

Course 2: Fundamentals of Retail Operations

This course will introduce you to the fundamentals of retail operations. You'll examine all aspects of the day-to-day activities that happen within a retail environment. The first lesson contains an overview of the customer experience. You'll learn the importance of customer service and all of the elements and considerations that go into building customer relationships. The second lesson covers product sales strategies and explains the differences between products and services. Best practices for selling is also covered. The third lesson is about workplace safety and security. You'll be given tips for keeping yourself, your coworkers, and customers safe. You'll also be encouraged to develop a personal safety program. The final lesson revolves around inventory management and the lifecycle of products.

THE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

This lesson provides an overview of customer service in the retail environment, including customer service standards, the elements of the customer transaction, identifying customer needs, communicating with customers, and handling customer complaints.

SECTION 1: CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARDS

Objective

When you complete this section, you'll be able to correctly identify customer service standards that represent the brand.

BRAND PROMISE

A brand promise consists of the service that a company assures it will provide its customers every time they enter a store or make a purchase. A company's overall goal is to ensure that their brand promise meets or exceeds the customer's expectations. This will help make sure a customer has a positive experience. A strong brand promise helps build a group of



loyal and repeat customers. As an employee, you help a company deliver on their brand promise. Going above and beyond for customers will help make sure that a company has a positive brand image.

THE CUSTOMER

A customer is a person who buys goods or services from another person or company. An employee who buys goods and services from the company is also considered a customer. Their happiness and satisfaction are what keeps a company alive.



CUSTOMER SERVICE DEFINED

Customer service is made up of all of the activities that happen before, during, and after a customer buys a product. If the customer service goes beyond what the customer planned, this leads to a repeat or loyal customer. If the customer service does not meet what the customer had planned, this could lead to a loss of a customer.



As an employee in retail, the goal is to always go above and beyond to make sure the customer has a great shopping experience.

BENEFITS OF DELIVERING GREAT CUSTOMER SERVICE

Excellent customer service brings a lot of value to a company. Benefits of delivering great customer service include

- Trust between a company and customer.
- Increased sales.
- Competitive edge.
- Loyal customers.



CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

It's the goal of every successful business to satisfy the customer above all else.

While customer service is the act of giving the best service to your customers while they are in the stores, customer satisfaction is the end result.

When the customer is not only happy enough to return and shop with you in the future, but also recommends your store to friends and family, this means you have a satisfied customer.



INCREASE CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

Customer satisfaction can be increased by providing

- A good assortment of products and services.
- Value for the dollar.
- A clean, safe, and easy-to-shop location.
- Respectful and cheerful service.
- Minimal wait times for checkout.
- A convenient location open during convenient hours.



THE GREAT CUSTOMER SERVICE EXPERIENCE

Read the scenario and answer the questions that follow.

Scenario: Mike was a loyal and frequent customer of a pizza restaurant in his neighborhood, but one day he stopped ordering pizza. After about two weeks, the store grew concerned about its loyal client and called to ask him if he was okay. To Mike's surprise, the restaurant offered him a free "Welcome Back" pizza. He was so surprised and delighted that he shared the story on Facebook and Twitter.



- Which skills and characteristics were used to make this a great customer service experience?

- Do you think Mike is satisfied? Do you think Mike will recommend this pizza restaurant to his family and friends?

Check your answers with those in the back of this guide.

KEY SKILLS AND CHARACTERISTICS

There are many skills and characteristics that will help you give great customer service. These skills are

- Clear communication.
- Product knowledge.
- Positivity.
- Teamwork.



- Problem solving.
- Patience.
- Empathy, which is the ability to put yourself in someone else's shoes.

TYPICAL COURTESIES

In addition to the key skills and behaviors that demonstrate customer service, be courteous to customers by

