



Customer care excellence in community pharmacies

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Definition of customer care

Customer care refers to the actions, attitudes, and behaviours used to meet customer needs and improve satisfaction before, during, and after service delivery.



CUSTOMER CARE EXCELLENCE
FOR PHARMACY DISPENSERS

WHO IS THE CUSTOMER?

Internal Customers

The colleagues and staff within your organization. Success starts with how we serve each other—cleaners, dispensers, and management.

External Customers

The patients, clients, and visitors who seek our products and services. They are the primary source of revenue and our core mission.

"Customers dictate our operations: from meeting frequencies to bonuses and promotions."

Internal customers

INTERNAL CUSTOMERS



Internal customers are the people within your organization who rely on your work and whom you rely on to get your job done.

They are your teammates. When you serve them well, the whole organization wins.

EXAMPLES AND THEIR IMPACT ON BUSINESS SUCCESS

EXAMPLE	HOW THEY SUPPORT YOU	IMPACT ON BUSINESS SUCCESS
 MANAGERS Provide leadership, direction, resources and support.	• Set goals and priorities • Provide guidance and feedback • Approve resources and solutions	 Clear direction and support improve performance, motivation and help achieve organizational goals.
 ACCOUNTANT Handles finances, payments, budgeting and reporting.	• Processes payments and salaries • Manages budgets and expenses • Ensures accurate financial information	 Good financial management ensures profitability, proper cash flow and sustainable growth.
 DISPENSERS Assist in preparing and supplying medicines accurately.	• Dispense medicines correctly • Check stock and prepare orders • Support patient counselling	 Accuracy and teamwork reduce dispensing errors, increase patient safety and customer satisfaction.
 CASHIERS Handle billing, payments and customer transactions.	• Bill accurately and efficiently • Provide good customer service • Maintain transaction records	 Efficient service reduces waiting time, improves customer experience and increases sales.
 SECURITY OFFICERS Ensure safety and security of people and property.	• Protect staff and customers • Prevent theft and illegal activities • Maintain a safe environment	 A safe environment builds trust, protects assets and supports smooth daily operations.



KEY TAKEAWAY

Treat your internal customers with respect, communicate effectively and support them well—together, you create a stronger, more successful organization.

How to care for internal customers

- ❖ Share the company vision
- ❖ Provide job description and Key performance indicators
- ❖ Provide 360 performance appraisal
- ❖ Involve them and create systems
- ❖ Have clear reporting lines
- ❖ Organize regular meeting
- ❖ Pay them promptly
- ❖ Respect one each and avoid shouting at them
- ❖ Provide the sales target and reward high performers

EXTERNAL CUSTOMERS



External customers are people or organization's outside your business who receive your products or services.

**They are the reason your business exists.
Their satisfaction drives your success and growth.**

WHO ARE EXTERNAL CUSTOMERS?

In a community pharmacy, external customers include:



PATIENTS

People who buy medicines, health products and use pharmacy services.



CAREGIVERS AND FAMILY MEMBERS

Those who support patients in purchasing and using medicines.



PRESCRIBERS (DOCTORS, NURSES, CLINICS)

Healthcare professionals who prescribe and refer patients to the pharmacy.



HEALTH INSTITUTIONS AND BUSINESSES

Hospitals, clinics, companies and organizations that buy medicines or services.



SUPPLIERS AND BUSINESS PARTNERS

Companies that supply medicines, products and services to the pharmacy.



THE COMMUNITY

The general public who trust and rely on the pharmacy for health needs.

THEIR IMPACT ON BUSINESS SUCCESS



Bring revenue and sustain the business.



Their satisfaction builds trust and loyalty.



Happy customers recommend your pharmacy to others.



Repeat business leads to growth and profitability.



Feedback helps improve services and quality.



KEY TAKEAWAY

External customers are at the heart of your pharmacy's success. Understand their needs, serve them well, and build long-term relationships. Happy customers mean a stronger, more successful pharmacy.

