



**Service  
Receptionist**

Body  
Specialist

Technician

**TRAINER GUIDE**

**Service Communication –  
Basic**

**CT-RL1008**



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**Training Services**



ZOOM-ZOOM



Pre-Course Work



Handout



Slide



Activity/Role-Play



|                                       |          |
|---------------------------------------|----------|
| 1. Introductions and Objectives ..... | ½ hour   |
| 2. Basic Communication Skills .....   | 3½ hours |
| 3. Dealing with Complaints.....       | 2½ hours |
| 4. Positive Outcomes .....            | 3 hours  |
| 5. Practical Skills .....             | 2 hours  |
| 6. Learning Check .....               | 1 hour   |

**DISCLAIMER:** This course has been written for the whole of Europe. The Trainer must check that any legal aspects apply in their own country, and modify the course content where necessary.

# Introduction and Objectives

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## 1. Introduction and Objectives

### 1.1 Welcome



#### *1 – The Course*

***Welcome the delegates, introduce yourself, and explain the domestic arrangements for the period of the course.***

***Go through those items appropriate to the venue.***

- ***Times: Start/Finish/Breaks - Coffee, Tea and Lunch***
- ***Smoking rules***
- ***Toilet locations***
- ***Fire Alarm Procedures***

***Leave immediately if the alarm rings***

***Evacuation Points/Fire Exits***

***Muster Point***

- ***Check that all delegates are present – advise reception of any missing.***

### 1.2 Workbooks, Commitment Plan and Course Evaluations

***Explain the purpose of the Workbooks that each delegate has been given - both during and after the course.***

***Also advise delegates that at the end of the course you will be asking them to consider the learning they have been given and complete a Commitment Plan to refer to on their return to work.***

***Delegates will also be asked to comment on the training when completing a Course Evaluation Form at the end of day 2.***

## 1.3 Passion for Driving



### *2 – Passion for Driving*

**Show this slide to delegates, and explain that this concept lies at the heart of these courses. The aim is to give delegates the ability to live up to the Passion for Driving.**

Through excellent service to customers, we aim to live up to the “Passion for Driving” statements:

- As a Mazda driver you can feel the little bit of sports car in every Mazda - Zoom-Zoom !
- We at Mazda Service are here to ensure this special feeling continues throughout your ownership experience.
- We share your passion for cars and we are dedicated to taking care of you and your Mazda. That shows in the way we treat you, the way we look after your car and the good value we provide.
- Making sure every drive leaves a smile on your face - that's what we work for.

## 1.4 Purpose and Scope of the Course

This course looks at the basic skills that are needed when dealing with customers to ensure that they leave with a positive impression of Mazda.

It addresses how to handle customer complaints and what you should be doing to deal with them. It also looks at the different ways we can ensure that the customer (and Mazda) ends up with a positive outcome to their visit.

Towards the end of day two, all of the learning gained during the course is recapped and time is given to practise the group's new skills in the form of role-play.

## 1.5 Course Objectives



### 3 – Course Objectives

***Talk through the objectives of the next two days.***

By the end of the training, you will have explored:

- basic communication skills needed to carry out your job
- what causes misunderstandings to occur and how to deal with them
- the elements of the communication cycle
- discovering why the customer is complaining and effectively handling customer complaints
- dealing with irate customers
- negotiating with the customer for the best solution for them and you
- the systems in place to protect you and the customer
- role-playing the communication that takes place at various stages of customer contact.

## 1.6 Group Introductions



### BC1 – INTRODUCTIONS

***Put the delegates into pairs or small groups and ask them to find out the following information from each other:***

|  |
|--|
| Name:  |
| Job role:                                      |
| Time in job:                                   |
| Expectations for the course:<br>1.<br>2.<br>3. |

***Ask the groups/pairs to present their findings back to the rest of the delegates.***

## 2. Basic Communication Skills



### 4 – Objectives

By the end of this session you will have:

- examined the steps in the customer process where communication is important
- explored the basic communication skills needed to carry out your job
- looked at what causes misunderstandings and how to deal with them
- examined the elements of the communication cycle.

