Client Dialogue Standards Course for Service Heads: Tone Guides, Written Replies and Review

7 – 11 December 2026
Amsterdam

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Programme Summary

Client dialogue standards are the subject of this one-week training course for heads of customer service and service managers at managerial level, ending in a communication standards pack for one service team. In many services each agent speaks in a personal style, so customers meet different tones and promises. The programme moves from what customers need to hear, to diagnosis of real calls and replies, then to design of tone guides, templates and escalation wording, and finally to a review routine a sponsor can approve. Mars Training Centre UK delivers this programme on client dialogue standards to mixed-organisation cohorts.

The Business Case

Customer service communication shapes how a customer judges an organisation after every call, chat and written reply. Unclear wording causes repeat contacts, unclear promises cause complaints, and a cold tone turns small problems into formal grievances. Leaders who set shared standards, supply tested templates and review replies steadily can explain service quality with evidence and direct coaching where it is needed.

- Repeat Contacts: Fall as replies state the next step, the owner and the timing in plain language.
- Complaints about Tone: Reduce as tone guides and escalation wording are applied by every team member.
- Reply Rework: Falls as templates are tested and reviewed against agreed quality criteria.

Principles and Evidence Base

- ISO 18295-1 Customer Contact Centres: Supplies the service requirements against which communication standards and monitoring are reviewed in Sessions 1 and 4.
- ISO 10002 Complaints Handling Guidelines: Frames how acknowledgement, explanation and response wording is set for dissatisfied customers in Session 3.
- Plain Language Principles: Direct the redesign of written replies towards short sentences, clear next steps and familiar words in Session 3.

Intended Participants

- Heads of customer service who answer for the consistency of what customers hear and read.
- Service managers who coach teams across calls, chat and email.
- Quality leaders who design review forms and sampling plans.
- Complaints and escalation leads who set wording for difficult situations.

Typical settings include retail banking, telecommunications, utilities, insurance and public service counters.

Learning Outcomes

1. Participants will be able to diagnose the causes of unclear, cold or inconsistent replies in call and message samples.
2. Participants will be able to construct tone guides that fit the service promise across channels.
3. Participants will be able to design reply templates and escalation wording for difficult conversations.
4. Participants will be able to evaluate replies against agreed quality criteria with calibrated scoring.
5. Participants will be able to prioritise coaching topics from review findings.
6. Participants will be able to justify a communication standards pack to a service sponsor.

Programme Structure

Day 1: Client Dialogue Standards and Customer Needs

What does the customer need to hear and read, and how is that judged?

- Customer Need Statement
- Service Promise Wording Sheet
- Channel Expectation Map
- ISO 18295-1 Requirements Review
- Communication Baseline Scorecard

Day 2: Diagnosing Calls and Written Replies

Where do current replies confuse, irritate or mislead?

- Call Extract Listening Grid
- Written Reply Clarity Audit
- Repeat Contact Reason Log
- Tone Marker Checklist
- Complaint Wording Review

Day 3: Designing Tone, Templates and Difficult Conversations

Which wording keeps replies clear, respectful and consistent?

- Tone Guide Draft
- Plain Language Rewrite Method
- Reply Template Library
- Escalation Wording Ladder
- ISO 10002 Acknowledgement Wording Check

Day 4: Quality Review and Coaching

How are replies sampled, scored and turned into coaching?

- Quality Criteria Form
- Scoring Calibration Exercise
- Sampling Plan Sheet
- Coaching Conversation Guide
- Management Dashboard Layout

Day 5: Communication Standards Pack for One Team

Do the earlier tools form one pack that a sponsor can approve?

- Applying the Session 1 Baseline Scorecard
- Testing the Session 2 Tone Marker Checklist
- Checking the Session 3 Template Library
- Rehearsing the Session 4 Quality Criteria Form
- Completing the Standards Pack and Sponsor Note

Methodology

The programme uses a structured exercise built on a prepared file for two service teams, one in banking and one in telecommunications, with call extracts, chat transcripts, email replies and complaint letters. Participants work in small groups, mark samples, rewrite replies and defend their wording choices to peers.

- Suggested activity: Marking a set of replies for clarity and tone and comparing scores in pairs.
- Suggested activity: Rewriting a refusal message so that the reason and next step are clear.
- Suggested activity: Drafting escalation wording for an angry caller and testing it in a role play.

Capstone Output

Each participant completes a communication standards pack for one service team. It holds a service promise statement, a tone guide, a reply template set, escalation wording, a quality criteria form and a coaching plan. The pack is used at work to brief a service sponsor and to agree wording and review routines with the team leaders.

Frequently Asked Questions

Is a client dialogue standards course suitable for service managers who have not written templates before?

Yes. Client dialogue standards are taught through a prepared sample file, forms and worked rewrites. The course assumes experience in customer service or quality management, but no earlier training in writing or linguistics.

Which standards do client dialogue standards rest on?

Client dialogue standards rest on ISO 18295-1 for customer contact centres, ISO 10002 for complaints handling and plain language principles for written replies.

How is the pack from client dialogue standards used at work?

You use the standards pack to brief your sponsor, agree tone and templates with team leaders and set the sampling and coaching routine for replies.

How do client dialogue standards differ from a communication skills programme for agents?

Client dialogue standards concentrate on the tone guides, templates and review routines set by leaders, while a communication skills programme concentrates on how each agent speaks and writes.