

TRAINEE WORKBOOK

**PROVIDE CUSTOMER INFORMATION AND
ASSISTANCE**

SITXCCS001



HOSPITALITY GROUP TRAINING

ELEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

- | | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| 1. Access and update information | <p>1.1 Source and access information on facilities, products and services</p> <p>1.2 Incorporate information into day-to-day work activities</p> <p>1.3 Share information with colleagues to support the efficiency and quality of service</p> <p>1.4 Identify and use opportunities to update and maintain facility, product and service knowledge</p> |
| 2. Assist customers | <p>2.1 Proactively identify information and assistance needs of customers, including those with special needs</p> <p>2.2 Provide accurate information in a clear, courteous and culturally appropriate way</p> <p>2.3 Where appropriate, assist or instruct customers in the use of equipment and facilities according to safety requirements, or relevant colleagues</p> <p>2.4 Identify and use opportunities to promote internal products and services</p> |
| 3. Seek feedback on services | <p>3.1 Proactively seek customer feedback on facilities, products and services</p> <p>3.2 Observe customer behaviour to inform future service developments and follow procedures for formal customer evaluation</p> <p>3.3 provide information on customer feedback to relevant colleagues</p> |

FOUNDATION SKILLS

Skill	Description
Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interpret sometimes detailed information on predictable customer requests
Writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Record brief notes and basic information
Oral Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listen and respond to diverse customer requests, asking questions to clarify and confirm
Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review own knowledge of information required to assist customers and participate in activities that continuously update it

PERFORMANCE EVIDENCE

Evidence of the ability to complete tasks outlined in elements and performance criteria of this unit in the context of the job role, and:

- provide current, accurate and relevant information and assistance about organisational facilities, products and services to three different customers on three different occasions
- provide above information and assistance in a culturally appropriate manner and according to customer service standards
- maintain and extend personal knowledge of relevant facilities, products and services
- seek informal feedback from customers on above activities.

KNOWLEDGE EVIDENCE

Demonstrated knowledge required to complete the tasks outlined in elements and performance criteria of this unit:

- sources of information, advice and referral on organisational facilities, products and services
- details of organisational facilities, products and services:
 - access
 - cloaking
 - direction or location of facilities
 - facilities for those with special needs
 - food and beverages
 - new activities, events and procedures
 - opening hours
 - operational changes
 - pricing
 - promotional activities
 - ticket sales
 - times of activities or events
- organisational service procedures and standards
- relevant legislation relating to customer service:
 - Australian consumer law
 - equal employment opportunity
 - work health and safety
 - promotions
- organisational policies and procedures to enable ethical and non-discriminatory treatment of client requests and resolution of complaints:
 - communication protocols
 - complaint procedures
 - customer service procedures
 - reporting procedures
 - personal presentation
 - privacy

- record-keeping procedures
- communication mediums required to provide service to clients and colleagues
- conflict-resolution strategies
- awareness of customs and practices of various social and cultural groups within Australia to assist with meeting client needs and expectations in regards to:
 - modes of greeting, farewelling and conversation
 - body language and body gestures
 - formality of language
 - clothing
- services and products within the organisation that may be suited to particular clients
- principles and benefits of enhanced customer service experiences and positive communication.

SOURCE AND ACCESS INFORMATION ON FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Hospitality is a service industry. Every time you enter the workplace you are acting on behalf of that business to provide its customers or guests with vital information. This could be internal or external to the establishment. Below are a few examples, but there will be many more pieces of information that you will be required to know to be able to perform your job role in the Hospitality Industry to the highest standard.

Internal	External
Opening/ closing hours	Where is the nearest supermarket?
Where are the toilets?	How do I get into the city?
Where is the restaurant/bar?	Do you have a bus timetable?
Do you have parking facilities?	Where is the nearest gym?
Do you have a gluten free menu?	How do I book a car rental?
How much does a room cost per night?	How can I buy theatre tickets for tonight?
Do you serve cocktails?	How do I get to the airport?
Do you have Foxtel TV in the rooms?	What tourist attractions should I see?
What time is checkout?	Is there a hairdresser nearby?

Where or how do you access information?