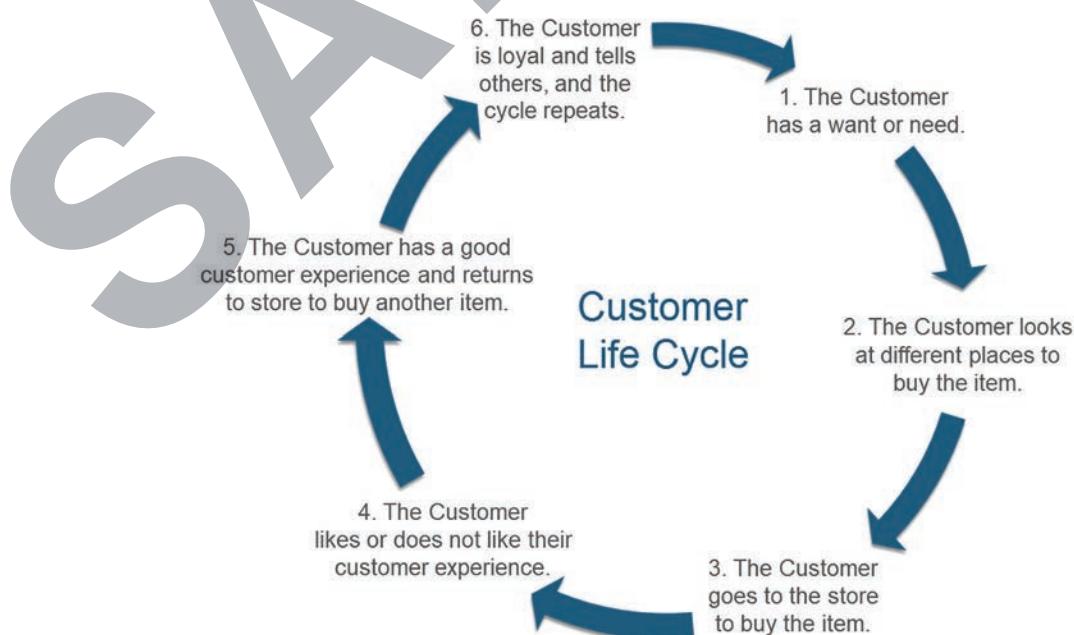
- Smiling.
- Making eye contact.
- Offering a friendly greeting.
- Thanking them for shopping in your store.



CUSTOMER LIFE CYCLE

There are six steps of a Customer Life Cycle:

1. The customer has a want or need.
2. The customer looks at different places to buy the item.
3. The customer goes to the store to buy the item.
4. The customer likes or does not like their customer experience.
5. The customer has a good customer experience and returns to the store to buy another item.
6. The customer is loyal and tells others, and the cycle repeats.



Customer service is important in helping a company's reputation. When customers have a great experience, they are more likely to tell others. This could work the other way as well; when customers have a bad customer experience, they also tell others.

CUSTOMER LIFE CYCLE DISRUPTIONS

Different events could happen and disrupt the customer life cycle and stop it from repeating. These different events include:

- Competitors may offer better prices or higher quality products.
- Products may be poor quality.
- Employees could provide poor customer service.
- Customers may not tell others about their experiences, or tell about bad experiences.



The overall goal of a company is to keep the customer life cycle repeating and growing.

Put these customer life cycle steps in the correct order.

- _____ The customer has a good customer experience and returns to store to buy another item.
- _____ The customer looks at different places to buy the item.
- _____ The customer is loyal and tells others, and the cycle repeats.
- _____ The customer goes to the store to buy the item.
- _____ The customer has a want or need.
- _____ The customer likes or does not like their customer experience.

Check your answers with those in the back of this guide.

NOT SO GREAT EXPERIENCE

Follow the trainer's instructions for the activity related to this section.

CONNECTING WITH THE CUSTOMER

Connecting with customers as soon as they enter the store will help set the tone for a great customer experience. A strong greeting is a great way to make a connection with a customer. Make sure you

- Greet customers within 30 seconds.
- Smile and make eye contact.
- Ask how you can help them with their shopping needs.



A retail employee should always try to build a trusting relationship with a customer. Trust begins with the first contact. The more confident and positive attitude you demonstrate, the more likely building a customer relationship will start things in the right direction.

MAKING A GREAT IMPRESSION

It is important for you to establish a quick and strong connection with customers. It is also important to maintain the relationship and leave the customer with a lasting impression. Use these tips to make a great impression with a customer:

- Keep active eye contact and an open, welcoming stance when speaking with a customer.
- Listen to the customer's needs and give the customer advice and recommendations.
- Suggest additional products and services to complete the experience.
- Try to make the shopping experience easy for the customer.
- Be a great listener. Lean forward, nod, and repeat back to the customer what you heard.
- Pay attention to the customer's non-verbal communication.
- Be aware of your tone when talking to customers.
- Try not to be pushy. You should be focused only on helping the customer.



LEAVING A GREAT IMPRESSION

You created a solid first impression with a strong greeting; you kept up the positive experience with great customer service and product knowledge; now it is time to end on a high note. As the customer is checking out or leaving, you should

- Verify that they found everything easily.
- Provide great service, even if they don't leave the store with a product.
- Check to see if there is anything else that you can help them with.
- Use the customer's name and provide the store's contact information or social media handles.
- Say goodbye and invite the customer to come back.



SAMPLE