

## UNI Call Centre Charter

The "UNI Call Centre Charter" is a set of broad principles relating to the call centre industry. The aim of the charter is to set a reasonable industry standard and identify those call centres that are committed to the key principles embodied in that standard.

Call centres that commit to the "UNI Call Centre Charter" will be publicly acknowledged on the UNI web site, by UNI's affiliates and in the industry. This will make them attractive to clients, business partners, potential employees, employment agencies, the community and their customers.

Meeting the minimum standards as provided in the "UNI Call Centre Minimum Standards" will be a guide to call centres as to whether they meet the "UNI Call Centre Charter" principles. This will assist in defining a standard acceptable to the industry and rewarding those call centres that are investing in their staff and customers. In addition, it will provide a guide to customer service professionals as to what the standard should be and which prospective employers meet it.

UNI believes that the competitive advantage of call centres signatory to the "UNI Call Centre Charter" should be the skill of their staff and professionalism of their operations. This is both advantageous to customer service professionals and the call centre industry:

### Key principles of the "UNI Call Centre Charter":

- Provision of minimum workplace conditions pay and benefits as outlined in the "UNI Call Centre Minimum Standards";
- Performance targets to be based on providing high quality customer service and not solely on quantity of calls taken or made;
- Increased training and development that
  - Provides employees with skills and product training to facilitate the development of meaningful careers and quality service for our customers;
  - Provides broad based, portable and accredited training and skills development
- Priority to retaining and re-training existing staff in the event that new technologies or products that require new skills or qualifications are being introduced
- Work organisation that enables communication of changes in company policy and product developments prior to implementation so that employees can increasingly participate in key decisions regarding improvements to the provision of customer service
- Issues to be considered when locating a call centre should not be based on costs only but instead on other key operational requirements such as
  - Being close to one's customer base
  - Demand for skilled and multilingual staff and
  - Access to a competitive telecommunications infrastructure
- Provide sufficient staffing level to ensure that
  - There are enough staff to effectively handle customer requirements;
  - Employees are able to attend training and staff meetings;
  - Backfilling of leave and other absences;
  - Employees are able to manage work, family and community responsibilities.
- Respect for core labour standards as set in the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work

# UNI Call Centre Minimum Standards

## 1. General

- Written working contract/ terms of employment
- National legislation and agreements shall be respected, trying wherever reasonably possible to create stable employment
- Managers and supervisors to support the employee's commitment to quality customer service, including providing all employees with adequate support and advice and a flexible approach to performance reviews

## 2. Health and safety

- *Ventilation, lighting and heating*
  - Light, ventilation, air filtering and heating systems need to be designed to cope with continued occupation, also at night-time
- *Ergonomic design of telephone and computer equipment, chairs and desks in order to avoid back strain and RSI*
  - Training on how to sit, work and use the equipment safely/ advise by ergonomic consultant/ adjustable work station and equipment (headset, ear piece etc)
- *Protection for workers using visual display units in order to avoid eyestrain and voice and hearing loss*
  - Employer to assess the risks of working with visual display units
  - European directive on display screen equipment
  - Ten minute screen breaks at least every two hours
- *Work-related stress and bullying*
  - Staff should spend no more than about 60%-70% actually taking calls
  - Performance targets based on providing high quality customer service and not solely on quantity of calls taken or made
  - Protection from violence at work (abusive callers)
- *General*
  - Dedicated space for breaks
  - Food & drink provision, also for night workers
  - Adequate toilets and washing facilities
  - (Non-)Smoking policy
  - First aid provision and employee security, especially if staff are arriving for work or leaving work very late at night (large percentage of the call centre staff may be women, who are more vulnerable to attack)

## 3. Working time and workload

- Maximum 40 working hours per week
- Rest period of 12 hours every working day and 48 hours continuous break every seven days
- Flexible working hours can benefit employees as well as management, but must be introduced by agreement
- Call centre staff need to have influence over the hours and shifts which they are asked to work (child care!!)
- Shift rosters should be drawn up with adequate notice to staff
- Employees must have flexibility in the arrangement of working hours to ensure that they can lead normal, active social lives
- Employees must have the ability to take time off away from work, e.g. for care for dependants
- Staffing levels sufficient to ensure:

- there are enough staff to effectively handle customer requirements;
- employees are able to attend training and staff meetings;
- backfilling of leave and other absences;
- employees are able to manage work, family and community responsibilities

#### 4. **Surveillance, electronic monitoring and privacy**

- Monitoring may only be allowed when the purpose is known and acceptable;
- The collected data may only be used for that purpose;
- The employee must know that he/she is being monitored or can be monitored;
- Listening in may only occur incidentally and not continuously;
- The employee must be allowed access to the registered data and be able to correct inaccuracies;
- Taping must be destroyed after a certain period.

#### 5. **Pay and Benefits**

- Link pay levels to demonstrable skills
- Direct pay comparisons with 'traditional' employees and clear pay levels/structures in order to avoid High staff turnover
- Extra premia payments for working evenings, weekends, or public holidays
- Bonus payments no more than 10% of gross wages
- Paid holidays according to national law, but at least 4 weeks per year
- Holiday pay at least what the call centre employee earned on average over the last 12 weeks before the holiday and include overtime and regular bonuses
- Sick pay
- Maternity & Paternity pay/ leave
- Two month's notice of dismissal
- Statutory redundancy pay after 1 year of employment

#### 6. **Equal opportunities and training**

- Regular, broad based, portable and accredited training and skills development for all employees
- Priority to retaining and re-training of existing staff in the event of introduction of new technologies or products that require new skills or qualifications
- Provide employees with the tools to resolve, as far as practicable, a customer's concern in the one call
- Provide employees with skills and product training to facilitate the development of meaningful careers and quality service for our customers

#### 7. **Workers representation**

- Right to form and join trade unions
- Right of trade unions to represent workers in
  - Collective bargaining
  - Settlement of disputes
  - Negotiations and consultations in all matters affecting jobs and training
- Workers representatives not be discriminated against and full access to all workplaces necessary to enable them to carry out their representation functions Negotiation of specific collective workplace agreement that meets the particular needs of the company
- Communication of changes in company policy and product developments prior to implementation so that the employees have input into the decision making process
- Right of free access by employees, trade unions and works councils to corporate email, so that information can be exchanged and communication being established
- Right of free access to the internet to enable them to access trade union websites and other information relevant to their rights at work