

5

Customers

Starting point

- 1 Who are your main customers?
- 2 How does your company keep its customers happy?
- 3 What percentage of your company's business is online?

Working with words | Customer service

- 1 Read this quote. How true is it for your type of business?
'If you make customers unhappy in the physical world, they might each tell six friends. If you make customers unhappy on the Internet, they can each tell 6,000.'
Jeff Bezos, founder of Amazon
- 2 Read about the company, Zappos. What is the best title for this article?
a Training staff to care
b Delivering happiness
c The customer is always right

ZAPPOS:

For many companies, having a call centre means two things: firstly, that you have unhappy customers and secondly, that you have the costs of paying staff to deal with customer complaints.

However, Zappos, the online shoes and clothing retailer, has a positive view of its call centre and uses it to build customer loyalty. Its team answer around 5,000 calls per day and 1,200 emails per week about its products. New staff receive four weeks' training in how to make customers happy and Zappos staff will do anything to go beyond basic customer expectations.

- One customer was staying at a hotel in Las Vegas. She wanted a pair of shoes but they weren't in stock. So, a Zappos customer service rep found the required shoes in a local shop and hand-delivered them to the woman's hotel room.
- The best man at a wedding arrived with no shoes. The company delivered in time for the wedding – for free.
- One member of the customer service team has the world record for the longest customer care phone call ever: it lasted ten hours and 29 minutes.

Clearly, with 75% repeat orders, customer satisfaction at Zappos is very high.



3 Read the article again. What do these numbers refer to?

5,000 1,200 4 10'29" 75

4 What do you think of the Zappos call centre? Underline the correct words in *italics* and complete the sentences. Then read out and compare your answers.I *think* / *don't think* it's a good idea because ...It *could* / *couldn't* work in my company because ...

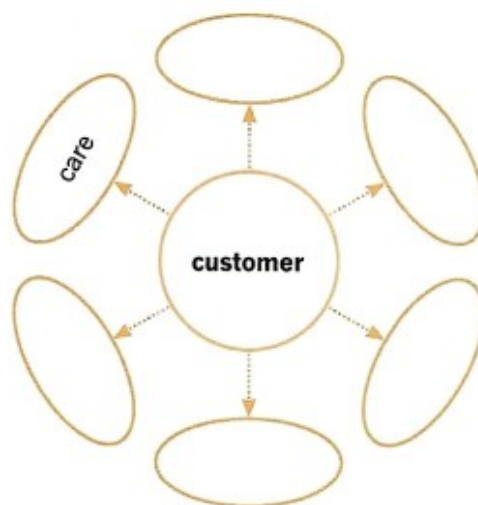
5 Complete this table with the word forms in the article in 2.

Verb	Adjective	Noun
1 to care	caring	<u>care</u>
2	loyal	_____
3 to expect	expected	_____
4 to require	_____	requirements
5 to serve	_____	_____
6 to satisfy	satisfied	_____
7 to produce	productive	_____
8 _____	_____	delivery

6 Complete this text with the correct form of the words from the table in 5. More than one word is correct for some answers.

Customers always ¹_____ an online company to ²_____ their order on time and in good condition. They are ³_____ if their ⁴_____ are met. However, if there is a problem, it is the role of the customer ⁵_____ department to solve it quickly and efficiently. As a result, if the customer feels that the company really ⁶_____ about them, they become ⁷_____ to the brand.

7 Look at the Zappos text in 2 again. Find different word combinations with the word 'customer' and add them to the mind map below.

**Tip** | Customer, client or consumer?

A *customer* is someone who buys a standard product or service.

A *client* is someone who buys an individually designed product or service (e.g. financial advice).

Consumer is a general term to talk about any person who buys things, not a specific product or service.

8 Complete these questions with an appropriate 'customer' collocation from 7.

- How important is customer _____ in your company?
- How does your company build customer _____?
- How does your company deal with customer _____?
- Do you think it's ever possible to guarantee customer _____?

9 Work with a partner. Ask and answer the questions in 8.

» For more exercises, go to **Practice file 5** on page 114.

10 Make five rules and guidelines for successful customer service in your company using words from the table in 5.

Example: Rule 1: Don't meet your customer's expectations. Go beyond them.