Taking care of your external customers

- ❖ Offer personalized service
- ❖ Ensure consistent availability of a wide range of medicines and cosmetics
- ❖ Offer competitive prices
- ❖ Offer quality medicines
- ❖ Ensure consistent opening and closing time
- ❖ Get both negative and positive feed back
- ❖ Ensure organized and clean environment
- ❖ Timely communication in case of prepayment

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- ❖ Offer uniform to staff
 - ❖ Use standard operating procedure to prevent dispensing error
 - ❖ Offer additional free services like BP measurement etc
 - ❖ Follow up on the patient after treatment
 - ❖ Availability of referral list of specialists with contacts

WHAT CLIENTS CONSIDER A GOOD CUSTOMER SERVICE IN COMMUNITY PHARMACY



FRIENDLY AND WELCOMING

- Greet customers with a smile.
- Make them feel comfortable and valued.



GOOD COMMUNICATION

- Listen carefully to their concerns.
- Explain medicines clearly in simple language.



PROFESSIONAL AND RESPECTFUL

- Treat every customer with respect.
- Be polite, patient and trustworthy.



EFFICIENT AND TIMELY SERVICE

- Attend to customers promptly.
- Reduce waiting time and avoid delays.



ACCURATE AND SAFE SERVICE

- Provide the right medicine, dose and instructions.
- Ensure safety and avoid mistakes.



CARING AND EMPATHETIC

- Show genuine care and concern.
- Understand their needs and health situation.



HONEST AND TRANSPARENT

- Be honest about prices, availability and alternatives.
- No hidden charges or misleading information.



RESPECTS PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

- Keep personal and medical information private.
- Offer a quiet and discreet environment.



RELIABLE AND CONSISTENT

- Consistently provide quality service.
- Keep promises and follow up when needed.



KNOWLEDGEABLE AND HELPFUL

- Have good knowledge of medicines and health.
- Give helpful advice and recommendations.

Customer care is every body's responsibility



The role of pharmacy owner/director

- ❖ Develop a clear customer-care vision
- ❖ Recruit staff with good attitude and integrity
- ❖ Provide orientation and training
- ❖ Ensure adequate staffing and supervision
- ❖ Reward good performance
- ❖ Monitor customer satisfaction regularly



The role of a pharmacy manager

Middle-level managers translate leadership vision into daily practice.

Managers should:

- ❖ Supervise staff performance
- ❖ Monitor workflow and waiting time
- ❖ Coach staff on communication skills
- ❖ Resolve operational challenges
- ❖ Handle escalated complaints
- ❖ Monitor adherence to SOPs
- ❖ Encourage professionalism and teamwork



Responsibilities of a dispenser

Dispensers are the face of the pharmacy and directly influence customer experience.

- ❖ Greet customers professionally
- ❖ Listen actively
- ❖ Clarify customer needs
- ❖ Dispense medicines accurately
- ❖ Give clear medicine instructions
- ❖ Maintain confidentiality
- ❖ Show empathy and patience



Types of customers

- ❖ Elderly customers
- ❖ Authoritative
- ❖ Anebial customers
- ❖ Rude customers

The Elderly Customer

Characteristics

May have hearing or memory problems

How to handle

- ❖ Speak slowly and clearly
- ❖ Repeat important instructions
- ❖ Be patient and respectful



An authoritative patient

Characteristics of authoritative customers

- ❖ Speaks confidently and firmly
- ❖ Wants to control the discussion
- ❖ May question the dispenser frequently
- ❖ Often believes they know the medicine or condition well
- ❖ May compare information from Google or use previous experience
- ❖ Expects fast and professional responses

Amiable customer

- ❖ An amiable customer is friendly, polite, and relationship-oriented.
- ❖ Value communication more than speed or authority
- ❖ Soft spoken and calm
- ❖ Likes warm conversations
- ❖ Appreciates respect and empathy
- ❖ May take time to make decisions
- ❖ Avoids conflict and arguments
- ❖ Loyal when treated well

