

Unit 3: Customer Service Skills in the Hospitality Industry

Delivery guidance

Learners will acquire an understanding of customer service skills in the hospitality industry.

Approaching the unit

This unit aims to provide learners with an introduction to customer service skills in the hospitality industry. Learners will understand the different characteristics of customer service skills in the hospitality industry and the importance of exceeding customer needs. This unit can be partially delivered in the workplace, in a realistic working environment (such as a training restaurant) or under simulated conditions, allowing learners to practise customer service skills and techniques.

You could use a range of delivery methods in this unit, including the following.

- Organising a mystery shopper experience will give learners an excellent opportunity to focus their evaluation of customer service provision.
- A training video to highlight some of the issues around customer service would also be helpful. The tutor could play clips of different situations, asking learners to comment on what is good and what could be improved.
- Role-play activities are a valuable way of allowing learners to understand and evaluate their interpersonal and communication skills. Roleplay could also be used to help gain an understanding of the needs of different types of customers.

Group work is an acceptable form of delivery, but you must ensure that each learner produces enough evidence on their own for assessment.

Learners will benefit from visits to different hospitality businesses and the involvement of local hospitality businesses so that they can gain an insight into how the companies work. You could involve local employers by:

- inviting them as guest speakers
- asking them to be members of the audience for learner presentations
- asking them to contribute to case study material
- asking them to provide work experience for learners
- asking them to offer business materials as exemplars
- asking them to mentor your learners.

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Delivering the Learning aims

Learning aim A Understand the characteristics of customer service skills in the hospitality industry.

This learning aim helps learners understand how different hospitality businesses meet the needs of their customers and the importance of exceeding customer expectations. Encourage learners to investigate different types of customers and their diverse needs, including internal and external customers. This can be done through roleplay and visits. Learners need to understand how to achieve customer satisfaction and how to apply this knowledge to practical situations.

Learners will need to investigate how hospitality businesses meet the needs of their customers. Learners would benefit from a guest speaker who has detailed knowledge about customer service operations. Guest speakers should be from local hospitality organisations. Where possible, introduce learners to the area where they will be carrying out their practical assessments and refer to this for the roleplay exercises. Case studies used could be from real examples from the practical customer service area. Encourage learners to research local businesses to gain a better understanding of different customer service styles. More information about customer service provision can be found by accessing the resources section of this unit.

Learning aim B Demonstrate customer service skills in a range of situations.

This learning aim begins to focus on the skills learners need when working in a practical customer service area. To complete this learning aim, learners will need access to this practical customer service area either in a simulated environment or the workplace. Learners will be observed working a range of customer service situations, and the tutor will record their performance. Customer feedback will also be encouraged, and this, together with the tutor observation and self-reflection, will allow the learners to make recommendations for improvement. The range of situations should be suitably different to demonstrate service customer skills on more than one occasion. If a range of real customer service situations is not available, then roleplay could be used to meet this learning aim.

Learning aim C Use information to suggest improvements to customer service.

This learning aim will equip learners to evaluated and review customer service performance. Learners will apply performance review techniques and suggest improvements to their customer service. This learning aim follows from the practical assessment in learning aim B, and the suggestions for their own improvement will be based on that. Learners will benefit from researching the different techniques which can be used to assess the success of customer service and the importance and benefits of improving customer service. During visits and guest speaker talks, learners should be encouraged to ask questions about the different methods businesses use to assess the success of the customer service and the benefit of the results to the company.



Assessment model

Learning aim	Key content areas	Recommended assessment approach
A Understand the characteristics of customer service skills in the hospitality industry	**A1** Customer service in hospitality **A2** The characteristics and benefits of customer service **A3** The importance of organisational procedures for customer service	Detailed written work that describes the features of customer service skills in the hospitality industry.
B Demonstrate customer service skills in a range of situations	**B1** Presentation and interpersonal skills **B2** Communication skills **B3** Customer service situations	A practical demonstration of working in a range of different customers service situations. Evaluate the practical sessions.
C Use information to suggest improvements to customer service	**C1** Different ways to monitor customer service **C2** The importance of evaluating customer service **C3** Benefits of improvements to customer service	

Assessment guidance

An assignment is a distinct activity, completed independently by learners, that is separate from teaching, practice, exploration and other activities that learners complete with direction from tutors. All learners must independently generate individual evidence that can be authenticated.