Language at work | Present tenses for future reference

- 1 How busy is your schedule this week, next week and next month? Which are the busiest periods for you/your department/your company?
- 2 Anita and Hakan are planning a series of customer visits in Turkey. Read the schedule and then Anita's email. What changes and additions need to be made to the schedule?

✉

6 Monday

5.45–11.45
Flight TK 1988 London – Istanbul.

14.30
Meeting at Akşa.

22.00 – 23.05
Flight to Ankara. Meet Giray.

✉

7 Tuesday

10.00
Leave hotel for meetings from 11.00.

19.00
Flight TK 1983 Istanbul – London.

✉

Subject: Next week

Hi Hakan,

I'm really sorry but there are changes to the original schedule. We still **leave** early on Monday and **come back** on Tuesday, but the bad news is that on Monday we're **not meeting** the people at Akşa until five – I'm afraid they're busy until then. Anyway, I **hope** to arrange another visit so we **aren't waiting** around all afternoon. Other than that, everything **is** fine for the rest of the trip. By the way, our new agent in Ankara **is joining** us at 10.00 for the customer visits on Tuesday. His name is Giray Demir.

Anita

- 3 Do the verbs in **bold** in the email refer to the present or the future? Match the verbs in the email to the explanations in the *Language point*.

LANGUAGE POINT

- 1 We use verbs in the present simple such as *arrive, go, start* to talk about a scheduled or timetabled event in the future: _____.
- 2 We use verbs in the present continuous to talk about an arrangement for the future: _____.
- 3 We use the present tense of verbs such as *plan, intend, expect* + *to* + infinitive to talk about future plans, hopes and expectations: _____.
- 4 We use the present tense of *be* + adjectives such as *free, available* to talk about future availability: _____.

» For more information, go to **Grammar reference** on page 115.

- 4 ▶ 5.1 Listen to a message from Giray in Anita's voicemail. What additional changes need to be made to the schedule?

- 5 Read Giray's voicemail message. Underline the correct words in *italics* 1–9. Then listen again and check.

Hi, Anita. This is Giray. I'm sorry but I ¹*be* / *'m* busy next Monday evening, so I can't meet you personally at the airport. When your flight ²*arrives* / *is arriving*, a driver will meet you. Let's plan ³*to meet* / *meeting* in your hotel reception on Tuesday morning at around eight thirty because we ⁴*meet* / *are meeting* the first client at nine thirty instead of eleven. By the way, do you intend ⁵*checking* / *to check* out in the morning or ⁶*do you stay* / *are you staying* another night in Ankara? I'm afraid I ⁷*'m not* / *don't* free in the evening, but I can book you an excellent restaurant near the hotel for dinner if you ⁸*stay* / *are staying*. It ⁹*opens* / *is opening* around eight, I think. Anyway, let me know your plans.

Tip | State verbs

Verbs used to talk about states (e.g. *understand, know, like, mean, need*) are not usually used in the present continuous.

6 Look at the schedule below and make sentences using prompts 1–9.

Example: *I'm going to a conference next week.*

The conference starts on Tuesday.

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 go / conference / next week | 6 free / Thursday morning |
| 2 conference / start | 7 plan / have lunch |
| 3 not / go / first session. / busy | 8 fly / Paris |
| 4 give / my presentation | 9 flight / leave |
| 5 hope / go / buffet reception | |

May

	a.m.	p.m.
7 Tuesday	CONFERENCE 9.30 First session / Meet clients	
8 Wednesday	CONFERENCE	14.00–15.00 My presentation 18.00 End-of-conference buffet reception
9 Thursday	CONFERENCE Free morning	12.30 Lunch with Sally and Remi
10 Friday		To Paris 14.20 Flight from LHR

» For more exercises, go to **Practice file 5** on page 115.

7 Tell your partner about your schedule for next week. Talk about when:

- scheduled events start and end
- you plan or hope to do something
- you are available or busy
- you are meeting people or have an arrangement

Practically speaking | How to say 'sorry'

1 Think of a situation when you had to say 'sorry' at work. Who was it to? Why?

2 ▶ 5.2 Listen to sentences 1–5 and match them to reasons a–e.