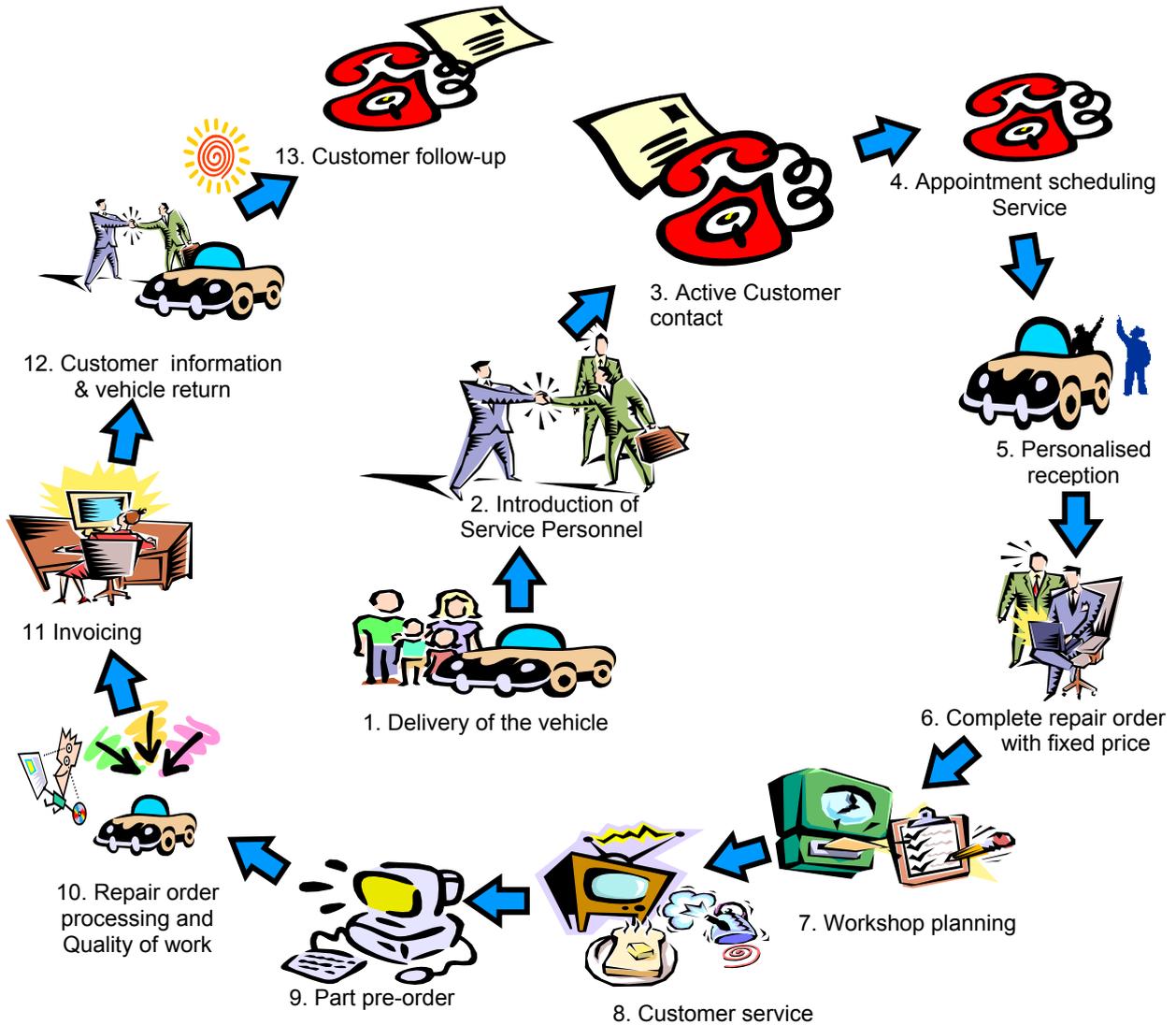
### 2.1 The Customer Process

**Show the following slide and point out that:**

- ***This slide illustrates a typical customer process.***
- ***This process starts before the service department gets involved, but shows the importance of meeting customer expectations that may have been set when the vehicle is originally sold to them in Stage 1.***
- ***We shall use this process throughout all three courses in the programme: Basic Service Communication; Advanced Service Communication; Service Organisation and Service Quality.***
- ***Effective communication with the customer, suppliers and colleagues is vital at each step in the process.***



## 5 – A Typical Customer Process





### 2.2 Achieving Excellence – The CSI

Our aim is to achieve excellence at every stage of the customer process.

***Remind delegates of the following vital elements of the CSI scoring:***

Typically, the CSI (Customer Satisfaction Index) scoring deals with these main elements:

- Arranging the Appointment
- Impression of the Facility
- Impression of the Staff
- Time Aspects
- Quality of Work
- Vehicle Handover
- Value for Money

In addition, the CSI checks whether the following took place:

- Offering to inspect the vehicle first
- Advising that the vehicle is ready
- Contact before any additional work done
- Handover using a service/repair checklist
- Offering to schedule the next service
- Follow-up call to check satisfaction with the work

***Briefly ask delegates which of the above CSI elements involve good communication. Agree with delegates that communication is vital at every stage:***

- ***To gain information that enables requirements to be met***
- ***To give information that sets customers' expectations***
- ***To check that everything is satisfactory.***

## 2.3 Delivering a friendly and professional communication

At each stage in the customer process, it is vital that you speak to customers in a friendly and professional way, and that all customers leave the dealership with a positive impression of the service they have received.

Professional communication with colleagues and suppliers is also vital. It ensures that everyone is working well together to give excellent service to the customer.

Take 5 minutes to list typical communications that takes place within your dealership – use the Customer Process diagram to guide you.



### BC2 – TYPICAL COMMUNICATIONS

**Ask delegates for their responses and make a note of them on the flip chart. Make sure you link the communications to the 13 steps of the Customer Process.**

**Look for examples such as:**

- **telephoning customers to make contact**
- **answering the telephone**
- **greeting customers**
- **introducing customers to other colleagues**
- **speaking to colleagues**
- **answering the telephone**
- **diagnosis of a vehicle**
- **keeping customers informed on progress**
- **ordering parts**
- **informing customers and returning the vehicle**
- **customer follow-up**

**Go through their responses to check your understanding.**

**Now ask them to be honest, and lead them in a discussion on the areas they could improve upon and how. For example, greet the customer with a smile.**

Once they have come up with a list of areas for improvement, ask them how they think it makes the customer feel: for example, valued.

| What improvements could be made?   | What does it mean to the customer?   |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Smiling at customers</i></li> <li>• <i>Asking how you can help them</i></li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Makes them feel valued</i></li> <li>• <i>They feel that you care about them</i></li> </ul> |

It is important that the customer feels valued. If they feel that they are undervalued or an interruption to your working day it could lead to the customer not returning. Lets look at other causes of customer misunderstandings.

## 2.4 Avoiding Misunderstandings

In your pre-course pack you were asked to note down typical communications where misunderstandings occur.



**Misunderstandings**



## BC3 – AVOIDING MISUNDERSTANDINGS

**Hand out flipchart paper and ask delegates to refer to page 1 of their pre-course pack. In groups of 3 or 4 ask them to discuss their findings and note down and present back the following:**

- Why do misunderstandings occur?
- How do you avoid misunderstandings?

**Explain that misunderstandings occur for a number of reasons, but usually it is because you and the customer have a different understanding of what either of you meant.**

How can we make sure that communication is always clear?

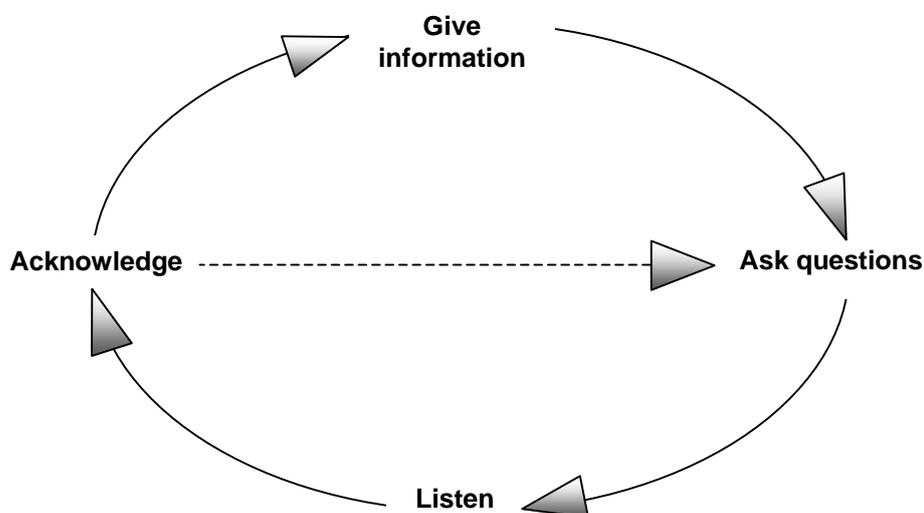
### 2.5 Check understanding

It is vital that you understand what the customer has said – and that the customer understands what you have said. You should do this using the Communication Cycle:

- Giving information.
- Questioning.
- Listening.
- Acknowledging.