Information on facilities and services available can be found in many places. Before you start working in an establishment try to do some research on the types of information that you may require if you were a customer there. Although this is a great start, you will learn more and more answers to typical questions in your workplace from your colleagues and supervisors or managers. Some sources of information are-

- **The internet**

The internet holds a vast array of information. Typical things you may use the internet for is to check directions, airport transfers, theatre information, etc. It usually is the source of the most accurate information, although be careful that what you find is up to date.

- **People**

People can be very useful for gaining information. Colleagues may pass on information in the form of team briefings, specials information, and by asking them questions. Customers can also provide you with information, so don't think that it is just you giving them the information. An example of this is if a customer mentions to the receptionist that they just had a really great meal at a local restaurant- you can then use this information next time that another guest asks for a recommendation.

- **Workplace documents**

Documents such as training manuals, policies, procedures, safety information, opening times, special menus, wine tasting notes etc can all be great sources of information to help you to better service your guests.

- **Leaflets, brochures and flyers**

These may be external leaflets about a local theatre company production or an internal flyer about a Valentine's Day special being held in the restaurant. Either way, it is useful to know about or be able to have them to hand should a customer ask about them, or if you have the chance to promote them.

- **Other businesses**

Visitor information centres, airports, taxi companies, local attractions, government departments or shopping centres to name a few can provide vital information to you. They can be accessed via the internet, email or telephone. Also, your past experience from working at other establishments can sometimes be useful in your new workplace to assist customers.

INCORPORATE INFORMATION INTO DAY TO DAY WORKING ACTIVITIES

So, you have worked out what information you need. You have gone out and done your research. Now how do you incorporate this into your day to day working activities?

There are many opportunities to use information on facilities and services day to day when working in the Hospitality Industry. Every time that you are approached by a customer there is potential that they might ask you something. Below is a variety of examples;

- **Fast food outlet**
A customer pulls into the drive thru and asks you- 'Do you charge extra for BBQ sauce?'
- **Restaurant**
It is your first day on at this workplace, (but the customer doesn't know that!). Walking through the restaurant a customer stops you to ask for directions to the toilets.
- **Hotel**
A customer approaches the reception desk and asks you for information on 'The Lion King' that is showing at the local theatre tonight.
- **Theme Park**
The fire alarm sounds and you are working in the cafe. Customers are rushing around and calling to you for information on where they need to go.
- **Bar**
A customer is sitting at the bar and asks you what the specials are tonight in the restaurant.

But why do you need to know this information? Being informed with up to date information will help you to provide your customers with excellent service. This will ensure that they have a better experience and in return are more likely to be a repeat customer or tell their friends; generating revenue for the business and securing your job in return.

Of course we cannot anticipate every question that a customer may ask, but having the ability to know where to locate information can help to make this a smooth process to get the information. Take opportunities to ask your colleagues, manager or other external businesses for assistance in these situations too.

Share information with colleagues

Day to day there are many opportunities for sharing information in the workplace. These could include any or all of the following;

- Team meetings/briefings
- Handover logs
- Training sessions
- Casual discussions with colleagues
- Emails

- Newsletters
- Intranet
- Posters, flyers or leaflets, brochures

It is important to share information with your colleagues to promote teamwork and in turn to provide customers with the highest levels of service possible.

Update and maintain facility and service knowledge

Every opportunity should be taken to update your knowledge and to stay current with information on facilities and services.

This can be achieved by;

- Attending staff meetings
- Attending training sessions
- Talking with your customers
- Looking at competitors
- Using the internet to research the latest information
- Attending trade fairs
- Reading Industry Magazines and journals
- Speaking with your colleagues and more experienced workers around you.

IDENTIFY INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE NEEDS OF CUSTOMERS

As an employee in the tourism and hospitality industry, you will be required to identify and meet, if not exceed customer needs and expectations. Customers must be seen as the main focus of your work. How you treat and relate to them will influence the success of your workplace. Customers are entitled to good service and efficient, friendly staff all the time. Without customers there would be no jobs, and the industry would simply die.

