

# Customer satisfaction

## Role and systems of the Customer Support Center

Day-to-day consultations with customers are vitally important activities that facilitate our efforts to ensure we can provide products and services that benefit our customers. We accept inquiries from customers by phone and email and do our best to respond promptly, accurately and sincerely. One of the important roles of the Customer Support Center is to accurately grasp the meaning of customers' inquiries, relay the comments to related organizational units and top management, and promote concrete measures to improve products and services. The Center strives to answer inquiries in a respectful, easy-to-understand manner in order to enhance customer satisfaction. For consultations that require direct customer visits, the Center works in coordination with marketing companies throughout Japan.

### Customer feedback

We categorize our customer consultations into inquiries, applications, complaints, discontinuations/suspensions, changes and others.

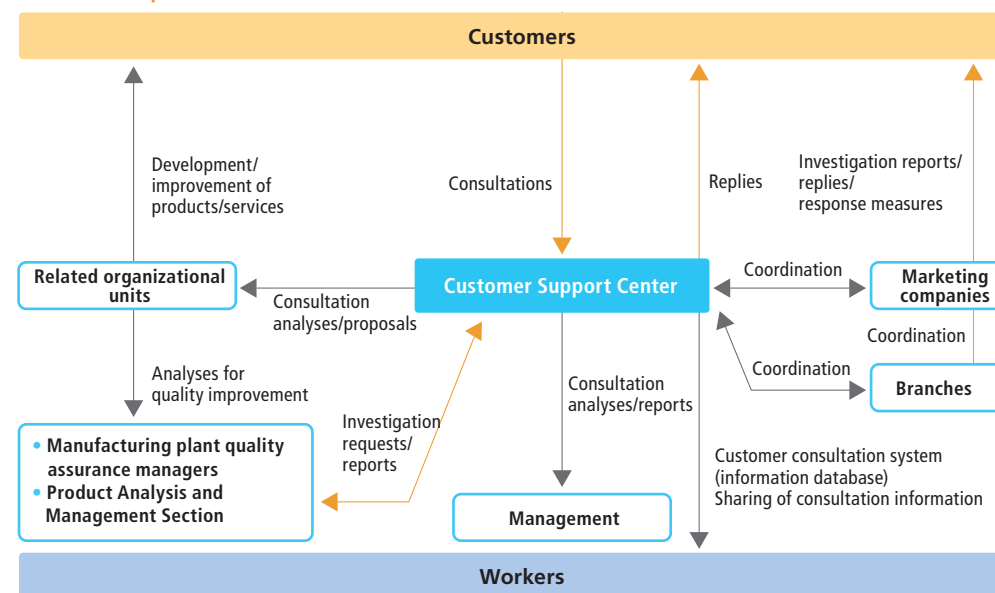
In fiscal 2021, the Center received 32,638 consultations.

From April 20, 2020, the telephone service hours were reduced by two hours to 10 am to 4 pm as part of measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and protect the safety of operators.

### Customer consultation in fiscal 2021

Type	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Inquiries	32,748	29,682	27,886	24,930	24,533
Applications	3,634	2,499	2,215	2,184	1,957
Complaints	4,108	3,858	4,107	3,776	3,339
Discontinuations / suspensions	1,242	1,211	1,112	858	734
Changes	216	210	294	263	250
Others	1,996	2,050	1,871	1,935	1,825
<b>Total</b>	<b>43,944</b>	<b>39,510</b>	<b>37,485</b>	<b>33,946</b>	<b>32,638</b>

### Customer response flow



### Customer Support Center

Toll-Free: **0120-11-8960** (In Japan only)

(10:00 to 16:00, except Saturdays, Sundays, holidays, summer holidays, year-end and New Year holidays, and so on.)

Note: The hours of operation are reduced.

Helpline: **0570-00-8960** (In Japan only)

### Customer communication through social media: Overseas

Yakult's overseas Group companies also use social media to inform and communicate with their customers.

In Brazil, an official TikTok account was launched in June 2022. Together with the existing Facebook, Instagram and YouTube accounts, these channels ensure that we not only share information with our customers but can also respond to inquiries quickly. As of the end of May 2022, we have 43,566 followers on Facebook, 39,977 on Instagram and 8,155 on YouTube.

