



UNIT 215

DEAL WITH CUSTOMERS ACROSS A LANGUAGE DIVIDE

This unit is about delivering customer service to those who have a different first language. The unit sits within the customer service theme of Delivery. This theme covers the organisational behaviours and processes that affect how your customers experience service delivery.

WHY CUSTOMER SERVICE MATTERS TO... A HOTEL PORTER

Hotel porters will often be faced with guests who want directions but whose first language is not the same as theirs. They will over time log useful words or phrases in the most common languages to support them. They will also need to speak clearly and slowly, maintaining a consistent tone and volume. What they won't do is shout!

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What this unit is about

Customer service is frequently delivered across a language divide. Organisations may be located in one country but deal mainly with another. In a multi-cultural society many customers may have a different first language from those delivering customer service to them. This language divide can present a real challenge to those who deliver customer service.

This unit is about how you prepare to deliver customer service across a language divide and seeing through that delivery. It also covers the steps that are needed to deal with customers with different language preferences without having full access to the customer's first language.

Note: You should only choose this unit if you frequently deal with customers across a language divide.

AN EXAMPLE

As a tourist information officer you often have visitors from overseas. Because a large international organisation is based in your town you often get visitors from their overseas sites. As a result you have tried to learn basic words and phrases in the relevant languages and use them to make the visitors feel welcome and relaxed.

What have you done in your workplace that is similar? Write your answer in this space...

...now talk to your assessor about how this could be turned into observed evidence.

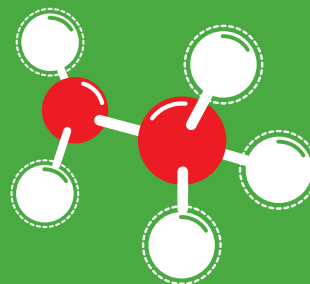
Elements in this unit

When you have completed this unit, you will have proved that you:

- 215.1 can prepare to deal with customers with a different first language
- 215.2 can deal with customers who speak a different first language from your own
- 215.3 know how to deal with customers across a language divide.

Key words and phrases for this unit

- identify the language
- learn a greeting
- log useful words and phrases
- speak clearly
- maintain a consistent tone and volume
- listen closely
- check understanding
- create a rapport



Evidence from this unit could possibly be cross-referenced to standards within other units, e.g. 101, 104, 105, 201, 214.

You should note

- 1 Your evidence should be collected when carrying out a real job, whether paid or voluntary, and when dealing with real customers, whether internal or external to the organisation. However, for this unit, evidence collected in a realistic working environment or a work placement is permissible. Simulation is not allowed for any performance evidence within this unit. (Guidelines for a realistic working environment can be found in the Assessment Strategy for Customer Service S/NVQs at Levels 1, 2, 3 and 4 – February 2010.)
- 2 You may collect the evidence for the unit through work in a private sector organisation, a not-for-profit organisation or a public services organisation.
- 3 You must provide evidence that shows you have done this over a sufficient period of time, with different customers on different occasions, for your assessor to be confident that you are competent.



E is for effort

To be successful in anything, you need to put in the effort. Nothing happens if you don't keep up to date and work at being good at what you do. Customers will appreciate evidence that you have made a special effort that benefits them. Put in the effort and you will see the difference in your achievements.

Assessed evidence

You need to show that you understand and are able to complete all the elements in this unit over a sufficient period of time, with different customers, on different occasions. Evidence may be gained through direct observation or products of work, recorded by your assessor and then referenced in the box below. On the next pages, these evidence references can be written in the relevant boxes of 'What you must cover', 'What you must do' and 'What you must know'.

Evidence reference	Evidence title	Assessment method

Assessment method key

O Observation **Q** Questioning **PE** Product Evidence
WT Witness Testimony **PD** Professional Discussion

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What you must cover

Evidence reference should be entered in the shaded areas below. You must cover **all** the points listed.