How to handle authoritative customers

- ❖ Remain Calm and Professional
- ❖ Speak politely and confidently
- ❖ Maintain good eye contact
- ❖ Avoid appearing intimidated
- ❖ Keep your tone respectful and calm
- ❖ Show Competence
- ❖ Give accurate and clear information
- ❖ Avoid guessing answers
- ❖ Listen Carefully



How to handle Amebial customer

- ❖ Be warm and friendly
- ❖ Greet them politely
- ❖ Smile naturally
- ❖ Use a welcoming tone
- ❖ Listen carefully to their concerns
- ❖ Be patient and approachable
- ❖ Explain medicines slowly and clearly
- ❖ Encourage questions
- ❖ Confirm understanding gently

The rude customer

- ❖ A rude customer may speak harshly, complain aggressively, shout, insult staff, or show frustration.
- ❖ The customer may be stressed, sick, worried, in pain, or frustrated by previous bad experiences
- ❖ Can create tension in the pharmacy.

How to handle rude customers

- ❖ Stay calm
- ❖ Do not react with anger
- ❖ A calm response often reduces tension.
- ❖ Allow the customer to speak
- ❖ Avoid interrupting unnecessarily
- ❖ Show that you are listening
- ❖ I understand your concern.”
- ❖ Thank you for explaining the issue.”
- ❖ Avoid proving the customer wrong
- ❖ Focus on solving the problem
- ❖ Never insult the customer back

Complaint Handling in the pharmacy

- ❖ A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction by a customer about
 - ❖ the services
 - ❖ Products
 - ❖ Communication
 - ❖ Environment
 - ❖ professional conduct experienced in the pharmacy.

It should be seen as feedback, not personal attacks.

Customers who complain do not want to leave, they want to be heard

Impact of poor customer care on the Business

THE ECONOMICS OF REPUTATION

9

People told by
Satisfied Clients

VS

21

People told by
Unsatisfied Clients

The "Amplifier Effect": Negative experiences travel more than twice as fast as positive ones in the 21st century.

Common complaints-1

Customers commonly complain about

- ❖ long waiting time and delayed service.
- ❖ Inconsistent availability of drugs
- ❖ Rude staff
- ❖ Abnormal prices
- ❖ Dispensing errors such as wrong medicines or wrong dosages
- ❖ Excessive cutting of medicines
- ❖ Presentation of staff

Common complaints-2

- ❖ Use of phones at work and lack of change
- ❖ Lack of privacy during patient counselling
- ❖ Delayed authorisation in case of insurance
- ❖ Dirty environment or disorganized pharmacy
- ❖ Suspected fake medicines
- ❖ Damaged products
- ❖ Expired medicines

HANDLING CUSTOMER COMPLAINTS USING ACROMEM LEARN

A	ACKNOWLEDGE the customer and their concern	• Greet politely and listen. • Let the customer feel heard and respected.
C	CLARIFY the issue clearly	• Ask simple questions. • Understand the real problem.
R	RESPOND with empathy	• Show you care. • Apologize if needed.
O	OFFER a solution	• Provide options or solutions. • Take action immediately where possible.
M	MAKE IT RIGHT and take responsibility	• Fix the problem. • Ensure the customer is satisfied.
E	EVALUATE customer satisfaction	• Confirm the issue is resolved. • Ask if they need anything else.
M	MAINTAIN the relationship	• Thank the customer. • Encourage future trust and loyalty.
L	LEARN and improve	• Identify the root cause. • Improve systems to prevent recurrence.
E	EDUCATE when appropriate	• Provide clear information. • Help prevent future issues.
A	APPRECIATE the customer	• Show gratitude. • End on a positive note.
R	REASSURE and build confidence	• Reassure them of quality and safety. • Build trust.
N	NURTURE long-term relationship	• Stay connected. • Encourage repeat positive experiences.



Thank you