Access Training and Logistics

# SITHIND008 Work effectively in hospitality service (Release 1) - Resource

**Hospitality**

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# COURSE INTRODUCTION

## ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This learner guide covers the following unit of competency

SITHIND008 – Work effectively in hospitality service

This unit describes the performance outcomes, skills and knowledge required to provide effective hospitality service to customers during live service periods.
It requires the ability to integrate a range of individual technical skills while dealing with numerous sales, service or operational tasks simultaneously to meet the needs of multiple and diverse customers. It incorporates preparation, service and end of service tasks.

This unit applies to a range of hospitality industry settings including bars, hotels, cafes, restaurants, clubs, pubs and motels.

It applies to those frontline service personnel who deal directly with customers on a daily basis and who operate with some level of independence and under limited supervision. They may work within any industry area including accommodation services, food and beverage, gaming operations and housekeeping.

## ABOUT ASSESSMENT

This guide contains a range of learning activities which support you in developing your competence. To apply this knowledge to your assessment you will be required to complete the assessment tools that are included in your program. The assessment is a competency based assessment, which has no pass or fail; you are either competent or not yet competent. This means that you still are in the process of understanding and acquiring the skills and knowledge required to be marked competent.

For valid and reliable assessment of this unit, a range of assessment methods will be used to assess practical skills and knowledge.

Your assessment may be conducted through a combination of the following methods:

- Third-party reports from a supervisor
- Practical demonstration of your skills in a classroom situation
- Projects and assignments
- Portfolio of evidence
- Written or verbal questioning to assess knowledge and understanding of business policies and procedures

- Oral presentation
- A combination of these methods

The assessment tool for this unit should be completed within the specified time period following the delivery of the unit. If you feel you are not yet ready for assessment, discuss this with your trainer.

To be successful in this unit you will need to be able to join you're learning to your work place, this should be achievable for those who are employed and for those who are not yet employed and you will be required to use observations of examples that can take place in a workplace environment.

# PERFORMANCE AND KNOWLEDGE EVIDENCE

## 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 hospitality service to customers for a minimum of 36 complete service periods (shifts) that individually or in combination involve:

- interacting with and positively responding to diverse demands and requests of different customers
- working with speed and efficiency to deal with numerous service and operational tasks simultaneously
- identifying issues and problems, determining solutions and taking appropriate action to resolve
- working cooperatively as part of a service team, monitoring the service process and workflow, and taking responsibility for own work outcomes
- providing technical advice and support to other team members.

## KNOWLEDGE EVIDENCE

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

Basic organisational information:

- availability of products, services and specials
- details of expected business, customer requirements and scheduling
- job role and tasks to be performed
- local area and venue facilities
- policies and procedures
- staff rosters
- verbal or written advice affecting job performance and service requirements

Information relevant to customers:

- customer loyalty programs
- food menu options and specials
- gaming facilities
- hotel facilities
- lost and found services
- membership benefits
- prices of products and services
- prize nights and special events
- product knowledge of food, alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages

Processes for undertaking common operational tasks:

- communicating orders to the kitchen
- ordering stock
- preparing rooms for guests
- processing financial transactions
- providing porting services
- selling and preparing drinks
- selling gaming tickets
- serving food and beverage
- taking orders

Tools and equipment to carry out common operational tasks

- ordering equipment and technology
- communication devices
- point-of-sale equipment
- software for booking, ticketing or check-in
- manual handling equipment

End of shift procedures:

- cleaning work areas and equipment
- debriefing sessions and quality service reviews
- preparation for the next service period
- restocking
- safe storage of products, equipment and supplies

Roles and responsibilities of service team members

Organisational policies and procedures for:

- administration and reporting relating to:
  - completing financial transactions
  - completing work plans and schedules
  - handover
- hygiene, health, safety and security:
  - completing incident, work health and safety (WHS) and maintenance reports
- customer service
- complaint handling.

# LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the end of this training program you should be able to

- Integrate technical skills and provide quality hospitality service to customers for a minimum of 36 complete service periods (shifts)
- Interact with and positively respond to the diverse demands and requests of multiple customers throughout the service period
- Work with speed and efficiency to deal with numerous service and operational tasks simultaneously
- Identify issues and problems such as workplace time constraints, late arrivals, no-shows, walk-ins, determine solutions and take appropriate action to resolve
- Work cooperatively as part of the service team, monitor the service process and workflow and take responsibility for own work outcomes
- Provide technical advice and support to other team members
- Integrate knowledge of relevant organisational policies and procedures

Assessment must ensure use of:

A fully-operational hospitality environment with the fixtures, large and small equipment and workplace documentation defined in the Assessment Guidelines; this can be a:

- Real hospitality workplace
- Hospitality industry environment operated within a training organisation that services customers e.g. A training restaurant for the food and beverage context

Industry-realistic ratios of service staff to customers
Products and services to be delivered to customers

You will be provided with more detailed information regarding assessment from your assessor prior to assessment taking place.

# TOPIC 1 – PREPARE FOR SERVICE

## PLAN AND ORGANISE TASKS FROM ORGANISATIONAL INFORMATION

Hospitality service includes many tasks which will contribute to giving the customers a greater service, and a better quality of hospitality experience.

In this section you will be able to identify the specific workplace information that needs to be accessed when organising and preparing for services. Planning and preparation is very important and it will enhance the efficiency and effectiveness on any workplace activity.

It is important that before you start any service or even setting up for service that you plan your set up and tasks prior to starting in accordance to the specific venues.

The type and extent of workplace information involved in organising for service will depend on the type of service being prepared for this could include a range of accommodation, catering and food and beverage services in various hospitality venues and settings such as hotels, restaurants, clubs, pubs, motels, gaming operations and catering outlets.

For example, the information needed by the food and beverage area will be different to that needed by front office; gaming, housekeeping or maintenance.

The basics about any information that is used as the basis for organising and preparing for service are that it must be:

- Comprehensive – there is little point having only half the information that is needed. It is not enough to know that 20 people are coming in but not knowing what day/time, the name of the reservation, if they have paid a deposit, or not knowing the special requests they have made
- Current – it is useless and confusing to be given (or to give others) information that is out-of-date. The information must be applicable to what is happening now
- Accurate – it is critical that the information contains correct information which may relate to issues such as:
    - Names
    - Addresses
    - Phone numbers
    - Dollar figures – including prices quoted (such as room rates; function costs; meal costs, deposits paid/ required) and budget targets that departments are expected to meet for the day
    - Times – of arrival, departure, timing requirements for functions (including pre-dinner drinks, speeches, activities, cutting of the cake)

Remember in the following area you will have different information such as:

## JOB ROLE AND TASKS TO BE PERFORMED

The basic job role for individual staff will not vary much from day-to-day. These tasks will be the ones that are set out in the Job Description/Position Description for that job. A bar attendant is expected to work behind the bar, a housekeeper will clean rooms, a receptionist will greet and room guests, and a kitchen hand will help prepare the meals and wash the dishes.

There may be days when there is a change in your role and these days may occur when:

- There is an unusual day expected – this can also include times when internal factors create an unusual event such as when maintenance is being done, special cleaning activities are being undertaken, some staff are attending training
- Some staff are absent from work – if there are going to be less staff at work than normal this is likely to necessitate a re-allocation of work between the staff that are at work so that the necessary/important tasks get done
- An emergency situation has occurred – such as times when there has been a major equipment malfunction, when there has been a fire, a hold-up, or even times when expected deliveries have failed to arrive and alternative action has to be taken in the immediate short-term to address the situation and still deliver the best service or product possible despite the lack of 'normal' products

The important factor to be aware of is what these individuals need to do when there is a day that, for some reason, is different to the 'normal' day-to-day routine.

There will be times when jobs/staff are going to be subject to verbal or written advice affecting job performance and service requirements.

These times generally occur when:

- Management are testing changes to service delivery and staff organisation to determine whether or not a more effective form of staff organisation can be found – this usually relates to factors such as:
    - Rostering staff at different times to better meet customer demand
    - Taking action to ensure the labour budget is not exceeded
    - Training, re-training and multi-skilling staff
    - Changes to service delivery standards – such as altering the way meals are service; guests are checked in; rooms are serviced; drinks are dispensed
- There have been complaints or compliments – action will be taken to address complaints and to extend actions that have pleased customers
- There are changes to legislation that impose new or changed compliance requirements – this can include anything to do with issues such as food safety, liquor, gaming etc

## DETAILS OF EXPECTED BUSINESS

Known details of expected business for the shift/session are one of the biggest factors likely to impact organisation and preparation. These can relate to days where there are lots of

bookings or a high level of trade is expected. This can necessitate re-prioritising activities – in essence, things that you would normally do during a shift may have to be left till next day.

The focus when times are busy must be 'customer service' and not taking care of non-essential tasks such as internal paperwork, stocking shelves, cleaning the windows, tidying the files etc.

Knowledge of details of the expected business may include:

- Customers who are booked into the dining facilities – including knowledge about when they are arriving and the size of the bookings. These details are important for service and bar staff in the dining rooms/ restaurants as well as the kitchen staff in terms of food preparation
- The level of house guests expected through reception – this includes details (and timing) about expected check-ins and the level of check-outs
- The number of departing and 'stay' guests in the rooms – as this has major impacts on the sequence in which rooms will be cleaned. It is important to get check-out rooms cleaned and back on the board for sale/ occupancy before cleaning the 'stay' rooms

For instance if you were looking for information that you would need for a restaurant or dining room for a service period the areas that you get the information from would be?

## RESERVATION

The reservation desk will have a book that will give you all the Indication of what to expect for that service period. It is very important that you check this at the very start of your shift. When you work in this area you will find that not only are the Front of House Manager interested but also the Head Chef is also interested in the information in the book , as it gives them a number of information fact they require for the day, such as:

- How many customers are booked in?
- What size table are required for service?
- How many people in each group will be coming in?
- What time each table is booked in for?
- There will also be special notes such as VIP's, special dates, birthday party and other relevant information
- Contact details of the customers who made the booking such as:
    - Name of the person who booked it
    - Their contact details

## TABLE PLAN

For each of the service periods a Restaurant Manager will make a table plan where he will allocate particular tables to each group of customers, he will set out exactly where to place those table within the dining room so the customers arrive and they have a table of 8, at 8PM

then the waiting staff know that they will be seated at table 12 & 13 which has been pushed together.

Also the information will give them and the chef's special information such as, special diet, allergies or a need for wheelchair access friendly rooms. One of your guests might require that there are no tomatoes in the salad or a meal as they have allergies, there could also be a special occasion such as a wedding anniversary and the guest might require a special room.

It is also important that you note down if there are any customers who have disability requirements such as wheelchair access, or a person with a Seeing Eye dog may let you know that they will be coming into your establishment. (*By law, Guide Dogs are permitted to travel in taxis and on public transport, and are allowed in all public places such as restaurants, shopping centres, hospitals, theatres, etc. It is an offence to refuse entry to a person accompanied by a registered Guide Dog.)*

Other guest may have special requests such as being served in a hurry especially if they are going to the theatre. This will be noted on the reservation book and the Restaurant Manager will have noted this and will organise it such.

## HOTEL OCCUPANCY

Another area might include occupancy, if the restaurant is attached to a hotel then it is important that the occupancy rate is known. The occupancy rate is worked out daily and the report is distributed throughout the premises as this will give you an indication for many things such as:

- How many guest are expected in the dining room for breakfast
- How busy the front desk will be with the morning check outs,
- How many customers are booked in for the day and their arrival time
- How busy room service will be
- How many housekeeping, waiter, front of house staff will be required to carry out the duties of the day

Staff allocation is worked out due to the amount of work that is required, a restaurant Manager may allocate staff to a specific area of the restaurant depending on the table plan that they have written.

The Hotel Manager may allocate the number of staff required to carry out the duties at the front desk, housekeeping, or the doorman duties.

All shifts must determine what the availability of products; services and facilities are for either the property, or, the individual department that they are working in.

In essence you need to know what is available and what is not – this is essential not only for planning work-related activities but is also important in providing accurate advice to customers in terms of what they can access and what they can't.

This consideration therefore involves working out:

- Products that are available and products that are out-of-stock – these may be hospitality items that have sold out, menu items that the kitchen has run out of, or rooms that are unavailable as a result of factors such as damage, guests who were expected to check-out but who are staying
- Services available – this commonly relates to individual staff. If a certain staff member is 'away' (not rostered on, ill, etc) then a certain service may not be available. Some services may also be cancelled due to high levels of trade – for example, front office may stop conducting room inspections at times where there is expected to be heavy demand on check-in and check-out; the kitchen may put a 'hold' on certain dishes when they are busy
- Facilities available – the availability of facilities generally relates to factors that pertain at the time, such as:

    - Damage, repairs being done and necessary service and maintenance that is being undertaken
    - Weather – some facilities need to be restricted/closed down under certain weather conditions
    - Timing – numerous facilities are limited in their availability on the basis of time restrictions. This is usually related to a safety factor and the likelihood that noise from the facility/activity could annoy other

## LIAISE WITH TEAM MEMBERS TO CONFIRM AND INFORM OTHERS OF SERVICE REQUIREMENTS

A basic element in preparing for any service session is to make sure that all relevant people are aware of what needs to be done and everyone knows what is expected of them. These requirements underpin the delivery of high quality service, and the essentials of team work.


As discussed prior working in hospitality is all about team work so as to give the customer the best possible service experience. Therefore it is important that the Front of House, bar, kitchen, front office, manager and all the Supervisors in those areas all work together and communicate to each other so as to provide the highest quality of service.

The main ways in which notification takes place includes?

- Staff briefings on the day immediately before the session – many establishments conduct a short briefing prior to the session (5 – 15 minutes is a standard time frame). At this briefing the matters expected to impact on work are discussed and passed on to relevant staff so that everyone becomes aware of key factors likely to affect them and their work – the sequencing of tasks, priorities, special events, level of trade expected etc
- Verbal one-on-one conversations – many factors impacting on the work for a shift will impact on one or two staff but not the rest of the staff. In these cases, the supervisor may elect to speak personally to those involved as opposed to sharing this information with all of the staff, this can save time
- Written notification – advising staff in writing is arguably the best way of notifying team members but it is very time consuming and not the commonly adopted approach

Written notification tends to be confined to material that already exists such as reports generated by the Management Information System (MIS) used by the property (such as Occupancy reports, Housekeeping reports), copies of function sheets and running sheets, and copies of bookings received.

