



Helping your clients with their business

The standards for Business Support

Standards to help you help your clients

? How do you make sure the information you provide is up to date?

? How do you develop your clients' trust and confidence in you?

? When do you refer them to specialists?

? What do you need to know about basic business practice in order to give good advice?

? How do you turn them into a "client for life"?

The standards for Business Support will help you if you work with small businesses, sole traders or the self-employed.

Widely researched with proven good results

The Standards for Business Support have been widely researched among small business support staff. They replace the SFEDI produced standards for Business Information and Business Counselling which have been used by thousands of business advisers and business information staff over the past five years.

New standards for all

The new standards are being used by all the major business support organisations throughout the UK. These include:

- Institute of Business Advisers.
- Investors in People UK.
- LEDU (Northern Ireland).
- National Federation of Enterprise Agencies.
- Prince's Trust.
- Scottish Enterprise.
- Scottish Princes Youth Business Trust.
- Small Business Service.
- Technology Means Business.
- Approved centres for Business Counselling and Business Information.
- Other training organisations.

Using national standards

"... has given me the ability to give a more effective delivery of accurate business information specific to our clients."

"... has focused my direction. Most importantly, it has provided me with further knowledge into upgrading my skills to provide SMEs with a higher quality mentoring and benchmarking service."

"... enabled me to make improvements to how I carry out my role. The whole process has further confirmed my view that you are never too old to learn."

Improved

Although people found the old standards useful, they find the new Standards for Business Support to be even better. The standards:

- do not exclude those who work only with start-ups or growth businesses;
- present the roles of business support in one framework;
- define exactly what business advisers need to know and understand about actual business practice;
- cover more subjects in greater detail;
- are more flexible;
- have been awarded a Crystal Mark by the Plain English Campaign.

Where to get the Standards

To order the Standards, visit the SFEDI website at www.sfedi.co.uk, or phone the SFEDI Helpline on 0114 209 6269. You will also find details of supporting products.

How to use the Business Support standards to help your clients (a summary)

Business Information Staff

Business Advisers

Knowledge & Understanding of Key Areas of Business

- | | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| a Strategic overview | c ICT and E-commerce | e Innovation and technology |
| b Finance and accounting | d People | f Marketing and sales |
| | | g Operations and processes |

Additional Units

Organising Information

8 Organise information and material

- 8.1 Classify information and material.
- 8.2 Catalogue information and material.

9 Index Information

- 9.1 Identify and locate information.
- 9.2 Analyse and describe information.
- 9.3 Arrange information into an entry.
- 9.4 Arrange entries into an index.

10 Create new material to preserve information

- 10.1 Identify requirements for new material.
- 10.2 Collect and evaluate information.
- 10.3 Create records of new information.

Customer Service

11 Monitor and solve customer service problems

- 11.1 Solve immediate customer service problems.
- 11.2 Identify repeated customer service problems and options for solving them
- 11.3 Take action to avoid the repetition of customer service problems.

12 Promote continuous improvement

- 12.1 Plan improvements in customer service based on customer feedback.
- 12.2 Implement changes in customer service.
- 12.3 Review changes that promote continuous improvement.

Common Core Standards

working relationships

1 Deal with clients effectively

- 1.1 Handle enquiries from clients
- 1.2 Help clients to choose suitable services
- 1.3 Help monitor and improve services

3* Build effective relationships with colleagues and contacts

- 3.1 Build the trust and confidence of other people
- 3.2 Develop personal networks and networking relationships
- 3.3 Identify ways to improve networks and services

2 Build effective advisory relationships with clients

- 2.1 Set up and maintain relationships with clients
- 2.2 Help clients to act for themselves
- 2.3 Monitor services and identify improvements

giving information and advice

4 Work with clients to give them the information they need

- 4.1 Find out what your client needs
- 4.2 Reach agreement with clients about how their information needs will be met
- 4.3 Research and present clients with the information they need
- 4.4 Help clients to get extra information and support

5 Help clients to meet their business needs

- 5.1 Help clients to work out their business needs and objectives
- 5.2 Review the client's business and help clients choose from the options available
- 5.3 Give feedback to clients
- 5.4 Reach agreement with clients over what course of action they should take

professional development

6 Develop your ability to provide business information

- 6.1 Develop business research and information handling skills
- 6.2 Keep up to date with any new developments
- 6.3 Monitor your work activity
- 6.4 Develop your professional skills and performance

7 Develop your ability to provide business advice

- 7.1 Develop a general business knowledge base
- 7.2 Keep up to date with any new developments in all key areas
- 7.3 Monitor your work activity
- 7.4 Develop your professional skills and performance

Additional Units

Helping clients improve their business

13 Design interventions which contribute to improved client performance

- 13.1 Evaluate the extent and nature of the intervention needed.
- 13.2 Determine methods of achieving the objectives of the intervention.

14 Implement interventions which contribute to improved client performance

- 14.1 Assemble the resources necessary to implement interventions
- 14.2 Agree systems, processes and methods of working
- 14.3 Implement and oversee the agreed interventions
- 14.4 Monitor and review the effectiveness of interventions

Team Development

15 Develop teams and individuals to enhance performance

- 15.1 Identify the development needs of teams and individuals.
- 15.2 Plan the development of teams and individuals.
- 15.3 Develop teams to improve performance.
- 15.4 Support individual learning and development.
- 15.5 Assess the development of teams and individuals.
- 15.6 Improve the development of teams and individuals.

*For Business Information Staff and Business Advisers

Improved business performance

Satisfied clients

Small Firms Enterprise Development Initiative