

## Customer care

### Activity 6: Could I do that job?

#### Introduction

An important skill for learners to acquire is the ability to evaluate a job opportunity and to compare their skills with those required for the job. This will help them to develop realistic aspirations and to seek employment suited to their current achievements and future potential.

They should also be aware that almost any job they apply for will require them to demonstrate elements of customer care for internal or external customers, or both. In preparing themselves to apply for a job, they should therefore reflect on their life experience to date and identify where they have used skills similar to those that underpin high-quality customer care.

These two aspects of job-seeking are combined in this activity. It invites learners to:

- identify the customer care skills of a job that they might apply for
- reflect on their own experiences and talk about those that would be relevant to the job.

The format of the activity is a mock job interview in which learners get the chance to interview and be interviewed.

It provides opportunities for experiential learning in groups. Learners develop their higher-order thinking skills by making links between their experiences in different parts of their lives and the requirements of a job. They also practise asking questions to elicit particular types of information.

This activity builds on other customer care activities.

#### Learning objectives/outcomes

Learners should be able to:

- identify the customer care requirements of a job
- identify evidence from any area of their life that demonstrates knowledge, skills and attitudes relevant to the customer care requirements of a job
- express clearly the link between the experience they identify and the requirements of the job.

## Resources required

Copies of:

- Sheet 6.1: Jobs in customer care.
- Sheet 6.2: Questions to help you reflect.
- Sheet 6.3: Possible interview questions.
- Sheet 6.4: Some principles of good customer care.
- Sheet 6.5: Recording sheet for interviewers.
- Sheet 6.6: Recording sheet for observers.

## Planning learning in multiple environments

In preparing for their mock interview, learners will be asked to draw on experiences from any part of their lives. For example, they might have had a part-time job or a work placement. They might also find evidence of skills, knowledge and attitudes relevant to customer care in their family or social lives or in other parts of their subject or vocational area.

The activity could be run as part of a careers session or preparation for work or for a work placement.

## Starting points

This activity will be most useful if learners have already begun to think about customer care. **Activity 1: My best and worst experiences of customer care** will provide the starting point for thinking about customer care from the customer's point of view. **Activity 5: Ask me about my job** will also provide useful preparation for this activity.

It would also be helpful if learners were already familiar with open and closed questions and the different responses that these types of questions are likely to elicit. You might want to adapt the job descriptions on **Sheet 6.1** so that they are more sector-specific.

## Suggested approach

Learners work in small groups to discuss and reflect on their prior experiences, and to ask and answer questions. You may find it useful to demonstrate the role of an interviewer before learners try it for themselves.

Further information about approaches to active learning can be found in Part 3 of **Cross-curricular themes: continuing professional development guide**.

## Stage 1

Outline the learning objectives and the activity. Pay attention to the words you use. If you describe the activity as a role play, you could risk provoking anxiety in some learners who may fear that they will be asked to act the role of someone other than themselves. You

may prefer to describe it as a chance to practise asking and answering questions about aspects of customer care in different jobs.

Explain how the activity will be run, making it clear that each learner will have an opportunity to be both an interviewer and an interviewee.

Divide the class into groups of four learners. Assign two learners in each group to be members of an interview panel and two to be job interviewees.

Explain that the two panel members in each small group will jointly interview each of the two interviewees in turn while the other interviewee observes and keeps track of the time.

## **Stage 2**

Give each interviewer and interviewee a copy of **Sheet 6.1: Jobs in customer care**.

Give each interviewee a copy of **Sheet 6.2: Questions to help you reflect**.

Ask the interviewees to select a job from **Sheet 6.1** that they want to be interviewed for. They can then tell the interviewers in their group which one they have chosen.

Next, invite the interviewees to:

- discuss with each other the customer care aspects of their chosen jobs
- reflect on their prior experiences (at home, school, college, on work placements, in social groups and anywhere else they can think of) and identify times when they used skills similar to those needed for the job
- make notes on **Sheet 6.2** on how their skills match the job.

At the same time as the interviewees are reflecting on their experiences, members of the interview panel will be developing a set of interview questions. This could be a set of common questions with a few specialist questions added. **Sheet 6.3: Possible interview questions** could be used to support them with this.

Learners may need some help in making connections between their life experiences and customer care in the context of a job. Be prepared to give some examples to help both interviewers and interviewees, such as:

- turning up on time to do a paper delivery round – could be used as an example of being reliable
- taking a young sibling to a party and staying to help the person organising it – could be used as an example of extending care further.

## **Stage 3**

The two interviewers question each interviewee in turn for a maximum of 10 minutes. They record one reason why they would appoint an interviewee to the job and one reason why they would not. In each case, they provide supporting evidence.

The observer monitors time and make notes on **Sheet 6.6: Recording sheet for observers**.

Interviewees draw upon their own experiences and skills when being interviewed. They are not asked to imagine themselves as someone else.