Written notification also tends to be used where liaison is required with other departments (as opposed to notifying staff within the department). These notifications may be requests for action to be taken by a support department such as:

- Request from the laundry for extra linen to cater for a function or increased level of guests in the dining room, housekeeping etc
- Request for the maintenance department to repair equipment etc in the department
- Request for the food and beverage department to provide staff to assist in expected high levels of room service at certain times

This written notification can be in hard copy, delivered by hand to the other department and often accompanied by a verbal explanation. Increasingly, these written notifications are communicated via the establishment intranet facility

For example: in a restaurant a waiter will need to liaise with all the other departments before, during and after the service period, and will include information such as:

Before Service:

- Specials and menu restrictions need to be discussed with the kitchen staff.
- Any special meal requirements need to be confirmed
- Booking numbers need to be confirmed with the kitchen
- Any menu items that the Head Chef would like you to promote or not promote (due to stock shortages) during service
- Any beverage items that the Bar manager would like to have promoted
- Liaise with other service staff to ensure everybody knows their tasks for the service period

During service:

- Liaise with kitchen re; the requirements of stock
- Liaise with bar re beverages requirements of stock
- Liaise with kitchen as to when your tables are being served their meals, and when entrees are finished
- Liaise with kitchen Supervisor or Manager if the client requests to speak to them or if you are having problems
- Keep Your Supervisor or Manager informed how things are going within your area
- Liaise with security or Management on RSA issues

After Service:

- Assist in debrief of the days issues and happenings
- All staff get thanked for their contributions of the days service
- Have staff levels reviewed for the next service period
- Make sure any complaints or compliments with the people concerned
- Disseminate any relevant information
- Order required stock

Front Office will need to liaise with other areas to inform them of guests checking in/out and any special requirements. For example they will have to notify housekeeping that a group has checked out and the rooms are available for cleaning. Notify housekeeping of rooms that are waiting to for cleaning. Notify kitchen of special requirements.

When there are notifications for different departments it is important to what can be involved in these notifications.

Sometimes there is a need for one department to liaise with other staff (within the department or elsewhere within the venue) in relation to issues such as:

- Timing of events – to make sure there is a seamless flow of service to customers in relation to check-ins, check-outs, functions, meal services, entertainment etc
- Re-prioritising of commonly undertaken activities – to advise other departments that the standard operating procedure for this day is going to alter in the following way for the given reasons
- Notifying them of special events that are taking place within the department
- Advising of any VIPs that may be in the venue – there can be times when VIPs are on-site and there is a need to make sure these people receive outstanding service. These may be celebrities, travel agents, marketing people, members of the media, politicians, people who are deemed influential etc
- Promises that the property has made to customers – this may be as part of a package that has been sold to a group, or special requests that have been made and agreed to by the venue

- Changes that have been made (or are being trialled) in relation to Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for the property

### SO WHY DO WE LIAISE AND NOTIFY?

We do this so that everyone is 'on the same page', so that 'the left hand knows what the right hand is doing' and so that individuals and other departments can factor this knowledge into the predevelopment of work plans that accommodate the expected needs of the venue for that shift.

In brief we cannot simply expect that others will know what our priorities, commitments, or levels of trade will be – we have to let them know and ask that they factor in our needs to their working day. We are also expected to factor in their identified needs into our working day.

The specifics of who needs to be liaised with will naturally depend on the demands expected on a department, the problems they are facing etc, but those with whom communication needs to take place can include:

- All team members – even if a team member is not specifically affected by an issue, it can be helpful if they know about the pressures being placed on other members of the team. This can help create increased tolerance towards some staff who are under a lot of pressure, help to generate better team work, and provide an opportunity for staff to volunteer for extra duties to reduce the workload on those who are over-loaded
- Supervisors and individual staff from other departments
- Management and owners
- Outside suppliers and service providers – to make sure they know the way in which we are relying on them and to verify that they are able to deliver the materials, support etc that we need to complete our planned activities

## DEVELOP WORK SCHEDULES TAKING INTO CONSIDERATION ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF OTHER TEAM MEMBERS

A work plan (or work schedule) is a guide about what tasks need to be completed for the up-coming session allocating tasks to individual staff/team members and indicating the sequence and timing of those tasks. It is a blueprint for how the session will take place.

It can be seen as making the best use, at the time, of the resources available to you – resources include team members, time, money and the use of knowledge.

Being efficient means:

- Eliminating/reducing wastage of materials and time
- Using the most effective person in the most effective way
- Getting the optimum return on the effort invested in an activity

When developing a work plan you need to know what needs to be taken into account, it is usually about organising the application of scarce resources – these resources are time and staff, and may involve physical equipment and facilities.

There are many and various things that should be factored into a work plan, such as:

- Who is best suited to undertake certain tasks – in most situations you will want to use the most competent person to do these jobs but attention must also be paid to training up other staff so that you have continuity of expertise/competence. Previous job performance is the best guide as to who has competency and who hasn't

- Volunteers – sometimes it can be best to use someone on a specific job (especially where the task is not a sought after one, where there may be risk associated, or where there is a deal of pressure) where they have freely and willingly volunteered to do the job. Promises made to customers/expectations that customers have about service provision – the work plan must be developed to ensure that any promises the establishment has made to its customers will be met. If the venue has said that pre-dinner drinks will be served at 5:30pm then this is a non-negotiable timeline that must be achieved. If reception has promised that 250 delegates to a seminar can be processed in half-an-hour then this is a non-negotiable requirement

- Priorities – there are frequently competing demands on a department during a session and it is one of the roles of a work plane to allocate preference to one or more activities. The planning phase prior before a session therefore asks you to work out which completing demands will have priority and requires you to make sure that the most significant or urgent priorities are handled before lower-order ones

Other thing that may need to be taken into account could be:

- Budgets – all departments are expected to work to budgets. These budgets will place limitations on the money that can be spent (in terms of labour, raw materials etc) as well as on the revenue that every revenue-generating department is expected to make. Regardless of most other demands on the department for a session, the need to stay 'within' budget usually remains a given constant – this means you have to know what the budgetary requirements and constraints are, and also know the times when you are allowed to exceed restrictions on spending
- Demands by other departments – while there is a tendency to believe that 'your' department is the important one, from a customer's perspective this rating does not exist. Customers judge their satisfaction on the performance of the venue as a whole so it is important that your work plan accommodates the needs of other departments in terms of delivering overall customer service. If another department needs your help at certain times, then these times and these demands need to be factored into the work plane for the benefit of the customer and the ultimate benefit of the property

- Stated job/position descriptions – while all departments will seek to multi-skill their staff there are limitations to this. This means that when developing work plans we may want to extend some staff and give those new experiences and extra responsibilities but we need to be mindful of not putting the wrong person into the wrong role. For example, a team member could have been hired, according to the official job description, for their expertise on the front office computer but it could be inadvisable to put this person into a face-to-face customer contact role at reception if their people skills were less than what was required for that type of job

- The overall duties that the team member is expected to discharge – one of the greatest temptations for supervisors is to give the best staff more and more work to do. Some staff appear able to and willing to do anything that is asked of them and you quickly get to rely on these people in a pinch. Their previous history has shown they can deliver when required so you tend to keep asking them to do more and more – the danger with continuing to do this is that at that some stage they will say 'enough' and may quit

- Company policies and operating procedures – nearly every venue has internal requirements that need to be adhered to when allocating tasks. For example, there may be a set number of people required to work behind the bar; there may be a certain gender balance required on the floor; there might always be a need for a certain ratio of new to experienced staff on shift

- Required certification – in some work situations there may be a need to ensure that staff allocated to certain jobs hold the necessary qualifications and certificates. For example, you may be required to make sure that those working with liquor have a Responsible Service of Alcohol certificate, that people working in the gaming area have a similar gaming certificate, and that those handling food have a food handler's certificate. Some venues make it a standard requirement that there is always someone on duty who holds a current First Aid certificate

## WORK SCHEDULES

A work schedule is a job check list that is planned with timing and importance; a work schedule will stipulate what tasks are required to be done first, second and so on... to last. It may also give times when each job tasks is done and how long it will take to do.

A work schedule will also give a list of Jobs that a section will carry out

It is important that you follow a work schedule, so when developing or working to a work schedule it is important to understand that there are a number factors to take into account, these could include but are not limited to:

- Which staff are available and what skills do they have?
- Who is the best at the specific task?
- What needs to be done first?
- How long will each task take?
- What certificates and level of training have each staff attained such as RSA, Food Handlers etc...

- What is the budget for your area e.g. staff wages

This work schedule will change from venue to venue and in reality there may be only a standard schedule as there is not enough time to write a complex one.

When carrying out your work schedule it is important that you learn to prioritise your work in this context it means deciding on and placing tasks in their order of importance. This sequence must match the identified goals and objectives of the individual departments, and the needs of your establishment on a day-by-day basis.

Prioritising doesn't necessarily mean that you do the most important things first, but it does mean that you fit them in ahead of less important jobs. It is the responsibility of the manager/supervisor for prioritising the work of that either the whole establishment or the section that they are in charge of. Where you are the supervisor, staff will look to you for leadership in relation to where their efforts should be directed. Where you fail to deliver this direction, your credibility may suffer.

There are many steps that you could put in place but the basic steps in prioritising work are:

- Involve staff in the process wherever possible
- Make three lists:
    - The essential tasks that absolutely, positively must be done no matter what with no excuses, no exceptions
    - Those tasks that are non-essential but that add quality to the performance of the department
    - Those tasks that it would be nice to do if there were sufficient time – but which are in no way important or essential
- Compare the lists you have generated with the overall goals and objectives of the department
- Adjust the lists accordingly, allocate the work and take action to achieve the lists in priority order

Most of your staff will be prioritising their work in their own area and doing a great job on their own, all they need is the list of their requirements and good feedback from you to show that they are doing a good job. Feedback provides this assurance. Feedback thus may be seen as the ongoing verbal and non-verbal support provided to staff as they seek answers to the perpetual question 'How am I going?' Therefore the work flow will be done quicker and with fewer mistakes. Workflow is basically the sequence in which work is best done.

Organising this involves determining the logical sequence of tasks. The aim is to make sure that the job is done efficiently and effectively. Things to take into account when organising workflow include:

- How long each individual task should take
- Recognition of staff needs and award requirements such as breaks
- The number of people to best achieves a result
- Occupational health and safety requirements
- The most logical order of tasks to avoid duplication and gaps in service

- The suggestions of staff who are actually doing the job

A useful tool for working out the appropriate workflow is a flowchart.

Part of the work flow might include how to greet customers in a courteous and appropriate manner so as to determine their requirements for products and services. The hospitality industry is a service industry and all customers should be greeted – whether in-person or by phone – in a courteous manner. In some cases, there may be house requirements that apply to how customers are greeted and the phrases that are used such as:

- Welcome to Best Hotel, how can I help you?
- Good Morning Sir/Madam, can I be of assistance?

REMEMBER!

**Taking care of customers, greeting customers and serving customers must always come before other non-essential tasks you may be required to do such as putting stock away, completing internal paperwork and general tidying jobs.**

**The customer must always be your number one priority.**

## HOW TO GREET CUSTOMER'S FACE TO FACE (IN-PERSON)

When greeting customers, the following guidelines apply:

- Be sincere in your greeting – avoid being 'plastic' or robotic
- Use the customer's name where it is known – be careful to use tact when doing this. Some customers prefer us to use their name and in some cases it is best to avoid acknowledging that you have seen the person previously
- Make eye contact
- Smile – regardless of which language the person speaks, a smile is interpreted the same way all over the world
- Make an offer of assistance – show that you want to be of help, "How can I help you?"
- Where appropriate initiate conversation with the customer – this can relate to the weather, where they have come from, , have they dined with us before, etc

When greeting a customer over the phone:

- All calls must be answered promptly. Calls must be answered in a clear and polite manner using the appropriate greeting. Staff must adhere to establishment procedures and be consistent in their delivery.

Here are some examples of greeting a customer on the phone:

- "Good afternoon, Webstar Bistro. This is Alan speaking, how may I help you."
- "Good evening, thanks for calling Webstar Bistro. Wayne speaking."

If the call has to be put on hold it should be done in courteously, such as:

- "Can you hold the line, please?"

**Remember though to wait for their response** – they may not want to hold. Nothing is more annoying for the caller to be asked a question and then have you not wait for their answer.

It is important to get back to all calls on hold as quickly as possible because no-one likes to be left hanging on the telephone.

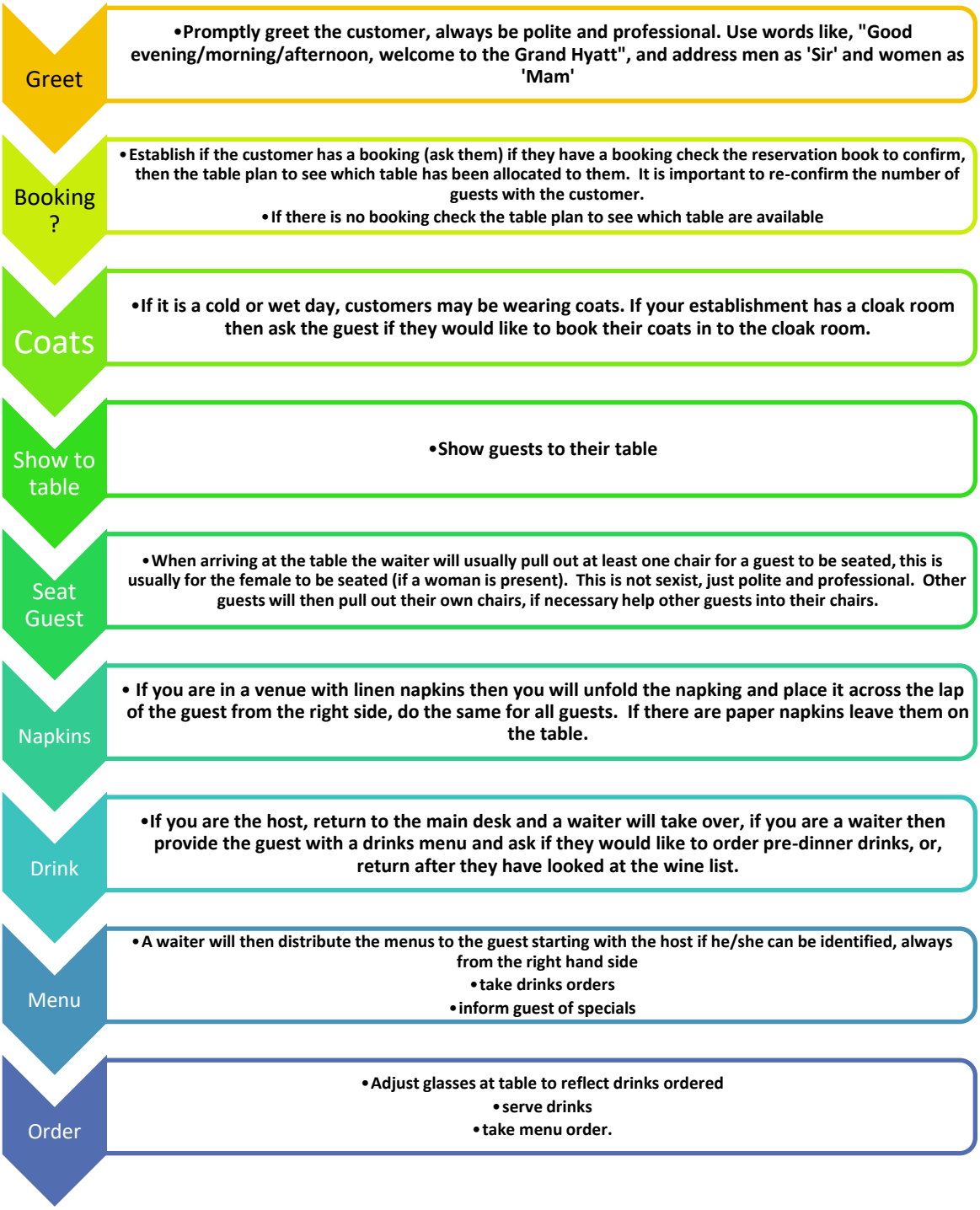
The correct use of your voice when using the telephone is especially important because people can't read your body language to supplement the communication they are receiving – all they have is the sound of your voice.

