

CUSTOMER SERVICE CERTIFICATIONS: A BEGINNER'S GUIDE



You work in customer service, but you want to up your skills. Professional organizations offer customer service certifications programs. Upon completion, you earn an official certification that can boost your job outlook. These courses teach best practices and provide real-life scenarios for individuals who are new to a service industry or focused on becoming a more marketable job candidate.

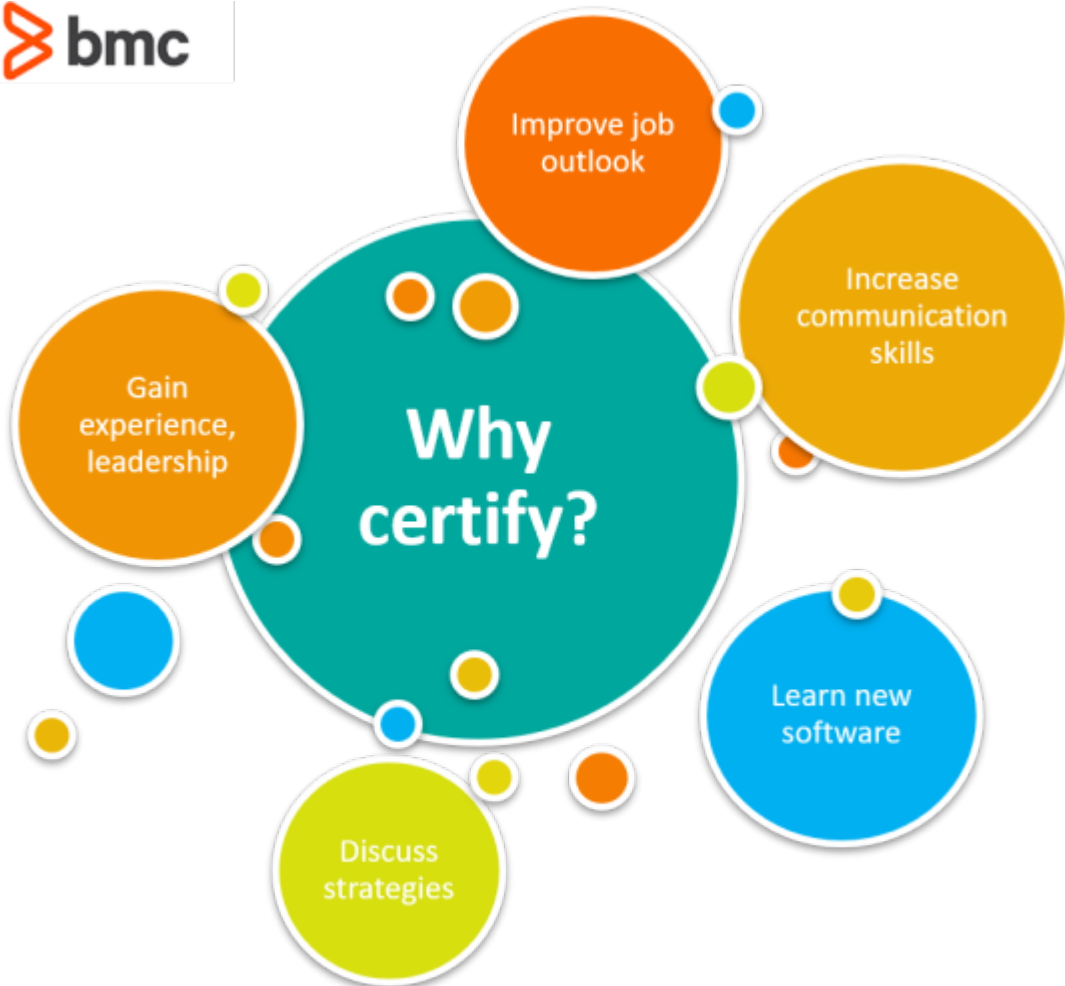
Certain courses also provide specific training for job progression within customer service. Certifications may be designed for growth in management, technical support, telecommunications, customer care, and help desk positions.

In this article, we'll look at the basics of customer service certifications, including types of certifications, benefits, examples, and FAQs.

Purpose of professional certifications

While collegiate and graduate programs provide a foundation for long-term career goals, many certification courses focus on job-specific training. Among many benefits, earning a certification is a way to:

- Gain leadership training
- Learn communication skills
- Practice working with popular industry software
- Discuss strategies for handling difficult customer service situations



Some benefits of earning a professional certification

With many certifications available, these courses range from a general field introduction to programs for developing a specific skillset or pursuing a management role.