### 6 – The Communication Cycle





Using this cycle means that you don't miss out any of the steps vital to excellent communication. For example:

- You **give information** to the customer
- You **ask them questions** to check their understanding
- You **listen** to what they say to you
- You **acknowledge** that you have understood their reply.

If you need to **give more information**, you go round the cycle again.

If you need to **gain more information**, you go straight across the dotted line – and **ask more questions**.

The start of the Cycle can be at any point dependent on the type of communication:

*If it starts by the customer asking a question or giving you information, you listen.*

*If it starts by you explaining something to the customer, you give information.*



## BC4 – THE COMMUNICATION CYCLE

***Put the delegates into groups and ask them to use the examples of typical communication from the earlier activity to demonstrate the cycle in everyday use.***

Your Notes

Let's examine each element of the Communication Cycle in turn.

## 2.6 Giving Information

When giving information to the customer, make sure you are aware of your body language, the tone you use and the words that you say.

### 2.6.1 Body Language



#### BC5 – BODY LANGUAGE

***Put 3 flipcharts up on the wall, with the following headings. Ask delegates how important they think body language is; ask them for examples of open and closed body language and what messages they think certain body language sends out to the customer. Split the delegates into 3 groups and ask them to visit each flipchart to note down their responses take about 2 minutes per flipchart, until each group has visited each one.***

#### The Importance of Body Language



| Open Body Language | Closed Body Language |
|--------------------|----------------------|
|                    |                      |

**What message does the wrong body language send out to the customer?**



**Body language is an aid to communication. Ask delegates how easy it is to speak without using their body. It's not as easy as they may think. To illustrate this, use the following examples:**

**USING YOUR HANDS:** Ask a delegate to explain a simple technical point such as how a tyre wears if it is over-inflated. Then ask another delegate to explain the same thing **WITHOUT** using their hands.

**MATCHING YOUR BODY LANGUAGE TO YOUR WORDS:** Point out that it is important to make sure that you are using body language that matches the words you are saying. Demonstrate your point by starting the course again. Say the words that you used when you opened the course, but look disinterested, don't make eye contact and close your body language. Ask delegates how they felt. Lead a discussion about how the delegates can make sure that they don't give out mixed messages.

Make sure your body language is open. This means that you are welcoming to others.

### 2.6.2 Maintaining a Good Relationship

In all our communications with people, we need to maintain a good relationship – making sure that the person we are speaking to feels comfortable in our company

To maintain this good relationship:

- Notice the way people sit, stand, walk, lean and shift their weight from one foot to the other
- Notice their facial expressions
- See if you can respond by making similar changes to your body language
- Make sure you don't come across as a mimic – be subtle.

When we are taking care to maintain a good relationship, we often mirror or match other people's body language without realising we are doing it.



## BC6 – MIRRORING AND MATCHING

***Split the delegates into small groups or pairs and invite them to talk to each other about anything they wish.***

***Observe the groups as they talk usually they will start mirroring each other, for example, leaning in towards each other, crossing their legs, leaning back and so on.***

***As soon as most of the group are mirroring/matching each other ask them to stop speaking, but to stay in the same position. Go around the room, pointing out where the mirroring or matching has occurred. Ask delegates if they knew they had started to mirror or match.***

***Discuss how it affected the conversation. Ask them if it would have been harder if we had not established a good relationship.***

***Ask the group to start talking again, but ask one person per group to try and break this good relationship – break eye contact, close their body language, and so on.***

***After the activity, ask the groups how difficult it was to keep the conversation going and what they did to try and maintain a good relationship.***

It is important that you match the behaviour and actions of the customer – you will find that you will match the other person's behaviour naturally as you build a good relationship with them.

- Matching a person's behaviour gets you into a better relationship with them, while mismatching leads to conflict.
- Matching makes the most of the similarities you have with them and plays down the differences.
- If you don't have a good relationship, you won't reach a mutually satisfactory outcome.

### 2.6.3 Your Tone of Voice

***Explain that the tone of voice you use will have an impact on the words that you say. If you sound as if you don't mean the words you are saying, the customer either won't believe you or won't think you are credible.***



#### **7 – Tone of Voice**

- Moving the speed and volume of your voice, to their speed and volume, makes people more comfortable in talking to you.
- Harmonising voice tone and tempo brings good results.
- But don't try to mimic them – that could lead to conflict.

So, if a customer talks quickly, speed up your words. If they talk quietly, drop your voice to match theirs; likewise, if they talk loudly, increase your volume too.

Watch out for accents – yours or the customer's. Some accents are more difficult to understand – listen especially carefully to people with strong accents.

### 2.6.4 The Words You Use

When you are talking to your customer, it is vital that they understand the words you are using. Keep your language simple.

Avoid jargon – you may know what the vehicle's compression ratio is, but the customer might not! Make sure that you explain any technical terms in full, so that the customer fully understands. This will also help to avoid misunderstandings.

Check the customer's understanding on a regular basis to make sure that they understand the words you are saying.



## BC7 – THE WORDS YOU USE

**Draw the following 3 columns on a flipchart and split the delegates into 3 groups – one for each column (positive, negative and neutral).**

**Write the first word under each heading to get them started.**

**Ask the delegates to write their words on post-it notes and stick them under the correct heading.**

| Positive                | Neutral              | Negative                    |
|-------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| Yes                     | Maybe                | No                          |
| <b>Certainly</b>        | <b>Try</b>           | <b>Impossible</b>           |
| <b>Definitely</b>       | <b>Perhaps</b>       | <b>Cant</b>                 |
| <b>Absolutely</b>       | <b>Hopefully</b>     | <b>Wont</b>                 |
| <b>Can</b>              | <b>Actually</b>      | <b>Im afraid not</b>        |
| <b>Will</b>             | <b>Might</b>         | <b>With all due respect</b> |
| <b>Ill do it now</b>    | <b>Should</b>        | <b>But</b>                  |
| <b>Tomorrow morning</b> | <b>In a few days</b> | <b>No way</b>               |

Avoid using neutral language, such as maybe, possibly or hopefully. These words don't actually mean anything, but can be quite confusing. For example, "I'll do that as soon as possible." The customer may think you will do it as soon as you finish speaking to them, when you may mean you'll do it in 2 or 3 hours' time (when you will have some free time). If this is the case try, "I'll have that within the next 3 hours."