**It is common advice that when you talk on the phone you should**

**'Put a smile in your voice'.**

When your guests arrive it is important to identify the host of the party at the table. As your experience improves when dealing with customers you will pick up on the subtle body language and the way other guests behave so as to identify the host.

It is important that you can identify the host so as to be able to present the wine list or the bill to this person, or, consult them when required on such things as a break between courses.




## DETERMINING THEIR REQUIREMENTS

Many customers who visit or telephone the property know exactly what they want, who they want to speak and so on. These people will tell you what they want as soon as the formalities and pleasantries have been dealt with.

In lots of other cases, either the customer will not know what they want or not know where to go or who to ask for. They may arrive at the venue with a list of questions they want answered:

- How much is a main course?

- Do you have vacancies for next Wednesday?
- Do you take cheques?
- Can I book a function for a wedding in March?
- Do you have vegetarian meals?),
- They may arrive with a reservation but no other information (or knowledge) about the property.

The best way to understanding what the customer requirements are is to ask – just a simple question is all it takes to get the ball rolling, "How can I help you?"

When this is done:

- Listen carefully to the answer – avoid distractions and focus on what is being said to you
- Be prepared to ask follow-up questions to further clarify needs
- Read between the lines – not all customer requirements are explicitly stated. If the customer arrives with a few presents and some friends, then ask what they are celebrating as this can influence how you deal with the group in terms of your level of formality, the products you might offer etc
- Offer advice and suggestions where appropriate – many customers rely on staff to inform them of options and advice on what best suits their needs. Make sure any suggestions are appropriate – if the guest is a vegetarian there is little point suggesting the grain-fed porterhouse
- Ask the customer if there is anything else you can help them with
- Thank the customer for their enquiry
- Wish them a good day

## PREPARE WORK AREA, EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES ACCORDING TO PROCEDURES TO MEET SERVICE REQUIREMENTS

Once the staff have been prepared for the session by discussing the needs of the up-coming session, and developing an action plan for the work that has to be done (that is, the work plans discussed in the previous section), the next jobs are to:

- Prepare the work area
- Prepare the equipment that will be used
- Prepare the necessary supplies

The work area has to be prepared so that it is:

- Safe – a brief inspection must make sure there are no workplace hazards that pose risk to either staff or members of the public
- Functional – the work area must be prepared so that it is laid out and readied the type of work expected. A place for everything and everything in its place. In hospitality industry this is known as **'Mise place'**. The focus here is on tidiness
- Attractive – the department/area must look visually appealing from the guest's point of view. The emphasis here is on cleanliness, both inside the property and out

Then all the task are to be carried out using a job/work schedule checklist this will vary a great deal from venue to venue and from manager to manager. These are often printed on A4 pages and laminated then placed in the work area: That way all staff have access and know what will be physically required of them.

One venue may make a job/work schedule checklist for the whole venue, whilst another may make it according to the staff involved e.g. one for the wait staff (front of house, one for the bar staff, one for the kitchen (back of house, and one for the supervisor.

As stated job/work schedule checklist will vary according to the:

- The menu - it may have different requirements
- Bookings - They might be busy or they might be slow
- Service periods - Breakfast will be set up different to lunch or dinner.
- Special requirements - any special requirements that are booked into the diary
- Staff absences - if a venue normally runs with five staff and there has been one called in sick and there is no replacement then the work schedule will need to be altered

Other Typical tasks that are carried out by wait staff (in a restaurant) could include:

- Opening the doors
- Preparing the cash register
- Cleaning and checking the dining room
- Cleaning and checking the toilets
- turn on the music
- Set the climate, either switch on the heater or cooler.
- Set tables
- Stock waiter station
- Check & start POS (point of sale) terminals
- Check and clean cutlery
- Check diary and bookings

- Prepare table plan
- Liaise with kitchen re: specials, menu availability and bookings
- Fold and place serviettes, prepare butters
- Staff briefing
- Check menus - clean and supply
- Check condiments such as mustard, sauces, salts etc…

A Job Check list for the bar could include:

- Check bar for cleanliness
- Preparing the cash register
- Stock bar fridges
- Check and connect beer barrels
- Check and connect post mix
- Check wine and refrigerated wine stocks
- Check beer and refrigerated beer stocks
- Check glassware
- Start glass washer
- Check beer supplies e.g. straws
- Fill water bottles
- Check beer quality from taps
- Check spirits
- Cut fruit garnishes
- Check bar measures and equipment
- Staff briefing

All areas will be preparing their supplies, which usually involve:

- Putting away items that have been delivered to the department – commonly, most departments order stock for tomorrow at the end of today's trading session. It is delivered first thing in the morning by the stores person and it has to be put away by staff at the start of the day. Stock that has to be put away is usually, regardless of what it is, stored according to the First In, First Out system – meaning that old stock is used first and the new stock is put 'at the back' and the old stock is 'moved forward'

- Checking to see that there are sufficient supplies for the up-coming session – this requires you to use your knowledge about trade and use to determine whether or not extra supplies need to be ordered in order to allow the department to get through the session. Where extra supplies are needed they may be ordered from your central store over the phone, or there may be a need to use a requisition form to order that stock. Where stock is obtained from another department, there may be a need to complete an 'Internal Transfer' form that tracks the movement of that stock between departments

- Undertaking a physical/visual inspection of the stock – this is done to make sure that foodstuffs and beverages are fit for human consumption (checks need to address use-by dates, freedom from contamination, correct temperatures for refrigerated and frozen food); that stock for hospitality sale is undamaged and presentable; that office

supplies are suitable for use in machines (such as photocopiers, printers, fax machines, EFTPOS machines etc)

In addition to preparing the work area, it is important that a check of the equipment, utensils, plant and machinery also be made:

- Machinery and equipment must be checked to verify it is working as intended – sometimes this involves simply checking 'the red light is on', and sometimes a short test run may need to be undertaken
- Utensils – a brief visual check to ensure they are all there and they are in good and safe operating condition
- Plant – sometimes all that is needed is to verify that, for example, the air conditioning is working, the lights are on and that the music system is working properly

Where things are not working as required, it is very important that immediate action be taken to rectify the situation, as this is not only for staff and customer safety but also if things are not working correctly then the establishment will be making a financial loss and staff will then have to be laid off. Reporting faults and failures may involve:

- Notifying your supervisor or informing management so they can take the appropriate remedial action
- Implementing basic trouble shooting action – to try to fix the problem yourself (within your individual scope of authority – note, however, your employer will always expect you to use common sense in terms of what you do/don't do in relation to trying to fix something}.
- Contacting the service provider – to make arrangements for them to come in and repair or service the items
- Initiating action to get another item into the workplace – to replace the malfunctioning item and prepare it ready for work
- Contacting the maintenance department – to get them to visit the department and take a look at the problem
- When a work schedule is being developed it is important to take into consideration what systems and procedures might have to be considered, throughout the service and end of service periods. These systems and procedures that may have to be taken into account when preparing for a session include:
- Stock rotation – First in, First out (FIFO)
- Security – to protect establishment assets from theft to the best extent possible and in-keeping with standing requirements. This may relate to secure placement of stock in

the most secure location; the use of locks and keys and other security devices; checking security systems to make sure they are working as intended

- Risk management – see above notes regarding 'safety'
- Documentation – most departments will be required to complete documentation of some sort. These may be labour sheets; responses to formal questions asked either by other departments or management; signing documents to authorise them for payment or processing
- Compliance issues – these relate to making sure that the establishment operates in such a way that it complies with the requirements of all applicable legislation
- Communication – in many (larger) venues there is a daily meeting between management-level/supervisory staff. This meeting discusses issues that are expected for the day, discuss progress on matters that are on-going; share information about staff absences, new staff, staff training, functions, VIPs expected on the premises, new advertising or promotional campaigns, legal issues impacting on or likely to impact on the venue etc…

# TOPIC 2 - PROVIDE SERVICE

## PROVIDE QUALITY CUSTOMER SERVICE

All staff that have customer contact roles are in a position to provide customer service. It is important that this service meets:

- Customer expectations
- Establishment service delivery standards
- Legally imposed compliance requirements


The exact nature of the service provided will vary with the each venue or department where the service is provided, and will vary with the customers involved.

Service methods and techniques such as in a kitchen will be different to those in front of house, housekeeping or the bars and even the front office/reservations. Service delivery to staff will be different to service delivery to that provided to customers.

Nonetheless, certain standards and expectations always apply to the provision of service regardless of the nature of it, or the person receiving it:

- **Due care** – to prevent injury to persons, damage to property and reputation, and to avoid giving offence

- **Professionalism** – to apply the skills and knowledge you possess to the highest level. This includes using correct techniques for your area of expertise, using the right equipment, applying the correct procedures etc to achieve the identified outcome required by either the property, a staff member or a customer

- **Compliance with company policies and procedures** – regardless of what many think, company policies and procedures are there for a reason and must be observed. They often allow legal requirements to be fulfilled, protect the venue against risk and allow the numerous and various tasks undertaken by the property to integrate effectively with each other and enable the efficient, effective and predictable delivery of service

- **Compliance with legal requirements** (where not already addressed by company policies and procedures) – no venue will want you to do anything that is illegal or which will open the venue up to possible civil action.

- **Timeliness** – this relates to getting things done 'on time'. Some tasks have nominated completion dates or times, but the industry generally accepts that most work needs to be done as soon as possible. Untimely service delivery means the customer is kept waiting and we need to do everything possible to minimise this

- **Meeting quality criteria** – quality relates to the standards prescribed for any product or service provided to customers. 'Quality' doesn't always mean 'top' quality but it should always relate to consistent quality that reflects the minimum standard required by the venue, and expected by the customers. Depending on the product or service, quality criteria can relate to:

    - Speed of service provision
    - Temperature and taste of food and beverage items
    - Quantity of product supplied
    - Number of facilities available
    - Politeness and courtesy of the staff

- **Checking with the customer to ensure customer satisfaction** – this is usually a simple question to determine whether or not:
    - Further service or products are required
    - There is a problem with the products or services already provided – so that appropriate remedial action can be take
    - The customer is happy
    - Additional sales opportunities exist

## PROVIDING SERVICE SUCH AS GLASSWARE, SERVICE WARE ETC…

### GLASSWARE

Most table set ups will include standard wine glasses, with many establishments also setting water glasses on the tables.

Where the guests order certain drinks and the correct glassware is not already set this will require you to:

- Remove the glassware that is not needed
- Replace it with the appropriate glasses

It is standard industry practice that all glasses that have to be removed from a table or carried to a table must be carried on a tray. Glasses should be removed and set or re-set from the guest's right-hand side.

Practical examples of the need to adjust glasses may include:

- Removing all wines glasses where guests elect not to order any bottles of wine
- Removing the white wine glass that was set and replacing it with a red wine glass if the guest orders red wine
- Adding a red wine glass if only a white wine glass was set and the table has ordered both red and white wine
- Removing the set glasses and replacing them with champagne flutes where a sparkling wine is ordered

## SERVICEWARE

Depending on the dishes ordered and the style of service is being used; there can be a need to provide various items of service ware to individual tables.

Serviceware may need to be provided as follows:

- Where the service style presents, for example, the vegetables to the entire table (as opposed to plating vegetables onto individual guest plates in the kitchen) there will be a need to use service platters

- Where customers order sauces there may be a need to provide sauce boats
- Where the guest has brought in their own cake (or arranged for the venue to supply one, perhaps for a birthday party) there may be a need to use a cake stand
- Where a soup is served to the entire table, a soup tureen may be required

Where venues use silver service, semi-silver service or guerdon styles of delivery there will be an increased need to provide additional serviceware.

## TAKING THE ORDERS

This will depend on the ordering system that your venue will use. Some systems use a handwritten (waiters) note pad, other systems might use a handheld wireless electronic device.

Experienced waiters using the written method will develop their own way of writing on the note pad that may be similar to the table below:

| Table no: | Entree | main |
|---|---|---|
| 1 - male red shirt | Garlic bread | Risotto |
| 2 | Soup | Eye Fillet MR m & v |
| 3 | Caesar salad | T-Bone MR chips salad |
| 4 | Prawns | Salmon salad |

- Each guest is numbered
- The writing is clear
- The writing assumes that there is only one soup one prawn entree etc... on the menu
- Guest one is identified wearing red shirt
- All waiters should be able to identify the main guest and what each guest has ordered from the note

The processes in which you take the orders are as follows:

- Make sure that all guests are ready to order
- Start taking their orders from the person left hand side of the host and work around the table in a clock wise direction
- Take the orders from the right hand side of the guest
- Speak very clearly and repeat back the order to the guest
- Ask supplementary questions such as "would you like vegetables or salad with the fish"
- Add any special requests - waiter will often circle on the pad any special requests. Don't forget to check with kitchen staff if the guests have any special requests before you accept the order
- Remember that dessert orders are not taken until the mains are eaten and cleared
- Once the orders have been taken make sure you thank the guests
- ALWAYS be polite and smile

Once the order has been taken, if you have used a note pad then you have to transfer it to the system that is used in your establishment or venue.

It is important that you remember to:

- Have clear writing
- Double check the information on the order
- Remember any special requests
- Don not forget to give the docket to the kitchen
- Remember to note how each steak is to be cooked
- Follow up verbally with the kitchen if required.

After the order has been taken and a copy has been transferred to the kitchen either manually or electronically, the service staff will have to make any necessary changes to the cover to reflect the dishes that the guests have ordered.

**Always** remember that cutlery should be carried to and from the table on a clothed service plate. Cutlery may only be carried in the hand if it is an establishment requirement.

It is a requirement that all covers are adjusted before any menu items are delivered to the table.

