



5

Customers

Learning objectives in this unit

- Talking about customer service
- Getting information
- Making and changing arrangements
- Starting a conversation on the phone
- Using the present simple and continuous to talk about the future
- Managing customer feedback

Case study

- Managing customer feedback

Starting point

- 1 Who does your company sell products or provide services to?
- 2 Which departments and employees in your company need your services or products to do their job?
- 3 Your answers to 1 are your *external customers*. Your answers to 2 are your *internal customers*. Compare your answers to 1 and 2 with a partner's answers.

Working with words | Customer service

- 1 Read this information. What does Technogym do? Who are its customers?

Technogym

Nerio Alessandri built his first fitness machine in his garage in 1983 and founded Technogym. The company is now a market leader in fitness and biomedical rehabilitation equipment. Its products have been chosen by over 30,000 fitness centres and 20,000 private homes worldwide. It was the official supplier at the Sydney 2000 and Athens 2004 Olympics and Paralympics, and at the Turin 2006 Winter Olympics.



- 2 Complete these sections of a website homepage with verbs from the list.

requirements care satisfaction services expectations

We're here to help

Whatever you require, our call centres are open to assist you with all issues concerning our products and ¹_____.

The design team

Our in-house design team assesses the proposed area of development to give the best layout of equipment. It then monitors every stage of the installation for complete ²_____.

After-sales

The After-Sales Service extranet site provides online ³_____ and support 24/7.

Technical support

Our technical support team ensures that the equipment is always in perfect working order and matches your ⁴_____.

Tailor-made courses

We tailor our courses to meet the specific ⁵_____ of our clients, with in-house training courses.

3 Which sections of the website in 2 should these customers click on?

- 1 'I want to download a copy of the instructions for your treadmill.'
- 2 'We're interested in having a small gym for employees in our office building but I don't think there's space for it.'
- 3 'Would it be possible to get some more information about your products?'
- 4 'I'd like all of my staff to understand how the machines work.'
- 5 'I can't seem to change the speed of the treadmill.'

4 Complete this table with words from 1 and 2.

Noun	Verb	Adjective
1 _____	serve	-
2 _____	satisfy	satisfied
3 _____	supply	supplied
4 _____	care	caring
5 _____	expect	expected
6 _____	require	required
7 _____	produce	-

5 Complete this text with the correct form of words from the table in 4.

Customers always ¹ _____ a company to ² _____ them with top-quality goods and ³ _____. They are ⁴ _____ if their ⁵ _____ are met. If their ⁶ _____ are not met, however, it is the role of the customer ⁷ _____ department to try to sort out any problems. If the customer receives efficient and helpful ⁸ _____ and feels that the company really ⁹ _____ about them, this will result in a happy customer who is more likely to buy the company's ¹⁰ _____ and services again.

6 Complete these questions with the correct form of words from the website sections in 2 to match the words in brackets.

- 1 What kind of customers do you *assist*? (help) What do they usually _____? (need)
- 2 How do you _____ their needs? (evaluate)
- 3 Is there a department at your company which continually _____ customer service? (checks)
- 4 What do you think is one way to _____ customer satisfaction? (guarantee)
- 5 Are you able to _____ 24-hour-a-day support to your customers? (give)
- 6 Is it important to be able to _____ your products or services? (adapt)

» For more exercises, go to Practice file 5 on page 110.

7 Work with a partner. Ask and answer the questions in 6 using the words you found in the website sections in 2.

8 Think of a service you know well. It could be your own company's product or service, or one you have recently bought or used. Present this product or service to the class, as if you are trying to promote it to them. Explain what makes it so good.

Tip | *customer, client, and consumer*

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

A *client* is someone who buys an individually designed product or service, for example, financial advice.

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

Exchanging information | Getting information | Making and changing arrangements



2.15 p.m.

1 _____ ?

A chain of 4- and 5-star hotels in Switzerland.

2 _____ ?

Ten years old.

3 _____ ?

Eleven in total.

4 _____ ?

Not known.

1 20▶ Listen to this phone call between Elena Schenker, the facilities manager of a hotel chain, and Sergio Lanese, a Technogym representative. Complete Sergio's notes. What information does he ask for?

2 20▶ Listen again and complete these phrases for getting information.