1 You must provide evidence of dealing with customers across a language divide:

a during routine delivery of customer service

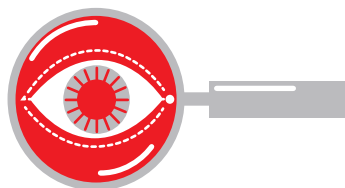
b during a busy time in your job

c during a quiet time in your job.



In the know...

When delivering customer service regularly to people who have a different first language from your own, it is good practice to at least learn some of the most important words or phrases. Consider the main languages you have to deal with and learn at least a greeting and some key words – that way customers are likely to relax and be less worried about the language divide.



Get it covered...

When the language spoken is not the person's first language, they are likely to feel nervous and so can be more difficult to deal with. Learning a few phrases in different languages means that you could use a greeting in the customer's language that makes them feel relaxed and confident that you want to and can help them. A few recognised words can bring a smile to a customer's face!



is for language

Your first language is the language you have grown up speaking and is the language in which you are likely to be most comfortable expressing yourself.

What you must do

Evidence reference should be entered in the shaded areas below. You must do **all** the points listed.

215.1 To prepare to deal with customers with a different first language, you must:

215.1.1 identify the language or languages other than your own that you are most likely to come across when dealing with customers

215.1.2 learn a greeting, an expression of thanks and a farewell phrase in the language you expect to encounter

215.1.3 identify a source of assistance with a language you expect to encounter when delivering customer service

215.1.4 agree with colleagues informal signing options that may be used for key aspects of your services or products when dealing with somebody with a different first language

215.1.5 log useful words and phrases to support your dealings with a customer with a different first language

215.1.6 learn an appropriate phrase to explain to a customer in their first language that you do not speak that language fluently.

215.2 To deal with customers who speak a different first language from your own, you must:

215.2.1 identify your customer's first language and indicate to the customer that you are aware of this

215.2.2 establish the expectations of the customer regarding whether they expect to deal in the learner's first language or theirs

215.2.3 speak clearly and slowly if using a language which is not the first language for either you or your customer

215.2.4 maintain a consistent tone and volume when dealing with somebody across a language divide

215.2.5 listen closely to your customer to identify any words they may be using in a way that differs from the way you would generally use the same words

215.2.6 check your understanding of specific words with your customer using questions for clarification

215.2.7 seek appropriate assistance from colleagues if you are unable to complete a customer transaction because of language barriers

215.2.8 reword a question or explanation if your customer clearly does not understand your original wording

215.2.9 use a few words of your customer's first language to create a rapport.

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What you must know

Evidence reference should be entered in the shaded areas below. You must know **all** the points listed.

215.3 To know how to deal with customers across a language divide, you must be able to:

215.3.1 list the languages that you are most likely to encounter among groups of your customers

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215.3.2 state how to greet, thank and say farewell to customers in their first languages

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215.3.3 explain the importance of dealing with customers in their first language if possible

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215.3.4 describe how to explain to a customer that you cannot hold an extended conversation in their first language

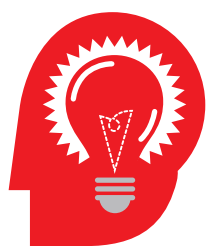
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215.3.5 explain the importance of tone, pace and volume when dealing with customers across a language divide

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215.3.6 identify possible sources of assistance to use when a language barrier demands additional language skills.

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In the know...

If you learn some key words or phrases, log them to allow colleagues to use them too.

Unit sign-off

The evidence for this unit is valid, sufficient and an authentic record of the candidate's current competence and has been assessed under the requirements of the assessment strategy.

I confirm that the evidence provided is a result of my own work.

Signature of candidate	Date

I confirm that the candidate has demonstrated competence by satisfying all of the criteria for this unit.

Signature of assessor	Date

Countersignature of assessor	Date

Signature of IV (if sampled)	Date

Countersignature of IV	Date

Signature of EV (if sampled)	Date