After 10 minutes the panel interviews the second learner and the first interviewee becomes the observer. Once both interviews have been held, roles are reversed and the process begins again from Stage 2.

Move between groups supporting learners in their tasks as required.

#### **Stage 4: Consolidating, checking and reflecting on learning**

Hold a plenary session on the outcomes of the activities to help learners reflect on their experiences. Stress that feedback should not be personal.

To enrich this part of the session and provide some structure, you might ask each learner in turn (or a selection of learners, depending on the size of your group and the amount of time you have available) to:

- give you one example each of an experience that demonstrated skills relevant to customer care
- tell the group one thing learned about being an interviewer
- describe to the group one thing that would improve their performance as an interviewee.

Invite learners to reflect on the learning process. Here are some suggestions of questions you could ask:

- What did you enjoy about working in a small group?
- What did you find difficult about working in a small group?
- What will you do differently the next time you work in a small group?

#### **Alternative approaches**

Create your own job role cards using jobs in your subject or vocational area, for example, an IT support technician.

The interview could focus on subject or vocational skills as well as customer care skills. Timings could be extended accordingly.

Learners could swap roles and re-interview each other using a new set of interview questions.

**Review and consolidate learning by asking groups of learners to produce a poster as a record of good practice.**

## **Differentiation to meet individual needs**

If you predict that your learners would not be able to cope with the activity as it stands, you could make it easier in the following ways:

- Invite each learner to choose a job from **Sheet 6.1**.
- Group together learners who have chosen the same job. You might need to ask some learners to make a second choice so that you can set up groups of four learners.
- Provide each group with a list of questions to discuss in relation to their chosen job. This will enable each person to prepare for their 'interview'.
- Allocate learners into groups of four, with two interviewers and two interviewees. Continue with Stage 3 of the original activity.

The emphasis of this easier version is on finding answers to the questions and answering the questions in the mock interview. By asking the given questions, learners are prompted to articulate the answers they have prepared.

You could ask more confident learners to:

- devise their own list of questions
- extend their questioning skills by probing an interviewee's answers with follow-up questions.

## **Challenges – what learners might do next**

To build on the activity further, learners could compile their own lists of the five most common skills needed for customer care, based on feedback from the interviews.

If you particularly want learners to prepare themselves for job interviews, invite them to write a short paragraph explaining how their prior experiences demonstrate their potential to take on a job in customer care. This would have further benefits of consolidating their learning from Stage 2 of the activity and provide them with practice in written communication.

Learners could deepen their understanding of customer care by undertaking a further activity such as **Activity 7: Create a job advertisement**.

## **Embedding literacy, language and numeracy (LLN)**

Every learning activity includes many different opportunities to develop LLN skills. Always try to find a naturally-occurring opportunity to work on them, where learners can immediately appreciate the relevance and importance of the skills they are learning to use. Your LLN specialist can advise you on how this can be done.

The priority LLN skills for this activity are speaking and listening when learners are questioning interviewees and reflecting on what has been learned.

**At Level 1 and Level 2**, speak clearly (and at Level 2, confidently) in a way that suits the situation.

- Understand that pace, volume and precision of articulation vary depending on the situation (speaking face to face, on the telephone, to a group).  
(Adult literacy core curriculum reference SLC/L1.1 and L2.1)

**At Level 1 and Level 2**, make requests and ask questions to obtain (at Level 2, detailed) information in familiar and unfamiliar contexts.

- Understand that to get detailed information involves wording questions carefully, asking follow-up ones to probe further if necessary.  
(Adult literacy core curriculum reference SLC/L1.2)

**Useful activities might include:**

- ringing up an employer and asking for details of a job that is being advertised. Prepare the questions in advance. Include queries about the extent to which the job involves contact with customers.
- a role play in which a learner presents a problem to someone on the customer service desk about a mobile phone that doesn't seem to be working.

## Sheet 6.1: Jobs in customer care

1	A trade show is taking place in your area. The organisers want staff who will greet and guide visitors, and issue information.
2	A company is installing cable TV in your area. They want staff to operate a help line for everyone affected by the work.
3	A large company has a contract involving many different parts of its business. They want staff to coordinate the work and ensure all parts of the business work together.
4	An international athletics event is being held in your area. Staff are needed to work at the athletic track where contact with athletes of all cultures and beliefs is expected on a daily basis.
5	The Royal Institute for the Blind is holding a conference in your area. They are looking for staff to serve refreshments to sighted and non-sighted delegates.
6	A company is carrying out a survey of home owners in your area. They want staff to go into homes and interview people.
7	A small gardening company has started in your area and is looking for staff to do simple garden clearing tasks for clients with disabilities.

## Sheet 6.2: Questions to help you reflect

The questions below will help you prepare for your interview. Discuss your answers with your fellow interviewee. Make notes about your discussion. You can use the notes in the interview.

Who do you think are the customers in the job you have chosen?

