

Customer Service

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1.0 Introduction

Providing excellent customer service is fundamental to the successful operation of a VIC. While the Operations Manual Guidelines within this Resource Kit include a section on Customer Service, ([Section C, 2.1](#)) this section provides further information to assist you to deliver excellent customer service.



2.0 Customer Service Policy and Procedures

In order to develop any customer service policies or procedures, you must have a clear understanding of the needs and expectations of your customers – the visitors, local residents, tourism operators, local businesses and organisations you service. Here are some considerations to help you determine your customer service needs:

- identify all points of customer contact, both in person and via other means (example, mail, fax, websites and email)
- who will contact you?
- who will they speak to?
- when are you likely to have this customer contact?
- why does this customer contact occur?
- identify what the customer expects at each point of contact. It may not be personal contact with a staff member, but information provided in written form.
- what are you trying to achieve at each point of customer contact?
- what service level are you currently providing or could you provide to improve customer service?
- what training could you undertake to improve customer service?

Your customer service procedure document should be simple. Show it to someone outside of your organisation to make sure it explains exactly what you are trying to achieve.

Factors to consider at each stage of the customer service process include:

- ensuring customer needs and expectations, including those with specific needs, are correctly identified and appropriate products and services are provided
- ensuring all communication with customers is friendly and courteous
- ensuring all reasonable needs and requests of customers are met within acceptable time frames
- opportunities to enhance the quality of service are identified wherever possible

The issue of 'misinformation' and possible litigious situations arising requires that staff are clear on their approach to delivering information. It would be prudent to clarify with the centre's insurance representative suggested approaches to customer enquiries, for example, providing 'advice' or 'recommendations'.

After considering the above points, the required customer service procedures for volunteers and staff should be documented in your VIC Operations Manual. See [Section C: Operations Manual, 2.1](#) and [2.2](#) for the situations to address in your customer service procedures

3.0 Customer Service Training

VICs have the opportunity to develop and provide staff and volunteers with their own customer service training, based on the information, policies and procedures outlined in this section.

Some VICs may like to consider the delivery of customer service training through an external person or organisation. There are many different options for training as was highlighted in [Section D: Staff Induction, Training & Professional Development](#) previously, including private training providers or TAFE centres. Local industry associations or Chamber of Commerce may also provide training opportunities relating to customer service.

3.1 Aussie Host

AussieHost is a nationally recognised customer service training program that focuses on interpersonal communications, customer relations and service. It builds personal, professional and community pride and inspires a greater commitment to providing better service.

AussieHost's unique approach focuses not only on skill development, but on versatility, innovation, self reliance and self confidence. It ensures that the individual takes responsibility for their service delivery.

The AussieHost Customer Service Program is delivered in a **one day workshop** that covers:

- what is customer service excellence
- work place and professional presentation
- excelling in communication skills
- effective telephone communication
- handling customer complaints and dissatisfaction
- who are your customers and how best to serve them

Options are available to arrange training onsite (subject to appropriate training room facilities).

Please refer to [AussieHost](#) for more information about the program and a list of current Trainers in your region.

Contact Aussie Host:

AussieHost

Telephone: (03) 8660 3334

Email: caroline@aussie-host.com.au or
coordinator@aussie-host.com.au

Website: <http://aussie-host.com.au>

3.2 Online Training

VICs can access a series of [online training guides on sales and customer service](#). The guides include how to develop sales and customer service skills and are available on the Queensland Government's business and industry portal.

The Tourism ekit also offers useful tutorials on digital customer service such as [Tutorial 7 Email Best Practice](#) and [Tutorial 24A Converting a Prospect](#).

4.0 Booking, Confirmation and Cancellation Policies and Procedures

For many VICs an essential part of their operation is the receipt of bookings, providing confirmations and, when necessary, processing cancellations.

As bookings typically follow enquiries, developing systems to support enquiries and encourage staff to convert enquiries into sales is essential.

Many VICs have an online booking service, such as V3, Jewel, Bookeasy or Ticketmates. For VIC's seeking to offer an online booking service, Tourism and Events Queensland has a handy tool, [The Wiz](#) an Online Booking Selection Wizard. The Wiz will help you identify some relevant online booking systems to suit the needs of the VIC.

As well as utilising online booking systems at your VIC, it is preferable to also offer a simple online booking process, with a 'Book Now' button on your website.

Online booking provides many benefits including the opportunity to:

- reach customers who only book online. Customers are online at all times of the day and are looking for simple and quick ways to book with you.
- save time with processing bookings and avoid double handling of data
- automatically update your records without manually entering customer details
- streamline payments online
- instant confirmation of booking for your customers
- display product availability on your website
- have your website become a 24/7 sales agent earning your VIC commissions directly instead of through third party websites.



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For more information on the main online booking services:

- **BookEasy** (07) 5668 2530
support@bookeasy.com.au
www.bookeasy.com
- **V3** 1300 266 582
v3sales@v3sales.com
www.v3leisure.com
- **Ticketmates** (07) 5592 2233
info@ticketmates.com.au
www.ticketmates.com.au
- **Jewel** (03) 9857 3299
richardw@jbs.com.au
www.jbs.com.au

Here are some helpful resources on choosing and using online booking systems:

- Be bookable online – [Digital Ready Training module](#)
- [Online bookings training tutorials](#) – Tourism e-kit
- The [WIZ](#), TEQ’s online booking system selection tool

4.1 What Makes a Successful Booking Service?

Success is based on:

- a well-trained, sales-focused team, able to convert booking enquiries into revenue generating sales
- a streamlined system that ensures booking product is quick and easy for customers
- a booking system that is easy for VIC staff and volunteers to use and maintain
- processes in place for ensuring the information provided on product availability is kept current
- an efficient procedure for processing bookings, tracking advertising campaigns, collating monthly revenue figures and dispatching commission invoices
- considerable time and on-going analysis of the way calls and emails are handled, the words used, the sales techniques used when asking for and closing a sale and the streamlined process taken with each potential sales call
- having phones analysed to know how many calls are being missed and focus on ensuring that the VIC has the best possible phone system to effectively provide every opportunity to capture potential revenue generating calls and in turn convert into bookings
- regularly up-dating regional web-sites and using them both as a sales (booking facility) & marketing tool

When developing a booking, confirmation and cancellation system, VICs must consider the following:

- how will customers contact you? In person, phone, fax, email or online
- what will customers request? Can they book product?
- how will you publicise your fair and equitable terms and conditions for bookings and cancellations?
- how will a request be processed? Is it a direct booking or through an agent?
- how will you know if the product or service is available?
- how will you know prices, including seasonal variations and specials?
- how will you make sure a space, room or seat is kept for the customer?
- what will be your procedure for acknowledging receipt of the booking through confirmation?
- what will be your procedure to receive a deposit or full payment?
- what commission, if any, will the VIC receive?
- how will the VIC forward payment to the tourism product?
- what will be the VIC’s cancellation procedure, including refunds if due? How will this procedure take into account cancellation policies of the operator?

The VIC’s procedures and policies for handling bookings, confirmations and cancellations should be clearly documented in the VIC’s Operations Manual as outlined in [Section C: 2.4 Booking Procedures for Tourism Product](#).



Mossman, Tropical North Queensland