Customer needs and expectations are often determined by:

- cultural factors, like language, values, religious beliefs, special dietary meals, comfort requirements
- socio-economic factors, such as level of income and therefore spending capacity
- health factors, such as special dietary meals, degree of mobility or exercise facilities
- available time-purpose of the visit
- age-children, adolescents, elderly people
- personality/moods for example quiet and subdued as opposed to bright and bubbly
- areas of interest, such as hobbies or sporting activities

Whilst customers should be treated as individuals, they all have one thing in common and that is their expectation of service. This may include:

- to feel welcomed and respected
- to be dealt with in a friendly, efficient and courteous manner
- to receive help and assistance when needed
- to be in clean, comfortable surroundings
- to feel recognised and remembered

Location and Activities

The first point to consider is whether a customer is there for business (maybe attending a conference) or as a tourist. Business people have totally different needs to those of holiday guests.

Holiday guests are usually looking for a relaxing, carefree time. There will be fewer time restrictions. They can sleep in and take in the sights at a leisurely pace. A business guest, on the other hand, may need to complete a lot of work in a short amount of time and usually expects prompt and somewhat formalised service from the staff.

Cultural Factors

It is important to be aware of the cultural origins of our guests. Depending on the country they come from, they can have different expectations.

Socio-economic Factors

The amount of money your customers are prepared to pay will influence the type of establishment they will choose. The same customers may choose different establishments depending on the reason for their stay. Let's have a look at the same customers under different economic circumstances.

For example, if someone is on business, and their company is picking up the expenses, they may stay at an upmarket hotel. Another reason, in this case, could be that they are representing their business; they may be meeting clients, to whom they have to convey a certain image. The luxury of a four or five-star hotel is therefore what they are looking for.

The same customers may stay in a budget-style motel or guesthouse if they are on holidays with their families at their own expense. This may be more appropriate for their budget.

You can probably think of many more examples where socio-economic factors influence the type of customers at an establishment.

Health

Customers may have special dietary needs or may be disabled in some way. They may need special facilities or they may be health-conscious. Many establishments have facilities for the disabled and cater for special diets. There are also health resorts, which have special facilities (as required by Australian law) such as ramps, lifts and wider walkways.

Age Factors

Some establishments consciously cater for different age groups. Are your customers mainly families, the elderly or the 18 to 30s brackets? Today there is an increasing number of older citizens, who are active, highly mobile, financially secure and aware of the services they want in the hospitality facilities they choose.

Customers with special needs

Customers with varying special needs will require different services and facilities to aid with their impairment. How you go about assisting them will also vary, in order to meet their individual needs. Below are some examples of the service and facilities you should offer to meet the needs of someone with a particular special need.

Customers with sight impairment

If you have a sight impaired customer, offer to assist immediately as the sight impaired customer may not be able to see where the service provider actually is standing.

Explain organisational features, services provided, and any procedures that require more detail. It is also important to describe how the venue is designed and enquire if they require assistance.

Customers with an intellectual disability

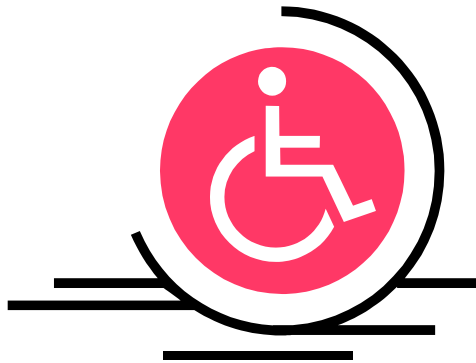
Customers with an intellectual disability may require more time and patience than would be given to a person without any special needs. Use a normal voice tone and don't shout. Keep sentences short and simple but do not be patronising to the customer.

Only explain organisational features, services provided, and any procedures that require more detail if the customer requires it. Ascertain if the customer is with someone who will be able to assist with information if required.

Customers in wheelchairs

If a customer is in a wheelchair ensure you speak to the customer and not the person pushing the wheelchair. Don't assume because a person can't walk, they also have a communication disability as well.

Explanation of organisation features, services provided and wheelchair access points. Offer to assist with parcels, luggage or other items as a matter of courtesy.



Provide accurate information in a clear, courteous and culturally appropriate way

Employees who provide information to customers must be good communicators who can present accurate information in a clear, courteous and culturally appropriate way. They should be able to express themselves clearly and positively to customers in face-to-face situations, over the telephone and in writing.

Courteous means polite and respectful of others. Culturally appropriate communication means communicating in a way that respects and accepts cultural differences.

Employees need to be able to communicate information to people clearly and simply, in a way that means the information is understood. This requires them to ask questions, listen actively.