Facebook and other social media platforms are also used in such other countries as Italy, Vietnam, Thailand, the Philippines, Indonesia and Mexico to provide information and handle inquiries.

## Using customer feedback in products

### ■ Improving visibility of lid marks on multi-packs of Yakult series: Japan

We received feedback from customers saying that instructions for opening multi-packs of *Yakult* series were difficult to understand, so we improved the visibility of the “open here” marks and added a warning on the multi-pack shrink wraps for *New Yakult* series, *Yakult Five*, *Yakult 400* series and *Yakult 1000*.



### ■ Changing the product formulations of Yakult and Yakult LT: Hong Kong Yakult Co., Ltd.

Consumer concern over sugar intake is increasing year by year in Hong Kong due to the rise in obesity and lifestyle-related diseases. In response, Hong Kong Yakult Co., Ltd. in July 2021 made its first change in the formulation of its flagship products, reducing the sugar content and sweetness of *Yakult* and *Yakult LT (Yiliduo LT)* and using stevia, a natural sweetener, in the latter. The changes have resulted in products more in keeping with customer needs.

## Expanding Yakult Delivery Net online ordering service

With a view to improving customer satisfaction as the e-commerce market continues to grow, Yakult launched the Yakult Delivery Net online ordering service in fiscal 2017 and expanded the service nationwide in September 2018. This service offers options for credit card payment and product delivery in a cold storage box, making it possible to deliver products in keeping with diverse consumer lifestyles. As of March 2022, the number of registered users increased 1.6-fold from the previous year to about 270,000, and we hope to expand the number of users to 390,000 by the end of fiscal 2022.

Note: The registration of new users has been suspended due to the shortage of some products (as of August 2022).

### ■ Customer satisfaction improvement in Mexico

To improve customer satisfaction, we have built an organizational structure that can respond quickly to inquiries and complaints received via our website and social media. We also send follow-up emails to customers who have placed orders using the *Pedido en línea* online ordering service to gauge their level of satisfaction. This information is then shared with the marketing department to help improve customer satisfaction.

## Communicating with customers and providing health information

### ■ Plant and institute tours

For a deeper understanding of our products and the Group's commitment to the environment and producing safe products that offer peace of mind, we proactively offer tours of our plants. The tours are not just for members of the general public of all ages but are also popular as destinations for elementary school field trips and environmental programs and as sources of information for opinion leaders and people with a particularly strong interest in health issues.

To simplify the way customers can make reservations for plant tours, we introduced an online reservation system in September 2018. Additionally, to make it easier for the elderly and customers with disabilities to comfortably tour our plants, we are introducing elevators, ramps, and handrails in plant tour areas to make each plant more accessible to all.

In fiscal 2021, when physical visits to our plants were suspended to prevent the spread of COVID-19, we began offering online tours.

Also suspended since fiscal 2020 due to COVID-19 have been annual festivals at our plants organized with the aim of deepening friendly relations with local communities.

The Shirota Memorial Museum [▶ P.10](#) at the Yakult Central Institute, which is normally open to the general public, has also been closed since fiscal 2020 as a precautionary measure.

### ■ Use of online tools

#### • Shonan Cosmetics Plant

To keep our workers informed about our cosmetics even during the pandemic, the plant conducts online plant tours. These tours also became opportunities to provide information to remotely located workers who cannot easily visit the plant. In the future, we plan to organize plant tours for customers through marketing companies.

### • Dairy plants in Japan

Physical plant tours were cancelled in fiscal 2021 to prevent the spread of COVID-19, and online plant tours were launched. As a result, we are now able to show the *Yakult* production process and the hygiene control measures in place to many more customers, including those living far away and those with limited mobility (officially started in May 2021).

### ■ Virtual plant tours: Yakult (Malaysia) Sdn. Bhd.

Plant tours were cancelled due to the impact of COVID-19, but virtual plant tours were started in October 2020. This enabled not only people who were prevented from visiting the plant due to COVID-19 to take part but also those who live in remote regions to experience the tours. In fiscal 2021, 18,299 people took part.

In addition to Malaysia, online or virtual plant tours continue to be offered in Singapore, Indonesia, Australia, India, Vietnam and Hong Kong and also began in Brazil and the Middle East in fiscal 2021.



