

Customer Service

Complete the table with the correct word forms.

Verb	Noun	Adjective
	anxiety	1 _____
apologise	2 _____	apologetic/unapologetic
3 _____	assistance	
complain	4 _____	
	confidence	5 _____
6 _____	demand	demanding/undemanding
empathise	7 _____	empathetic
8 _____	handling	
help	help	9 _____ 10 _____
request	11 _____	
satisfy	satisfaction	12 _____ 13 _____
14 _____	upset	upset

8 Complete the sentences with the correct prepositions.

- The passengers were getting anxious _____ long queues at check-in.
- The airline apologised _____ passengers _____ the delay.
- The cabin crew are available to offer assistance _____ passengers.
- I complained _____ the airline _____ the slow service.
- The training session helped staff feel confident _____ handling upset passengers.
- We are not satisfied _____ the compensation we received for the delay.

9 Discuss the questions.

- Do you ever get anxious about flying? What do you do to calm down?
- Have you recently been dissatisfied with a product or service? What and why?

- Look at the businesses in Exercise 1 again. What are some things each one might offer as a premium service?

airline bank hotel internet provider online retailer restaurant shop

- Can you think of any other types of businesses that offer a premium service? Do you use any of these services?
- When would you consider paying more to be a premium customer?

B Choose one type of business and design a premium service. Think about some of the items in the box or use your own ideas.

exclusive goods or services loyalty cards
personalisation priority services

2 Choose the correct option in italics.

Subject: Complaint about recent flight

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am a regular passenger with your airline and I am usually very ¹ *satisfying* / *satisfied*. Unfortunately, on a recent flight to Athens your staff were not very ² *helpful* / *helpless*. Firstly, the woman sitting next to me was very ³ *anxiety* / *anxious* and I called for ⁴ *assist* / *assistance* but nobody came. I know passengers can be very ⁵ *undemanding* / *demanding* but worried passengers need to be looked after. Then, the person sitting on my left ⁶ *requested* / *request* a glass of water. It took fifteen minutes before he got the water but nobody ⁷ *apologetic* / *apologised*. Generally, on this flight the crew lacked ⁸ *empathy* / *empathetic* and ⁹ *handling* / *handled* a number of situations badly. I hope I can feel ¹⁰ *confident* / *confidence* the next time I fly with you.

Yours faithfully,

Emma Hobbs

3 Put the words in the correct order to complete the sentences.

1 was / take-off / the / probably / anxious / about / passenger

2 about / aren't / a / people / confident / lot / flying / of

3 nobody / passengers / to / offered / the / unfortunately / anxious / assistance

4 for / the / passengers / flight attendant / apologise / to / the / the / delay / didn't

5 service / passengers / was / the / neither / satisfied / with / of / the

Responding to customer concerns

1A There is a saying in business: 'the customer is always right'. Work in pairs and discuss these situations. Is the customer right in each case?

- 1 A passenger boards an aeroplane wearing a hat with an offensive slogan on it. Other passengers complain, and the cabin crew ask the passenger to remove the hat. The passenger refuses.
- 2 A man orders a meal in a restaurant. The food takes a long time to come, and when it finally arrives it is cold. The man complains to the waiter.
- 3 A woman goes into a shop to buy a blouse. The shop assistant offers to help, but she says she is just looking. She tells him to leave her alone. Later she needs help from the assistant, but he is nowhere to be seen. The woman complains to the store manager.

B How would you react if you were the:

- a pilot on the aeroplane?
- b restaurant manager?
- c store manager?

The customer is not always king

Julia, 25. We flew to Florianopolis for a relaxing, short break before my wedding. There were eight of us. We booked a villa with a pool and the plan was to be there for a week. We had a brilliant five days, but on the Friday, completely out of the blue, we got an email from our airline telling us our flight back to Sao Paolo on Sunday was cancelled. No other information. We were told we could book another flight but the next one was on the Wednesday! We tried to telephone our airline but they didn't answer. Their website crashed the next day because they had cancelled so many flights. They said we would get our money back but no news so far. We tried other airlines and managed to get three tickets for the Sunday but the rest of us had to book a coach back. Our journey back was awful – it took fifteen hours because the coach broke down, not the two hours we were expecting at the start of the week. I promise I will never fly with that airline again. Definitely 'no frills'!

Roberto, 35. We needed to book a car for our holiday in Florida last September. I made the booking online but unfortunately I had booked it to start the next day, not the following Monday. Later that day I checked the confirmation email and realised my mistake. I went online and entered the booking number but I was told that it was too late to change. It was annoying because it was my own mistake. Anyway, at the top of the screen was a telephone number and I decided to call it. They answered the phone immediately and asked what the problem was. I said it was completely my fault and probably too late to change the booking. The young man replied that there was no problem and in fact it would be \$50 cheaper! He changed the booking and repaid the difference within five minutes. Brilliant service. It was my fault after all.



1 Read the article and decide if Julia and Roberto would describe their customer service experience as positive (✓) or negative (✗).

Julia ☐

Roberto ☐

2 Read the article again and decide if these statements are *true* (T) or *false* (F).

- 1 Julia booked a holiday for five days. _____
- 2 Her group bought alternative flights for the return date. _____
- 3 Luckily, there were no problems with the bus journey. _____
- 4 Roberto couldn't change his booking online. _____
- 5 He had to wait a long time when he phoned. _____
- 6 He knew he had made the mistake. _____

3 Choose the correct option.

- 1 Why did Julia go away with her friends?
 - a to see Sao Paolo
 - b to relax before her wedding
 - c to attend a friend's wedding
- 2 They got new flights
 - a for the following week.
 - b for three of the group.
 - c within fifteen hours.
- 3 What mistake did Roberto make when booking his car?
 - a He booked it from the wrong place.
 - b He booked it with the wrong company.
 - c He booked it from the wrong date.
- 4 The new dates for his booking
 - a were the following month.
 - b were less expensive.
 - c were booked online.