LEGISLATION

Australian Consumer Law

On 1 January 2011, the **Australian Consumer Law** (ACL) was introduced to replace a number of existing national and State and Territory consumer laws.

Under this law consumers and businesses will have the same rights and responsibilities across the country. The objective of this law is to protect consumers and promote fair trading.

The Australian Consumer Law is a basis for the Competition and Consumer Act 2010, (the new name for the Trade Practices Act 1974).

The *Competition and Consumer Act 2010* will apply to incorporated businesses in Australia. The *Fair Trading Act 2010* will apply to individual traders and incorporated businesses in Western Australia.

The following are examples of how this may affect a business:

- Refund guests where the service/product was not of the standard promised
- Quotations to be fair, clear and honoured for reasonable length of time/according to stipulated period of time
- Where guarantees are required or purchases may be subject to cancellation fees – policy must be stated at time of purchase
- Ensure our products are priced correctly.

Equal employment opportunity/anti-discrimination legislation:

This is a compilation of the *Equal Employment Opportunity (Commonwealth Authorities) Act 1987* that shows the text of the law as amended and in force on 1 July 2016 (the **compilation date**).

- Ensures that people are not discriminated against based on their age, gender, gender history, marital status, family responsibility, family status, pregnancy, breastfeeding, impairment, race, sexual orientation, religious conviction, political conviction, spent conviction.

LISTENING TO CUSTOMERS

Customers are often unclear and unsure when asking for a product or a service. The reason for this is that they often do not know exactly what is available, nor do they know what they really want. This is where you, as a professional hospitality employee, need to practice your listening skills.

This is often difficult in a busy situation. It is worth spending the time to be attentive when listening to what the customer has to say to avoid misunderstandings later. Don't interrupt when the guest is speaking. Maintain eye contact with the guest, nodding your head, with your body facing the guest to indicate that you are giving him/her your full attention.

When listening to customers' requests, remember you are the expert with all the information. You need to make the best use of this time to promote your products and services. The guests may be speaking slowly or loudly to convey to you that they want to be understood. If you don't have the information, be honest and say so. You need to identify and respond to situations where you can refer a query or problem to a colleague or supervisor.

Do not promise anything you can't deliver but be confident in your explanations. With good listening skills you can often improve on the service or product that the customer initially wanted, leading to repeat business from these customers and their friends.

Good listening skills go hand in hand with good oral communication. Proper eye contact and good body posture can facilitate effective listening. The more involved a listener is the better chance there is that the message will get through correctly.

This means that when you listen to a guest asking you a question or to a supervisor giving you some instructions, you have to actively listen and have eye contact. You have to show interest and you may ask questions. You can combine this with the following rules:

- Stop talking
- Avoid distractions
- Concentrate on what the other person is saying
- Provide feedback to the other person to ensure you have understood

Listening is an active process. It requires your participation and involvement. It is a skill that is difficult for most of us. Practice and training can improve your ability to listen well.

Verbal Communication



Verbal or oral communication is the art of talking. In the hospitality industry, you will have lots of opportunity to talk to the guests, other staff members and your supervisor or manager. Handling this type of interaction with others effectively can have a dramatic effect on your career as well as on your personal life. When you communicate with others, it could be:

- at a departmental meeting
- talking to a guest
- giving instructions to another staff member
- using the telephone

These are just a few examples where it is important to use appropriate language and tone in verbal communication.

Voice is a reliable indicator of nationality, regional origin, social class, educational level, age and gender. Allied to paralanguage (rate, pitch, stress, and intonation) it can carry up to 38 percent of the message. It also discloses the emotional state of the speaker and conveys attitudes such as sarcasm.

If someone has a high pitch in their voice, it can be interpreted as a sign that they are upset. With the frequent contact you will have with customers and guests in this industry, it is important that you project a good natural speaking voice.

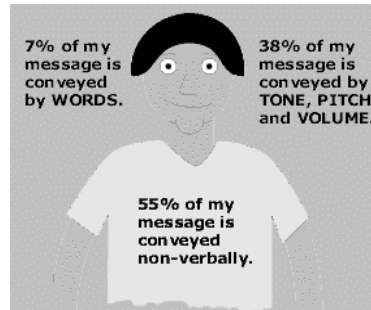
Voice and speech are part of your self-presentation. Your voice is linked to the way you feel about yourself, your voice indicates how you are feeling.