1 I'd like to _____ your services ...

2 Can you _____ a little more?

3 We're _____ updating ...

4 Is that something you _____ ?

5 Would it be _____ someone to ...?

3 Work with a partner. Student A, you are a hotel facilities manager. Turn to File 06 on page 136. Student B, you are a sales representative for Technogym. Answer your partner's phone call and ask for the same information as in the notes in 1. Then change roles. Student B, turn to File 14 on page 138. Student A, use the notes in 1.

4 21▶ Listen to the end of Sergio and Elena's phone conversation and answer questions 1–3.

1 What do they arrange?

2 What is planned for the 30th?

3 What is planned for the 1st?

5 21▶ Listen again and complete these sentences.

1 Can we _____ a meeting then?

2 _____ about Tuesday the 31st?

3 I _____ the Wednesday.

4 The 1st of February? Yes, that _____ me.

6 Work with a partner. Take turns to answer the phone and make arrangements for the situations below. Use this flow chart and your own diaries if you want.

A Answer the phone.

B Suggest an arrangement.

A Agree and suggest two possible dates / times.

B State your preferred date / time.

A Agree and say goodbye.

- meeting to plan new website
- celebrating your birthday
- playing golf or tennis

- visiting your new company headquarters
- an anniversary dinner

Tip | make

Make has many uses. Here it means to attend.

I can't **make** the meeting. = I can't attend the meeting.

7 22▶ Sergio calls Elena again. Listen and answer questions 1–4.

- 1 What is the main reason for his call?
- 2 What else do they talk about?
- 3 What can't Sergio make?
- 4 What do Sergio and Elena move back?

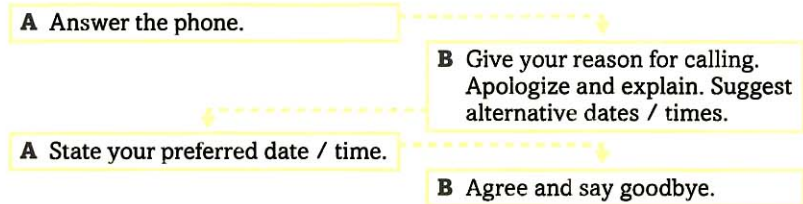
» For more exercises, go to **Practice file 5** on page 110.

8 Read this sentence and then change the diary page below.

‘Fabio can't make the 27th, so we'll bring the meeting forward a day and move the tour back a day.’



9 Repeat your calls in 6 but now you can't make the appointments. Change the arrangements to a new time. Use this flow chart and your own diaries if you want.



» Interactive Workbook » Email

Key expressions

Stating interest

I'd like to find out about ...
We're interested in ...

Asking for information

Can you tell me a little more ...?
Is that something you deal with?
Would it be possible for ...?

Suggesting arrangements

Can we fix / arrange a date for the meeting?
What / How about the 30th of January?

Stating a preference

I'd prefer the Tuesday.
Tuesday would be better.
The 31st is good for me
Thursday suits me.

Changing arrangements

Sorry, I can't make the Thursday.
I'm afraid I can't come on / make Thursday.
Can we move it back to Friday?
Can we bring it forward to Wednesday?
The afternoon is free / convenient.

» Interactive Workbook
» Phrasebank

Practically speaking | Starting a conversation on the phone

1 23▶ The first time we speak to someone on the phone we are usually quite formal. After that the calls may be more conversational. Match phrases 1–5 to responses a–e. Then listen to five conversations and check your answers.

- 1 Sorry for calling so late. _____
- 2 How are things? _____
- 3 Is this a busy time for you? _____
- 4 What's the weather like? _____
- 5 Hello, Anna. This is James. _____

- a No, I'm not too busy at the moment.
- b It's really beautiful and clear.
- c Everything's going fine, thanks.
- d Hello. How are you?
- e Don't worry – I don't usually finish before 7.00.

2 Work with a partner. Start a phone call. Use phrases from 1 or your own conversational openers.

Language at work | Present simple and continuous for future use

1 24▶ Listen to these sentences. Choose the correct answer from the verbs in *italics*.

- 1 We *come* / *'re coming* to Switzerland next month.
- 2 Customers often *comment* / *are commenting* on this.
- 3 I *call* / *'m calling* for some information.
- 4 My trip *begins* / *is beginning* on the 30th of January.