**Note** however that some establishments require that dessert cutlery is only adjusted after the guests have completed their main course, and some establishments have a standard requirement that covers are not adjusted at all. If the guest doesn't order a certain course, the cutlery stays on the cover until the table is cleared. Your copy of the order for the table provides the basis for determining what needs to be adjusted for each diner.

Adjusting the cover may mean you have to:

- Remove cutlery for courses that have not been ordered
- Exchange cutlery where necessary – such as swapping the main course knife for a steak knife where steak has been ordered; swapping the main course gear for fish gear where fish has been ordered
- Add cutlery for dishes that have been ordered where no suitable cutlery has been set – for example, if the cover did not include a soup spoon and the guest ordered soup, there would be a need to adjust the cover by adding a soup spoon

The process requires you to:

- Identify what needs to be removed from each cover
- Identify what needs to be added to each cover
- Obtain the necessary cutlery – which should be stored in your waiter's station
- Load them onto a clothed service plate – ready for carrying to the table
- Carry the clothed plate with all the required cutlery to the table
- On arrival at the table, begin adjusting the cutlery by starting at the Number One guest – working anti-clockwise around the table. Change the knife first, then the fork, and don't forget to place the cutlery down on the table so that it is parallel with all others

The knives should be removed or replaced from the right-hand side of the guest, and the forks from their left-hand side – never place or exchange cutlery by leaning across in front of a guest. Always handle cutlery by the handles.

Assume that a table to be serviced has been set for an entrée and main meal. This will mean it has been set with a main course knife and fork, and an entrée knife and fork.

The cutlery on this table may need to be changed for several reasons, as follows:

- No entrée was ordered – so the entrée cutlery must be removed
- Soup was ordered but no entrée – so the entrée knife and fork must be replaced with a soup spoon, which would be positioned on the outside of the main knife
- Soup was ordered in addition to an entrée – a soup spoon must be positioned on the outside of the entrée knife
- If steak was ordered, a steak knife may be positioned to replace the main course knife
- If only an entrée was ordered – the main knife and fork would be removed

## PRIOR TO SERVING THE FOOD

Before any food is taken to the guest, the waiter has a responsibility to check that the items are correct and are in a condition ready for the guest, these checks would include:

- Check that the food is correct e.g. the right standard of presentation for that dish
- Check that all standard items for the dish are on the plate, e.g. potatoes are not missing etc...
- Check that the plate is clean, especially for drips of sauces on the side of the plate
- Check that the plate is not chipped or cracked
- Check that no foreign bodies have fallen on the plate, e.g. hair, jewellery
- Check that all meals are ready to go and that you have the permission from the kitchen to take the meals. Sometimes the chef will place them on the bench under a heat light until they are all ready and have all been plated. NEVER take the meal without the chef's approval.
- Check for any special requests made by the guest, e.g. sauce on the side, no nuts in the dish etc...

## IT IS NOW TIME TO SERVE THE FOOD AND BEVERAGE

Two keys when serving food and beverage are:

- Do it quickly – without giving the guest the feeling they are being rushed or you are in a hurry
- Do it professionally – serve the correct items to the correct diners, be polite, identify items as they are served, communicate and interact with guests, smile, answer any questions that are asked, check that the items presented are acceptable to the guests

When placing the food on the guests table it is important to follow the same standard:

- Always serve the meal from the guest's right (the same side that beverages are served from) and announce the meal as it is being placed down – consistency in service is important

- Make sure the dish is placed down so the main item on the dish – the steak, the slices of meat, the piece of fish, the chicken breast – is closest to the guest (at the 4 o'clock – 8 o'clock position)
- Where a steak is being served, the kitchen should have presented the steak on the plate with the fat toward the centre of the plate, and not facing the guest so they have to cut through the fat/gristle to get to the meat
- It is professional to place the right meal down in front of the right person, without having to ask, "Who's having the chicken?"
- The guest numbering system comes into play when identifying which meal is to be placed in front of a particular guest. It is usual practice to announce each guest to confirm that each diner is receiving what they ordered – for example, "The Grand T-Bone, rare with extra chips. Enjoy!"
- Place the dishes on the table in such as way that the noise made by contact with the table is minimised

There is a technique for carrying plates and an experienced waiter may carry many plates; where as an inexperienced waiter may only carry a few. Below are two methods to choose from and proficiency in using either method can only be gained in the same way as gaining competency in carrying a drinks tray – practice, practice, and practice.

Firstly the **two plate carry** method;

Step 1

- Hold the first plate between your thumb, index finger and the middle finger of the left hand

Step 2

- Place the second plate above the first plate, supporting it with your fourth finger, your little finger and the base of your thumb and forearm

Important points to remember are:

- The second plate must rest on the three points mentioned above
- The third plate is carried in your right hand
- The plate in the right-hand must be selected with care as it will be the first plate to be served

Note: If plates are hot, use a waiter's cloth before placing the plates between your fingers (in step 1) to protect yourself.

Second the **three plate carry** method;

Step 1

- Hold the first plate between your thumb, index finger and the middle finger of the left hand

Step 2

- Place the second plate into the crease of the palm of your left hand under the edge of the first plate, supporting it with your ring and little fingers

Step 3

- Carry the third plate on the flat of your forearm and rim of the second plate

Note: It is not recommended to carry hot plates or plates that have delicate garnishes or runny sauces by this method.

A fourth plate may be carried in the right hand. This method is best for cold entrees and desserts.

When serving beverages it is important to remember that there are a number of points to note when serving drinks. Always serve to the right of the seated customer, unless this is obviously impossible.

It may be impossible to serve from the guest's right-hand side if two people are talking intimately head-to-head, or if there is something (such as a pillar or plant) in the way to the guest's right.

Other points include:

- Trays are usually carried on the palm of the hand with the tips of the fingers slightly raised – do not hold the tray by its edges
- Drink trays are usually held on the left hand – so that the right hand is free to serve the drinks
- If the tray does not have a non-slip surface, then a tray liner or mat should be used to prevent glassware from slipping – the tray mat may be kept in place by smearing a few drops of water on the tray's surface
- Service staff should handle glassware by the base or the stem – never handle glasses by their rims, never put fingers in the glasses
- Trays are usually loaded with the heaviest glass in the centre, and the lighter glasses placed around the outside – in most cases, the last drink on the tray should be the first drink off
- Trays should be carried at waist level through the room – walking with a straight back and shoulders don't carry the tray above your head

- Trays should be carried close to, and 'within', the body – to avoid knocking into someone or something
- When unloading trays, you may have to slightly twist your body with the tray positioned slightly away from your side – this is to enable the right arm and hand to reach in towards the table and safely position the customer's drink
- All drinks should be announced when being placed on the table – this provides an element of customer service as well as providing the guest with an opportunity to check that they are being served the drink they ordered. "Excuse me sir, your Bourbon and Coke. Thank you."

When serving guest in a restaurant it is important that you remember the sequence of service, below is the sequence broken down into stages of service, from their arrival to their departure, the sequence should be similar to the following, though all procedures should be carried out in accordance with individual establishment standards, practices and policies where these differ from what is presented here.

This sequence of service has been broken into blocks of tasks that sit logically together. Each block should be completed before the next block commences.

Stage one (arrival)

- Greet and seat guests
- Present menus and wine list from the right hand side of the customer
- Inform guests of the specials or any menu changes or adjustments
- Take the drink order
- Take bread orders or serve (the complimentary) bread
- Serve drinks from right hand side of the customer
- Serve breads, if ordered by guest from the left hand side of the customer

Stage two (ordering)

- Take food order from right hand side of the customer
- Remove menus from right hand side of the customer
- Lodge food order with the kitchen
- Adjust cutlery if necessary from right or left hand side of the customer, as appropriate
- Take wine order if required and serve wine

Stage three (service of entree)

- Serve entrées from right hand side of the customer

- Three-minute check of the table to see if guest requires a refill of their drink or to remove empty glasses
- Clear entrées and any unwanted or unused cutlery and crockery
- Call the meals away with the kitchen for the next course – make sure chef responds and confirms the message was heard
- Respond to any beverage needs

Stage four (service of main)

- Serve main course meals from right hand side of the customer
- Perform three-minute check – to make sure if everything is OK or if the guests have a complaint that needs some action to be taken (returning the meal to the kitchen to cook a steak a bit more; adding food items that have been omitted)
- Clear away main course plates, and any unwanted or unused crockery and cutlery, from right hand side of the customer
- Clear away side plates and side knife from left hand side of the customer
- Respond to any beverage needs
- Present customers with dessert menus (if applicable)

Stage five (dessert order)

- Take dessert order from right hand side of the customer
- Take coffee and tea orders
- Take port or liqueur orders
- Position cutlery for dessert
- Serve dessert
- Serve coffee and tea
- Serve port, liqueur or requested beverages

Stage six (clear away/farewell)

- Clear away dessert crockery and cutlery
- Respond to any further beverage needs
- Prepare and present guest with the account
- Accept payment
- Farewell guest

## OFFER INFORMATION TO CUSTOMERS ON PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

Customers will expect you to provide information on products and services available within your venue. The knowledge that enables you to do this is called 'product knowledge'. One definition of product knowledge is:

- An understanding of a goods or services that might include having acquired information about its application, function, features, use and support requirements. A waiter in hospitality is an example of an individual that is typically expected to acquire considerable product knowledge about the goods and services that they are responsible for selling to consumers.

You must strive to cultivate a sound and comprehensive bank of product knowledge for your industry sector and specific to the venue where you work, and the department you normally work in.

Being able to help customers meet their individual needs and preferences is one excellent way of differentiating your premises from the competition.

Management also expect you to promote the products and services of the property so as to meet customer needs and to optimise revenue and profit for the establishment

### WHY IS OFFERING PRODUCT KNOWLEDGE IMPORTANT?

The type and extent of product knowledge you are expected to provide to customers will be determined by:

- Their stated requirements

- Your interpretation of what they need– in many cases you will find it necessary to supply product information that is not specifically asked for. Many customers don't know what they don't know so they can't ask for it and your ability to provide information that enhances their experience is all part of providing excellent levels of customer service

For example: If the dining room doesn't take payment by either credit card or EFTPOS, it is worth notifying customers about this when they ring to make a booking or make enquiries about dining. The aim is to try to avoid embarrassment or dissatisfaction to the customer and further a complaint from the customer – we don't want to have a situation where the customer says "Why didn't they tell me that when I rang?"
When you are giving customer information of a certain product or service it is important to know what to cover. Any information that relates to the products and services offered by the venue, facilities available or policies and procedures that the establishment operates by can be counted as product knowledge.
The range of information that can be deemed to be product knowledge is almost without end – you should constantly seek to expand and update your product knowledge.

Product knowledge can therefore include:

- Information about the physical products – where they are made, their characteristics, their price and availability, how to buy those products

- Information about the services that are available – this could include who provides the service, when it is available, how much it costs, what it involves, what it is like and how to book it

- Information on prices, Specials, deals and packages – It is important that you are able to explain how these will benefit the customer, what savings they involve, when they are available, when the offer finishes, who is eligible for them and how to obtain them

- Information about the operation of the business – this will cover such things as facilities available, policies and procedures, opening and closing times for departments and services (such as restaurant, bar or room service) what deposits are required with bookings, methods of payment accepted by the venue, peak and slow trading times,

- Other information that may be required to assist the customer may include the names of staff and management, contact details of the property, the quietest accommodation rooms, the location of the best seats in the restaurant, the number of rooms on each floor

The most common ways to promote products and services (many of which are combined at the time of service delivery) some of these are:

- To tell the customers verbally – this includes advising customers on all relevant 'standing' products and services (that is, items etc that are normally stocked or offered by the establishment), and mentioning any specials, deals or packages that are available that seem to meet their needs. These specials, deals or packages should be proactively mentioned even where customers are unaware of their presence

- Give customers relevant documentation to take away and read – this may include:
    - Advertising material – either in-house material or material from an external source or supplier
    - Information brochures, fact sheets, product information etc
    - Printed instructions, directions, maps of the outlet
    - Copies of entry forms, application forms etc
    - Sample menus, drink lists, functions kits, spa treatments

- Offer to show the customer a particular product, item or facility – this can include a guided visit to the function room/area, a viewing of a room, or looking at the restaurant set up for this evening's meal

- Offer a sample of food and beverage – giving the customer a taste test of a product

- Provide a regular customer (within your personal scope of authority to do so) with a voucher for a free drink, treatment, meal etc

Whenever selling anything to customers/guests a standard technique is to 'sell the benefits, not the features'. All products and services have tangible features and the poor sales person will only tell the customer about these – whereas a good sales person will take the time and make the effort to convert those features into benefits.
The key to the effectiveness of this theory is that most people respond more positively to being told the benefits than they do to a stark statement of clinical features.

**REMEMBER**

**Sell the benefits, not the features**

It is important to remember that every venue or establishment will have their own organisational policies and procedures in relation to the requirement in giving information and promoting products and services this can vary between properties but will usually relate to:

- **Honesty** – there is no room for dishonesty, deception or misleading statements. This only leads to customer dissatisfaction when the reality fails to live up to the hype

- **Accuracy** – strongly related to honesty and relates to ensuring that prices quoted are correct/all inclusive, figures provided (for numbers that a room can accommodate, deposits required, days and dates, quantities) are correct

- **Currency** – information must be kept up-to-date and relate to the current situation (not last year's etc)

- **No pressure** – most establishments insist that customers are 'provided with information' to enable an informed buying decision as opposed to being 'pressured into buying'

## ASSIST CUSTOMER CHOICES THAT MEET INDIVIDUAL NEEDS, SPECIAL REQUESTS OR CULTURAL REQUIREMENTS

When working in your establishment you will have to assist customers with their choices, or assist the customer so as to meet their individual needs, special requests or cultural requirements such as dietary requests, or position of rooms, or even size of mattresses etc...
These special requests might apply when a customer to a limited number or they can ask for an unlimited number of special requests and where possible you should do everything to accommodate them within operational, safety, cost and resource limitations.
It is very important to remember never agree to a special request made by a guest or customer unless you know it can be met.

Special requests can include:

- Timing issues – such as tables asking for their food to be served as quickly as possible, or asking that there is a gap of an hour between each course
- Cultural issues – some guests may ask for food and beverages that meet their cultural and religious needs. Always check with the kitchen or your supervisor before committing the venue to meeting these needs
- Dietary requirements
- Personal preference requests – in relation to serve size, extra amounts of… no sauce/chips etc, a special way of cooking that is not listed on the menu, or the inclusion or exclusion of nominated ingredients from a dish
- How steaks are to be cooked - known as the 'degrees of doneness' these are:
    - Blue – steak is seared on both sides then served
    - Rare – steak is served when browned on both sides, and meat still contains blood
    - Medium rare – steak has less blood than a rare steak, though blood is still just present
    - Medium to well-done – steak is cooked all the way through, no sign of blood
    - Well-done, steak is cooked very well – a little burnt on the outside and definitely no sign of blood (These last two are not normally cooked these day as some chef's will refuse to cook the meat well done)
- Entrées required as main courses – or vice versa

If you are working in the hospitality industry as a waiter, then to be an effective waiter you will need to know and understand all the dishes on the menu as well as the beverages that you establishment sells such as wines, and beers etc... Customers are very likely to ask you questions about the food and they will also ask you for your recommendations for wine and food matchings. If you have a specialist Sommelier (A specialist wine waiter / wine steward, who is trained and has knowledge about the wine profession, and who specialises in all facets of beverage service), on staff then you would probably refer the customer to them to answer any wine questions.

