- Entering customer information onto a computer database
- Handling complaints and passing them onto a manager if required

Hours and Environment

In a full-time job you would usually work between 35-40 hours a week. Part-time work is very common though, as is shift work in the retail, leisure and contact centre industries.

Depending on the employer you could be working from an office or a customer services desk. In an office job you would spend a lot of time on the telephone and using a computer. The working environment can be very busy, loud and buzzing.

If you are dealing with customers on a face-to-face basis, you may need to wear a uniform.

Skills and Interests

- Excellent communication skills
- A genuine interest in helping people
- The ability to work as part of a team
- Patience and calm under pressure
- A helpful, pleasant and tactful approach
- The ability to handle complaints and difficult situations
- Computer and administration skills
- Basic maths skills



Getting into the Industry

All kinds of employment sectors require good customer services skills, including retail, travel, finance and local authorities.

Jobs may be advertised in local newspapers, Jobcentre Plus, recruitment agencies, by employers themselves (online or in-store) or on the ICS Jobs Board.

Customer Services qualifications, further information & useful contacts

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- 1) Intermediate & Advanced Apprenticeship in Customer Services www.keits.co.uk
You can also do courses at various levels, depending on the qualifications and experience you already have. Relevant courses include: NVQ Level 2 and 3 in Customer Services.
If the employer is a member of the Institute of Customer Service (ICS) you may be able to work towards the ICS Professional Award in Communication, Solutions and Innovations.
With experience, you could progress to customer service manager and may have a chance to take NVQ Level 4 in Customer Service and other general management qualifications.

Further information and contact details

- 1) Institute of Customer Service, www.instituteofcustomerservice.com
- 2) Lantra, Lantra House, Stoneleigh Park, Nr Coventry, Warwickshire, CV8 2LG
[Tel:0845 707 8007](tel:08457078007), www.lantra.co.uk
- 3) KEITS, Unit C, Houndswood Gate, Harper Lane, Radlett, Herts, WD7 7HU,
[Tel:01923 854586](tel:01923854586) www.keits.co.uk
- 4) Skillsmart Retail, www.skillsmartretail.com
- 5) www.afuturein.com
- 6) www.ajobin.com
- 7) National Apprenticeship Service – www.apprenticeships.org.uk