

Selection of written reflective tasks

Task 1 – Compare Job Adverts

For this task, two job adverts within the customer service sector have been analysed: a Customer Service Executive role at Santander UK plc and a similar Customer Service Executive role advertised on Indeed. Both roles focus on interacting with customers, resolving enquiries, and ensuring a positive customer experience while representing the organisation professionally.

Key Skills and Knowledge Identified

The Santander job advert highlights several important skills required for the role. These include strong verbal and written communication skills, as employees are expected to deal with customer queries clearly and professionally. The role also requires a strong customer-focused approach, ensuring that each customer receives a high level of service. In addition, problem-solving and decision-making skills are essential, as employees are expected to resolve issues efficiently, often at the first point of contact. Basic IT skills are also required, as the role involves using internal systems.

Similarly, the second job advert includes many of the same requirements. It emphasises the importance of customer service experience, the ability to handle enquiries and complaints, and maintain professionalism in a fast-paced environment. It also highlights teamwork and organisational skills, as employees must manage multiple tasks while working collaboratively with colleagues. Time management is another key requirement, as employees need to prioritise tasks effectively.

Common Skills Across Both Adverts

There are several skills that appear in both job adverts. These include:

- Strong communication skills
- Customer service focus
- Problem-solving abilities

- Teamwork and collaboration
- IT/computer skills
- Ability to work under pressure

The repetition of these skills across both roles shows that they are essential within the customer service profession. Employers are clearly looking for individuals who can interact confidently with customers while maintaining efficiency and professionalism.

Importance of Communication Skills

One key shared skill is **communication**, which is highly important in customer service roles. Employees must be able to clearly understand customer concerns and respond in a helpful and professional way. This is especially important in roles such as the one at Santander, where customers may require clear explanations of services or support issues.

Strong communication helps build trust between the company and the customer, ensuring that problems are resolved quickly and effectively. It also reduces misunderstandings and improves overall customer satisfaction. In addition, good communication supports teamwork, as employees need to share information clearly with colleagues.

Overall, communication is essential because it directly impacts the quality of service provided, customer satisfaction, and the reputation of the organisation.

Task 2 – Self-Assessment

Reflective Self-Assessment (SWOT Analysis)

To evaluate my current level of employability and personal development, I have conducted a SWOT analysis based on my skills, work experience, and academic background. This allows me to clearly identify my strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, while also reflecting on how prepared I am for a future career in customer service and professional environments.

Strengths

One of my key strengths is my strong communication and interpersonal skills. Through my experience working at McDonald's and in my current role as a Teaching Assistant and Cover Supervisor, I have developed confidence in interacting with a wide range of people. I am able to communicate clearly, listen actively, and respond appropriately in different situations. This is especially important in customer service roles, where understanding customer needs is essential.

Another strength is my adaptability. Working through agency placements in different schools requires me to quickly adjust to new environments, teams, and responsibilities. This has helped me become flexible and confident when facing new challenges, which are highly valuable in fast paced workplaces. I also have strong organisational and multitasking skills. Balancing work, studies, and responsibilities within a family business has helped me manage my time effectively. I am able to prioritise tasks, stay organised, and complete work efficiently even when I have multiple responsibilities.

In addition, I demonstrate teamwork and leadership abilities. I have experience working collaboratively with others and contributing to a positive team environment. I am also comfortable taking responsibility when needed, which shows that I can be trusted in professional situations. Finally, my experience in customer service has helped me develop my ability to work under pressure. I am able to remain calm, professional, and focused even during busy or stressful situations.

Weaknesses

Despite my strengths, there are areas where I need further development. One weakness is my limited experience in a professional office environment. While I have customer service and administrative experience, I have not yet gained significant experience in a corporate setting.

Another area for improvement is my advanced IT skills. Although I am confident using basic computer applications, I need to improve my knowledge of more advanced tools such as Excel and data systems.

I also recognise that I can improve my confidence when taking initiative in new professional environments. While I adapt quickly, I sometimes take time to fully express my ideas or step into leadership roles.

Opportunities

There are several opportunities available that can support my development and improve my employability. My current course, HE Business Skills for the Workplace, is helping me develop knowledge and practical skills that are relevant to professional environments. It provides a strong foundation for understanding workplace expectations. My role as a Teaching Assistant also offers valuable opportunities to develop transferable skills such as communication, leadership, and organisation. These skills can be applied directly to customer service and other professional roles.

Additionally, I can use online learning platforms to improve my IT skills and gain certification. This will help strengthen my CV and make me more competitive in the job market. Receiving feedback from supervisors and colleagues is another opportunity for growth. Constructive feedback allows me to identify areas for improvement and continue building my confidence and performance.

Threats

One potential threat is the high level of competition within the job market. Many candidates may have more experience or higher qualifications, which means I need to continue developing my skills to stand out.

Another challenge is the increasing use of technology in customer service roles. Many organisations rely on digital systems, so it is important for me to continuously improve my IT skills to remain relevant. Balancing work, education, and personal development may also be a challenge. Managing multiple responsibilities requires strong time management and discipline to ensure consistent progress.

Evidence of Readiness for Employability

I have demonstrated my readiness for employment through both my academic achievements and practical work experience. My role at McDonald's provided me with direct experience in customer service, where I developed skills in handling enquiries, processing orders, and maintaining professionalism in a fast-paced environment. This role requires teamwork, communication, and the ability to work under pressure. As a Teaching Assistant and Cover Supervisor, I have gained experience in supporting students, managing classrooms, and adapting to different environments. This has strengthened my communication, leadership, and problem-solving skills.

My involvement in a family business has given me experience in administration, including managing emails, organising schedules, and communicating with customers and partners, and further developing my organisational abilities. Academically, my studies in Business Skills for the Workplace are helping me understand professional expectations and develop employability skills.

Overall, these experiences show that I have developed transferable skills, practical experience, and the motivation to continue improving, demonstrating that I am ready to progress into a professional customer service role.

Task 3 – Employment Goals & Personal Development Plan

Based on my SWOT analysis, I have identified short-term and long-term employment goals that support my development in customer service and future career progression. My short-term goal is to secure a full-time Customer Service Executive or Advisor role, where I can gain practical experience in a professional environment, strengthen my communication skills, and build confidence in handling customer interactions. My long-term goal is to progress into a supervisory or team leader position within customer service, where I can take on more responsibility, support colleagues, and contribute to improving overall service quality within an organisation.

To achieve these goals, I will focus on improving my advanced IT skills by completing online training courses in Microsoft Excel and workplace systems within the next six

months. I will also apply for entry-level office or customer service roles within the next six months to gain experience in a professional setting and strengthen my CV. In addition, I will continue developing my communication and confidence by actively seeking feedback from supervisors and using it to improve my performance in both work and academic environments. I will measure my progress by completing certifications, receiving positive feedback, and gradually taking on more responsibility in my roles.

These actions will directly address my weaknesses in IT skills and professional confidence while enhancing my overall employability. My personal development plan focuses on gaining experience, improving technical ability, and building the skills required for long-term career progression. It also ensures I remain competitive in the job market, especially in customer service roles where technology and communication are essential. By consistently reviewing my progress and setting clear targets, I will stay focused and motivated. Overall, this plan will help me develop into a confident, skilled, and employable candidate ready for future career opportunities in customer service.