


	Current Number of Workers 2006	Projected Number of Workers 2016	% Change to 2016	Average Annual Openings	 Customer Service Representatives SOC # 43-4051	
Regional	2500	3200	28.00%	140		
Texas	214,450	280,050	30.60%	12,535		
Education/ Training Time	Is License Required?	Wage Rate \$/Hr. 2008 Regionally	Percent Female	Average Age	Job Turnover	Why Most Job Openings Occur
HS+	No	\$10.73	71.5%	36.6	Average	Equal Growth/ Replacement

JOB DESCRIPTION

Interact with customers to provide information in response to inquiries about products and services and to handle and resolve complaints. *May be pathway to Executive Secretary/Administrative Assistant.*

WHERE DO WORKERS FIND JOBS?

Grocery Stores
 Business Support Services
 Agencies, Brokerages, and Other Insurance Related Activities
 Nondepository Credit Intermediation
 Depository Credit Intermediation
 Insurance Carriers
 Wired Telecommunications Carriers
 Wireless Telecommunications Carriers (except Satellite)
 Electronic Shopping and Mail-Order Houses
 Employment Services
 Management, Scientific, and Technical Consulting Services
 Local Government, Except Education

RELATED COLLEGE PROGRAMS

CIP 520406 Receptionist
 CIP 520411 Customer Service Support/Call Center/Teleservice Operation

IMPORTANT KNOWLEDGE

ARTS AND HUMANITIES
 * English Language
 BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT
 * Administration and Management
 * Clerical
 * Customer and Personal Service
 ENGINEERING AND TECHNOLOGY
 * Computers and Electronics
 MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE
 * Mathematics

IMPORTANT SKILLS

CONTENT
 * Active Listening
 * Reading Comprehension
 * Speaking
 PROCESS
 * Active Learning
 * Monitoring
 RESOURCE MANAGEMENT SKILLS
 * Time Management
 SOCIAL SKILLS
 * Service Orientation

IMPORTANT ABILITIES

AUDITORY AND SPEECH ABILITIES
 * Speech Clarity
 * Speech Recognition
 IDEA GENERATION AND REASONING ABILITIES
 * Deductive Reasoning
 * Problem Sensitivity
 VERBAL ABILITIES
 * Oral Comprehension
 * Oral Expression

NATURE OF THE WORK: Customer Service Representatives

Customer service representatives are employed by many different types of companies throughout the country to serve as a direct point of contact for customers. They are responsible for ensuring that their company's customers receive an adequate level of service or help with their questions and concerns. These customers may be individual consumers or other companies, and the nature of their service needs can vary considerably.

All customer service representatives interact with customers to provide information in response to inquiries about products or services and to handle and resolve complaints. They communicate with customers through a variety of means--by telephone; by e-mail, fax, or regular mail correspondence; or in person. Some customer service representatives handle general questions and complaints, whereas others specialize in a particular area.

Many customer inquiries involve routine questions and requests. For example, customer service representatives may be asked to provide a customer with their credit card balance, or to check on the status of an order that has been placed. Obtaining the answers to such questions usually requires simply looking up information on their computer. Other questions are more involved, and may call for additional research or further explanation on the part of the customer service representative. In handling customers' complaints, customer service representatives must attempt to resolve the problem according to guidelines established by the company. These procedures may involve asking questions to determine the validity of a complaint; offering possible solutions; or providing customers with refunds, exchanges, or other offers, such as discounts or coupons. In some cases, customer service representatives are required to follow up with an individual customer until a question is answered or an issue is resolved.

Some customer service representatives help people decide what types of products or services would best suit their needs. They may even aid customers in completing purchases or transactions. Although the primary function of customer service representatives is not sales, some may spend a part of their time with customers encouraging them to purchase additional products or services. Customer service representatives also may make changes or updates to a customer's profile or account information. They may keep records of transactions and update and maintain databases of information.

Most customer service representatives use computers and telephones extensively in their work. Customer service representatives frequently enter information into a computer as they are speaking to customers. Often, companies have large amounts of data, such as account information, that can be pulled up on a computer screen while the representative is talking to a customer so that he or she can answer specific questions relating to the account. Customer service representatives also may have access to information such as answers to the most common customer questions, or guidelines for dealing with complaints. In the event that they encounter a question or situation to which they do not know how to respond, workers consult with a supervisor to determine the best course of action. Customer service representatives use multiline telephones systems, which often route calls directly to the most appropriate representative. However, at times, the customer service representative must transfer a call to someone who may be better able to respond to the customer's needs.

In some organizations, customer service representatives spend their entire day on the telephone. In others, they may spend part of their day answering e-mails and the remainder of the day taking calls. For some, most of their contact with the customer is face to face. Customer service representatives need to remain aware of the amount of time spent with each customer so that they can fairly distribute their time among the people who require their assistance. This is particularly important for customer service representatives whose primary activities are answering telephone calls and whose conversations often are required to be kept within set time limits. For customer service representatives working in call centers, there usually is very little time between telephone calls; as soon as representatives have finished with one call, they must move on to another. When working in call centers, customer service representatives are likely to be under close supervision. Telephone calls may be taped and reviewed by supervisors to ensure that company policies and procedures are being followed, or a supervisor may listen in on conversations.

Job responsibilities can differ, depending on the industry in which a customer service representative is employed.