

Customer Service Representative

WAGES AND EMPLOYMENT TRENDS

New York City

2006 Entry-level hourly wage	\$9.96
2006 Median hourly wage	\$15.96

New York State

Job growth outlook 2004–2014 (from 124,080 in 2004)	+13%
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JOB CHARACTERISTICS

What do customer service representatives do?

- Confer with customers by telephone or in person in order to provide information about products and services, to take orders or cancel accounts, or to obtain details of complaints.
- Keep records of customer interactions and transactions, recording details of inquiries, complaints, and comments, as well as actions taken.
- Resolve customers' service or billing complaints by performing activities such as exchanging merchandise, refunding money, and adjusting bills.
- Check to ensure that appropriate changes were made to resolve customers' problems.
- Contact customers to respond to inquiries or to notify them of claim investigation results and any planned adjustments.
- Refer unresolved customer grievances to designated departments for further investigation.

- Determine charges for services requested, collect deposits or payments, or arrange for billing.
- Complete contract forms, prepare change of address records, and issue service discontinuance orders, using computers.
- Obtain and examine all relevant information to assess validity of complaints and to determine possible causes.
- Solicit sale of new or additional services or products.

In what type of conditions do customer service representatives work?

- **Contact with others.** Requires contact with others (face-to-face, by telephone, or otherwise).
- **Telephone.** Frequent telephone conversations.
- **Face-to-face discussions.** Frequent face-to-face discussions with individuals or teams.
- **Indoors, Environmentally Controlled.** Requires working indoors in environmentally controlled conditions.
- **Sitting.** Requires time sitting.

EMPLOYEE CHARACTERISTICS AND QUALIFICATIONS

How much education must a customer service representative have?

A high school diploma or GED is usually required; some employers may require vocational training or job-related course work too.

What kind of *licensing* must a customer service representative have?

Customer service representatives do not require licensing.

How much *work experience* should a customer service representative have?

Some work-related skill, knowledge, or experience is helpful but is usually not required.

What type of *job training* does a customer service representative need?

Anywhere from a few months to one year of working with experienced employees.

What are the most important *abilities* a customer service representative should have?

- **Oral comprehension.** The ability to listen to and understand information and ideas presented through spoken words.
- **Oral expression.** The ability to verbally communicate information and ideas so others will understand.
- **Deductive reasoning.** The ability to apply general rules to specific problems to produce answers that make sense.
- **Problem sensitivity.** The ability to tell when something is wrong or is likely to go wrong.
- **Speech clarity.** The ability to speak clearly so others will understand.

What are the most important skills for a customer service representative to have?

- **Active listening.** Giving full attention to what other people are saying, taking time to understand the points being made, asking questions as appropriate, and not interrupting at inappropriate times.
- **Reading comprehension.** Understanding written sentences and paragraphs in work related documents.
- **Monitoring.** Monitoring/assessing performance of yourself, other individuals, or organizations to make improvements or take corrective action.
- **Speaking.** Talking to others to convey information effectively.
- **Time management.** Managing one's own time and the time of others.

RELATED OCCUPATIONS

- Counter and Rental Clerks
- Retail Salespersons
- Telephone Operators
- Bill and Account Collectors
- License Clerks
- Eligibility Interviewers, Government Programs
- Interviewers, Except Eligibility and Loan
- Reservation and Transportation Ticket Agents and Travel Clerks
- Insurance Policy Processing Clerks

SOURCE O*NET Summary reports and occupational databases. Retrieved May 2008, from <http://online.onetcenter.org/>.