Connecting schools online



Conducting an online plant tour in Indonesia

### ■ Healthist

*Healthist* is a magazine first published in 1976 that provides easy-to-understand information to the general public, from the newest discoveries in life science and cutting-edge research to health-related topics and useful information for daily life. Some 50,000 copies of the bimonthly, Japanese-language magazine are published each year. From fiscal 2020, we launched an online version to make the magazine more widely available.

**WEB** <https://healthist.net/en/>



*Healthist*

## Understanding and complying with marketing rules

### ■ Training for Yakult Ladies

Aiming to standardize the service quality our customers receive, we provide training for Yakult Ladies on topics such as product temperature control, personal appearance and basic manners.

To facilitate continuous training and information sharing, we publish a magazine for Yakult Ladies four times per year. "Mind your manners" campaigns were held twice during fiscal 2021. We also introduced a form of study via the internet, through which participants could go over the key points in building trust with customers while preventing the spread of COVID-19. In addition, we used the Safety and Security Clinic, a website where Yakult Ladies can independently acquire information on safety and security and conduct home delivery self-checks, to raise awareness of these issues.

We provide center managers with manuals to help them conduct cosmetics training. Newly recruited Yakult Ladies are given a subsidy to buy basic skin care products so that they have a firsthand understanding of the products.



A study session on delivery quality (Kitaumemoto Center, Yakult Matsuyama Sales Co., Ltd.)

### ■ Training for route sales representatives

To ensure safe and secure product delivery operations, we conduct training on driving and accident prevention during deliveries as well as product temperature control and best-by dates.

We also conduct training for route sales representatives to improve their product knowledge and communication skills so that our customers are given accurate information about our products.

In addition, we provide a suite of personal study tools to be used as required, including an e-learning platform covering subjects such as business manners and maintenance of vending machines and manuals and DVDs on maintaining the freshness of our products and other topics.



Training session for route sales representatives (Yakult Mito Co., Ltd.)

## Honest and responsible advertising

### ■ Establishing an advertising policy

To put into practice our company philosophy of contributing to the health and happiness of people around the world, we established an advertising policy in March 2021 emphasizing response to the changing media environment, highly appealing advertising expressions, and communication activities in compliance with laws and regulations.

#### Yakult Group Advertising Policy

The Yakult Group operates its business globally under the corporate philosophy of “We contribute to the health and happiness of people around the world through pursuit of excellence in life science in general and our research and experience in microorganisms in particular.”

To realize this philosophy, the Group shall increase the engagement of its corporate and product brands with consumers through highly appealing communication policies developed for the changing media environment.

1. Response to the changing media environment
2. Improvement of brand recognition and favorability through highly appealing advertising expressions
3. Promotion of communication activities which comply with laws and regulations and also consider the SDGs

Established: March 30, 2021

In addition, the Yakult Group Advertising Policy includes a section entitled “For Responsible Advertising Activities,” which lists examples of international standards that must be observed and provides details on ensuring compliance.

Please refer to the following URL for the full text of the Yakult Group Advertising Policy:

**WEB** [https://www.yakult.co.jp/english/csr/download/pdf/2022\\_advertising\\_policy.pdf](https://www.yakult.co.jp/english/csr/download/pdf/2022_advertising_policy.pdf)

### ■ Considerations in the production of advertisements

We have put in place internal rules to ensure appropriate and effective advertising and promotional activities. When producing advertisements, we follow the Yakult Ethical Principles and Code of Conduct and comply with relevant laws and regulations such as the Act against Unjustifiable Premiums and Misleading Representations and the Act on Securing Quality, Efficacy and Safety of Products Including Pharmaceuticals and Medical Devices to prevent the use of advertisements that mislead or confuse our customers. In addition, all our advertising and promotions are assessed by various media. We also hold regular workshops for internal staff responsible for advertising to share the latest information and raise awareness to enable the implementation of responsible advertising and promotional activities.

### ■ Internal review for responsible marketing

Yakult recognizes that businesses are expected to conduct fair and responsible corporate activities, which also extends to marketing.

To carry out fair and responsible marketing, we subject the content of all our media communications, such as on TV, radio, newspapers, magazines, the website, YouTube, social media sites, transit advertising, leaflets and point-of-purchase advertising, to preliminary screening and internal review by our Public Relations Department.

Similar to when we create advertising, the review confirms whether the contents comply with related laws and industry-led standards;\* the information we are promoting is factually accurate and scientifically based in accordance with the Yakult Ethical Principles and Code of Conduct; the expressions we use are free from defamation and discrimination; the contents do not take advantage of minors who lack knowledge or choices; and the contents do not mislead or confuse customers, among other points.

In fiscal 2021, we carried out 1,063 screenings and reviews, constantly making sure to prevent issues from arising.

\* Industry-led standards

The code of fair competition for food for specified health uses (FOSHU Fair Trade Council)

<http://www.jhnfa.org/tokuho-kyougikai/kiyaku-1.pdf> (Japanese)

Code of fair advertising practices: Foods with Function Claims

[https://www.jadma.or.jp/pdf/criteria\\_for\\_advertise.pdf](https://www.jadma.or.jp/pdf/criteria_for_advertise.pdf) (Japanese)

The code of fair competition for the labeling of fermented milk and lactic acid beverages

<https://www.nyusankin.or.jp/know/display2/> (Japanese)

## Protecting customers' personal information

### ■ Basic Policy for Protection and Management of Personal Information/Personal Information Protection and Use Manual

We established a Basic Policy for Protection and Management of Personal Information following the full enforcement of the Act on the Protection of Personal Information in April 2005. We revised the basic policy when the act was amended in April 2022, stipulating the items that employees must observe to protect personal information.

We are further promoting efforts to protect personal information by revising our Privacy Policy to include items in response to the legal amendments (such as the publication of additional safety control and other measures and the electronic disclosure of retained personal data), as well as specific provisions on the purpose of use to enable more rigorous management of such information.

### Yakult Group's Privacy Policy

The Yakult Group observes relevant laws and regulations, guidelines and other standards and appropriately handles information of customers whereby a specific individual can be identified, such as name, date of birth, address, telephone number, email address and information like driver's license number containing an individual identification code (hereinafter referred to as "personal information").

The Yakult Group's Privacy Policy covers the following items:

1. Basic policy and definitions
2. Name, address, corporate representative name of the business operator
3. Personal information collection method
4. Purpose of use
5. Joint use
6. Outsourcing of personal information processing
7. Providing personal information to third parties
8. Pseudonymized personal information
9. Request for disclosure, correction, addition, utilization cease or deletion
10. Outline of the security control action of personal information
11. Inquiries

Revised April 2022

Please refer to the following URL for the full text the Yakult Group's Privacy Policy:

**WEB** <https://www.yakult.co.jp/english/privacypolicy/>

### ■ Training for Yakult Ladies

Yakult Ladies often have the opportunity to handle customer personal information in their line of work, and we enforce rules for the handling of this information through training and handbooks. We remind them that utmost care must be taken never to leak or lose any information received while on duty.

### ■ GDPR compliance

To ensure compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) of the European Union, Yakult Europe B.V. monitors the latest conditions and undertakes other activities. The database containing customer feedback has been redesigned to be fully GDPR-compliant. In addition, in response to the July 2020 ruling by the EU Court of Justice invalidating the Privacy Shield—a framework for the transfer of personal data between the EU and the United States—we conducted an investigation into whether personal data is stored within the United States.

\* GDPR: A regulation in EU law governing the protection of personal data in the EU

## Health-focused management

### Statement on Health

#### ■ Initiatives based on our Statement on Health

The Yakult Group sees employee health maintenance and improvement as an investment that can enhance profitability in the long run. Viewing these concerns as a management issue, we promote strategic Health-focused Management and published in September 2017 our Statement on Health. To actively promote Health-focused Management, we established a new, dedicated Health-focused Management Promotion Section within the Human Resources Department in fiscal 2020. While encouraging employees to manage their own health, the Group is also proactively engaged in the health maintenance and improvement of its employees. By further boosting everyone's awareness and keeping them in good health, we aim for continuous and stable business development.

#### Statement on Health

We recognize that the health of our employees is essential to realizing the Yakult philosophy of "contributing to the health and happiness of people," and therefore strive to create safe work environments that offer peace of mind, as well as promote good physical and mental health in our employees.

### Health-focused Management promotion system