7 Use the seven phrases from the video (a-g) to complete the gaps in the table (1-7).

- a I am sure we'll [come up with a solution].
- b [Beata] is correct about that.
- c I just want to hear your side of things.
- d [Beata] has filled me in on all of the details.
- e Let me [do some calculations and speak to my people].
- f [Beata] is absolutely right on this.
- g [Please understand] I see your point.

A Explaining the reason for the conversation	1 _____ I just want to make sure everything is OK.
B Confirming you already have specific information	2 _____ Beata has told me about that.
C Supporting a colleague	3 _____ 4 _____ I have to say Beata [is right / has a point].
D Reassuring a customer	5 _____ 6 _____ I'm confident we'll come up with a solution.
E Outlining your next step	7 _____ I'll [go through all the details / double check all the data] with Beata.

1 Complete the conversation using the phrases in the box.

correct about that has filled me in on the has told me about that
I'll go through I'm sure let me please, understand that I see
we'll come up with a your side of things

A: Good evening, Madam. I hear that you're not happy with your room. My colleague, Claudia, ¹ _____ details. Could you tell me again? I just want to hear ² _____.

B: Basically, I stay here quite often and I always get a room with a bath, not a shower. I also like the 4th floor.

A: Yes. Claudia ³ _____.

B: I explained to your colleague but she said you were full and I couldn't change. She said I should speak to you.

A: Claudia is ⁴ _____. We are full and because you were the last to check in, she couldn't make a change.

B: So, will you be able to do anything about it?

A: ⁵ _____ the bookings and see if we can make a late change. Why don't you have dinner and come back and see me in an hour or so?

B: Sorry, but I'm not at all hungry. I just want a bath. I'm a regular customer here, and that's the only thing I ask for.

A: ⁶ _____ your point, but I'm afraid you'll have to wait. Why don't you wait in the bar?

B: OK. But do you think you will find a solution?

A: Yes, I'm confident ⁷ _____ solution. I just need an hour or so. ⁸ _____ speak to my colleagues. ⁹ _____ we'll find you a room with a bath. Hopefully on the 4th floor!

B: Thank you so much. I'll come back in an hour.

Scenario 1

'Your technician came to our house yesterday to fix our satellite dish which was broken in a storm last week. He arrived late, but that was OK. He spent two hours on my roof, but he did not fix the problem. My TV still doesn't work. I tried calling your office to complain, but all I got was a busy tone. Nobody answered the phone. What are you going to do about my satellite TV?'

Student A (manager): Think about whether or not you want to try to support your technician.

Student B (unhappy customer): Be prepared to challenge the manager if you are not satisfied with what he/she says.

Scenario 2

'Your cleaner came to our office yesterday to clear up after an office party. Unfortunately, the job was not well done, and the office is still dirty. Specifically, the kitchen is still full of dirty dishes, bins have not been emptied and the windows have not been cleaned. Please tell me what you are going to do about it.'

Student A (manager): Think about whether or not you want to try to support your cleaner.

Student B (unhappy customer): Be prepared to challenge the manager if you are not satisfied with what he/she says.

Scenario 3

'Your restaurant supplied food for our office party yesterday. Unfortunately, the food arrived late and was less than what we had ordered. Although the food was delicious, many of our staff expressed disappointment at the limited amount. I would like to talk to you about a reduction in the bill.'

Student A (manager): Think about whether or not you want to try to support your staff.

Student B (unhappy customer): Be prepared to challenge the manager if you are not satisfied with what he/she says.

Verbs + *to*-infinitive or *-ing*

1 Match the questions (1–6) with the responses (a–f).

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1 Did you mention it to your manager? | a No, but I remember putting it in my bag. |
| 2 Have you met the new Sales Director? | b Yes, Alfredo has agreed to manage it. |
| 3 Who have they decided to work with? | c No, I saw him but I forgot to tell him. |
| 4 Have they found someone for the project? | d Yes, I called them last night. |
| 5 Did you remember to call the hotel? | e I think they chose a German company. |
| 6 Have you found your passport yet? | f No, I wanted to say hello but she was busy. |

2 Choose the correct option in italics.

A: Who's that over there?

B: That's the Customer Care Director. Do you remember ¹ *to meet* / *meeting* him last year at the sales conference?

A: Yes, of course. He's here to talk about his department. Did you hear about our main competitor?

B: No. What happened?

A: They've lost a lot of business. And unless they improve their systems, they risk ² *to lose* / *losing* more customers.

B: Really?

A: Yes. Apparently, their largest customer is considering ³ *to changing* / *change* suppliers.

B: What happened?

A: They failed ⁴ *to realise* / *realising* the importance of good customer service! There were some problems and the customer asked for a discount.

B: With unhappy customers, I always agree ⁵ *to reduce* / *reducing* the price the next time.

A: Me, too. Do you want ⁶ *to meet up* / *meeting up* for dinner later? I'll pay!

3 Complete the text using the correct form of the words in the box.

book call stay use waste write

I wanted ¹ _____ a holiday in Italy and a friend recommended ² _____ a website called roomz.com. I registered, but unfortunately I didn't remember ³ _____ down my password. Anyway, I booked my room and then went out shopping. When I came back an hour later, I hadn't received the confirmation email, so I tried to log in but I couldn't remember the password. So, I decided ⁴ _____ Customer Services but they couldn't find my booking. I couldn't afford ⁵ _____ any more time so at this point I called the hotel directly. They were very polite but obviously couldn't find my booking either. I told the person I spoke to that I would still like ⁶ _____ in their hotel and she made the booking for me.