So, try to use positive words and phrases. When you have to use a negative, follow it by a positive, by giving a reason and a solution.

For example, "I'm afraid I can't do that for you today, but I can book you in for tomorrow. Will that be OK?"

***Make the following points:***



## **8 – The Right Words**

- Neutral language is open to misinterpretation.
- You should always use positive words wherever you can.
- If you have to use negative words, follow them with positive ones.
- Using positive language will assist the process of maintaining customer satisfaction.

## **2.7 Questioning Techniques**



### **BC8 – THE QUESTIONING GAME**

***Give each delegate a label and ask them to write the name of a famous person, country or landmark on it, for example, the Eiffel Tower, Madonna or Africa.***

***Now ask each delegate to stick their label on the back of another member of the group without them seeing it. Now, ask the delegates to ask each other questions, to find out what is written on their label.***

***Explain that delegates can ask any question apart from “What does it say on my label/back?” Give examples of closed questions such as, “Am I a landmark?” or “Am I dead or alive?”***

***Nearly all delegates will ask closed questions. Ask the group what they think open and closed questions are.***

#### **So what are open and closed questions?**

Open questions are used to obtain detailed information. Closed questions result in simple “yes” or “no” answers. For example:

*“What time do you want to collect your vehicle?”* This is an open question, and the customer will give you a time they wish to collect their car.

*“Will you be collecting your car today?”* This is a closed question, where the customer can only answer “yes” or “no”. You will need to ask them another question to determine the time of collection.

*Ask the group for examples of words that start open and closed questions.*

| Open            | Closed           |
|-----------------|------------------|
| <i>What...</i>  | <i>Can...</i>    |
| <i>Why...</i>   | <i>Am...</i>     |
| <i>When...</i>  | <i>Will...</i>   |
| <i>How...</i>   | <i>Should...</i> |
| <i>Where...</i> | <i>Do...</i>     |
| <i>Who...</i>   | <i>Is...</i>     |

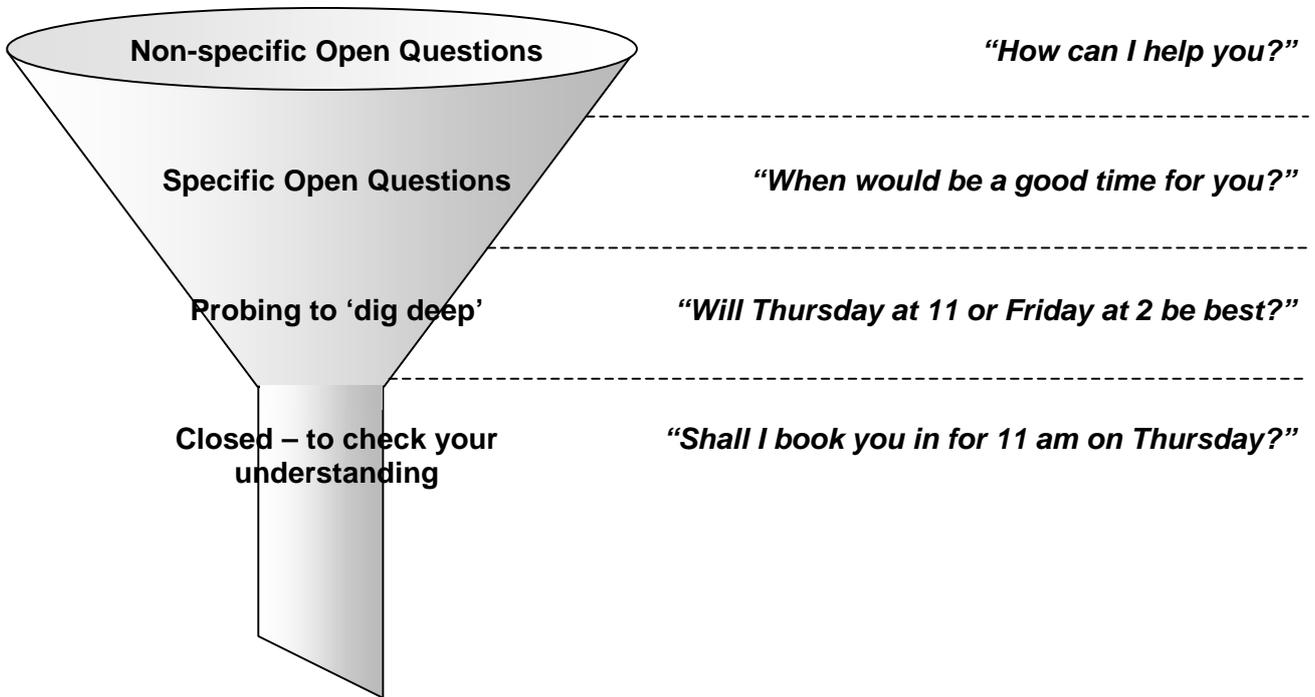
*As each person gives you a word, ask them to put it into a sentence. For example, "Will 4 o'clock be OK?"*

## 2.7.1 Questioning using a funnel approach

The funnel approach starts with open questions, continues by using probing techniques, and ends by gaining agreement through closed questions.



**9 – The Funnel**



***Ask delegates to call out questions and get other members of the group to shout out if it is an open or closed question.***

## 2.7.2 Assumptions

However well we question, there is one failing that can cause big problems in communication – making assumptions.

If we assume that we know the answer, we don't even start to question.

These assumptions can relate to the customers needs, their ability to pay and their readiness to agree a solution or a time.



