I want to start my career as a...
Customer Service Representative

What will I do?
Customer Service careers are available at most, if not all, businesses and organizations. Careers can range from insurance, banking, retail and even healthcare services. This career choice allows individuals to pursue many different kinds of jobs. The skill sets learned in Customer Service can be used in almost all job roles.

What are the important facts?
Job Growth
Customer Service is a great starting career because an applicant can work in different environments such as retail, technology, and insurance.

In California, there are projected 8,520 new job openings in Customer Service between 2012 and 2022, which is a 16% job increase in the state--this level of employment increase means there will be plenty of new jobs in the field.

Wage/Salary
Average hourly wage in San Jose is $15, with an annual salary of $31,200. In Silicon Valley, the living wage for a single person is $16.00 an hour.

Required Training
Customer Service Representatives can receive training through Career Technical Education or a Community College.

There are two routes to becoming a Customer Service Representative:
1. Career Technical Education
2. Community College

What are typical tasks?
- Consult with customers either over the phone, in-person or via e-mail.
- Relay information to clients regarding products a company is trying to sell.
- Keep records of customer complaints, inquiries, or general comments about the products.
- Recommend improvements for products based off customer reviews.
- Review insurance policy claims.
- Help patients either exchange or return items.

What would make this career a great fit for me?
- You enjoy working with people.
- Have strong verbal and written communication skills.
- Able to work on a team and take on leadership roles.
- You are reliable, dependable, and responsible.

Where can I get the training I need?
- De Anza College
- Evergreen College
- Foothill College
- Gavilan College
- Job Corps
- Generation
- Mission College
- San Jose City College
- West Valley College
- Work2Future

I want to start my career as a... 
**Customer Service Representative**

**Step 1**
Learn the skills employers say you need. Begin your education.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Career Technical Education</th>
<th>Community College</th>
<th>Four-Year University</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Certificate of Completion in Customer Service</td>
<td>Associates Degree or Certificate of Completion in either Communications, Business, or Marketing</td>
<td>Bachelor's Degree in Hospitality Management, Business, Communications, Marketing, or Public Relations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Job Corps</td>
<td>• De Anza College</td>
<td>• California East Bay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Generation</td>
<td>• Evergreen College</td>
<td>• Chico State</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Step 2**
Find a job that fits your level of education and training.

**Career Pathways for Customer Service Representative**

**Entry Level Positions:**
Customer Service Representative  
Certificate of Completion or Associates Degree. The AS degree can be in Communications, Business, or Marketing.

**Employers:**
- Major Box Stores
- Front Desk Representatives
- Event Planning Firms

**Labor Market Information:**
- Average hourly wage in San Jose begins at $15, with an annual salary of $31,200

**Mid-Level Positions:**
Assistant Manager  
Management positions need 2-3 years of work experience as a Customer Service Rep. & a Bachelor’s Degree. It is HIGHLY recommended individuals pursue a Bachelor’s Degree. This will make individuals a more valuable candidate.

**Employers:**
- Hotel Management
- Marketing Firm
- Journalism

**Labor Market Information:**
- Average hourly wage in San Jose begins at $21.00, with an annual salary of $45,560.

**Advanced Skills:**
General and Operation Managers  
It takes 3-4 years of work experience as an Assistant Manager AND a Bachelor's Degree to move up from Assistant Manager to General and Operational Manager.

**Employers:**
- Marketing Firms
- Advertising Firms
- Tech Field

**Labor Market Information:**
- Average hourly wage in San Jose begins at $67.05, with an annual salary of $139,470.

In order to advance from Entry-Level to Mid-Level positions, it takes 1-2 years of work experience at an entry-level position AND higher education. These are not the exact career paths individuals have to follow. This is meant to be more of an example.
What are the Skills Employers Look for in a Customer Service Representative?

**Employers are looking for someone who:**

- Has either an Associate's Degree in Communications, Business, or Marketing. The other option is a Certificate of Completion in Customer Service.
- Has strong customer service skills.
- Is able to handle fast paced environments and sometimes long work hours.
- Has the ability to be on your feet for long periods of time.
- Enjoys working on a team and collaborating with other team members.
- Has the ability to maintain calm during stressful situations.
- Has strong conflict management skills when dealing with customers who may not be in the best mood.
- Has strong oral and verbal communication skills.
- Enjoys working with people.
- Has the ability to smooth talk people into an honest sale.
- Is a reliable and dependable employee.

**Employers may also call me:**

- Sales Associate
- Cashier

**Moving up: Customer Service Representative**

*Below are a few examples of how you can eventually move up in your career. These career advancements are options for when you are ready to advance from entry-level to mid or advanced-level positions.*

**Example Career Ladder:**