Types of customer service certifications

Many certification programs focus on job-specific roles. These include:

- Call Coordinators
- Service Dispatchers
- Help Desk Personnel
- Tech Support
- Customer Care
- Senior Support Professionals
- Support Analysts

Courses may be unique to an industry, such as those focused on retail, food service, or hospitality programs. One example of a [certification course recommended by HubSpot](#) "covers topics like handling inquiries and complaints from customers as well as reading stressful situations to determine the best outcome. The skills and fundamentals obtained from this training program are essential for delivering consistent customer satisfaction." [This short course provided by Alison](#) focuses specifically on Customer Service Training.

Business News Daily provides information on the vast number of help desk functions and technical

support roles that customer service certifications assist with. Ed Tittel and Mary Kyle's review of [top help desk certifications](#) reports that "A greater number of credentials that style themselves as verifying technical support skills are also available, where many such credentials focus on specific sets of vendor platforms and products."

Each of these focused courses may provide hands-on training and develop core competencies related to the software and technologies used in specific industries.

Leadership training for customer service job candidates

Customer service certification programs that focus on leadership training and development are designed for those hoping to quickly excel within a chosen field. These courses cater to team leaders, staff supervisors, senior management, and even future executives. Many future focused candidates chose this type of course in order to comprehensively understand the connection between service level employees and overarching business goals.

Programs tailored to staff supervision, management and other leadership positions include:

- Team Lead
- General Manager
- Senior VP
- VP
- Staff Trainers
- Senior Director

[Courses designed for customer service leaders](#) focus on topics ranging from increasing market share, building customer loyalty, improving customer retention, recognizing and developing direct reports, managing and training staff, analyzing customer service performance, and optimizing technological solutions.

Benefits of getting certified

Completing any certification program can [offer many benefits](#). Here are some common ones.

Job specific training

Programs focused on real world job situations prepare job applicants for what to expect on day one in a new customer service position. This practicum supplements textbook studies provided by secondary education. Course attendees discuss current best practices for handling common customer service scenarios.

These courses prepare job seekers for handling customer complaints, managing customer expectations, de-escalating customer dispute calls, and discussing common situations encountered within specific industries.

Candidate marketability

Another common goal in gaining professional credentials is to stand out from other candidates. The job market is competitive. Standing out among your competition can be especially difficult for applicants without years of job experience to add to a resume. Or, perhaps you're breaking into a

new field altogether, which demands overcoming obstacles. New hires may struggle with understanding situational nuances, mastering industry terminology, and maneuvering the customer service structure within different businesses.

Upward mobility

Earning a customer service certifications may support customer service employees in moving up in the company hierarchy and seeking positions with a higher job salary. HDI, one of the top certification associations for the tech support industry, offers courses tailored managerial roles.

Increased salary

Many course attendees seek out HDI certifications in order to progress their careers and increase their salaries. The program provides many benefits, as [Software Advice.com](https://www.softwareadvice.com) reports that "Professionals holding HDI certifications earn a starting salary that is 5 percent higher than those without them."

Customer Service Certification FAQs

How long does it take to earn a customer service certification?

Customer service certification courses range in length and delivery format. While some courses demand only a few hours of online training, other intensive courses require weeks of attending in-person classes taught by company agents. Many courses are available as either online or in-person training.

How much do customer service certifications cost?

Some courses are designed for job seekers and can be independently attended. Other courses are administered by individual employers and provided as part of the onboarding process for new hires. Because certifications are specific to each field and vary in topic and depth, the cost per course can range from free or employer provided to a fixed cost.

What companies offer CSCs?

Organizations that provide customer service courses and certifications include: The Customer Service Institute of America, Alison, HDI, Service Strategies, Hubspot Academy, EdX, Universal Class, Bonfire Training, Business Training Works, SkillPath, WorkLifeBalance, GoSkills, LiveChat, The Success League, Dale Carnegie, SkillSoft, SimplyHired, Indeed, LinkedIn Jobs, and LinkUp.

Evaluating certification programs

Are you new to your industry? Do you have customer-facing experience? Are you planning on pursuing a leadership role? Getting certifications provides on-the-job level training to prepare for a career as well as professional credentials to stand out as a job applicant within a chosen field.

Individuals from a variety of backgrounds may pursue certifications to help bolster their resumes. These certification programs prepare current employees for future promotions and train job

applicants for tasks they may encounter once they obtain a position within the field of customer service.

When choosing which certification to pursue, consider the most popular of official options—the more widely known, the more immediately these certifications can help you.

Additional resources

For more information on IT certifications and career paths, check out these BMC Blogs:

- [Why Certify? The Top 5 Benefits of IT Certifications](#)
- [ITSM Certifications: A Beginner's Guide](#)
- [Top Paying IT Certifications for 2020](#)
- [Guide to IT Leadership & Best Practices](#)
- [Service Desk Support Analyst: Roles and Responsibilities](#)
- [Creating a Strong Service Desk Culture](#)