

Customer Service Representative of the Year 2016 : Caroline Vaughan

Caroline is a part time Customer Service Advisor within the Assistance Services Department of DAS Legal Expenses Insurance Ltd. Her job role is to answer calls from customers on a variety of emotive problems and ensure her customer gets the help they need, when they need it. Typical call enquires can be for legal advice, legal claims, health advice, counselling, claim notifications for household and motor claims, emergency contractor requests as well as answering a variety of ad hoc queries. Our callers can be distressed, confused, emotional, vulnerable, angry or a mixture of all. It is the advisor's job to ascertain the help they need and how our services can provide this help. Caroline's skill in finding the right remedy for her customers is exceptional.

Caroline is a relatively recent member of the Assistance Services Team, joining us in December 2014. Caroline has proven time and time again that she goes above and beyond in demonstrating an excellent customer service. Caroline shines above her peers by providing a unique customer experience, with an unparalleled ability to empathise with the caller and to make sure they get the right help at the right time. Caroline is the advisor that every other advisor aspires to be.

So what is it that makes Caroline excellent in her job? Caroline has a genuine empathy for the customers that call, establishing heart felt rapport whilst maintaining a professional demeanour. Caroline's professionalism and aspiration to give great customer service reaches across the whole spectrum of customers, even when dealing with distraught or challenging customers. Caroline's ability to display patience and understanding breaks through to get to the crux of the customer's issue, and to seek the resolution that they need.

When a customer is distressed Caroline provides comforting words of support which are not just shown in her words but in the tone of her voice. She is able to see the need of the caller and to hand hold the customer throughout, allowing them to go at their own pace and not to second-guess their needs. Caroline is able to pick up on the subtle nuances in the customer's voice to gauge their emotional needs, to ensure the customer is okay (sometimes asking them if they want to get a glass of water) and then to provide the confidence that we can resolve their issue. Caroline is patient, professional, courteous and re-assuring which engenders a high level of trust that encourages the customer to be confident that we **can** resolve their problem.

Caroline provides the same customer service to angry, belligerent or even rude customers. Caroline's calming manner and willingness to help in challenging situations will break through barriers, to truly understand the customer's problem and to address the want the customer really needs. Caroline's ability to deal with these more difficult calls has been highlighted and forwarded as 'Best Practice Call' and used in training, to help staff understand and better handle fractious customers.

In our department we deal with a variety of bespoke policies and procedures which sometimes can be a little bewildering for a new starter. However Caroline, in spite of working part-time, has an exceptional knowledge of all our policies, with an insight to direct the caller to the best outcome we can provide within the remit of our services. In addition her adherence to her daily schedule is consistently high.

Caroline's customer service skill is not only recognised within DAS, but also by our Business Partners. On the 3rd of February 2016, Mark Lee from Wesleyan came in to audit some of the FNOL calls we take on their behalf. One of these randomly picked calls was Caroline's call. Mark was so impressed with the care and attention given to our mutual customer he specifically requested if he could congratulate Caroline in person. Meeting with Caroline he told her that her call was 'outstanding'. This is a first for our organisation for a business partner to ask to congratulate the advisor in person.

Caroline, as well as being a role model to her colleagues, is always willing to assist her colleagues where she can. This is particularly noticeable when we have new employees. Caroline is the 'go to' person for a new starter to sit next to and to listen to her calls. Caroline's patience and ad-hoc training during this time proves invaluable. Some feedback we have received is that "Caroline was really helpful and explained things clearly and in a way that I understood. Her customer service was really good and I picked up on how she controlled the conversation but in a friendly and approachable way to ease the customers.", "Last Monday, I was struggling with an out of hours Irish call (I was also a bit emotional due to a family member having health issues) right when I was about to finish for the day and she took time to come across and guide me through what to say. I really appreciated her help. "

Caroline will support the team with her eagerness to call customers back when requested from a Team Leader, often where a sensitive call back is required for a distressed or challenging customer. Caroline's patience and hand-holding throughout her call enables her to provide the best service. Caroline has good awareness of our service levels and will, unprompted, log onto her phone before her shift starts to clear a call queue. Caroline takes ownership of her own development, always willing and eager to learn more, she is always happy to come into work on her rest days to attend various learning workshops or to attend important meetings. In addition Caroline, although a part time worker, will help the department by agreeing to work late on short notice, work extra days when we are short staffed or to change her shifts when needed to cover sickness or when we are hit by an unexpected influx of calls. There is no doubt that not only does Caroline make a huge impact with our customers, but with the department as well.

To summarise, Caroline is dedicated, compassionate and hard working. If you were distressed and needed someone to resolve your problem you would want to speak to Caroline.

PERFORMANCE STATS APRIL 2015 – APRIL 2016

Name Caroline	Target	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sep
Average Monitoring Scores for Month	80%	85	87	83	88	84.9	80.69
Monthly Difference			+2	-4	+5	-4	-4
Adherence	85 % or More	90.78	93.4	95.16	86.41	84.25	75.46

Name Caroline	Target	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	March	April
Average Monitoring Scores for Month	80%	85	86.63	89	86	86.5	83.5	89
Monthly Difference		+5	+1	+3	-3	+5	-3	+5.5
Adherence	85 % or More	92.76	94.4	94.78	95	94	92	TBC

EVALUATION COMMENTS FROM TEAM LEADERS

Call 11/07 2015 11:25 “You acknowledged the caller's loss and showed the right level of empathy, which I thought was nicely done as family losses can be a bit sensitive. You really warmed to the caller showing empathy and a confident tone. This was a nice little call that showed a professional manner in dealing with a sensitive issue.”

Call 9th December 2015 16:33 “you have shown perseverance to push through the obstacles to get to the crux of the problem and resolve the customer's issue. This was a difficult customer to deal with, however you have used placating words and empathy to resolve the issue, this was successful enough to actually get the customer to apologise to you at the end of the call.”

Call 1st February 2016 10:12 “You have given the caller some really nice comforting phrases that is something that I think the caller really needed, the empathy is clearly shown in both your words and also the tone of your voice. Your hand holding throughout the call has prompted the caller to say that "I really appreciate you being so understanding" –

Call 8th April 2016 11:47 “Customer was distressed and vulnerable, your pace and tone was professional, courteous and re-assuring although the customer started off very emotional your hand holding turned this around (with a compliment that you were “brilliant”)