- | | |
|--|----------------------------|
| 1 I'm sorry, but I'm busy next Monday evening. <u>b</u> | a You did something wrong. |
| 2 I'm sorry, but can you repeat that? ____ | b You can't do something. |
| 3 I'm sorry to keep you waiting. ____ | c You give a reason. |
| 4 I'm sorry, but the traffic was terrible this morning. ____ | d You interrupt someone. |
| 5 I'm sorry, but can I say something at this point? ____ | e You ask for repetition. |

3 ▶ 5.3 Match responses a–e to sentences 1–5 in 2. Then listen and check.

- a **Sure.** It's A as in Alpha. ____
- b **Of course.** Go ahead. ____
- c **Not to worry.** We haven't started yet. ____
- d **That's OK.** There was a problem with my train as well. ____
- e **No problem.** How about Tuesday instead? ____

4 Work with a partner. Practise each situation by saying sorry to your partner and responding.

- You can't get to work because of a train strike. Call your partner from the train station and explain.
- You can't attend your partner's presentation next week. Give a reason.
- Your partner is a visitor waiting for you in reception. After 15 minutes, you arrive.
- Your partner is explaining something but you didn't hear all the information.



Business communication | Making and changing arrangements

- Who are your company's main suppliers? What do they supply you with?
- ▶ 5.4 Elena Schenker works for a chain of hotels in Switzerland. She calls Sergio Boccherini, a supplier of gym equipment. Listen to their conversation and write *E* (Elena), *S* (Sergio) or *B* (Both) next to each sentence.
 - ___ was at a trade show in Geneva last month.
 - ___ is based in Bern.
 - ___ has clients in Geneva.
 - ___ is always busy on Mondays.
 - ___ can meet on Tuesday 1st at 3 p.m.
- ▶ 5.4 Read expressions 1–8 for making arrangements. Try to say each expression in a different way, using the words given in brackets. Then listen again and check.
 - Can we fix a date to meet? (arrange) Can we arrange a date to meet?
 - I'm sorry but I can't on Mondays. (afraid I'm busy) _____
 - I'm not free on that day. (can't make it) _____
 - What about Tuesday? (How) _____
 - That's good for me. (suits) _____
 - Is two o'clock OK? (convenient) _____
 - Can we meet later? (make it) _____
 - We've confirmed Tuesday the first at three. (So that's) _____

» For more exercises, go to **Practice file 5** on page 114.

Key expressions

Calling to make an arrangement

The reason I'm calling is ...
I'm calling to arrange ...
It's about our meeting next ...

Suggesting times/dates

Can we arrange a meeting?
Can we fix a date to meet?
What/How about ...?
Is ... convenient/OK?
Is ... any good?
Does ... suit you?

Accepting/Declining

Yes, of course.
That suits me.
That's good/convenient for me.
I'm afraid I can't come on ...
I'm sorry but I can't make it.
I'm not free on ...

Changing arrangements

Can we make it later?
Can we move it back to Friday?
Can we bring it forward to Wednesday?
The afternoon is free/
convenient.

Confirming

So that's Tuesday at three.
We've confirmed Monday at 10 a.m.

- ▶ 5.5 Listen to these short expressions from the conversation for suggesting and checking days, dates and times. Note if the intonation is rising or falling. Then listen again and repeat.
On Monday? The 1st? At three?
- Work with a partner. Take turns to answer the phone and make arrangements for the situations below. Use the flow chart and your own diaries if you want.
 - meeting a new customer
 - visiting the new company headquarters
 - playing golf or tennis
 - meeting a colleague to plan a product launch

A Answer phone.

B Give reason for calling.
Suggest date/time to meet.

A Say you can't.

B Suggest another date/time.

A Agree.

B Confirm and say goodbye.

- ▶ 5.6 Sergio calls Elena again. Listen to their conversation.
 - What is the main reason for his call?
 - What can't Sergio make?
 - Do they bring the meeting forward or move it back a day?

- Repeat your calls in 5 but now you can't make the appointments. Change the arrangements to a new time. Use your own diaries if you want.