2 Which sentences in 1 are about the future?

3 Which of the sentences you selected in 2 describes

- a an arrangement? ____ b a schedule / timetable? ____

4 Complete these sentences with *simple* or *continuous*.

- 1 Use the present _____ to talk about an arrangement for the future.
- 2 Use the present _____ to talk about a scheduled or timetabled event in the future.

» For more information and exercises, go to Practice file 5 on page 111.

5 Complete this email with the present simple or present continuous form of the verbs in brackets.

✉

Dear Elena

I ¹_____ (write) to confirm that we ²_____ (meet) on Thursday at 2.00 p.m. My train ³_____ (arrive) at 12.30, so there shouldn't be any problems. One of our technicians ⁴_____ (come) with me. He's called Mario.

We look forward to seeing you.

Sergio

6 Work with a partner. Look at the diary and make sentences in the present simple or present continuous using prompts 1–9.

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

The conference starts on Tuesday.

- | | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 go / conference | 4 conference / start | 7 first session / start |
| 2 have / team meeting | 5 fly / Paris | 8 flight / leave |
| 3 have / lunch | 6 speak / at conference | 9 presentation / start |

May

	a.m.	p.m.
6 Monday	10.00 Team meeting	
7 Tuesday	_____ CONFERENCE _____ 9.30 First session	
8 Wednesday	_____ CONFERENCE _____	14.00 My presentation
9 Thursday	_____ CONFERENCE _____ 12.30 Lunch with Sally and Remi	
10 Friday	To Paris.	14.20 Flight from LHR.

Tip | Action and state verbs

Remember that some verbs (state verbs) are not used in the present continuous when they are talking about states, not actions. For example: *understand, like, know, believe, mean, need*.

Managing customer feedback

Background

Limewood Spa is an exclusive country house hotel and spa. It has a very good reputation, but recently it has received negative customer feedback on several websites



Set in its own country garden, Limewood Spa believes in combining state-of-the-art facilities with natural therapies. Limewood Spa is unique in being able to offer long, quiet walks in its fifty-acre forest followed by vigorous exercise in the fitness centre. We assess your fitness on your first morning and tailor your programme. Our five-star restaurant is run by chefs specializing in healthy cooking.

Customer feedback

'This hotel is set in a most beautiful location. The problem was the restaurant. The service was poor and the food itself was expensive and not very good. When we mentioned this to the manager, she said that we were the only people complaining so things couldn't be that bad!'

'The room was very nice, and the setting is wonderful. It's a shame the staff aren't more helpful.'

'The hotel was very clean and you could see that the rooms had been refurbished recently. The health spa in the basement was of a really high standard. The main problem was that the staff didn't seem interested, and only really attended to our needs when we asked them.'

'We arrived in the restaurant at 9.34 (to be exact), only to be told that the kitchen closed at 9.30 and we were too late for dinner!'

The Expert View

In any business, it is a mistake to invest in facilities for customers without training staff in customer care. Success means building good relationships with customers, and good service means loyal customers. Poor customer service and poor maintenance of customer relations can mean long-term damage to an organization's reputation and, eventually, loss of profitability. Solutions include better staff training and rewards for good customer care, a commitment to maintaining good customer relations, and an effective system for responding to complaints and feedback.

Lynette Ryals, Professor of Strategic Sales and Account Management
Cranfield School of Management

Discussion

- 1 Based on the information in their brochure, what would you expect as a customer at Limewood Spa? Do you think they are living up to their good reputation? Why / why not?
- 2 Is it important to act on customer feedback? How much do customers' comments affect business?
- 3 How should Limewood Spa respond to the negative customer feedback?

Task

- 1 Limewood Spa needs to do something about the bad feedback it has received from some customers. The hotel manager has decided to contact a firm of business consultants for advice. Work with a partner. Student A, turn to File 07 on page 137. Student B, turn to File 13 on page 138. Read the information and follow the instructions.
- 2 You are now at the arranged meeting. Brainstorm some ideas for how the hotel can offer better customer service and guarantee customer satisfaction. Discuss your ideas and what you are going to do.
- 3 Present your ideas to the rest of the class.