**BC9 – ASSUMPTIONS**

***Discuss with delegates examples of when they made false assumptions that may have affected the service they gave. Ask delegates to note down their thoughts in the space below. One example is given to get them started.***

| Assumption  | How it can affect the customer  |
|---|---|
| <b><i>The vehicle is old – we assume that the customer wants the minimum of work doing on it, and say so.</i></b> | <b><i>If the customer has just bought the vehicle and wants to use it regularly, they may be offended by our assumption – do we think they cannot afford to have all the necessary work done?</i></b> |
|   |   |
|   |   |
|   |   |
|   |   |

So, you can see that it is important to ask questions, listen to hear and keep on checking understanding, to make sure that you don't make assumptions.

## 2.8 Listening



### BC10 – LISTENING QUIZ

*Ask the group how good they think they are at listening – get them to score themselves out of 10 (10 being a good listener and 1 being a poor listener). Put their names up on the flipchart and put their score alongside.*

*Hand out blank pieces of paper to the delegates and explain that you will ask them the following questions once. They should write their answers on the piece of paper. Point out that they cannot confer or make notes.*

*Ask them to write their first name and today's date on the top left hand corner of the page. Now ask the following questions – do not read them slowly.*

**Q. You need to travel to trade shows in California, Florida, Wisconsin, South Dakota and Maryland. Which of these states contains the letter f?**

**A. California and Florida (1 point each)**

**Q. You sell DVDs. You offer a next-day worldwide delivery service. You deliver to Palm Springs, Pittsburgh, Phoenix, Prague, Paris and Philadelphia. An order comes in on Thursday for deliveries to Paris, Prague, Peru and Pittsburgh – will you be able to deliver the DVDs on Friday?**

**A. No, you don't deliver to Peru (1 point)**

**Q. You sell school photographs. Whilst exhibiting the photos at the school one day, several students placed orders. The first one was Susan, then Johnny, Penny, Malcolm, Larry and Amy. Who was the third student to place an order?**

**A. Penny (1 point)**

**Q. You sell fruit to fruit stands. During your calls today Mr Cherry bought some oranges, Mrs Lemon bought some pears, Mr Fig bought some apples, and Mrs Kiwi bought some grapes and Mrs Berry bought some bananas. Who bought the pears?**

**A. Mrs Lemon (1 point)**

*Ask the group for their answers. Give them a point for each correct answer. Give a bonus point to anyone who put their first name and today's date on the top left hand corner of their page.*

*Compare their score to the rating they gave themselves earlier and ask them what they thought were the learning points of the activity.*

*Look for: not taking notes, being unable to ask questions and taking in too much information.*

***Run through the following list, encouraging delegate feedback.***

- Discipline yourself to concentrate on giving full attention
- Use any spare time during the thought process to sift and assimilate data
- Ensure minimum distractions and interference
- Show a positive interest
- Deliver intelligent questions and comments
- Be objective and avoid preconceived ideas
- Allow the speaker to say all they want to say and do not interrupt
- Memory is not always reliable – make notes if necessary
- Ask for repetition to confirm understanding and check details
- Be aware that speakers do not always say what they mean
- Do not be afraid of silence
- Listen – don't just hear.



### 2.9 Acknowledging

Acknowledging what the customer has said is more than repeating their words back to them. It is about giving them confidence in you and your dealership.

- Lean in towards the customer to show that you value them and their custom.
- Make noises such as “mmm” and “aha” and words like “I see” and “OK” to show you are listening and understand their need.
- Paraphrase their words to show that you understand.
- Take notes so that you have a written record of what was agreed.
- Tell them what you can and can't do – be honest.

***Stress the importance of the last two items – these will be covered in the next two sections.***

***Ask the group to come up with examples of what they do and say when acknowledging the customer.***

## 2.9.1 A Written Record – Documenting the Information

It is vital that we make proper notes of what we have heard:

- To reassure the customer that you are taking their information seriously
- To get things right first time.

***Ask delegates how they convert notes into properly documented information. Encourage them to make notes.***

***Look for examples such as:***

- ***Using proper forms (such as the Repair Order)***
- ***Using notepaper that is attached to the formal documentation***
- ***Taking care to make clear notes – so you only have to write things down once***

## 2.9.2 Being Honest

We want to be positive with the customer – and sometimes this makes us tell them what they want to hear, rather than the absolute truth.

We must **never** over-promise and under-deliver.

We must **always** under-promise and over-deliver.

***Ask delegates what will happen if, for example, we promise a solution, a price or a time that we may not be able to achieve. The answer will be big problems when the truth becomes clear – the customer will know that you were not honest with them when you made the promise.***

***Discuss with delegates how they should tell customers what they can and cannot do.***

***Remind them of the need to use clear negative words, followed by positive words:***

***“No, I’m afraid that this will take until Wednesday – I cannot promise to do it sooner. But I can provide you with a courtesy car later today – and we can get you to your office now and pick you up later today.”***

***Explain to delegates that we will look at this in more detail in the Service Communication Advanced course – including the use of assertiveness to get a win-win solution for them and the customer.***

***Encourage delegates to make notes.***

## 2.10 Review of the Session

In this session we have examined how to make the most of your communication skills and the techniques and skills to be used.



### BC11 – SESSION REVIEW

***Split the delegates into pairs and ask them to think about the three most important learning points from this session.***

***Ask them to write the points down in the table below and be prepared to present their findings.***

***If pairs come up with the same points, get them to add to the previous pairs' comments.***

Your Notes

***End by asking delegates to turn to Session 6 and add any learning points to their learning checklist.***

We are now going to take a look at complaint handling.

## 3. Dealing with Complaints



### 10 – Objectives

By the end of this session you will have:

- discovered why customers complain
- discussed how to effectively handle customer complaints
- explored how to deal with irate customers
- looked at ways to delight the customer.

The provision of an excellent service to customers is an important part of your role, and you must make sure you do everything possible to make sure they are fully satisfied. It is also essential that minor annoyances do not escalate into full-blown complaints.



### Typical Customer Complaints

**Ask delegates to look at the activity in their pre-course pack where they detailed typical customer complaints in their dealership. Using their notes, ask them to call out common complaints. Write these down on the flipchart.**

**Put the delegates into two groups and allocate 2 complaints to each group and ask them to discuss their findings and decide what could happen if the complaint was not dealt with correctly. Ask one person per group to feed back.**

| Common Complaint | What could happen if not dealt with correctly |
|------------------|---|
|                  |   |



# Dealing with Complaints

| Common Complaint | What could happen if not dealt with correctly |
|------------------|---|
|                  |   |
|                  |   |
|                  |   |



## 3.1 Why do Customers Complain?

Complaints usually arise due to the customer feeling let down. This is usually because they feel that the service, workmanship or product was not as they expected.