What might they need?

What customer care skills do you think you would need in the job?

Describe what you have done in any situation that suggests you have the skills to do the customer care part of the job. For example, turning up on time every day to do a paper round could be used as evidence of being reliable.



## **Sheet 6.3: Possible interview questions**

1. Please tell us about yourself.
2. Please explain where and how you have developed your customer care skills in previous jobs or roles, or in other areas of your life.
3. Which customer care skills do you consider most important to this job?
4. Who are the customers in this job?
5. We have different sorts of customers. Why don't we treat them all in the same way?
6. If you had to choose one skill that is essential to this the job, what would it be? Why?
7. Why should we choose you for this job?
8. How is dealing with customers on the phone different from dealing with them face to face? Do you need different skills?
9. What customer care skills would you most like to develop while in this job? Why?
10. Are you a team player? How do you know?

## **Sheet 6.4: Some principles of good customer care**

1. Be approachable and welcoming.
2. Ask the right questions to find out what your customer needs.
3. Listen carefully and show that you understand how the customer is feeling.
4. Take responsibility for meeting your customer's needs – don't leave it to others or blame others.
5. Treat every customer as an individual and treat them with respect.
6. Be responsive. Go the extra mile to help the customer.
7. Be reliable. Don't make promises you can't keep.
8. Turn a complaint into something positive by dealing with it effectively.

## Sheet 6.5: Recording sheet for interviewers

<b>Name of interviewee 1</b>
<b>Job</b>
<b>Reason for giving the job to the interviewee</b>
<b>Reason for not giving the job to the interviewee</b>

<b>Name of interviewee 2</b>
<b>Job</b>
<b>Reason for giving the job to the interviewee</b>
<b>Reason for not giving the job to the interviewee</b>

## Sheet 6.6: Recording sheet for observers

### Interview 1

Which questions drew out useful information from the interviewee?

What information did the interviewee give that suggested they could handle the customer care aspects of the job?

### Interview 2

Which questions drew out useful information from the interviewee?

What information did the interviewee give that suggested they could handle the customer care aspects of the job?

**Session plan**

**Aim:** To increase learners’ awareness of transferable skills and to help them prepare for a job involving customer care.

**Learning objectives/outcomes**

Learners should be able to:

- identify the customer care requirements of a job
- identify evidence from any area of their life that demonstrates knowledge, skills and attitudes relevant to the customer care requirements of a job
- express clearly the link between the experience they identify and the requirements of the job.

<b>Time</b>	<b>Teacher plan</b>	<b>Learner activity</b>	<b>Resources</b>
0-10 min	Outline learning objectives and activity plan. Allocate learners to groups.		
10-25 min	Distribute: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sheet 6.1 to each learner</li> <li>• Sheet 6.2 to interviewees</li> <li>• Sheet 6.3 to interviewers.</li> </ul> Monitor discussions. Provide examples where necessary.	Interviewees select job and discuss customer care requirements and own relevant experience. Interviewers prepare questions.	<b>Sheet 6.1, Sheet 6.2 and Sheet 6.3.</b>
25-55 min	Set up mock interviews.	Interviewers ask prepared questions. Interviewees answer questions.	<b>Sheet 6.5.</b>

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**Customer Care**

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55-70 min	Consolidation, checking and reflection on learning	Reflection and recording significant learning about customer care, being an interviewer and being an interviewee.	Mini-whiteboards or paper.
70-90 min	Extension activity if required.		

**Assessment of learning objectives/outcomes**

Ask each learner in turn (or a selection of learners, depending on the size of your group and the amount of time you have available) to:

- give you one example each of an experience that demonstrated skills relevant to customer care
- tell the group one thing they have learned about being an interviewer
- describe to the group one thing that would improve their performance as an interviewee.

**Differentiation to meet individual needs**

**To make the activity easier:**

- invite each learner to choose a job from **Sheet 6.1**
- group together those learners who have chosen the same job. You might have to ask some learners to make a second choice so that you can set up groups of four learners
- provide each group with a list of questions to discuss in relation to their chosen job. This will enable each person to prepare for their ‘interview’
- allocate learners in to groups of four, with two interviewers and two interviewees. Continue on with Stage 3 of the original activity.

To make the activity more challenging, encourage learners to extend their questioning skills by probing an interviewee’s answers with follow-up questions.

**Teacher evaluation**

Consider which parts of the session were effective and why.

**Learner feedback**

Consider whether the activities were suitable for all learners and whether the session helped to develop the expert learners.

## **Personal, learning and thinking skills developed**

### **Teamworking**

- Reach agreements, managing discussions to achieve results.
- Take responsibility, showing confidence in themselves and their contribution.
- Provide constructive support and feedback to others.

## **Literacy, language and numeracy skills developed**

### **Language**

At Level 1 and 2, use speaking and listening skills to communicate information, ideas and opinions, and engage in discussions.