Case study

File 03 | Unit 2

Business communication skills, Exercise 8, page 15

Student A

You went to the Project 1 meeting. Your partner went to the Project 2 meeting. Call your partner to find out what's happening with Project 2. Then, tell your partner about Project 1. These are the things you need to know.

Project 1 – organizing a training day for staff

- Venue for training session – room booked
- Hotel for trainers – Victoria Hotel has available rooms, trying to negotiate discount
- Lunch – nothing so far. Need someone to book caterers and negotiate payment.
- Information pack for trainees – need to ask trainers to send schedule and summary of training day
- Transport between hotel and office for trainers – need to book taxis

Project 2 – raising money for a local children's charity

- Posters and leaflets?
- 10 km sponsored run?
- Charity sale?
- Other?

File 04 | Unit 2

Case study, Task, Exercise 2, page 17

Group A

You are working on the venue and all the equipment.

Your responsibilities:

- Organizing the installation of the dance floor, the sound system, the toilets, and the kitchen equipment.
- Painting and decorating the whole building.
- Buying plants and furniture for the relaxation zone.

Your progress: All the equipment has been ordered. The energy-generating dance floor is ready to install, and the kitchen and toilets have been installed.

Problems: You need a specialist electrician to complete the work on the dance floor and link it up to the sound system and the lights. The company you booked has pulled out and you need to find a replacement.

File 05 | Unit 4

Case study, Task, Exercise 2, page 29

Student A

Summarize these results for your partner. Do not read out the figures, but compare the results of last year and this year.

Example: The number of staff using public transport is a great deal lower than ...

	Last year	This year
% of staff using public transport	59	36
% of staff walking or cycling to work	22	21
% of staff sharing a car to work	11	23

File 06 | Unit 5

Business communication skills, Exercise 3, page 32

Student A



You are the facilities manager for a chain of hotels in Singapore and Thailand. Call your partner to ask about the services they offer. Ask if a visit is possible. Give this information to your partner.

- A chain of exclusively 5-star hotels.
- Some of the hotels have gym facilities that are eight years old.
- There are twelve hotels in total. Two have no gym facilities.
- You are speaking to your finance manager about the budget next week.

File 07 | Unit 5

Case study, Task, Exercise 1, page 35

Student A

- 1 You are the hotel manager. Read some more reviews from recent customers.

Customer feedback

'The customer service is a well deserved 1 star!!'

'When we eventually arrived at the hotel after bad directions the Duty Manager was really rude to my wife as I was parking the car.'

'The TV stopped working on the first day and although they promised to fix it, nothing happened.'

'The staff, on the whole, I am sorry to say, were very abrupt and were most definitely not trained in customer service.'

- 2 Call Student B who works for a business consultancy.
 - Explain that you are calling to ask for some help. You want to improve your customer reviews.
 - You would like the hotel to have an image that would attract business people wanting to relax and take a break from their busy lives.
 - This is high season and staff are all very busy, but you usually have some time free on Monday mornings and you have a half day off on Wednesday afternoons.

File 08 | Unit 7

Business communication skills, Exercise 5, page 45

Student A

Read this email, make notes, then update your partner.

To: All administrators
From: Head of Administration
Subject: New security measures

As many of you are aware, we've recently been having a number of problems with the underground car park. In one case, an employee had her bag stolen from her car. As a result, we've decided to install CCTV in all parts of the car park and in the corridors around the offices.

By the end of the month, you will see these cameras around the building. The cameras are connected to TV screens at reception.

File 09 | Unit 12

Starting point, Exercise 1, page 72

- | | |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1 / 2 vacuum cleaner (1901) | 4 photocopier (1938) |
| 1 / 2 instant coffee (1901) | 5 Velcro (1948) |
| 3 parking meter (1935) | 6 handheld calculator (1966) |

File 10 | Unit 6

Case study, Task, Exercise 1, page 41

Student A

You are the Human Resources Director of a Swedish company that is working closely with an Indian company on a joint venture in India. Many of your staff are now based in India. You are meeting with your Indian colleague. You have both received complaints from your own employees working on the project in India.

- 1 Read through the information below before you begin.
- 2 Take turns to exchange information. Tell your partner about a problem below that your Swedish employees are having. Your partner will try to explain why. Then your partner will tell you a problem his / her Indian employees are having. Use the 'Business etiquette' information below to explain the possible reasons for the problems.

