

Title: Employability and Career Development

Module Code: LCLM4005

Assignment Title: Selection of in class tasks

Student Name: Cherinne Edwards

Lecturers Name: Essa Bah

Key Skills and Areas of Knowledge for Customer Service Roles

Skill Category	Common Key Skills & Requirements	Rationale and Knowledge Area
Communication & Interaction	Communication Skills, Active Listening, Empathy, Patience, Resilience	This is the core role of customer service. Having the ability to clearly articulate information, listen to and understand any concerns, and use empathy when handling difficult individuals while remaining professional under pressure.
Problem Solving	Problem-Solving Skills, Critical Thinking, Conflict Resolution	These roles resolve issues, which require the ability to quickly diagnose the root cause of a problem, while thinking on your feet, and be able to offer solutions that satisfy the customer, adhering to company policies.
Product & Commercial	Product/Service Knowledge, Commercial Awareness	A comprehensive knowledge of the company's offerings, policies, and processes is mandatory. Agents must be able to provide accurate information, make recommendations, and troubleshoot issues related to the specific product or service they support.
Technical & Administrative	IT Proficiency (CRM/Software Use), Time Management, Organizational Skills, Attention to Detail	Customer service involves significant administrative work, including logging interactions, processing orders/payments, and updating records. Knowledge of relevant technology (like Customer Relationship Management - CRM software) and the ability to multitask and manage time efficiently.

Interpersonal & Teamwork	Teamwork/Collaboration, Positive Attitude, Adaptability	Customer service teams rely on collaboration for escalating issues and sharing knowledge. A positive, professional manner and adaptability to switch between different customer issues, systems, or communication channels (phone, email, chat).
-------------------------------------	--	--

Common Skills and Knowledge Area

1. **Communication & Active Listening:** The main requirement of this role. It requires exceptional ability to communicate clearly and concisely (written and verbal) and listen attentively to fully understand the customer's needs.
2. **Empathy and Patience:** These are crucial for de-escalating tense situations and building rapport. It demonstrates a shared understanding of the customer's frustration, which is key to turning a negative experience into a positive one.
3. **Problem-Solving:** All roles are fundamentally centred on diagnosing and resolving customer issues in an effective and timely manner.
4. **Product/Service Knowledge:** providing accurate information about the company's offerings, policies, and processes.
5. **Technical Aptitude:** Competency in using computer systems, databases, and communication software (CRM, ticketing systems) for an efficient service.

Self-assessment using the swot analysis

Strengths

- **Verbal Communication:** I can explain complex information simply and clearly.
- **Empathy:** I have a high ability to stay calm and connect with frustrated customers, quickly de-escalating conflicts.
- **Technical Aptitude:** I am highly proficient with CRM software and can quickly learn new systems.
- **Organizational Skill:** I can effectively manage a large volume of inquiries (emails, calls, chat) simultaneously while maintaining accuracy.

Weaknesses

- **Specific Knowledge:** I lack formal knowledge of the specific industry the job is in.
- **Time Management:** I struggle to efficiently prioritize tasks when under extreme pressure.
- **Delegation/Escalation:** I try to solve every problem myself, rather than escalating complex issues to a manager or specialist.

Opportunities

- **Training:** An accredited course in ITIL Certification would enhance my resume.
- **Industry Growth:** The demand for remote Customer Service Agents is increasing, providing more flexible job options.
- **Networking:** I can leverage my professional network to secure a referral for a desired company.
- **Further Education:** I could pursue a business administration qualification part-time.

Threats

- **Competition:** Many experienced candidates are applying for the same entry-level roles.
- **Automation Risk:** My current core tasks might be automated by AI/Chatbots in the next few years, requiring me to upskill.
- **Economic Downturn:** The company I want to work for might impose a hiring freeze.
- **Skill Obsolescence:** My knowledge of older CRM systems is becoming outdated.

Evidence of readiness

1. Leadership, Coaching, and Team Management

My CV shows a proven track record in leadership and team development.

- **Evidence:** I was previously employed as a Call Centre Team Leader at M Fortune Casino (Feb 2019 – Sept 2023) and again at Virgin Media (April 2005 – Dec 2008).
- **Specific Skills:**
 - Directly managed, motivated, and coached teams, including conducting 1-2-1's and team meetings.
 - Managed day-to-day line activities and made risk/impact assessments to ensure Service Level Agreements (SLAs) were achieved.
 - Maintained training and development plans for all team members.
 - Ensured attendance and retention targets were achieved.

2. Commitment to Continuous Learning

My CV demonstrates my willingness to pursue formal education to enhance professional knowledge, even while working.

- **Evidence:** I am currently pursuing a Certificate of Higher Education Business Skills for the Workplace at the University of Wales Trinity Saint David (Jan 2025 - Current).
- **Previous Qualifications:** I completed an Access to Higher Education Social Science course, and a GNVQ Business studies course.
- **Workplace Learning:** In previous roles, I proactively stayed up to date with business development and new product lines.

3. Advanced Customer Service and Conflict Resolution

Experience in dealing with escalated issues proving the ability to handle complex and high-stakes customer interactions.

- **Evidence:** In both Call Centre Team Leader roles, I was responsible for dealing with escalated calls and complaints passed on from team members.
- **Skill Demonstrated:** I highlight a personal commitment to providing exceptional service focused on actively listening to customer needs and ensuring their satisfaction.

- **High Standards:** I am dedicated to ensuring customer satisfaction through the application of effective communication and robust quality standards.

4. Organizational and Administrative Proficiency

The ability to manage complex administrative tasks, maintain records, and manage budgets.