As a waiter you will have to have an understanding of what special dietary needs many patrons ask you to accommodate?


The range can be quite large and extensive but could include:

- Vegetarian requests – this is probably the most common dietary-related request and can include:
    - Lacto-ova vegetarians/Ova-lacto vegetarians – these are the majority of 'vegetarians'. They eat dairy products and eggs but not meat of any kind (meat, poultry or fish)
    - Lacto-vegetarians – they don't eat meat, poultry or fish. They don't eat eggs but they eat dairy products
    - Pescatarians – people who don't eat meat, poultry or animal flesh but do eat fish
    - Vegan – this definition is open to various definitions so it is best to check exactly what the diner means when they say they are a 'vegan'. Generally a vegan can be seen as anyone who doesn't eat meat, poultry, fish, eggs or dairy products

and doesn't eat foods derived from animals (such as gelatine). The person may also stipulate that they are served only raw/unprocessed foods, or foods that have not reached a temperature of above 46ºC (because they believe foods above this temperature have had some or most of their dietary goodness removed and can be harmful to the human body

- Requests for low-salt meals
- Requests for low-sugar/no sugar meals – for diabetics
- Requests for lactose-reduced milk – for those who are lactose intolerant
- Requests for gluten-free food – from patrons who have celiac disease
- Requests for a macrobiotic diet – for those who are especially health-focussed they will request unprocessed vegan foods, no oil and no sugar

## VERY IMPORTANT NOTE

It is extremely important to make sure that special requests that relate to dietary issues receive extra or special attention and care as there can be severe medical consequences if dietary needs are not met.

mentioned that they have special needs in relation to:

- Allergies
- Medications
- Health-related conditions – such as diabetes, heart conditions
- Specific diets that are mentioned

The consequences (such as the possibility of anaphylactic shock, increased blood sugar levels and other reactions that diners may have to various foods or substances) can result in the property being sued.

Remember that all establishments have a common law '**duty of care'** towards their customer or guests and this obligation definitely extends to situations where customers have asked for a certain meal or service and are served something that does not comply with their stated requests and when this results in injury to those persons.


When you have a special request by a customer in relation to food, then you should immediately:

- Check with your management or the kitchen to determine whether or not a specific stated dietary request can be accommodated or not
- Make doubly sure that those preparing the dish know the specific dietary requirements that have been requested

- Never assume that the kitchen can accommodate dietary needs of customer – even if you have accommodated similar requests in the past
- Double check with the kitchen when you pick up a dish for service to the table – ask them if they have prepared the food as requested and obtain positive confirmation before taking the dish to the table
- Ensure appropriate emergency procedures are in place to manage situations where customers are adversely affected by foodstuffs while on the premises – these procedures may be included in the Emergency Management Plan for the premises

If the request are in relation to other services such as room location, or other special services then you should:

- Check with your management or the reception supervisor to determine whether or not a specific stated request can be accommodated or not.
- Never assume that the establishment can accommodate the needs of the guest – even if you have accommodated similar requests in the past

## PROACTIVELY PROMOTE, UPSELL AND CROSS SELL PRODUCTS AND SERVICES ACCORDING TO ORGANISATIONAL PROCEDURES

When working in the Hospitality food sector, your venue will expect you to actively promote the food and drinks that are available in order to optimise sales. To describe the dishes and wines you should, not only be knowledgeable but also, if possible have seen and/or tasted these items. A well organised kitchen will provide the FOH staff with samples of the specials for them to see and taste, that way they will be able to describe the dishes to the guests.

However, as part of the 'best before service procedure' a waiter should find out what the specials are and also talk with the head Chef about the details such as how it is prepared, served and cooked.

This selling activity needs to be undertaken in line with organisational policies and procedures which will include various issues such as:

- Observe Responsible Service of Alcohol provisions
- Always be truthful and accurate in your descriptions of what is available
- Never do anything that can be interpreted as putting pressure on customers to buy
- Never give people who order less a lower quality of service – the table that ordered only main courses and no drinks should get the same high level of service as the table that ordered three courses with wines to accompany every course

When you start your presentation it is usually after the guests have been seated and you have presented them a menu (more casual establishments, such as cafes tend to have a drinks/wine menu all inclusive of the food menu). In a more formal restaurant the food and the wine menu will be separated.

As you are presenting the menu this is where you will build a rapport with your customer and you can make small talk (if appropriate to do so). It is important that you remember to smile and be friendly. Once all guests have the menu then you can explain the specials, and answer any of the questions that your guests may have about the food and wines etc...

Making recommendations is a subtle way of promoting products. When recommending food, options include:

- Recommending what it is you like
- Recommending what is popular
- Asking some questions first to determine whether they are after a big meal or a snack, whether they like chicken, meat or pasta, whether they prefer plain food or dishes with sauces and added flavour – and then recommend an appropriate dish

Obviously, the third option is the most customer-focussed method.

In relation to drinks, advice or recommendations should be based on identified need so there is a need to ask some basic questions:

- Do they want an alcoholic or non-alcoholic drink?
- Do they want a beverage that they can share with others?
- If they want wine, do they prefer red or white? Still or sparkling?
- What have they selected in the way of food?

When advising customers, it is useful if you can give them information about:

- Taste, colour and aroma
- Whether it is imported or domestic
- How it may be consumed – describing options available to enjoy the product
- The alcoholic strength
- Any special points about it – things like the worm in certain tequilas, a special advertising campaign that may be running for it, any competitions that are running if people buy it

Doing a 'hard sell' on your guests or customers is usually not a good outcome as this could turn them off and they may react badly to a pushy waiter. So it is better to keep the hard sales pitch as soft and gentle as possibly you will find this will bring a better result and a happy guest.

Some examples of this soft sell could include:

- Instead of asking "Can I get you a pre-dinner drink?" try saying "What would you like as a pre-dinner drink"

- Instead of "Can I get you some garlic bread, or side dish or vegetable or salad?" try "Would you like to have some garlic bread, or a side dish of vegetables or salad?"

Some establishment have instruction to always ask the customers if they would like to have some additional dishes with their meals. These are known as 'add on' sales and can be quite profitable to the venue.

There also may be times when you are asked to recommend a wine to go with a meal. Some basic suggestions include:

| Food | Wine |
|---|---|
| Seafood | Semillon, Sauvignon blanc, Riesling |
| Game | Cabernet sauvignon, shiraz, chardonnay, Semillon |
| Red meat | Cabernet merlot, cabernet sauvignon, shiraz, malbec |
| Poultry | Chardonnay, Chenin blanc, Verdelho |
| Salads | Chenin blanc, Verdelho, chardonnay, Riesling |
| Antipasto | Chardonnay, rosé |
| Pasta | Chardonnay, Riesling, shiraz |
| Cheese platters | Cabernet merlot |
| Desserts | Dessert wines |

You should also be sufficiently familiar with the wines on the drink list to make intelligent recommendations to compliment the food. One way of choosing wines to go with food is the 'Complement or contrast' approach as follows.

When complementing food with wine, try to select wines that will harmonise well with the dishes and their ingredients – general guidelines are:

- Whites with fish, chicken, veal and pork
- Reds with dark meat
- Reds with cheese
- Delicate wines with delicate food
- Full-bodied wines with full-bodied food
- Sweet wines with sweet food
- Champagne can generally go with anything and with any course
- 'Contrasting' relates to selecting a wine that stands distinctly on its own when compared to the food being eaten and is viewed as a separate taste experience

It's best to stick with the idea that a style of wine goes well with a style of food and then fine-tune your selection from that point, taste-testing dishes and wines, and taking professional advice from wine experts.

Your venue will often have instruction or policies that staff take the opportunities that present to them to promote menu items and drinks. Management will certainly expect you to do this (to optimise sales), and arguably customers expect you to do this (to optimise their enjoyment of the dining experience).

Promoting products simply means making customers/guests aware of what is available. This can be done by:

- Verbally informing them of what is available
- Creating a display in the room highlighting what is available
- Providing samples of items
- Including written advice on the table – such as a tent card

The intention is to encourage guests to buy an item that they had not previously considered buying, but care has to be taken not to give the impression of pressuring the guests into buying something they don't want.

Other types of selling that establishments will expect from their staff would include upselling and cross-selling;

Upselling involves suggesting a more expensive item as an alternative to the one that the guest has indicated they want. This has to be done sensitively so as not to give the impression that the venue is 'money hungry'. Examples of opportunity to upsell can include:

- Advising customers that the 'King size' steak represents excellent value-for-money compared to the normal steak
- Suggesting a bottle or carafe of wine instead of a glass
- Recommending a more expensive bottle of wine
- Recommending an imported product over a domestic one

Whenever an attempt to upsell is made, it is important that the offer is accompanied by truthful reasons why the suggestion would benefit the diner/purchaser – examples of benefits may include.

- Unique opportunity – the product may be rare, or the offer may not be available elsewhere
- Unique taste
- Larger size/serve

In a fast food shop, up-selling would be asking the question "Do you want to up-size/super-size?"

Cross-selling is selling associated items to accompany what the guest has already ordered. The idea is to encourage the guest to buy something that will enhance their enjoyment of the experience and increase the 'take' from that table/room/person.

In a dining room you might suggest the garlic bread as a brilliant accompaniment for the minestrone soup or recommend a crisp, fresh Garden Salad to accompany the Lasagne.

In a fast food outlet, cross-selling would be asking "Do you want fries with that?"

## FAREWELLING GUESTS

There should always be a staff member located near the door to farewell the guests as they leave, this is a very important task as this will leave them with a good impression.

Some key points that you must remember are:

- Be very polite to all guests
- Call men "Sir" and ladies "Mam"
- Say "Thank you" and add "Hope to see you again"
- If appropriate use a personal message. For example when serving the customer you may find out that they are in town for a business meeting, so it might be appropriate to say " Good luck with your business tomorrow"
- Follow the establishments procedures
- Open the door if appropriate
- Offer help such as a taxi or directions
- **SMILE**
- Be friendly

Remember that procedures will vary from venue to venue.

# RESOLVE COMPLAINTS ACCORDING TO INDIVIDUAL EMPOWERMENT AND USE APPROPRIATE COMMUNICATION TECHNIQUES TO DEAL WITH CONFLICT

Every business is likely to have its own 'dispute resolution procedures' based on their past experience, their commitment to their customers, the nature of the complaint and their need to address such issues.

Many establishments reduce these procedures to writing in a formal 'Dispute Resolution' or 'Customer Complaints' policy accompanied by relevant procedures which may include:

- Nominated scopes of authority for staff to take action and make decisions on complaints

- Specified pre-programmed decisions that are to apply in designated complaint situations – these provide consistency when dealing with common complaints and relieve operational staff of having to make decisions in relation to the complaint
- Designation of management personnel who are responsible for defined categories of complaints

## SAMPLE DOCUMENTS TO BE USED IN RELATION TO COMPLAINTS

These may include:

- Customer feedback forms
- Complaint registration forms
- Pro forma letters to be sent to customers where a formal, written response is deemed necessary or appropriate

The following provides a general outline as to how complaints should be dealt with – you will notice that the exact nature of the action to be taken in the instance of each complaint (such as giving a free drink to a customer, allowing them a discount, or receiving an apology from the manager) remain dependent on the nature and extent of the complaint, its seriousness, the person/customer involved as well as the potential impact of not 'appropriately' responding to the compliant.

Use questioning techniques to establish and agree on the nature, possible cause and details of the complaint or difficult customer service situation with the customer and assess the impact on the customer of the situation:

- Use communication techniques to assist in the management of the complaint and handle the situation sensitively, courteously and discreetly – see below
- Take responsibility for finding a solution to the complaint within the scope of individual responsibility
- Determine possible options to resolve the complaint and promptly analyse and decide on the best solution, taking into account any organisation constraints
- Take appropriate action swiftly to resolve the complaint and prevent escalation, in agreement with customer and to the customer's satisfaction
- Where appropriate, use techniques to turn complaints into opportunities to demonstrate high quality customer service

- Provide feedback on complaints to appropriate personnel in order to avoid future occurrence
- Reflect on and evaluate complaint and solution to enhance response to future complaints or difficult service situations

During your career within the hospitality industry, you will undoubtedly come across many different types of customers including

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| • Rude<br>• Exasperated<br>• Arrogant | • Passive<br>• Fussy<br>• Demanding | • Friendly<br>• Aggressive<br>• Assertive |

You may also assist customers from various social, cultural or ethnic backgrounds. Customers will also have varied physical and mental abilities. Your range of customers will be diverse and you will require many specialist qualities and techniques to deal with this diversity.

Dealing with difficult customers with the aim of retaining them as customers is vital to your hospitality venue success.

The threshold of complaint is the level of dissatisfaction a customer must reach for them to complain. As in the pain threshold, the complaint threshold varies among individuals. Some customers look for any opportunity to complain, while others will put up with a lot before they complain.

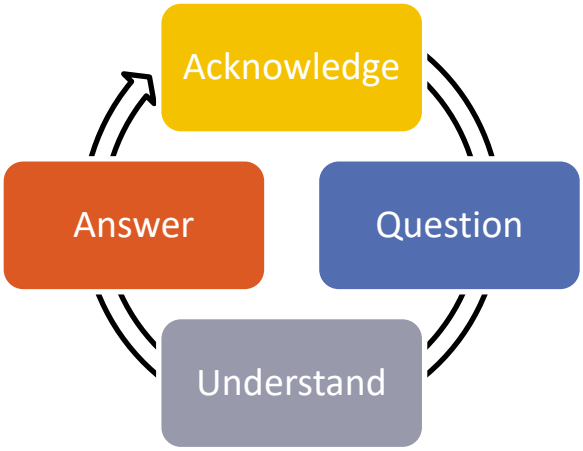
In almost all cases of customer complaints, the customer honestly believes that they have a legitimate problem. Handling all customers with problems tactfully and thoughtfully is critical to retaining them, regardless of the way they choose to make you aware of the problem.

## RESOLVING COMPLAINTS

If a hospitality venue is to be successful in a competitive market it is important to retain existing customers as well as win new ones. Winning back an unhappy customer by effective complaint-handling can result in increased customer loyalty. The set of strategies used to resolve customer complaints is called customer recovery.

Organisations must put in place processes to measure the customer satisfaction/dissatisfaction of all customers if customer recovery is to be successful. Customer dissatisfaction must be identified, investigated, then quickly and effectively resolved.

