

ICS FirstImpressions™ aims and objectives

The customer experience is vital to organisational success and how people behave can make a real difference to that experience. Their actions can transform customers into loyal ambassadors who can play a key part in the success of any organisation.

The central aim of **ICS FirstImpressions™** is to provide people in front-line customer service roles with a foundation in the knowledge, understanding and skills needed to become a Customer Service Professional.

ICS FirstImpressions™ will help delegates think about the customer service they provide and learn how to apply best practice so that they support their organisation in developing and maintaining long-lasting customer relationships.

ICS FirstImpressions™ learning and assessment methods

Delegates attend two one-day (or four half-day) workshop sessions during which they carry out a wide range of learning activities. Based around a high quality learning resource – the **ICS FirstImpressions™** Participant Guide – recent research and current best practice is used to introduce delegates to the knowledge, understanding and skills that are needed to become a Customer Service Professional.

Concepts and techniques are fully explained in the workshops, and delegates consolidate their learning through workplace activities in which they apply the basic principles to their own customer service role.

Delegates are encouraged to check their own learning by completing the end-of-module self-assessments. Examples provide extra reinforcement of innovative techniques for dealing with customers and establishing customer loyalty and repeat business. A workplace assignment, which may be customised to meet the needs of the organisation, allows the delegate to make a real difference to the level of customer service in the organisation.

ICS FirstImpressions™ concludes with a multi-choice assessment. Successful delegates will be awarded the ICS Customer Service Foundation Certificate and a free one year Foundation Membership of the Institute of Customer Service.



ICS FirstImpressions™ structure

ICS FirstImpressions™ consists of a Quick Start Guide, six modules and a Workplace Assignment.

Quick Start Guide

- Introduction to **ICS FirstImpressions™**
- Encourages delegates to think about their own customer service role and how it fits into their organisation

1 Basic concepts of customer service

- What is customer service?
- Excellent and poor customer service
- Views of service excellence
- The service offer and value added
- Moments of truth

2 Developing relationships with your customers

- Internal and external customers
- Customer relationships and the customer service process
- Achieving and maintaining a reputation for excellence
- Repeat business through customer loyalty
- Benefits of customer loyalty

3 Communicate effectively

- Why it is important to communicate well internally and externally
- Choose appropriate communication methods
- Effective verbal and non-verbal communication skills in customer service transactions
- Transactional Analysis
- Active listening skills

4 Deliver service excellence through teamwork

- The benefits of team work
- Satisfying your internal customers
- Working in partnership with other organisations
- Clear principles of team working
- Are you part of a winning team?



5 Responding to customers

- Systems for customer feedback
- Resolving problems well
- Service recovery
- Handling difficult customers by staying positive
- Using IT to support your systems

6 The you factor

- Getting fit to become a Customer Service Professional
- Emotional intelligence competencies for customer service
- Dealing with aggressive behaviour
- Happiness through personal attitude and motivation
- Winning more business

Workplace Assignment

The participants will also be asked to complete a workplace assignment, which can be customised to maximise the benefit to both the individual and the organisation.

ICS FirstImpressions™ learning outcomes

At the end of **ICS FirstImpressions™**, delegates have a sound foundation in:

- the basic language and concepts of customer service
- the importance of effective communication in the delivery of customer service
- recognising essential verbal and non-verbal communication behaviours in customer service transactions
- understanding the different ways of team working in the delivery of customer service and why this is important
- the importance of assessing the effectiveness of customer service transactions and different ways of doing this
- methods of communicating with difficult customers and how to recognise and react appropriately to difficult customer service situations.



Features and benefits of ICS FirstImpressions™ for individuals and employers

- **ICS FirstImpressions™** provides delegates with a foundation in the knowledge, understanding and skills needed to become a Customer Service Professional
- **ICS FirstImpressions™** releases the inspiration to deliver exceptional customer service, which means organisations can expect more satisfied customers leading to an improved reputation
- A 20-hour improvement course delivered to meet employers' needs, targeting important areas
- Flexible delivery times, which means the course can fit around busy periods and deadlines, not the other way round
- Interactive and activity based training that is both informative and fun
- A foundation from which to encourage individuals to consider further development, for example by undertaking qualifications in customer service (ICS Professional Awards, NVQs, SVQs, etc)
- Individual Foundation Membership of the Institute of Customer Service is granted to successful delegates, giving them access to the experience of the growing community of Customer Service Professionals across the UK and internationally
- Participant Guide includes a choice of work-based assignments that can be customised to meet the specific needs of employers, which means **ICS FirstImpressions™** can be of immediate benefit to the organisation
- **ICS FirstImpressions™** can be customised to include an organisation's service standards
- **ICS FirstImpressions™** content takes account of the latest industry research on customer service, keeping organisations at the cutting edge of customer service professionalism.



Feedback from Attendees of the Pilot ICS FirstImpressions™ Courses

From Managers of staff who attended:

“My staff are now working as a team, they answer everyone’s telephone instead of walking past like they used to” (Martin Hodge of Hodges Coaches)

“ My staff are now being innovative in their dealings with our customers”
(Karen Dowding, Grovelands Garden Centre Manager)

“ I cannot believe the difference this programme has made to my staff and the Participant Guide is brilliant , I need my managers to go on the same programme now to keep them up to speed!” (Christine Pierce Training Manager Donnington Hotels)

From Attendees:

“Thought I knew all about Customer Service until I went on this programme”

“The Workshops are facilitated in such a way that not only do you have the opportunity to learn and reflect on what you have previously done, you have fun as well.”

“Anyone who is in the customer service business should go on this programme”

“I was disappointed when the programme finished”

“Excellent programme linked to knowledge and skill development.”

“Excellent way to share best practice.”

“Will make sure other members of my team attend as well.”

These quotes are taken from feedback forms of employees working for:

Swindon Borough Council
Wilts Wholesale Electrical Company
Haine and Smith Opticians
The Health Shop Devizes