Elements of Speech

- Pitch or inflection
- Quality
- Intensity
- Rate
- Pause
- Formality of language

Non-Verbal Communication

Everything you do carries non-verbal messages. For example, a well-typed letter on good quality paper with an attractive letterhead will carry a non-verbal message that this organisation is efficient and worthy of respect. On the other hand, a few words scribbled on cheap and tattered paper with dirty fingerprints on it will carry quite a different message.



The importance of non-verbal communication has only been recognised in the recent past. Estimates vary, but it is generally understood that when you think about it, and analyse the way people communicate with each other, it seems quite normal to make use of these non-verbal ways of getting the message across. In our case, however, we will be more concerned with body language, both your own and that of others.

These aspects of non-verbal communication rely on careful observation, for they either reinforce verbal messages or, if there appears to be a conflict, they give you an indication of the real frame of mind of the people you are dealing with.

Customers may say that they are happy with what you are doing for them but their body language displays negative gestures and possibly the opposite feeling. You will need to practice the skill of observing and analysing basic signals of behaviour to better understand what the body language of your customer is really saying.

Written communication

The rules of formal or written messages are:

- Handwriting should be legible
- Sentence construction should be short and simple
- Jargon must be avoided
- Technical detail must be accompanied by explanation
- The writer should not assume the recipient of the message has prior knowledge of a subject
- Correct sentence structure should be used
- Correct grammar, spelling and punctuation are used.



Use of eye contact

This is one of the most important non-verbal clues in our society. You are expected to meet other peoples' gazes when you communicate. If you fail to do this, you are interpreted as being deceptive, weak, bored or angry.

There are actually complicated rules governing eye behaviour, with much variation on the direction of the gaze and the length of time you look at someone.

While eye contact is supremely important in our society you will need to know that in some societies, for example-it can be embarrassing and intrusive. If you are dealing with people from another culture you must be aware of their background and allow for the differences in their cultures.

Facial appearance and expressions

You can observe from the face of a person such things as ethnic origins, age, gender and the image that a person wants to project. Hairstyle and colour, jewellery, glasses and make-up all combine to give you indications of the type of person you are dealing with. To judge the character from facial structure and appearance only can be superficial.

Be aware of making a character judgement from facial appearance only! It is only one of the wide range of non-verbal signs that you can look at. The expression on a person's face is a good indicator of emotions. Many of these can be observed: happiness, surprise, sadness, fear, anger, disgust, interest and many more. For example, you can distinguish between the different types of smiles, from the slight tilt at the corners of the mouth to the wide-open mouth of great amusement or astonishment.

Nodding and physical gestures

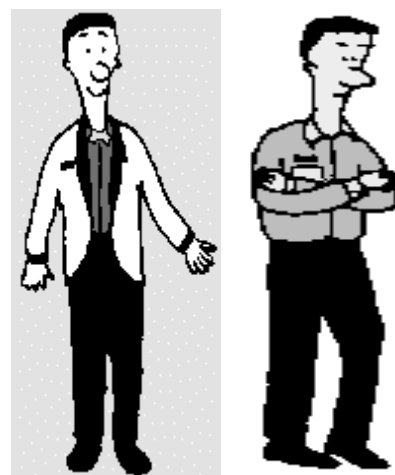
Specific movements or gestures can indicate what a person wishes to convey to you. For example, a listener might nod her/his head during a conversation or a member of the police force might hold up a hand with the palm outwards to signify 'Stop!'

You might use a beckoning gesture to call a person to you or wave to say hello.

Posture refers to 'how you position your body'. It can be a real give-away to your feeling or attitude at the time. For example, there is an **open posture** or a **closed or defensive posture**. In the picture above we can see someone with a friendly, open posture.

In a closed posture you will place some kind of barrier in front of your body for example, by folding your arms across your chest or crossing your legs or your ankles.

In the closed posture you are signalling rejection



or defensiveness and your attitude towards the other person is negative. With an open posture you make sure there are no barriers between yourself and the other person and in this way you signal receptivity and acceptance. We also show interest and involvement by inclining the top half of the body towards one another. The sitting or standing angles between people can also indicate their relationships at the time.