There is a four-step strategy that can be used to deal effectively with problems. This strategy is called **AQUA**. This acronym stands for:



An important part of dealing with a difficult customer is to **acknowledge** their complaint or problem—to communicate to them that you are really listening to them.

When acknowledging an angry and unhappy customer, it is important that you deal with both parts of the problem: the emotion and the facts.

It is important to defuse the emotions, as these are often what make a customer appear 'difficult'. Only when the customer's emotions have been acknowledged can you really address the facts.

In dealing with your 'difficult customers', it is important that you adhere to the following:

- Focus on the customer by maintaining eye contact;
- Show that you are listening, e.g. nod your head, have an open, non-defensive body posture;
- Listen to feelings and facts;
- Do not interrupt;
- If you don't understand, ask for clarification;
- Summarise in your own words to clarify your understanding.

It is important that you help to reassure your customer and that you remain positive.

| | |
|---|---|
| • Show the customer you are listening by… | • Nodding, eye contact |
| • Empathise with your customer by.... | • Reassuring, listening |
| • Focus on your difficult customer by... | • Maintaining eye contact |
| • Gain an understanding of the problem by… | • Seeking clarification |
| • Arrive at a positive outcome by… | • Mediating, being positive |

Once you have listened thoroughly to your customer's difficulties, you are ready to move on to the second part of the AQUA acronym, which is '**question**'. It is important to make appropriate use of open and closed questions in order to gain an accurate understanding of the issues.

Whilst questioning, it is also vital that you again listen to your customer's answers. To show your **understanding**, it is useful to clarify the customer's issue. This can be achieved by putting the issue into your own words, and providing an opportunity for the customer to respond.

This helps calm the customer down by proving you've paid attention to what they have said. It also provides an opportunity for them to ask extra information or clarify issues they may not have fully explained.

Your **answer**, or solution to the problem, is the strategy that you propose to the customer to gain a positive outcome. Your answer should always be within store policy, and should aim to get the best possible outcome both for the business and the customer.

It is important for staff to have the skills, ability and knowledge to find resolutions that not only meet the needs of the customer but also adhere to the store's policy.

Once you have applied AQUA and hopefully reached a positive ending, the next step is to boost the customer's confidence in you and your store in order to promote long-term commitment.

Showing confidence in yourself and your answers plays an important part in whether the customer accepts it. By maintaining eye contact, speaking clearly and confidently you will be well on your way to developing this confidence.

If the problem is in need of investigation, it is important to take action immediately.

Follow-up at a later stage is also a good idea. It may be a telephone call to the customer to make sure they are happy with the outcome, or to thank the customer for bringing the problem to your attention.

By successfully dealing with difficult customers, they could turn into your most loyal supporters. It is certainly worth the investment of your time and effort.

Consider the following options:

- Apologise again
- Commit to ensuring the problem does not reoccur
- Refer to Manager
- Offer a token of regret
- Promise to factor their experience into future training

A mutually acceptable resolution to your customer complaint should be any good salesperson's goal. A customer's expectations of your store when a problem occurs are in most cases reasonable. An apology should always be delivered regardless of the cause of the problem.

To compromise means finding an acceptable solution that is less than the initially expected position.

Unfortunately compromising may not always reach an outcome that is satisfactory to all concerned, but it generally brings the parties at least closer together and helps to set the groundwork for eventual resolution.

Customers expect a fair hearing of their problem. If your store offers a reasonable explanation and demonstrates concern and tact, the customer should generally respond in kind.

If the problem has caused a great deal of concern, maybe some kind of value-added compensation could be organised. This of course would be in line with your store's policy in this area.

To resolve conflict you have be an effective communicator, it is important to pick your words carefully. Always be aware of the type of person you are speaking with and modify your language to suit the listener as much as possible.

It has been said so many times that it loses its effect but it's true. Every one of our guests is an individual and must be treated as such. The communication style that you use for a group of young adventure seeking holiday makers should not be the same as for a bus load of senior citizens touring the local lawn bowls clubs.


## BODY LANGUAGE – NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION

Non-verbal communication occurs in all person-to-person situations – it is impossible for it not to happen. Some people use more non-verbal communication than others do, but we all use it to some degree.

You need to pay attention the messages your body language is sending when dealing with a conflict situation and make the effort to read the other person's body language.

Forms of body language important in conflict situations include:

- Your stance and posture
- Your facial expressions
- How you hold your arms

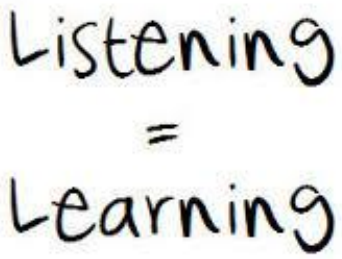
Body language transmits feelings. We must take care that these 'emotional messages' cannot be interpreted as conflicting with the verbal message sent. Where your body language says one thing but your words say another, people tend to believe the non-verbal communication.


It is extremely important to be consciously aware of your body language at all times when communicating face-to-face in a conflict situation, and to realise that the total interaction involves much, much more than just the spoken word.

## LISTENING

To be an active listener you must be able to concentrate well. When we listen, we are also:

- Watching to identify non-verbal communication
- Analysing what the person is saying
- Interpreting the words and the body language




Remember that communication is a two-way process between a sender and a receiver. It is the presence of 'feedback' that converts a monologue into a dialogue and hence defines the exchange between people as 'communication'. Without feedback, communication cannot be said to have taken place.

Likewise, if a message is not clearly understood by the receiver it can open the door for misunderstandings and the desired action or response not being achieved. In this case, too, it cannot be said that proper communication has occurred

Common customer service problems can include:

- Difficulty contacting service staff
- lack of information about the products and services offered
- Unclear or incorrect price information
- Handling of complaints
- Incorrect billing
- Products not available

All these should be handled professionally and with respect and courtesy.

# TOPIC 3 - COMPLETE OPERATIONAL TASKS

## FOLLOW WORK SCHEDULES AND WORK COOPERATIVELY AS PART OF THE TEAM TO MAXIMISE EFFICIENCY

As stated in topic all venues and establishments, and it is important that you follow these work schedules, as you follow these work schedules it is important that you also work cooperatively as part of a team so as to maximise efficiently.

The lack of effective communication is the root cause of many workplace problems – with other staff, with customers and with management. This underlines the absolute need to maintain appropriate and effective communication with others during the working day.

The hospitality industry is an extremely dynamic one – things change not only from week-to-week but also from day-to-day, hour-to-hour and even minute-to-minute.

For example:

- A machine that was working perfectly 5 minutes ago has now crashed
- The table for 20 has shrunk to a table for 4 – or the table for 4 has grown to a table for 20
- The reception area that was vacant at 3:00pm can be packed with 100 people looking for accommodation (and a meal) after several unexpected coaches arrive

Customers who appear happy and pleasant at 7:15pm can be obnoxious and anti-social at 7:16pm. All the above, and so much more, can give rise to the need to communicate with other staff – either team members in your own department or elsewhere within the property.

It can be useful to see other staff at the venue as customers – internal customers. It is said that if you aren't serving an external customer, you had better be serving someone who is.

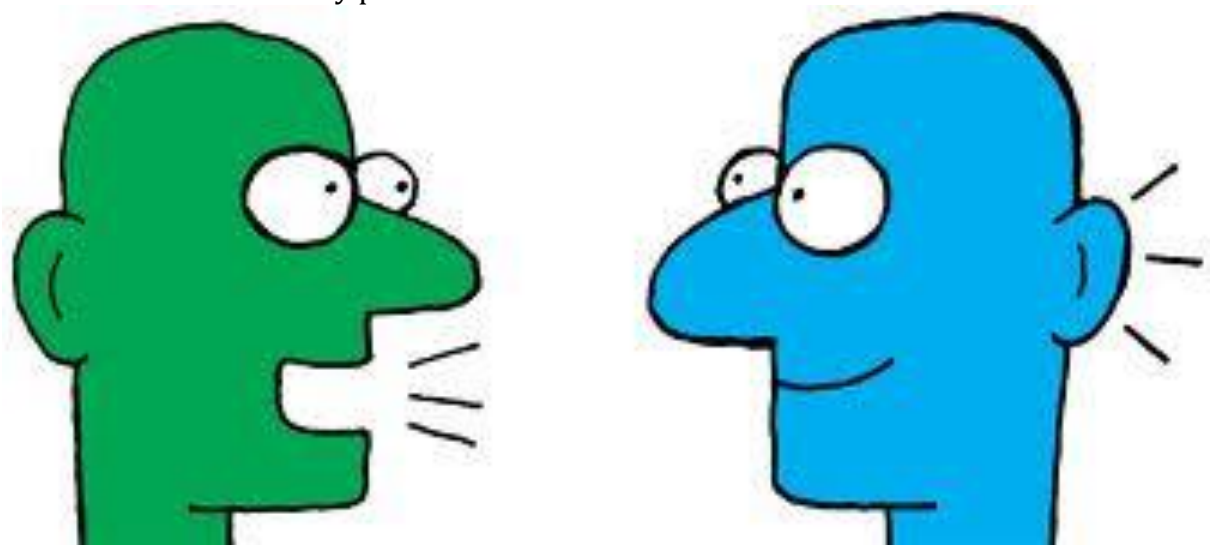
This orientation also highlights the need to treat other staff with the same courtesy, respect etc that you use when dealing with external customers/guests.

Working cooperatively with other staff means different things at different times depending on the circumstances that apply but can be seen to involve:

- Re-prioritising your personal work schedule to accommodate the needs of others – it is a wise person who realises that a work plan needs to be set in jelly, not in concrete
- Pitching in and helping others as required – you should not only do this when asked but be alert for opportunities to help without being asked
- Not making a big deal of helping someone else – remember there is always the possibility that you may need help at one time or another
- Letting other people know when you think they have done a good job
- Working harder – this may mean:

- Missing out on a scheduled break
- Returning to work earlier than rostered
- Staying behind for a while until the work has been done
- Simply focussing and striving that little bit extra – ignoring distractions, staying 'on task', multi-tasking, working quicker, doing the important tasks before the less important ones

The simplest and most effective way is often the best. In this case this means talking to people – either face-to-face or by phone.



When you do communicate, consider the following:

- Advise them of changes that you know of that have occurred to the previously discussed arrangements – this is essential where the changes will impact on them, their workload or their prepared work schedule
- Explain any matters (that is, issues that are associated to, or underpin, the changes) – for example, if there is a change with a booking it can be useful for other staff dealing with that booking to know not only what changes have taken place but also why those changes needed to occur
- Try to anticipate things that need attention – never leave advising others till the last minute if it can be avoided. Pre-warned is pre-armed. Cultivate the ability to predict problems, shortages, issues, the need for change
- Convey the facts – tell people all the details (names, times, what is involved, prices that have changed etc) that you have regarding the changes. There needs to be a genuine sharing of all known information
- Commit important details to writing – where possible it is best to write down the really important parts of any communication to help ensure clarity and avoid misunderstanding and confusion

## FOLLOW WORKPLACE SAFETY AND HYGIENE PROCEDURES

All Hospitality work areas must factor in all the relevant compliance requirements for work place health and safety. A compliance requirement is an obligation imposed on you or the property under a piece of legislation. Remember that you also have a common law duty of care toward your employer, customers and other staff plus you have an obligation to work in such a way that protects your safety and the welfare of others.

Yet again the specifics of workplace safety will vary between premises, and can even differ between individual departments within the same venue. This said, your induction and orientation at the property can be expected to make you aware of the safety requirements you need to comply with.

Establishments take safety seriously and will have undertaken a number of risk assessments to determine what issues, activities and areas need to have special safety requirements applied to them.

These areas can relate to:

- Staff safety – when working alone; when working late at night; in relation to threats and violence from customers; workplace harassment and bullying; risks associated with workplace activities and procedures
- Customer safety – in relation to services and facilities provided by the venue, and from other customers
- The security of assets belonging to the property – there is a fine line between safety and security and mush that occurs blurs from one field into another.

Employers are under a legal obligation to consult with staff in relation to Work Health and Safety (WHS) matters. This means staff must be made aware of unsafe issues and encouraged to participate in resolving them. There may be a formal structure (such as an OHS committee, OHS representative) at your workplace to assist in relation to OHS issues.

The basic approach that is recommended by WHS authorities in relation to risk management is based on three activities:

- Identify the risk
- Assess the risk
- Control the risk


WHS legislation provides for enormous fines (and jail time) for employers who fail to discharge their mandated WHS responsibilities, so most employers take these responsibilities seriously and are keen to address genuine identified safety needs in the workplace.

Nearly all states now have changed their legislation and now come under Safe work Australia, and use the WHS or Work health and Safety Act's, Victoria still use Work Safe Victoria and use OHS or Occupational Health and Safety Act.

## WHAT SHOULD YOU DO IF YOU NOTICE AN UNSAFE SITUATION?

The basics are straight-forward – there is little for you to do anything else but:

- Cease work whenever you believe that your safety or the safety of other is in jeopardy
- Report the situation to your supervisor/management immediately
- Initiate action as set out in the Emergency Management Plan where you believe an emergency situation (as defined by the Plan) exists

Note: In every emergency situation, the safety of people must take precedence over protecting physical assets/ property.

All premises are subject to safe food handling requirements which are covered by relevant state/territory legislation as well as 'Safe Food Australia.

Where the premises operates a Food Safety Plan/Program, this document will provide establishment-specific details about what is required in order for the business to meet their food safety obligations and ensure that only safe food is served. Once again, induction and orientation coupled with further on-site training will make you aware of what is required where you work.

Your responsibilities under the Food Safety Plan/Program are to comply with all stated food handling, storage, preparation, display and service requirements as well as all personal hygiene, waste disposal, pest control and cleaning requirements. You also are under an obligation to report any unsafe food practices or situations you become aware of, and to take whatever action is necessary to prevent the contamination of food on the premises.

In addition you may be allocated additional duties such as:

- Checking incoming goods to ensure they are safe, fit for consumption
- Completing necessary records as required by the Plan – see immediately above for examples of these
- Calibrating food thermometers
- Conducting inspections of the food premises, food equipment and food stocks
- Implementing pest control procedures – including using external, professional pest control companies where needed
- Acting as the designated Food Safety Supervisor for the business

It is industry 'Best Practice' that even where food handlers are not **required** to hold a food handler's certificate, management insists that they do.

## MAINTAIN THE CLEANLINESS AND TIDINESS OF WORK AREAS

At the conclusion of the service session there are always jobs that need to be done. Just because the guests have gone doesn't mean the job is over. The exact nature of the clearing, cleaning and dismantling that may be required will vary between sessions and differ between

properties but the one thing that does stay constant is the need to comply with all OHS requirements and to accommodate various environmental considerations.

