THE COMPLETE LEADER

COACHING GUIDE

CUSTOMER FOCUS

The ability to consistently build long-term relationships based on the delivery of a service, product, or other value to individuals.



LEADERS LEAD OTHERS

One of the 25 leadership competencies

SECTION 01

WHY CUSTOMER FOCUS MATTERS

Customer Focus is one of the 25 core competencies that define a complete leader. As you grow this capability, you'll notice real shifts in how you lead yourself and influence others.

This guide is built for a 90-day journey. You'll explore the foundations, assess where you stand today, practice new behaviors, sidestep common traps, and track your progress, at your own pace or alongside a coach.

WHAT STRONG CUSTOMER FOCUS LOOKS LIKE

- Customers come back, which is what makes a business profitable
- Satisfied customers pass along positive word about you to others
- You anticipate needs instead of reacting to complaints

> **REFLECT**
>
> *Why does Customer Focus matter to you personally? How might developing it change your effectiveness as a leader?*

SECTION 02

FOUNDATIONS OF CUSTOMER FOCUS

THE DEFINITION

The ability to consistently build long-term relationships based on the delivery of a service, product, or other value to individuals.

Like any skill worth mastering, Customer Focus rests on a few core building blocks. Understanding them gives you a vocabulary for your own growth.

THE CORE ELEMENTS

1 **The relationship, not the transaction**

A good salesperson can sell anything to anyone once. Customer focus is what brings them back, and the core of it is forming a relationship.

2 **Reliability**

Meeting every promise and commitment. Don't make promises unless you'll keep them; nothing annoys a customer more than a broken one.

3 **Actions over words**

The one true secret: you will be judged by what you do, not what you say.

REFLECT

Which element feels most familiar? Which one feels like a stretch right now?

SECTION 03

YOUR STARTING POINT

Before you move forward, take an honest look at where you are today. Read each statement and mark how often it's true of your leadership.

I ask my key customers, whether internal or external, how I am doing and what I can do to improve.

☐ Never ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Always

I make promises to my customers sparingly, and keep them rigorously.

☐ Never ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Always

I consciously look for opportunities to exceed my customers' expectations, particularly when it's unexpected.

☐ Never ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Always

I receive unsolicited referrals or endorsements from my customers, whether internal or external.

☐ Never ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Always

I follow through on what I tell customers I will do, on the timeline I gave them.

☐ Never ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Always

I invest in customer relationships between transactions, not only when I need something.

☐ Never ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Always

> **REFLECT**
>
> *Looking at your answers, where is your greatest opportunity for growth? What patterns do you notice?*

SECTION 04

CUSTOMER FOCUS IN PRACTICE

Competencies grow through deliberate practice. Work through the activities below in order, or choose the ones most relevant to your context.

ACTIVITY 01 30 min

Reading Body Language

Understanding what people are expressing without words lets you serve them better.

TRY IT

1. List five emotions or mental states commonly expressed in your workplace.
2. For each, list at least three examples of accompanying body language.
3. Watch for those signals in your next several customer conversations.

ACTIVITY 02 75 min

Listening and Observing

Study how skilled communicators deliver a message, and how it lands.

TRY IT

1. Watch 15 minutes each of three to five formal presentations: a lecture, a briefing, a TED talk.
2. For each, note the main points, why the speaker is expressing them, and how.
3. Ask how you would demonstrate the same points, and whether you'd do it differently.

ACTIVITY 03 40 min

Dealing With a Complaint

Complaints are the clearest information a customer ever gives you.

TRY IT

1. Choose two recent situations where someone was complaining to you.
2. For each, note whether it was difficult from the start or became so, and how you and they reacted.
3. Write what each of you was really trying to say, and what you could have done to understand them better.

ACTIVITY 04 45 min

Ask How You're Doing

The most direct route to customer focus is asking your customers. Plan on three conversations.

TRY IT

1. Identify three key customers, internal or external.
2. Ask each how you're doing and what you could do to improve.
3. Act on one piece of what you hear, and tell them you did.

ACTIVITY 05 20 min

Throw In Something Extra

People love getting more than they thought they were getting, and the gesture doesn't have to be large.

TRY IT

1. For your next several customer interactions, plan one small unexpected addition.
2. It might be extra information on using the product, a future discount, or a genuine smile.

3. Be helpful even where there’s no immediate profit in it, and note what comes back.

ACTIVITY 06 30 min

Anticipate the Need

Anticipating needs and developing solutions beats responding well to problems.

TRY IT

1. List what your customers have asked for most often over the past few months.
2. Identify the need behind those requests that nobody has asked you to solve yet.
3. Develop one solution in advance and offer it.

SECTION 05

COMMON CUSTOMER FOCUS TRAPS

As you practice, watch for these common pitfalls. Naming them now makes them easier to catch in the moment.

01 **Promising to please in the moment**

A promise made to end a difficult conversation becomes the thing that loses the customer. Think before you commit.

02 **The reflex shrug**

“You can’t please all the people all the time” ends the conversation. Giving one complaint real attention may win that person and the referrals that follow.

03 **Selling once**

Bringing in new customers without bringing any of them back isn’t a profitable business for long.

04 **Saying rather than doing**

Statements of commitment to service count for nothing next to what customers watch you actually do.

REFLECT

Which trap feels most familiar? How will you stay aware of it as you practice?

SECTION 06

YOUR 90-DAY PRACTICE

Lasting change comes from a few focused habits, practiced consistently and tracked honestly. Build your plan below, on your own or with your coach.

CHOOSE YOUR THREE HABITS

Based on everything above, which three habits will make the biggest difference in growing your Customer Focus over the next 90 days?

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

BUILD IN WEEKLY ACCOUNTABILITY

Write questions you can answer each week to measure progress and surface obstacles. The best ones are answered with “yes,” “no,” or a number.

Q1 _____

Q2 _____

Q3 _____

Accountability partner: who will you share these with?

_____

Completion date: when will you evaluate & celebrate?

_____

Measurements of success

How will you celebrate?

SECTION 07

GO DEEPER

Keep building your Customer Focus with these resources. Explore them, then capture what stands out to you.

BOOK	**The Complete Leader, Ch. 3.12: Customer Focus** The full framework and examples behind customer focus.
PODCAST	**The Complete Leader Podcast** Episodes 12, 79, 80 & 81 explore customer focus.
ONLINE	**Customer Focus competency library** Videos, articles, and podcasts at TheCompleteLeader.org.

> **CAPTURE YOUR INSIGHTS**
>
> *As you work through these resources, which ideas most apply to your own growth in Customer Focus?*

KEEP GOING

YOU'VE GOT THIS

Developing Customer Focus is an investment in yourself and everyone you lead. Return to this guide often: revisit the activities, reread the traps, and celebrate small wins along the way.

Every complete leader started exactly where you are now.