So what do customers expect? They expect that the promises made to them will be met, if not exceeded.



*11 – Best Practice*

***Show the Best Practice slide and ask delegates to come up with complaints that may arise if we do not achieve that Best Practice standard.***

### Best Practice – what customers expect from us:

- To provide the customer with fully inclusive prices, with no hidden extras.
- To carry out all servicing and repair work to the highest quality, through Mazda trained technicians.
- To make it convenient for customers to use the dealership through providing alternative means of transport while their vehicle is with us.
- To wash the customer's vehicle where possible.
- To aim to ensure that Mazda CSI scores reflect an excellent customer experience, and to take appropriate action if they are not satisfied.

The customer expects us to meet this Best Practice standard, and if we don't they will be disappointed and likely to complain.

To keep customer complaints to a minimum, we need to make sure we are giving them what they expect.



### BC12 – WHAT DO CUSTOMERS EXPECT?

***Split the delegates into small groups and ask them what they expect as customers. Explain this can be when they are shopping for food, having a meal out or buying something more expensive like a stereo.***

#### ***Look for:***

- ***Honesty***
- ***Good service***
- ***The right product***
- ***Value for money***

**Lead a discussion comparing what they expect against what they offer their customers, linking back to the Mazda Service Commitment.**

The key to managing customers' expectations is honesty. If we can't do something for them, tell them we can't and tell them why.

## 3.2 How to Handle Customer Complaints

**Now go through the simple Mazda Complaint Resolution Formula:**

So what do customers expect? They expect that the promises made to them will be met, if not exceeded.



### 12 – Resolving Complaints



**Go through the formula in detail, getting delegates to give real life examples.**

#### **APOLOGISE**

- The first thing you must do is to apologise for the failure identified by the customer.
- Listen carefully to what they have to say and apologise for the failure.
- Resist the temptation to apologise for something other than that identified by the customer, even if you think they have got it wrong.
- This is not the right time to correct them.
- Make sure the customer sees that you are taking their complaint seriously – give them your full attention and apologise in the right tone and with positive body language.
- The effect of an apology is to diffuse the situation and show that we will do everything we can to resolve the problem.

#### **EMPATHISE**

- The second step is to empathise with them – by confirming our understanding of the problem and its impact on the customer.
- Acknowledge the error and express regret regarding the inconvenience that the customer has experienced.
- If the right tone of voice is used this will show that their concerns are being taken very seriously.

*These two steps are important because they show the customer that we value them. However, they don't prove that they should continue to do business with you. For that you need the third step.*

## REASSURE

- You must now make sure that the customer is confident that something will be done about the complaint.
- This reassurance can be in two stages:
  1. FIRST fix the customer's immediate problem – tell them what you are going to do and then take corrective action.
  2. THEN prevent future breakdowns – assure the customer that processes will be put in place to make sure it doesn't happen again.

This will reassure them that it will not happen to them again, and that other customers will not experience a similar difficulty.

This second form is very powerful and has the potential to overcome major anger and frustration. It shows you value them and that they are helping you improve your systems.

***Spend a few minutes going through what NOT to do when handling complaints.***

- ***Do not get defensive – the customer does not want to be complaining and does not enjoy it.***
- ***Don't refuse to take responsibility – do not say "It's not my fault" or "It's nothing to do with me."***
- ***Never say "We're doing our best" – this suggests that you lack the ability to correct it.***
- ***Make sure everyone in the dealership is trained to handle complaints – just one bad experience with a poorly-trained employee will reflect on the whole dealership.***

***Ask delegates if they have their own rules about what NOT to say to customers.***

### 3.3 Offering the customer the right solution

In some cases it is necessary to provide a number of potential solutions, and allow the customer to choose the one that suits them best.



#### BC13 – THE RIGHT SOLUTION

***Use the list of customer complaints from the beginning of this session.***

***Now, using the information from the earlier activity about complaints and what could happen if they are not dealt with properly, lead a discussion to get delegate agreement on the best way to deal with complaints, before they become more serious.***

Your Notes

***When going through the delegate responses, it is worth pointing out that sometimes there will be more than one solution or answer to a problem.***

Often the customer will have to make the final decision. For example, a customer who has complained because their car hasn't been cleaned can choose to bring their car back another day or wait to have it cleaned now.

They may complain about having to come back to the dealership or having to wait – either way, it is their choice, and you should not force a solution on them.



## BC14 – COMPLAINT CLOSURE

***Closure of a complaint is vital to success. Lead a discussion about making sure that problems don't become ongoing occurrences.***

***Put 3 flipcharts up on the wall with the following headings. Split the delegates up into 3 groups and ask them to take it in turns to visit the three flipcharts. Allow up to 2 minutes per team per flipchart.***

**What can we learn from mistakes?**

**How can we make sure it doesn't happen again?**

**Who should we inform/involve?**

## 3.4 Calming Angry Customers

### *Discuss the following with delegates:*

Ongoing complaints are to be avoided, but they do happen and customers can have a difficult time if problems occur with them more than once. If they have had a difficult time with the service they have received the matter can easily become more troublesome than necessary. In such cases it is important that you are able to reason with customers and overcome their anger.

When dealing with irate customers try to offer a compromise, talk through the problem or offer to call another colleague to speak to them.

- If customers shout at you, you mustn't shout back.
- If customers are critical of you, you can't be critical of the customer.
- If customers act in a spoilt manner, you mustn't be spoilt and childish to the customer.

You need to treat everyone as an adult, being assertive with the customer. An adult is rational and objective, and uses positive communication.

Remember people tend to mirror each other's behaviour – if you act in an adult manner, your customers will do the same.

You must use adult behaviour at all times, especially when dealing with conflict.

So what do customers expect? They expect that the promises made to them will be met, if not exceeded.



### **13 – Calming Angry Customers**

**Never underestimate a threat and don't respond aggressively, as this could increase the chance of a confrontation!**

If you find yourself in a situation where a customer becomes extremely irate, then you must try to calm the situation down as quickly as possible:

- Stay calm; speak gently, slowly and clearly (without sounding superior or condescending).
- Do not be drawn into an argument, and do not use jargon.
- Avoid an aggressive stance – don't cross your arms, put your hands on your hips, raise your arms or wag your finger, as these could be interpreted as challenges.
- Try to defuse the situation by talking things through as reasonable adults.
- Keep your distance, where possible, and try to avoid looking down on your aggressor.
- Never put your hand on someone who is angry – you are invading their space.