Personal Space

Each of us has a personal space requirement or a territory, which surrounds us. Individual people have greater or lesser space needs, because of their personality and experiences. Certain situations and cultural backgrounds can influence the amount of personal space required. Invading someone's personal space can make that person uncomfortable and non-receptive.

Touch- This type of non-verbal communication is extremely powerful. In our society it must be used with discretion. To be effective, touch must occur at the right moment and in the right context, otherwise it can be violently rejected and may even lead to charges of harassment. In general, we prefer not to be touched by other people. There are a few exceptions to this. Most people will accept a handshake, a kiss on the cheek or perhaps a pat on the back in an appropriate setting and/or from approved people in a non-discriminating fashion.

Become aware of and be receptive to the mass of non-verbal information that is available to you. Try to determine what each instance implies. It happens around you all the time. Just keep your eyes and ears open. You can start to develop your ability to read non-verbal signals and thereby build up an awareness and intuition that will help you build up your communication skills

Unacceptable Behaviour

- Touching the customer
- Using bad language
- Giving personal observations, opinions or criticisms
- Rudeness, which includes ignoring, calls for attention or interrupting a customer's conversation without excusing yourself first.

ASSIST OR INSTRUCT CUSTOMERS IN THE USE OF EQUIPMENT AND FACILITIES

Taking into consideration all the information that we have learnt so far about effective and appropriate ways to communicate with the customer, now it is time to look at some important moments when you will be required to instruct the customer in the use of certain facilities and equipment in a safe manner.

If you walk into any business, firstly look around for all written instructions on how to use equipment and facilities. These could be;

- Toilet signs
- 'How to place your order' signs
- Information on safety equipment
- Directions
- How to use a telephone in your room



As a customer you would expect to be greeted as you enter the establishment very quickly by a member of staff, who will also be able to provide you with more information and instructions. Often the customer will ask you for assistance, however there are also great opportunities to anticipate a guest's need and to provide that information or service before they even have to ask for it.

An example of this might be that you notice a lady get up from her table in the restaurant during her meal and look around the room. This could be an indication that she is trying to locate the bathrooms and this is where excellent customer service skills jump into action and you approach her to assist her with the information.

Emergency Procedures

When there is an emergency situation you will need to be able to instruct and provide information to customers in a very clear and precise manner as to not cause more panic or confusion. Examples of some emergency situations that could occur in the hospitality industry are;

- Fire evacuation
- Bomb threat
- Gas leak
- Theft
- Injury/medical emergency

Find out the procedure in your workplace for each of these situations and think about how you would instruct customers if one of these were to occur on your shift.

Workplace health and safety:

- The *Occupational Safety and Health act 1984* and the Occupational Safety and Health Regulations 1996 apply to all West Australian workplaces and are there to protect and ensure the safety of all staff and people who visit the establishment.
- Workplace health and safety legislation is currently being reviewed and the 'Model Work Health and Safety Act (Federal level) forms the basis for the Work Health and Safety Acts being enacted across Australia. Western Australia and Victoria are still in the process of reviewing this.

PROMOTE INTERNAL PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

As an employee in the Hospitality Industry, part of your job role is to identify and use opportunities to promote internal facilities and services. The reason for this is not only to generate more business and revenue, but also to ensure that you meet the needs and expectations of your customers.

Customers often will visit your establishment for one purpose and be unaware of other facilities and services that are available to them. An example of this could be;

A customer has come to dine in the restaurant, but is unaware that you have a private function room that would be the perfect venue for their 50th birthday party next month. Or the catering that you offer, which could mean that they can have their favourite dish served at their party at their house.

It is important that you are able to take opportunities to promote products and services at your venue, even if they are outside of your department. Being knowledgeable and up to date with current promotions will help you to provide a service that exceeds the customers' expectations. However, there is no place in Hospitality for pushy or 'hard selling', and here is an example of the difference;

Scenario A - A couple come to the restaurant for dinner. Whilst you offer them the menus, you mention to them that you are doing a 'sea breeze' cocktail this week and it would be a great way to kick off their lovely evening.

Scenario B - A couple come to the restaurant for dinner. Whilst they are getting sat down at the table you shove the cocktail flyer in their face and tell them that they have to try it because there is a competition and if you sell 10 of them tonight then you will win the prize!




It is important that you select the correct communication techniques and timing when you promote products and services to your customers, as not to come across as rude, abrupt or too strong.