The end of session cleaning that has to be undertaken is usually a low-level style of cleaning that tends to be more a 'tidying' activity than a genuine cleaning one. The real cleaning of the department is the role of the dedicated cleaning staff.

For example, staff in the department may be responsible for:

- Sweeping a floor area
- Removing furniture that was brought in to the dining area for the service session – such as high chairs
- Dismantling items – such as table tops that may have been put over a smaller table (that would normally seat 4 people) to enable it to seat 10 people; taking down display tables that were prepared for the session; removing decorations etc that were put up for a special function
- Picking up large/loose rubbish that is lying around
- Wiping the counter, bench or desk tops
- Cleaning operational items of equipment – such as computers, deep fat fryers, point of sale terminals etc

It may remain the job of the cleaning staff to:

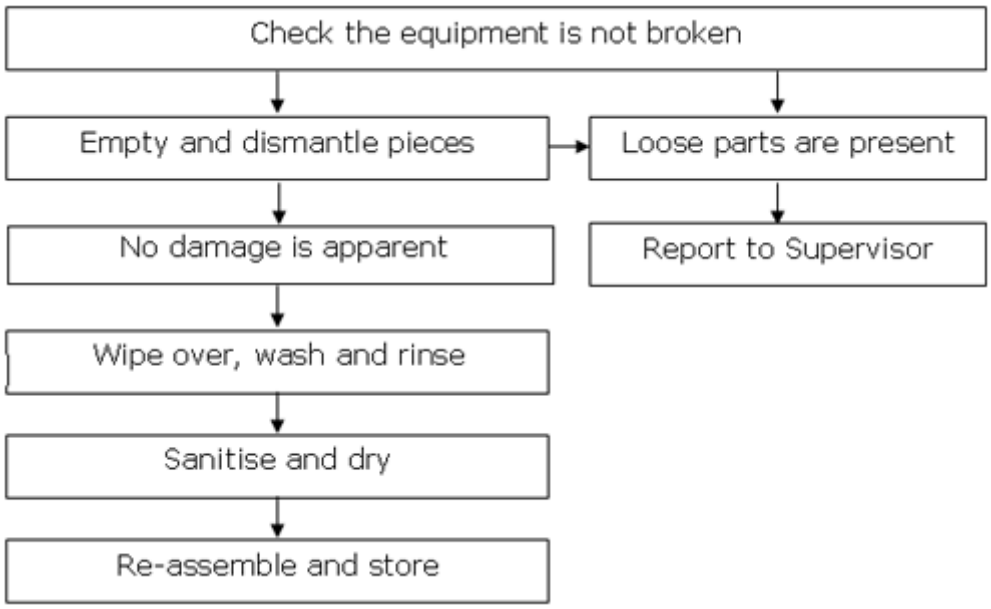
- Vacuum the carpets
- Mop the floors
- Clean the public areas allied to the department – foyers, corridors, toilets, waiting areas, gardens etc

To maintain cleaning equipment and keep it in a good working condition, it must be thoroughly cleaned and stored correctly every time it is used. If regular maintenance does not occur, the equipment may, over time, become dangerous to individuals, e.g. electrical accidents through poor connections or frayed cords on a vacuum cleaner. Poorly maintained equipment may also cause damage to the area being cleaned, e.g. a mop which was used to clean glass particles may scratch a wooden floor if it is not properly cleaned before being used again.

Cleaning of equipment that will need cleaning includes:

- Garbage receptacles
- Pans
- Brooms, dusters and brushes
- Mops and buckets
- Electrical equipment, e.g. Vacuum cleaners, polishers, scrubbers

Every time a piece of equipment is used, the general rule is to clean it straight away so it is ready for the next person to use. The manufacturers' instructions should be strictly followed when maintaining and cleaning equipment, however the following flow chart provides some general guidelines:




## EMPTYING

Not all pieces of equipment need emptying; however garbage receptacles and vacuum cleaners need to be emptied regularly. Other pieces of equipment may need to be emptied of chemicals or other liquids before they are stored, e.g. floor scrubbers. Manufacturers' instructions should be followed carefully to ensure that equipment is maintained properly and remains safe for future use.

## DISMANTLING AND REASSEMBLING

Dismantling equipment allows it to be meticulously cleaned – improving its effectiveness and often extending its life. It is important that all staff involved in this stage are fully trained to prevent damage to the equipment and reduce the risk of them injuring themselves.

## WIPING OVER, WASHING AND RINSING

At the end of the business day, each piece of equipment should be wiped over and where appropriate washed and rinsed to prevent build up of grime. Some items of equipment may also need to be dismantled before they are washed and rinsed.

## SANITISING AND DRYING

Any area that is in contact with bacteria must be sanitised. Sanitising reduces the harmful bacteria. Before cleaning any area you should know which areas need to be sanitised and what chemicals are safe to be used. After equipment or work areas are sanitised they need to be dried. This can be done by either allowing them to air dry or drying them with a towel. Air-drying is safe if the equipment is left in a well-ventilated area so the drying process is quick.

Small pieces of equipment can also be dried by washing them in a dishwasher which has a drying cycle.

Knives should be hand washed and towel-dried before storing. Pots and pans should be hand washed and then hung up on hooks or placed on wire racks to dry. Both glassware and cutlery should always be hand-dried to prevent streaks.

## ROUTINE MAINTENANCE

Every organisation should have a maintenance schedule for items of equipment, which specifies when each item of equipment should be checked for maintenance. It is important that this schedule includes cleaning equipment and that all items of cleaning equipment are regularly checked for damage. Sub-standard cleaning equipment increases the risk of a breach in the organisation's hygiene standards.

## CLEAN DRY AND WET AREAS

Avoiding customer inconvenience is the main priority when designing and undertaking cleaning tasks. All cleaning tasks should be planned so that they cause the least inconvenience to the customers.

Safety is also a high priority when cleaning - not only to the person carrying out the cleaning tasks but also their colleagues and customers. Wherever possible areas should be cleaned at a time when they are not in use.

## WET OR SLIPPERY SURFACES

Both internal and external floors need to be regularly washed. In addition to this there will be occasions when spills need to be cleaned. To prevent accidents occurring because of slippery wet surfaces, excess liquid should be mopped up without delay. Immediately after mopping a warning sign should be placed on or near the area to caution customers and colleagues of the slip hazard.

## FUMES

Many chemicals used for cleaning give off dangerous toxins or fumes. It is essential that there is adequate ventilation in all areas where these chemicals are used. All windows and doors should be open and exhaust fans switched on. In some instances where different chemicals react with each other or burn, the fumes created will be highly toxic. When this occurs the fumes should be confined within the area. Emergency evacuation procedures should be followed and professionals contacted to help eliminate the dangerous fumes.

## BREAKAGES

Glass and crockery are potentially dangerous when they break in food preparation areas due to the risk of food contamination. Glass can be extraordinarily dangerous, as it not only breaks but splinters leaving minute pieces of glass not visible to the naked eye. Extreme care should

be taken to remove all particles from food preparation areas and any food which may have been contaminated should be immediately discarded.

Broken furniture should be removed immediately to prevent potential accidents, e.g. customer sitting on broken chair and falling.

### FAT AND OIL

When fat or oil is spilled it creates a dangerously slippery surface. If spills do occur immediate action must be taken to prevent accidents. Paper towels should be used to absorb the oil. The area then should be washed thoroughly with a mix of hot water and detergent. This should be followed with another wash with hot water only to remove detergent residue left from the first wash.

### SHARP OBJECTS

These include needles, syringes, knives, skewers and scissors. These sharp objects may be found in discrete places, e.g. down the back of a lounge or under cushions. When cleaning, take care in these discrete areas to avoid injury.

## USE ORGANISATIONAL PROCEDURES AND TECHNOLOGY FOR OPERATIONAL TASKS

Organisational procedures at close down can relate to:

- Allocation of tasks to designated persons/positions
- Completion of nominated internal documentation – such as reports relating to the trading session
- Notification to management of problems – such as difficulties with patrons, equipment that is not working, damage that has occurred, procedures that appear not to be working
- Protocols for ensuring departmental and property security
- Counting of cash, reconciliation of takings and transfer of money to a central office/safe

# IDENTIFY AND ANTICIPATE OPERATIONAL PROBLEMS AND TAKE ACTION TO MINIMISE THE EFFECT ON CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

In the hospitality Industry and your venue or establishment management will expect you to be proactive in identifying and addressing problems that crop up in the workplace. It is inevitable that all workplaces have problems; even the most well known establishments throughout the world, with the best organised plans, procedures and policies have problems. It is how establishments – that is, the staff – deal or cope with these problems that also help to differentiate one establishment from another.

One of the main ways to identify problems is to make sure that you are aware that problems will arise. Being aware that problems will occur is the starting point of effective identification of problems.

Another effective way is to be constantly vigilant, observant and monitor your establishment for problems this will help in supplementing and give practical effect to this awareness. In the workplace this means:

- Being alert – keeping your eyes and ears open to identify events that are out-of-the-ordinary. This may include:
    - Noting a piece of equipment that is making a strange noise or giving off a strange smell
    - Noting a piece of equipment that is giving an out-of-control temperature (or other)reading
    - Noting items that fail to operate as intended
    - Noting leaks, damage, signs of pest infestation, missing items
    - Listening to and monitoring the behaviour of customers and guests
- Analysing documentation – to identify instances where there are records, facts, figures etc that indicate a problem.
- Listening to customer feedback – information from customers can be the first sign that a problem exists or is imminent.
- Listening to feedback from team members – they are also a prime source of identifying problems.
- Reading general or specific information – that may indicate that existing practices, materials, customers etc are a potential or actual source of concern.

In determining possible solutions management will expect you to be a part of a solution to any problem you identify. It is standard advice that anytime you mention a problem to management, you should also try to accompany it with a workable solution. The aim is for you to be part of the solution and not part of the problem. You should try to use your personal experience coupled with your knowledge of the property, its operations, policies etc to create a response that:

- Is legal
- Is cost effective
- Eliminates the cause of the problem – and doesn't just address the symptoms

- Retains or improves existing service delivery levels
- Is able to be implemented and integrated into other existing procedures within the business

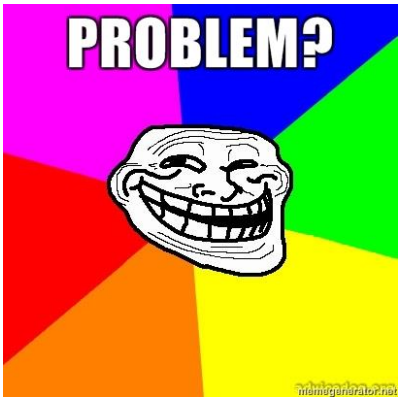
Where you are unable to determine a possible solution you may elect to:

- Discuss the matter with colleagues – to gain input from a wider pool of experience, knowledge etc
- Engage in creative thinking techniques to develop original responses – these may include brainstorming, Six Hats Thinking (developed by Edward de Bono), lateral thinking, or mind maps
- Refer the problem to management in written form – including a note that you are willing to participate in any planning sessions to address the issue/problem

Taking action in response to a problem is the ultimate outcome of addressing problems but the key is that the action must be 'appropriate'.

What is appropriate will depend on the problem but factors to consider include:

- Action taken must be legal and compliant with applicable legislation
- There is rarely a problem that arises where you have unlimited ability or authority to throw money at the problem
- Safety of persons and property must be maintained
- Speed is usually essential – some problems allow leeway for thinking, discussion, planning, consideration etc but most problems require some form of immediate action




Note: that some situations can require you to:

- Take immediate action to respond to an immediate problem or need – such as withdrawing a contaminated food item from service.
- Take alternative short-term action – such as providing a substitute item in the interim to serve to customers.
- Take longer-term action – such as determining how and why the contamination occurred in the first place and changing internal procedures to ensure the problem doesn't recur.

Remember that any action that you take must be taken within the scope of your authority and job skill and knowledge. You usually will never have permission to take action outside these parameters unless the situation is an emergency situation where either people or property are under direct, imminent or substantial threat.

It should also be noted that taking no action sometimes is the wrong thing to do as this could cause harm to staff, customers or property. But there are time thought when taking no action (even though limited) can be acceptable.

You may, for instance, deliberate over a problem, consider all the options etc and then decide that it is best to do nothing about the problem.

This decision may be the best if:

- The cost or effort of addressing the problem outweighs the benefits that would result from doing so – note, of course, there always remains a need to comply with legislated requirements and to limit the establishment's exposure to liability
- The problem is a short-term thing that will resolve itself
- The issue is genuinely of a minor or unimportant nature
- The problem has passed and is not realistically expected to occur again

# TOPIC 4 - COMPLETE END OF SHIFT DUTIES

## FOLLOW END OF SHIFT PROCEDURES

Following the end of shift (closing down) procedures is as important as the start of shift procedures. Closing down the venue or dining room at the end of the shift this is usually done at night time, and is an important part of the customer service. Once the customer has gone you will need to clean and prepare for the next service period or the next day. Closing down procedure will vary from venue to venue but there are normally some similarities in tasks that need to be completed at the close of each day.

### WHAT'S INVOLVED IN COMPLETING END OF SERVICE PROCEDURES?

The aims of end of service procedures are:

- To prepare the service area for the next shift – as far as possible given the time of day
- To finalise certain administrative tasks

The exact natures of the closing down duties will depend on the department – the closing down activities in the kitchen will differ fundamentally to closing down activities behind reception.

Staff who are expected to perform closing duties should always be shown what to do by more experienced staff, and have their first attempts monitored by a supervisor.

Performing closing duties is a very responsible task and must be treated with the seriousness it merits.

Despite this, some generic activities remain constant across departments – these include:

### TURNING OFF EQUIPMENT

At the end of trade, most – but not all – electrical equipment will need to be turned off. This saves energy and costs, allows them to be safely cleaned and helps to extend the working life of the equipment.


You must ask to find out what equipment is not to be turned off – items that are commonly left switched on include refrigeration equipment and security lighting but can extend to air conditioning (which may need to be adjusted to suit the changed conditions) and music systems (which may need to have their volume adjusted or the music type changed).