The whole complaint handling process must end with the customer being delighted with the service with which they have been provided.



### BC15 – DELIGHTING THE CUSTOMER

*Ask delegates what they can do to delight a complaining customer.*

**Look for:**

- **Remain professional**
- **Deal with the complaint promptly**
- **Get the job right this time**
- **Remain friendly**
- **Manage the customer's expectations – under-promise, over-deliver**

Sometimes complaints are inevitable, and the skill is to keep them to a minimum. Customers are not always complaining for genuine reasons and, while these have to be handled, they must be identified and dealt with accordingly.



### BC16 – COMPLAINT HANDLING IN PRACTICE

*Ask delegates what they can do to delight a complaining customer.*

*Split the delegates into groups of 3 or 4 to put together complaint handling scenarios based on those identified as part of the pre-course work.*

*Each group has to examine one of these complaints and put together a scripted scenario where one group member will play the customer, the other playing a Mazda person.*

*After preparing the scenario it will be acted out in full group and discussed. Remember:*

- It is important that the **APOLOGISE – EMPATHISE – REASSURE** formula is used.
- Keep the situation calm – even if the customer is angry.
- Offer a solution.
- Make sure the customer is happy with the outcome.



*Your Notes*



## 3.5 Review of the Session

In this session we have examined how to deal with complaints; the techniques and skills to be used.



### BC17 – SESSION REVIEW

***Split the delegates into pairs and ask them to think about the three most important learning points from this session.***

***Ask them to write the points down in the table below and be prepared to present their findings.***

***If pairs come up with the same points, get them to add to the previous pairs' comments.***

Your Notes

***End by asking delegates to turn to Session 6 and add any learning points to their learning checklist.***

***You should be at the end of day one. Remind the delegates of tomorrow's start time.***

## 4. Positive Outcomes



### BC18 – RECAP OF DAY ONE

***Before you begin day two of this course, ask delegates to create a quiz to test each other's understanding of yesterday's learning.***

***Split the delegates into two groups and allocate one group Basic Communication and the other Dealing with Complaints. Ask the delegates to come up with 10 questions each about their allocated session. Remind them to note down the answers too, as they will need these when the other team give their replies.***

***This should be run in the style of a pub quiz. Collect the questions in and ask each team their set of questions; they will have 20 seconds to discuss the answer amongst themselves. Ask them to nominate a spokesperson to give their final answer. Make sure that you keep to the timescale to give them a sense of urgency.***

***Make sure that their workbooks are closed, as they shouldn't refer to them for the answers.***

***Award one point per correct answer – ask the team who wrote the questions to say if the answer is correct or incorrect. If incorrect, ask them to give the correct answer.***



### 14 – Objectives

By the end of this session you will have:

- discussed how we cannot always meet the customer's demands
- explored how to gain customer agreement on what is possible.

***Explain to delegates that this session deals with difficult situations where we cannot meet the customer's initial demands – and how we can reach a positive outcome that avoids a complaint.***

We want to achieve a positive result for the customer – completely meeting their needs.

This, however, won't always happen – we won't always be able to give the customer exactly what they want or expect. At times this will involve negotiation to gain an agreed solution.

This can be difficult to do, but it does rely on you having a good argument that will convince the customer that the solution you are offering is the best one.

### 4.1 What do Customers Demand?



#### BC19 – WHAT DO CUSTOMERS DEMAND?

*Ask the group to come up with a list of difficult things that customers demand – in terms of what we do and when we do it.*

*Use a flipchart to record their responses.*

*Look for such things as:*

- *Servicing at short notice*
- *Immediate solutions, even to complex problems*
- *Commitment to something that they say a colleague has agreed*
- *Instant parts availability*
- *Immediate courtesy car or transport*

***Now ask the group to come up with a list of what is possible – creative solutions that they have been able to agree with demanding customers, even if the initial demand could not be met.***

***Look for such things as:***

- ***Finding a date and time that suits them – perhaps just a few hours***
- ***Fitting transport solutions into their working day***
- ***Doing the vital work immediately – and arranging acceptable courtesy car/transport arrangements for the next visit***
- ***Investigating an earlier commitment by a colleague – and checking that the situation is still valid***
- ***Getting as close to an earlier commitment as is realistically possible***

## **4.2 Reaching a Positive Outcome**

We have just discussed the challenging demands that customers make – and some ideas for meeting them.

But there will still very often be a gap between what the customer wants and what we can offer – at least initially.

How do we bridge that gap in a professional way?



### 4.2.1 A Step-by-step Approach

*Discuss the following step-by-step approach with delegates:*

- **Listen to the customer's demands** and check your understanding
- **Think creatively:**
  - ask the customer more questions to establish what they might accept
  - if necessary ask for time to discuss solutions with your colleagues
  - Look for things that are of high value to them and low cost to you – such as delivery to the customer's home
- **Propose your solution**
- **Stress the benefits** to them – how the solution comes closest to what they have said they need
- **Listen to objections**
- **Prepare your response:**
  - To price objections – benefits or a lower specification
  - To objections on the work done and the time taken – why this is the absolute best that can be done
- **Prepare to offer a bit more** – but know your final position.

*Your Notes*

## 4.2.2 Reaching a Positive Conclusion

If you use the step-by-step approach, you have a better chance of reaching agreement. But we still need to reach a professional conclusion – whether the customer agrees or not.

### **If agreement is reached:**

- Summarise the agreement
- Document it, using the appropriate order form and/or diary
- Thank the customer for their patience
- Reinforce the positives of the customer's decision.

### **If agreement is not reached:**

- Sometimes your solution is still not acceptable – in that case, you need time to rethink, and you may have to involve your manager, particularly if there is a price problem
- Agree the next step – such as a further meeting
- Thank the customer for their patience
- Stress that you hope to help them in the future – even if, in this instance, they may be taking their business elsewhere.