- **Evidence:**
 - Has a proven ability to prioritize complex workloads, manage multiple deadlines, and ensure operational tasks meet a high standard.
 - As an Administration Co-ordinator (Feb 2012 – Dec 2015), I managed the invoicing process, updated claim details on portal software, ordered materials in line with claim budgets, and managed relationships between clients and the company.
 - As an Office Manager, responsibilities included handling expenses, billing cycles, managing purchase orders and invoicing, and maintaining accurate records.

5. Adaptability Across Industries

My work history spans diverse sectors—gambling/telecom call centres, recruitment/logistics, childcare/social services, and insurance administration—demonstrating adaptability and broad experience in different regulatory and client environments.

- **Evidence:** My work experience includes M Fortune Casino, Forde Recruitment, I Care Children's Services, Indemnity Group Ltd, and Virgin Media.
- **Skill Demonstrated:** My CV shows experience in fields requiring high levels of confidentiality and adherence to regulations (social services, insurance), alongside client-facing administrative and sales support roles.

Short-Term Employment Goals (0-12 Months)

1. Goal: Secure a Foundational Customer Service Role

- **Description:** Gain a full-time position as a Customer Service Advisor in an industry that prioritizes structured training (e.g., a major utility, banking, or large e-commerce company).
- **Alignment & Importance:** This goal is important because it provides the essential on-the-job training needed to address the weakness of lacking specific industry knowledge and allows for immediate application of existing leadership skills in a supportive environment. It solidifies entry into the target profession and provides experience with real-world time management challenges under pressure.

2. Goal: Achieve Proficiency in Written Communication & Escalation

- **Description:** Within the first six months of employment, consistently meet or exceed team Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for written customer interaction speed and quality. Additionally, master the internal escalation procedures, resulting in zero unnecessary escalations/re-routes.
- **Alignment & Importance:** Improving written communication and speed is crucial for succeeding in multi-channel customer service (chat, email), directly supporting my focus on effective communication and robust quality standards.

Long-Term Employment Goals (3-5 Years)

1. Goal: Advance to a Customer Service Team Leader/Manager Role

- **Description:** Progress from an Advisor role to a Customer Service Team Leader or Senior Coach role within five years, specializing in training and process optimization.
- **Alignment & Importance:** This goal directly aligns with and utilizes my proven background as a Call Centre Team Leader. My previous experience in motivating, coaching, conducting 1-2-1's, and managing SLAs makes this a natural and achievable advancement.

2. Goal: Gain a Formal Qualification in Business Process Optimization

- **Description:** Complete a recognized professional qualification related to CRM systems and process improvement, to formalize business knowledge.
- **Alignment & Importance:** This goal is a strategy for personal advancement and directly supports the current study towards a Certificate of Higher Education Business Skills for the Workplace. Formal training in process optimization allows me to move beyond day-to-day team leadership and contribute to high-quality operational outcomes by identifying and fixing systemic issues, making a stronger case for senior management roles.

Personal Development Plan

Weakness Targeted	Short-Term Goal	Timeline	Resources Needed	Progress Measurement (KPIs)
1. Time Management Under Pressure	Implement the Eisenhower Matrix, and dedicated time-blocking techniques for all professional tasks.	1-3 Months	Time management apps (Trello, Asana), daily planner, online tutorials on "Deep Work" and "Time Boxing."	Daily: Completion of the top three priority tasks. Weekly: Document a 10% reduction in time spent context-switching between tasks.
2. Written Communication	Complete an advanced	3-4 Months	Online platforms (LinkedIn	Course Completion

Speed & Grammar	business writing course focused on concise, professional communication for a multi-channel environment.		Learning, Coursera), grammar tools (Grammarly Premium), and peer review from trusted contacts.	Certificate. Monthly: Use a tool to track improvement in average error density in professional communications.
3. Specific Industry Knowledge Gap	Complete an introductory industry-specific certification relevant to the target role (e.g., CompTIA IT Fundamentals for tech support, or a relevant compliance course for financial services).	5-8 Months	Online course materials, industry-specific forums, company training materials (once hired), and self-study time.	Pass the Certification Exam. Post-Hiring: A 30% reduction in reliance on immediate colleagues for basic product/process questions.
4. Avoiding Escalation	Develop and practice a clear "3-Step De-escalation and Triage" protocol, ensuring complex issues are resolved or passed to the correct level within predefined time limits.	2-4 Weeks	Mentorship from Senior Advisor/Manager, internal procedure manuals, and role-playing scenarios.	Monthly Review: Achieve an average 90% compliance with the defined internal escalation path. Post-Hiring: Zero instances of critical issues being delayed or mismanaged due to self-imposed bottlenecks.

Long-Term Integration and Advancement (12+ Months)

1. Integrate Strengths to Overcome Weaknesses (The 'SO' Strategy)

- **Action:** Leverage the existing Strengths to overcome the new skills acquired in the Short-Term Goals.
- **Example:** Once proficiency in Time Management and Written Communication is achieved, use that expertise to coach and train junior team members in best practices.
- **Targeted Outcome:** Use success in a foundational role to build a case for the next promotion.

2. Formalize Business Expertise (The 'O' Strategy)

- **Action:** Use the progress made in the Certificate of Higher Education to build momentum toward the Lean Six Sigma Green Belt certification
- **Timeline:** 18–36 Months.
- **Importance:** This moves my career focus from day-to-day team management to strategic operational efficiency. This aligns perfectly with my desire to contribute to "robust quality standards" and "high-quality outcomes" at a management level.

3. Measure Career Progression

- **Long-Term KPI:** Secure a promotion to a Team Leader or Senior Coach position within 3-5 years of entering the new industry, demonstrating that the addressed weaknesses did not hinder advancement potential.