Items that need to be shut off can include:

- Department-specific equipment – such as coffee machines, cooking equipment, office equipment etc
- Air conditioning
- Music systems
- Televisions and monitors
- Communication systems
- Point of Sale (POS) systems – including cash registers and electronic ordering systems, hand-held devices may need to be placed on the charger

Points to note when turning off these items include:

- Turning them off at the appropriate location – many items are switched off at the item and other items are switched off at the power point
- Turning items off at the appropriate time – it is rarely acceptable, for example, to turn any item off while guests are still in the dining area. This is extremely rude and gives guests the impression we are trying to get rid of them
- Checking security aspects of the item – this may involve verifying that doors and drawers are closed or locked, that money has been removed, and that there is no evidence of unauthorised tampering
- Checking the operational status of the item – when turning an item off it is an opportunity to check that it is working correctly. Where an item is found to be not fully operational (or working below expectations) this must be reported to the appropriate person immediately. An establishment will always prefer to know they have a problem with an item on closing, as opposed to next day as this gives them more time to consider their options and to arrange for appropriate service, maintenance or repairs
- Using this time as an opportunity to identify other tasks/issues that need attention – such as cleaning, re-stocking, repairs to other pieces of equipment, items that may have been stolen, the presence of suspicious persons
- Performing spot cleaning – such as wiping over surface areas

## STORAGE OF PRODUCTS, EQUIPMENT AND MATERIALS

At the end of a session there is a need to store away products, equipment and materials to:

- Protect them against theft
- Maintain their suitability for use in the next session
- Present a ‘tidy’ and ‘professional’ image to people who may see the closed area

Possible activities involved in this role are:

- Removing documents, files etc from desktops and public view and appropriately filing them – this also helps meet privacy requirements

- Saving left-over foodstuffs – so that they can be re-used in the next session. This usually requires that foods are covered, and placed under refrigeration at 5ºC or below
- Putting away any items that have been used during trade – to maintain a tidy appearance and so that they are in their normal location if others need them

## DISPOSAL OF WASTE

A good waste management plan should incorporate all elements of waste control including collection, transportation, processing, recycling and/or disposal of materials. Each sector of the hospitality industry can improve their waste management techniques from using and disposing of food responsibly (food and beverage sector), responsible disposal of e-waste (all sectors), programs for recycling and re-using (all sectors) and water waste management (accommodation and food and beverage sectors).

## RESOURCE USE AND EFFICIENCY

Resources such as plastic, paper and wood should be maximised to improve environmental sustainability. Here the hospitality industry can follow the four steps for improving environmental sustainability; reduce, re-use, recycle and treat waste that cannot be avoided, to make it less hazardous or to reduce the volume.

## WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Water is a precious commodity in Australia which should be used appropriately. Employing water saving techniques such as installing low flow shower heads and/or taps, and dual flush toilet systems are becoming a more common practice within the hospitality industry. Sydney Water, the main supplier of water in regional and metropolitan NSW, estimates that the hospitality sector uses up to 14% of Sydney's business daily water usage. This is approximately 52 million litres of water per day.

## RECYCLING AND RE-USE

Recycling has become a common practice in both Australian businesses and households. Recycling is the practice of collecting and sorting materials such as paper, plastic and glass and then the processing of these materials into new products. This preserves the raw materials that may have been used to make new products and thus helps with sustainability and resource management. Re-using involves the reuse of materials you would otherwise throw away, such as containers, boxes or bottles. The hospitality industry can contribute to recycling by being aware of the products they use and putting recycling and re-use policies into place.

## COLLECTION AREAS

Always ensure that areas of the hotel which are used for collection of waste are kept as clean as possible and that bins are clearly marked and segregated. In a lot of cases, hotels hang sign in sheets in these areas. Staff are required to list use of correct bins and to note use of the compactor if one is available to them. This means that staff are aware that these areas are under observation by senior staff members and are required to be used correctly and kept orderly.

## SEGREGATION

Waste streaming is a highly effective way of reducing waste.

- Kitchen and bar area: bins colour coded for easy training and clear segregation
- Clear plastic bags to be used for easy identification of waste type

All new staff should be fully briefed in the benefits of segregation, the use of these bins and also aware of the Hotels/establishments environmental policies.

## ORDERING STOCK

In service-specific areas (such as bars, kitchens, dining areas), there is usually a need to prepare orders for stock to replace items that have been used during the trading session. Commonly a 'requisition form' is prepared that identifies the type and quantity of stock that the department wants the central store to supply to it.

The completed requisitions forms are taken to a central point (perhaps the stores office, perhaps the front office) and the stores person fills these requisitions first thing next day by delivering the required stock to the department. It is the job of the departmental staff to put the stock away.

In some cases, the department may:

- Phone orders through to suppliers for delivery next day
- Place electronic orders

## SECURITY CHECKS

It is always wise to undertake a security check of the area at the end of trade. This check should:

- Double-check and verify that all things that need to be closed or locked have been closed or locked – this can be filing cabinets, doors, windows, cupboards, computers
- Ensure that there are no members of the public locked in the premises – many thieves prefer to be locked in the premises rather than having to break in. Check toilets, behind drapes and in any obvious hiding places
- Verify that security equipment is operational – this may include closed circuit television (CCTV), and alarms

## RESTOCKING

Where the department has access to stock at the end of trade/session, it is standard practice for staff to restock shelves, supplies, refrigeration units etc. This differs from the situations where stock has to be requisitioned.

Where stock is restocked and any stock 'outages' are identified (that is, situations where the department has run out of stock), there can be a need to either notify the supervisor or Purchasing Officer of this, or to place an order with a supplier (within the limitations of applicable scopes of authority).

Restocking can apply to:

- Food and beverage items
- Stationery – including internal forms, audit rolls, pens and paper
- Chemicals
- Promotional materials – such as items that are given away by the business to advertise their activities
- Any disposable items – that have been used during the session (such as packaging and wrapping material

## PREPARATION FOR THE NEXT SERVICE PERIOD

You should leave any service area you work in at the end of a service session in the condition that you would expect to find it when you arrived for work at the next session. It is not the job of the next shift to complete the duties that were the responsibilities of the previous shift.

Preparation can include:

- Cleaning and tidying activities
- Replacing items in their designated locations – putting things away
- Finding out relevant information and leaving it ready for the next shift – this can include bookings, service issues from the previous session that will impact on the next session, known staff absences, notification of problems with equipment, notification of out-of-stock items
- Remove and clean all dirty plates cutlery and glasses
- Place cleaned plates, cutlery and glassware back into storage location
- Re-stock beverages
- Empty rubbish bins
- Dress and re-set tables
- Polish cutlery
- Polish glasses
- Clean down all surfaces such as: waiter station and bars
- Clean and close down coffee machine
- Clean and empty coffee grinder
- Check the room and the toilets to ensure all guest have vacated the premises
- Balance cash register and count the days takings
- Run the POS software reports (supervisor normally)
- Make days notes in diary (normally supervisor)

# COMPLETE ADMINISTRATION AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Most departments will have to complete a range of administration and reporting requirements before the department can be truly said to be 'closed. These requirements assist management in determining the performance of each department and help to secure both the money generated and the information gathered for the session. In addition, on some occasions there can be a need for the department to continue operating, necessitating a handover.

## COMPLETING FINANCIAL TRANSACTIONS

This can involve:

- Closing off registers, counting money and reconciling takings – this will include cash payments and all other forms of payment accepted by the department
- Investigating cash shortages – where the actual takings fall below the expected amount, there can be a need for staff to undertake immediate investigation into what has happened to cause this situation. If the investigation does not occur immediately, the cause of the problem may be lost in the passage of time and the variation can hold-up the processing of the takings (such as the accounting procedures and banking)
- Filling in the required paperwork to reflect the revenue earned by the department – this can include separating the various payment types (credit card, EFTPOS, vouchers, cheques, cash etc) into individual amounts; identifying the amounts taken in each cash register; identifying takings by individual staff members
- Completing 'change required' forms – to order change for the next shift
- Securing the takings by transferring them to a designated location, safe, night banking option or cash pick-up service
- Forwarding supporting or necessary paperwork to the relevant area – this may include forwarding details of enquiries made by customers, bookings, advanced deposits paid, invoices for goods delivered into the department by suppliers
- Obtaining cash floats and change for the next session, where applicable. Many properties leave cash drawers in their central safe overnight and deliver them (or require them to be picked up and signed for) to operational departments at the start of the next shift

Some venues require the supervisor of a section to forward formal work plans or schedules for staff to the central admin office/management. These plans/schedules are then monitored as a tool to determine individual staff performance in relation to:

- Work performed
- Hours worked
- Skills used
- Experience gained
- Comparing the actual level of work completion to planned levels of work attainment – this can be useful in situations where, for example, a major event such as a function is

being prepared for and management need to closely monitor the activities underpinning the preparation etc to ensure that timelines are met and all event-specific tasks have been completed as expected

### COMPLETING REPORTS

At the end of a session the venue may require staff to complete a range of reports – in many cases, the reports only need to be completed where there is a need to complete them (that is, that something has happened that necessitates the completion of a report). These reports include:

- Incident reports – detailing a problem with a customer, a fight, an event where police or other emergency services had to be called, or a situation where a staff member of customer was injured, or property was damaged or stolen
- WHS reports – these can detail 'near misses', events that resulted in injury and identification of emerging risks that require attention
- Maintenance reports – identifying plant, equipment and machinery that needs repairs or servicing

## PARTICIPATE IN DEBRIEFING AND HANDOVER SESSIONS WITH COLLEAGUES AND SUGGEST SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS

In the same way that some venues will encourage or require supervisors to hold a briefing session with staff at the start of a session, so too do some venues require a de-briefing session to be held at the completion of the session.

This session provides a perfect opportunity to review and evaluate the previous session, including the items sold and the way the service went. This is very handy to find out about problems or good work as it usually takes place very shortly after service has concluded. Arguably, less information and a lower quality of information would be obtained if the review was left to the next day.

Debriefing is usually an informal gathering of all staff once the closing procedures have been completed. It usually takes 5 to 10 minutes. Some venues include a knock-off drink as part of this session, some don't.

It must be remembered that while this session is potentially important and useful, most staff are either tired or just want to go home.

The supervisor leads the session and:

- Congratulates staff on work that has been well done during service
- Highlights and leads discussion on problems and issues that arose – with a view to determining what went wrong, how a similar event can be avoided in the future
- Provides the staff with feedback on their perspective of how the session went – and provides feedback they have captured from others (such as customers, management and/or other departments)

- Reviews and evaluates the quality of service delivery provided – with a view to identifying changes that could lead to possible improvements in service delivery
- Reviews and evaluates the products sold – with a view to identifying quality issues (for example, was the hot food hot enough? Were serve sizes sufficient and consistent across all plates? Did customers complain about tough steaks? Was the beer too warm?)
- Encourages staff to identify issues of concern to them – including identification of problems they have found with equipment etc, suspicious persons, procedures that are not working effectively
- Presents issues or details of what can be expected in the next session
- Thanks staff for their efforts and contribution

A handover is a situation where the department remains open but the staff working in that department change. While it is uncommon – and often inadvisable – for all the staff to change when there is a handover (it is best if there is some continuity of staff), this situation can sometimes occur especially where there is only one staff member running a department.

When handing over a department to other staff, it is important to ensure:

- The department is clean and in good order – this includes all areas, floors, counters, desks, equipment
- Available stock has already been put away – new, in-coming staff should not be responsible for this unless there has been an extremely busy session that has prevented out-going staff from doing this
- Where the department handles cash payments, there must be change in the register sufficient for the next shift to at least start there shift without experiencing a shortage of change – where necessary change should be obtained to supplement what is already there
- Information about particular customers is passed on – special attention must be paid to those who have already been spoken to, made complaints, experienced service difficulties, are deemed to be suspicious
- Information about customer complaints is passed on – with details covering who has complained, what the complaint was about and what action (if any) has been taken as a result
- Information about problems with equipment or utensils is passed on – this should name the equipment etc involved, the type of problem being encountered and advice about whether service or repairs have been organised or not
- Information about any out-of-stock or 'need to order' items is passed on – there can often be situations where the department has run out of a stock item and there are no items in the store to re-supply. It is best if new staff know what stock items are out-of-stock so they can inform customers of this
- Information regarding any concerns relating to product or service quality issues – these should include any issues mentioned by customers and issues about which you have suspicions that there is a problem. Your information should include what action,

if any, you have taken in relation to this situation and details of anyone you may have already contacted to resolve the problem

- Transition of staff members is done smoothly and with little or no disruption to the customers – this means that service delivery should not suffer as the handover is made. Customers shouldn't be kept waiting as the handover occurs

Before departing after making a handover, check that all is running smoothly and that your services are no longer needed. It is not acceptable practice to simply walk out of the department when the clock reaches your knock-off time.

Remember that hospitality venues are often open for long period and have a range of staff that are rostered at various times. Quite often you will need to handover to the incoming staff members to take over your duties and customers. Communication and information is the key to a successful handover. A good handover will cause minimum disruption to the customers.

# SUMMARY

Now that you have completed this unit you should have the skills and knowledge required to work effectively in hospitality service.

If you have any questions about this resource please ask your trainer. They will be only too happy to assist you when required.

# GLOSSARY

**Back of House**- Refers to the area of a restaurant that guests are not allowed. The kitchen, dishwashing area and wait station are all located in the back of the house.

**Bar-back**- An assistant for the bartender. A bar-back usually runs glasses through the dishwasher, stocks the coolers and liquor bottles, and pours beer, wine and non-alcoholic drinks for the wait staff.

**Bussing**- Term used for clearing off and resetting tables after guests have left. In busier restaurants this is done by the busboy (also called a busser).

**Front of House**- Refers to the area of a restaurant where guests are allowed. The dining room and bar are all in the front of the house.

**Host/Hostess** -The person who meets the guests and shows them to their table. The host is also responsible for keeping track of reservations and waiting lines.

**Line**- The line is the area that divides the cooks from the wait staff. It is where the food is placed to await pickup.

**Mise en Place** - Refers to the set up of the sauté station. Essentially, it means everything in its place. Most cooks put certain ingredients in a certain spot each shift (salt and pepper to the right, olive oil to the left).

**Plating**- Putting the food on the plate is referred to plating. This includes adding any sauce or garnish before handing over to the expeditor or the server.

**POS System**– A **p**oint **o**f **s**ale system is a computer system that helps businesses track sales. It also tracks employee sales (who sold the most during a shift) and which dishes are sold most often.

**Sections**- Many restaurant dining rooms are divided into sections, and each section goes to a particular wait staff each shift.

**ADR (average daily rate)** - A measure of the average rate paid for rooms sold, calculated by dividing room revenue by rooms sold

**Appetizer -** A small first course dish that is presented before the entree. Some guests mistake appetizers for entrees.

**Assistant Manager -** See Manager. But has the same responsibilities, but gets paid less.

**Full Service** - full service restaurant is one where a wait person is there to see to the customer's every need.

**HACCP** - (Hazard analysis control point system) It helps ensure food handling errors do not occur and that safe food is served to your customers

**HQSC** - Hospitality, quality, service, and cleanliness.

**HVAC** - Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning

**Pass Station** - Refers to an area of the restaurant where food is passed from the kitchen to with wait staff

**Sanitising** - A cleaning process to remove anything unclean.

**Single Service Article** - Disposable tableware, carry out utensils designed for one-time or one person use.

**Tableware** - eating, drinking and serving utensils for the table

**Utensil** - tableware and kitchenware that is used to cook or eat food.

**FIFO** - First in First Out