Some examples of opportunities to promote other products and services in your workplace could be;

- Promoting a special event menu to regular customers in the bar.
- Providing guests with flyers and information in the guest bedrooms about the spa facilities
- Placing posters in the reception advertising Christmas Functions.
- Offering customers sitting by the pool the opportunity to purchase a drink from the bar

SEEK FEEDBACK ON SERVICES

Customer feedback is useful for a business because it lets the business know:

-  What they are doing well?
-  What they need to improve?
-  Ideas for new products or services.

Seeking feedback on services from customers

In the workplace there are several opportunities to gain feedback from your guests or customers. A common approach is to ask the customer at the point of payment if they were satisfied with everything today. Although this is a good habit to get into, as it ensures that every guest gets asked once, it is also not the best time to ask that question. This is because the customer is about to leave the venue and therefore you will not have the chance to put right something should they not have been satisfied. Many restaurants for instance will present the customer with their meal and then perform a 'meal check' after a couple of minutes. This gives the customer the opportunity to say if there is something not quite right and for the employee to then take action; and hopefully the customer will enjoy the rest of their experience and leave happy.

Feedback about what customers liked or what they thought that the business did well is called positive feedback. It lets businesses know that they are meeting the needs of their customers and it helps employees to feel good about the work they are doing and how this helps customers.

Constructive feedback is feedback that tells a business where they need to improve. Sometimes this type of feedback is confused with negative feedback because it does point out what is going wrong or not working well. Complaints are a type of constructive feedback. Constructive and negative feedback gives businesses a chance to improve or get rid of products or services that are not meeting customers' needs or expectations and to get things right the next time. Workers can get feedback from customers in a number of ways:

- Observing them
- Talking to them
- Asking them to fill out customer feedback forms
- Surveying customers

Customer feedback forms

There are several ways of collecting feedback; observing customers, talking to customers, customer feedback forms (see below), customer surveys and email questionnaires with incentives to name a few. The most commonly used methods however is verbal questioning and customer feedback forms. Customer feedback forms are a formal way of getting information from

customers. Customer feedback forms can be paper-based or electronic. Some businesses will now send out feedback forms to their guests after their visit via email to ask for their feedback on their experience.

Acknowledging feedback

Workers should thank customers for their feedback, even if it is negative, as all feedback provides an opportunity to improve the way things are done. This can be done via face to face, written, email or telephone. All feedback should be acknowledged quickly and responded to in an appropriate manner.

OBSERVING CUSTOMER BEHAVIOUR AND FOLLOWING PROCEDURES FOR FORMAL CUSTOMER EVALUATION

A great way to gain feedback is to observe customer behaviour. The things that our customers do can provide you with vital information without the need sometimes to even ask for their opinion. For example, if the restaurant launches a new menu and after one week no one has ordered a certain dish from it, what does this tell you? Is the menu worded or described incorrectly or confusing? Is it the wrong season for the dishes on the menu? Is it the wrong target market for this type of menu?

Another common example is if a dish on the menu is never finished by customers. Is the portion size too big? Or is there something wrong with the way that the dish is prepared?

Customers can tell us a lot from their facial expressions also. If you serve a drink to a customer and then notice that upon sipping this drink they pull a face of dislike, then would you just ignore it, or ask if you can correct the situation for them?

Provide information on customer feedback to relevant colleagues

It is important that all information gained from customer feedback is communicated. This ensures that the business can make necessary changes where possible, in order to better meet and often exceed customer expectations. Most successful Hospitality business' are created upon word of mouth recommendations from their customers, so it is vital that we are listening to their needs.

Feedback from customers could be shared with a variety of colleagues including:

- Team members who might also serve the same customer
- Supervisors/team leaders
- Managers
- Staff from other departments (eg front of house staff should share customer feedback about food with kitchen staff as well as the manager or supervisor)
- Security
- Maintenance

There are many opportunities in the workplace to share information with colleagues mentioned above. These could be, but are not limited to;

- Team briefings/debriefings
- Staff meetings
- Management meetings
- Training sessions
- Communication logs
- Intranet
- Internal newsletters

Workers can follow up on the feedback with the appropriate staff to see if changes or improvements can or have been made. This would normally be done a few days after sharing the information.



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For more information contact

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