Problems reported by Swedish employees

'My local Indian team members are always late for meetings. It's such a waste of my time having to wait so long for our meetings to start.'

'No wonder we are missing deadlines – my Indian colleagues take really long lunches – I hardly leave my desk all day! And I start work earlier.'

'My colleague never finishes a job when she says she will – I'm finding it really hard to plan my own workload.'

'The managers that report to me never consult me – they often just ask their staff to do things that are not in the best interests of the project.'

Sweden – Business etiquette

The working day: The working day often starts early, at 8.00 a.m. or earlier, and lunch is often only a half-hour break at around midday.

Concept of time: Arriving at meetings on time and starting them promptly are very important. If you are going to be late for any reason you must phone and let someone know. Being late is seen as poor etiquette.

Communication styles: Swedish communication style is direct and open – people say what they think. This can seem rude but is not meant to be so.

Status and hierarchy: Equality is an important social value in Sweden. Swedes like to establish relationships on an informal level and at work they usually address everyone by his / her first name.

File 11 | Unit 2

Case study, Task, Exercise 2, page 17

Group B

You are working on the launch party event.

Your responsibilities:

- Booking the DJs and other acts.
- Organizing the special events, such as ethical clothing and make-up displays.
- Ordering all the food and drink for the event.
- Hiring and training staff.

Your progress: You have started booking people and so far the response is good. You have found local suppliers for most of the food and drink. You have advertised for staff and have a number of candidates. You need to interview candidates, hire them, and set up a training day.

Problems: The famous DJ you booked is no longer available. You have found a replacement but he is asking a lot of money which will take you over budget. You still need to find a supplier of organic beer.

File 12 | Unit 4

Case study, Task, Exercise 2, page 29

Student B

Summarize these results for your partner. Do not read out the figures, but compare the results of last year and this year.

Example: The number of staff arriving late is a great deal higher than ...

	Last year	This year
% of staff arriving late	53	87
% of staff doing flexitime	33	55
% of staff unable to find alternative parking (within walking distance of the company)	43	44

File 13 | Unit 5

Case study, Task, Exercise 1, page 35

Student B

You work for a business consultancy. Student A calls you. Ask for more information.

- What sort of reviews has the hotel received? What are the main problems?
- What sort of image does the hotel want to project?
- Arrange to visit the hotel. You are free on Thursday and Friday this week or Tuesday and Wednesday next week.

File 14 | Unit 5

Business communication skills, Exercise 3, page 32

Student B

You are the facilities manager for a chain of hotels in Croatia. Call your partner to ask about the services they offer. Ask if a visit is possible. Give this information to your partner.

- A chain of 3-star and 4-star hotels near the beach.
- One of the 3-star hotels has a fitness gym which is fifteen years old. You want to update that one and have new gym facilities in your other hotels.
- You have one 4-star hotel and three 3-star hotels.
- You have a comfortable amount set aside for installing these facilities.

File 15 | Unit 6

Case study, Task, Exercise 3, page 41

- 1 Have a film made showing day-to-day business and the lives of employees in the Swedish company and day-to-day business and lives of employees in the Indian company. It would include interviews with staff describing what they do and how they go about their jobs. Show this to all employees.
- 2 Set up a virtual chat room so that colleagues can communicate anonymously with each other to air their problems, find out what the reasons might be, and to share thoughts about their own cultures.
- 3 Get an external trainer to run a training course for Swedish and Indian managers about how to raise intercultural awareness. The course includes role-plays and language training.
- 4 Have a 'culture sharing meal / day' where Swedish and Indian colleagues spend a part of the day sharing their cultural background with each other over Indian and Swedish food.
- 5 Bring Indian managers to Sweden for a visit to observe how Swedish employees go about their day-to-day business. These managers would then report their observations to their Indian employees.

File 16 | Unit 16

Case study, Task, Exercise 1, page 101

Student A

Mission: Face-to-face market research in local supermarket. Get customers to taste the tea.

Result: Not good because

- some customers don't ever drink tea
- other customers like the taste but think the price is too high
- many customers have never seen this brand in the supermarket before.

Conclusion: Need to persuade supermarkets to make tea more prominent on the shelves. Offer special deals.