### BC20 – AGREEING A POSITIVE OUTCOME

*Split the delegates into groups of three or four, for role-plays:*

- *One person plays the customer*
- *One person plays the Mazda service person*
- *One or two people act as observers.*

*Give them 15 minutes to devise up to three situations, based on the earlier activity on Customer Demands.*

*Then give each “Mazda” person 10 minutes to prepare how they will deal with the first situation, using the observer(s) to help them.*

*At the same time, the “customer” will prepare how they will conduct themselves.*

*Allow the groups to run their own role-plays – ask the observers to record their observations on the sheets overleaf, using as a guide:*

- *The Step-by-step Approach*
- *Reaching a Positive Conclusion.*

*After the first round of role-plays, bring the groups together and ask them to feed back the observers’ findings.*

*If there is time, run a second or even a third role-play, with feedback after each.*



## OBSERVER'S SHEET

Things that I particularly liked (what went well)

Things I would have done differently (what could have been improved)



**OBSERVER'S SHEET**

**Things that I particularly liked (what went well)**

**Things I would have done differently (what could have been improved)**



## OBSERVER'S SHEET

Things that I particularly liked (what went well)

Things I would have done differently (what could have been improved)

## 4.4 Review of the Session

In this session we have examined how to ensure a positive outcome; the techniques and skills to be used.



### BC21 – SESSION REVIEW

*Split the delegates into pairs and ask them to think about the three most important learning points from this session.*

*Ask them to write the points down in the table below and be prepared to present their findings.*

*If pairs come up with the same points, get them to add to the previous pairs' comments.*

Your Notes

*End by asking delegates to turn to Session 6 and add any learning points to their learning checklist.*

### 5. Practical Skills

*This session is devoted to allowing delegates to review the learning so far and to practise the skills from each of the sessions.*

*Split the delegates into three groups, with one group examining the learning on communication, one looking at complaints and the other dealing with positive outcomes.*



#### BC22 – PRACTICAL LEARNING

*Allow a few minutes before the activity starts to brainstorm the situations and then allocate three different ones to each group – a minimum of 9 are therefore needed, three from each subject.*

*These situations are of their own choosing and should be the most common they have to handle.*

*This activity is in two parts:*

**Part One:** *Each group examines the learning and prepares a presentation, lasting no more than 15 minutes, on how the skills will be applied in three of the real life situations.*

*Allow 60 minutes for Part One: 15 minutes preparation, 30 minutes for the presentations and 15 minutes debrief.*

**Part Two:** *In the same groups delegates have to demonstrate to the other group what the learning will look like in real life situations. This is carried out by using role-plays.*

*Each group has to prepare one detailed role-play (lasting a maximum of 10 minutes) during which the main learning points from their presentation are brought out.*

*Allow 60 minutes for Part Two; 15 minutes preparation, 30 minutes for the role-plays and 15 minutes debrief.*

*In both parts, ask all delegates who are not actually playing a role to act as observers, and to use the sheets that follow. Explain that they should feed back first – and that you as the trainer will then pick up any further points that they may have missed.*



*Your Notes*

A large, empty rectangular box with a black border, intended for taking notes.





*Your Notes*





Once the role-play has ended you will be asked to feed back on how the communicator (Mazda person) handled the situation.

So, when observing the role-plays, please complete an Observer's Sheet so that you can make notes of what you thought went well and where you would have done things differently.

## OBSERVER'S SHEET

**Things that I particularly liked (what went well)**

**Things I would have done differently (what could have been improved)**



## OBSERVER'S SHEET

Things that I particularly liked (what went well)

Things I would have done differently (what could have been improved)



**OBSERVER'S SHEET**

**Things that I particularly liked (what went well)**

**Things I would have done differently (what could have been improved)**





## OBSERVER'S SHEET

Things that I particularly liked (what went well)

Things I would have done differently (what could have been improved)





## 6. Learning Check

Now you will:

- review the two days' learning
- complete a Commitment Plan for implementation on return to work.

### 6.1 Learning Checklist

Make a note of your learning at the end of each session. Note down the information that will be of most use to you on your return to work.

## 6.2 Learning Quiz

1. What are the four elements of the Communication Cycle?

***Give information, ask questions, listen and acknowledge***

2. When communicating, what are the percentages allocated to body language, the words you speak and the tone you use, from 100%?

***Body language: 58% Words:7% Tone: 38% .***

3. Which type of language should you use – positive, negative or neutral?

***Positive***

4. Give 5 examples of neutral words.

***Maybe; try; perhaps; hopefully; actually; might; should; in a few days; as soon as possible***

5. Name the two different types of questions; give two examples of each.

***Open and Closed.***

***Open: What; why; when; how; where; who.***

***Closed: Can; am; will; should; could; do; is.***

6. List the stages of the Questioning Funnel.

***Non-specific, Specific, Probing and Closed.***

7. Why do we use open questions?

***To obtain detailed information.***

8. Why do we use closed questions?

***To confirm details.***

9. Why do customers complain?

***Customers usually complain because they feel that the service or goods that they have received are not to the quality they expected.***

10. There are 5 elements to the Best Practice standard discussed on the course – name two of them.

- ***To provide the customer with fully inclusive prices, with no hidden extras.***
- ***To carry out all servicing and repair work to the highest quality, through Mazda trained technicians.***
- ***To make it convenient for customers to use the dealership through providing alternative means of transport while their vehicle is with us.***
- ***To wash the customer's vehicle where possible.***
- ***To aim to ensure that Mazda CSI scores reflect an excellent customer experience, and to take appropriate action if they are not satisfied.***

11. Name 3 things that purchasing customers expect, whether they are buying their weekly food, a new TV or a car service.

***Honesty, good service, ease of use, the correct product, reliability and value for money.***

12. What are the three steps to customer complaint handling?

***Apologise – Empathise – Reassure.***

13. How can we learn from our mistakes?

***Find out where the problem came from. Ensure that we do things differently to make sure it doesn't happen again. Let others know – so they can learn from your mistakes.***

14. How should you deal with an irate customer?

***Stay calm and in control.***



15. There are 7 steps in the approach to reaching a positive outcome. Name two of them.

- *Listen to the customer's demands and check your understanding*
- *Think creatively*
- *Propose your solution*
- *Stress the benefits to them*
- *Listen to objections*
- *Prepare your response*
- *Prepare to offer a bit more – but know your final position*



## 6.3 Commitment Plan

Think back to the learning from the last two days (use the learning check on the previous page) and commit to 5 actions you will carry out on your return to work.

|    |
|----|
| 1. |
| 2. |
| 3. |
| 4. |
| 5. |

Thank you for your contribution over the last two days and good luck implementing your learning on your return to work.



Notes: