



Lesson Plan: Retail Sales and Customer Service

Time required for this lesson

60 minutes

Aim of the lesson

To introduce students to the Retail Sales and Customer Service occupational sector.

Learning outcomes

By the end of this lesson students should:

- have a greater understanding of the range of jobs in the Retail Sales and Customer Service occupational area
- have thought about what makes a retail environment appealing to them
- have thought about how to deal with difficult customers and have some experience of dealing with customer complaints
- have a greater awareness of what is happening nationally and locally in the area of Retail Sales and Customer Service

Resources required for this lesson

- 'Working in Essex, Southend and Thurrock - Retail Sales and Customer Service' leaflet obtained from www.stepon.org
- Dealing with Customer Complaints – Teachers Notes
- Customer Service Role Play - Worksheet
- Retail Sales and Customer Service Quiz and Answer Sheet



Introduction

Explain to the students that this collection of labour market leaflets has been produced by Connexions and the Learning and Skills Council. It is intended to be used as an information, advice and guidance resource to help them understand more about the trends in the labour market in Essex and to support the introduction of the new 14-19 Diplomas. Its ultimate aim is to help students with their decision-making regarding their future career plans. This lesson is all about the occupational area of Retail Sales and Customer Service and can support students who are thinking about doing the Diploma in Retail Business.

Activity 1

Retail Sales Discussion Exercise (10 minutes)

Discuss with the class all the places that they go to, to buy something. Get them to think about all aspects of their lives where they make purchases (e.g. clothes shops, supermarkets, newsagents, call centres to top up their mobile phones etc). Write up all of the different places on the board.

Now discuss with the class all the things that make a retail environment attractive to them (e.g. level of service they receive from the staff, good quality products, competitive prices etc). Look at how important and influential all of these are in their purchasing decision.

Conclude that the retail sector is a huge employer of staff in London and the South East and impacts on our everyday lives. Competition in this sector is enormous with retail outlets competing for our business.

Activity 2

Dealing with Customer Complaints (10 minutes)

Teachers Notes: Dealing with Customer Complaints

Explain to the class that people who work in sales and, especially, customer service are at the sharp end of having to deal with angry people and it's not restricted to just these two types of job that have to bear the brunt of an irate customer. Most of us at some time in our jobs will encounter an uncomfortable situation like this no matter what line of work we do. We'll be faced with having to deal with fault finders, picky people, complainers and angry people and, whilst this isn't the most pleasant of experiences we'll have in our everyday working lives, it's important to know how to deal with them.

Either read out to the class or write on the board the True or False statements detailed on 'Teachers Notes'. Get the class to comment on each of the statements and say whether they think it is True or False. You can expand on each point by using the information detailed on the 'Teachers Notes' sheet.

Explain that this leads us onto the next exercise where the class are going to role play dealing with customer complaints.

Activity 3

Customer Service Role Plays (20 minutes)

Worksheet: Customer Service Role Plays

Hand out to the class 'Customer Service Role Plays Worksheet'. In groups of three get them to role play the scenario. For each scenario the group will need to allocate one person to make the complaint, one person to deal with the complaint and one person to observe and make notes on what happened.

After 15 minutes get feedback from the groups on how each scenario was handled (e.g. how was the complaint dealt with, what skills were used to deal with it, was the customer satisfied, did the situation get resolved).

Ask the group how they found this activity and what they have learnt from it.

Activity 4

Retail Sales and Customer Service Quiz

(15 minutes)

Worksheet: Retail Sales and Customer Service Quiz and Answer Sheet

Pupils will need a copy of the 'Working in Essex, Southend and Thurrock – Retail Sales and Customer Service' leaflet to be able to find the answers to the quiz.

The pupils can work on their own or in pairs to complete the quiz.

Give the pupils 10 minutes to complete the quiz and then spend the last five minutes going through the answers.

Plenary (5 minutes)

Ask the students to work in pairs and discuss with each other three skills and qualities that they have that would be useful for a job in the Retail Sales and Customer Service industry. If you have time ask for some volunteers from the group to feed back their skills and qualities.

End the session by going back over the aims and learning outcomes of the lesson with the students and asking them if they have any questions about anything that they have done.

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Activity 2

Dealing with Customer Complaints – Teachers Notes

For each 'work detail' decide which job title suits it best. There are only four work details for each job.

Statement	True	False
It's not you personally that's the problem....it's the problem itself	●	
If you blame the company that you work for or the customer the complaint will be resolved.		●
Remember it's YOU that has the control	●	
The same resolution will satisfy all customers		●
Listen to the customer before saying anything	●	
Its important to look at the situation from your perspective first and then from the customers perspective.		●

It's not you personally that's the problem....it's the problem itself

When a person complains about something, it's important to remember that they're not attacking you personally. It's a problem they've encountered which has caused them to fly off the handle.

If you blame the company that you work for or the customer the complaint will be resolved.

Before resolving the problem, it's important that you don't apportion blame – neither to the customer or to your company directly to prevent damaging its reputation further

Remember it's YOU that has the control

People can often 'lose it' completely when they are annoyed. They'll shout and scream and talk so fast, it's often hard to get to the gist of knowing what their particular problem is. However, you are not angry and are calm and, therefore, you have the power and you are in control by remaining restrained. If you adopt this mentality whenever you're faced with an irate customer, you're likely to eventually win the customer around.

The same resolution will satisfy all customers

There is never going to be a successful outcome every time here and what may be a satisfactory resolution for one customer may not please another but what is important is to go about trying to resolve the problem in the correct manner

Listen to the customer before saying anything

Once you've asked the person to explain their problem or issue to you, it's then crucial that you simply listen without any kind of interruption whatsoever until they've finished. Not only will this enable you to gain a thorough understanding of what the problem is, by interrupting them 'mid-flow' when they are likely to be highly charged emotionally, you run the risk of them getting even more upset.

Its important to look at the situation from your perspective first and then the customers perspective

It's important that you try to look at the situation from the customer's perspective only. Having not interrupted their flow and by listening intently, it's already sent a signal to the person that you have listened and that you care about them and the situation they are facing.

Activity 3

Customer Service Role Plays - Worksheet

In groups of three, role play each of the scenarios below. For each of the scenarios one person needs to be the customer, one person needs to be dealing with the complaint and one person needs to observe and make a note of how the situation is dealt with. Swap your role for each scenario so that everybody gets an opportunity to play all of the different parts.

Scenario 1

You are having a family meal at your favourite Italian restaurant. You have waited 45 minutes for your pizza and when you received it, it was cold and some of the vegetables on it are uncooked. You ask the waitress to come over. What happens next?

Scenario 2

A month ago you bought a pair of shoes from your favourite shoe shop in town. You have just noticed that the stitching on one of the shoes has come undone and there is a hole in it. You take the shoes back to the shop that you bought them from. You have not got the receipt but you still have the box that you bought them in. What happens next?

Scenario 3

You have just arrived at your hotel in Majorca where you are going to be spending the next 2 weeks on holiday. You asked for a sea view twin room, but because of a mix up with your booking you have been given a twin room at the back of the hotel that looks down onto the service entrance. You find your resort representative to tell them about the situation. What happens next?



Activity 4

Retail Sales and Customer Service Quiz - Worksheet

Using the 'Working in Essex, Southend and Thurrock Retail Sales and Customer Service' leaflet have a go at answering the questions below.

1. Which retail outlet is the UK's second largest employer?

2. What skills are employers reporting a need for in the retail and customer services sector?

3. How many telesales operators are employed in the UK?

4. What is the annual average salary for a Sales and Retail Assistant in the UK?

5. How many people will the East of England retail sector have to recruit into the retail industry between 2004 and 2014?

6. Name some of the skills and qualities that it would be useful to have to work in the retail sales and customer service sector?

7. How many year 11 school leavers started full-time employment or work based training in the retail sector in 2006?

8. What is the website address for The Retail Sector Skills Council?

Activity 4

Retail Sales and Customer Service Quiz – Answer Sheet

Using the 'Working in Essex, Southend and Thurrock Retail Sales and Customer Service' leaflet have a go at answering the questions below.

1. Which retail outlet is the UK's second largest employer?

Tesco

2. What skills are employers reporting a need for in the retail and customer services sector?

ICT, oral communication, customer handling, team working and personal attributes

3. How many telesales operators are employed in the UK?

57,000

4. What is the annual average salary for a Sales and Retail Assistant in the UK?

£9,277

5. How many people will the East of England retail sector have to recruit into the retail industry between 2004 and 2014?

49,000

6. Name some of the skills and qualities that it would be useful to have to work in the retail sales and customer service sector?

Well organised, good communication skills, enjoy working with people, customer service focused

7. How many year 11 school leavers started full-time employment or work based training in the retail sector in 2006?

357 (275 Essex, 31 Southend, 51 Thurrock)

8. What is the website address for The Retail Sector Skills Council?

www.skillsmartretail.com