This unit is internally assessed. There is a maximum number of two summative assignments for this unit. Tutors should refer to the assessment guidance in the specification for specific detail, particularly in relation to the requirements for Pass, Merit and Distinction grades.

It is suggested that learning aim A is assessed through writing a report or producing a presentation. Within the report or presentation, learners will assess the customer service provision of two different hospitality organisations. Learners will need to make valid comparisons and point out the strengths and weaknesses of the customer service provision.

In the written work produced by learners, they should be encouraged to use headings, sub-headings and annotations such as pictures and diagrams to support explanations and comparisons.



For learners to gain a merit, they will need to analyse the effectiveness of the customer service provision of the two businesses when making their valid comparisons. Merit learners will also be expected to show understanding of the problems or complaints in the information provided.

For learners to gain a distinction grade, they will be expected to make recommendations for improvements to the customer service provision at hospitality businesses and justify their recommendations by relating them to existing customer service policies, general industry practise or the potential benefit to the organisations.

Learning aim B and C will be assessed using practical work for assessment criteria B.P3 and B.M2. Written reflections of own performance will support the assessment criteria C.P4, C.M3 and BC.D2 for these learning outcomes. For the practical part of these learning aims, learners will need to demonstrate their practical customer service skills in simulated or real situations. Learners are expected to respond as if their situation was real and should be encouraged to try in terms of personal presentation and dress code. Learners will need to demonstrate skills in three different situations with different types of customers. One should be a complaint, whether verbal or written. Hard evidence of the practical assessment should be provided, for example, learner observation records.

Tutors should give detailed feedback to learners in the form of an observation record, and learners should be encouraged to ask for customer feedback about their performance. This feedback should be recorded and included in the learner work.

For the written part of these learning aims, B and C learners will also need to produce a written report or reflective journal on the skills they have demonstrated when providing customer service. This report or reflective journal should be a personal self-reflection of their ability to assess the application and development of customer service skills.

For learners to gain a merit grade, they should display competent customer service skills in three different situations as above but without direct supervision, showing that they are confident when dealing with the different situations. For the merit learners, their written report or reflective journal should include how they can improve their customer service skills in the future.

To gain a distinction, learners will need to evaluate the skills they have demonstrated when providing customer service. The evaluation should include an assessment as to how these skills can be improved for the future.



Getting started

This gives you a starting place for one way of delivering the unit, based around the recommended assessment approach in the specification.

Introduction

Introduce this unit by providing an overview of the unit explain what your learners will study, and how they will be assessed. Learners need to understand that this unit contains practical work as well as theory work.

Learning aim A – Understand the characteristics of customer service skills in the hospitality industry

- Learning aim A is to introduce learners to the different types of customers in hospitality and their needs. Learners will investigate how to achieve customer satisfaction and research the benefit to business of exceeding customer expectations and how this helps to meet organisational targets. Learners will study the importance to a hospitality business and their procedures for customer service.
- For A1, You can begin the delivery of this learning aim by having a class discussion on what customer service and customer service excellency means to learners. You can then explain the difference between these two terms and give a clear definition of each. This can be in the form of a presentation showing examples of internal and external customers.
- As a class discuss learners' experience of customer service in hospitality. This will allow you to establish the existing knowledge of your learners. Ask how they feel good and bad customer service affected their experience in a customer service situation. You can record the learner responses to see if the good experiences outweigh the bad experiences or vice versa. This record of learner work can be reintroduced in later lessons to reinforce the consequences of poor customer service. Discuss with the learners why they think that they remembered these situations. You can consolidate this by including a short video clip (there are quite a few available on YouTube and various company websites).
- A presentation will allow you to explain to the learners the different types of customers in hospitality, and the needs and expectations of these types of customers, showing the learner how these needs and expectations may differ. The customer types below need to be explained to learners.
    - Internal customer
    - External customer
- Ask learners to work in pairs to list as many different types as possible of internal and external customers from a given hospitality business. Learners can then present this information to the class. More customer types can be added to the lists during the presentation. You can use this information to design a handout for the class for private study.
- You can discuss with learners the identified customers' needs and expectations for the list in the previous task. Ask learners to record their thoughts on the different service



needs of each customer. Learners can then discuss the main difference between these customers and their service needs. Collate this information and give it to the learners as a class handout.

- You can ask learners to produce a small sample of written work on the difference between customers and their service needs and why they differ. Learners can evaluate the different service needs of these customers in small groups.
- In pairs ask learners to record what they think the main benefits of good customers service will be. Then have a class discussion, record the responses and make into a class handout.
- For A2, this can be introduced by designing a presentation about the importance of exceeding customers' expectations will allow learners to understand why this is an important part of customer service. The presentation could begin by showing the learners a video or internet clip about meeting and exceeding customer expectations.
- In a small group, ask learners to consider what they think important staff attitudes and behaviours should be for a successful customer service. Learners can present their ideas to the class for discussion.
- Using a presentation, introduce the learners to customer service knowledge and the importance of the quality of these services and products. Encourage learners to ask questions to clarify their understanding.
- Ask learners to list as many different reasons as possible why staff knowledge is important in customer service and make this information into a diagram about the topic to display in the classroom.
- For A3, introduce the topic of organisational procedures for customer service to the class with a discussion. Test learner's knowledge by giving them a teacher designed worksheet about dealing with complaints.
- Ask learners to discuss the benefits to the business of exceeding expectations. Learners could, in pairs, design a flow chart to show how exceeding customer expectations links to increased profit or improved reputation for a business. Learners can present the flow charts to the class confirming learning.
- Ask learners to think about customer service in businesses they have experience of. Learners could be given a large hospitality business to investigate on the internet and record any procedures for customer serivce. Learners can feed back to the class identifying any common trends. This could be booking policies or cancellation policies.
- In small groups get learners to record the benefits to hospitality businesses of following procedures for customer service, encourage learners to discuss repeat business, business reputation, customer satisfaction and staff job satisfaction.
- A guest speaker from a well-known hospitality business could speak to learners. The discussion should cover business customer service standards and their impact on the business and customer service. Learners should be encouraged to check understanding with the speaker. Learners can take notes and write a report based on the impact of good and bad customer serivce for a hospitality business. If the guest speaker is not availble learners can investigate customer serivce standards of large businesses in the area and record their findings. This can be shared with the group. Learners can take notes and write a comparison of the different customer standards.

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- Use a tutor designed worksheet to check understanding of the learning outcome.
- Please ensure all learners are prepared for assessment prior to providing them with the assignment brief.

Learning aim B: Demonstrate customer service skills in a range of situations

- Learning aim B is a practical and theory learning aim where learners will develop themselves when delivering customer service. Learners will need to use the correct type and style of communication when dealing with customers in a range of different situations.
- For B1, you can use a presentation to introduce learners to the factors needed to demonstrate good customer service skills.
- Ask learners to work in small groups to design a short presentation on role of the individual in delivering customer service. Learners can deliver the presentation to the class. You could collate a master presentation covering all the points. You can add any missing factors to the presentation if necessary. This can then be issued to learners to use as reflective private study.
- Give learners tutor-designed role play cards. Learners can work in small groups or pairs. One should be the customer and the others the team members. Write the role play cards so that a team member does not demonstrate good customer service skills. The other learner will have to respond appropriately. Learners can take turns being the team member and the customer. The rest of the group can complete observation forms on the role play and the feedback can be given back to the teams to write points for improvement.
- For B2, introduce the section by having a class discussion to talk about effective and appropriate communication. Use body language exercises to show learners how this method of communication is important when dealing with people. Discuss with learners the appropriate language which needs to be used when delivering effective customer service.
- Have class discussion to talk about effective and appropriate communication. Use body language exercises to show learners how this method of communication is important when dealing with people. Discuss with learners the appropriate language which needs to be used when delivering effective customer service.
- Ask learners to work in small groups to design and carry out a small role play scenario showing how effective customer service can benefit a business. Learners should perform the role play for the class and receive feedback on the effectiveness of the customer service skills. The role play could be recorded and played back to the class.
- Discuss body language and communication and its importance of giving the right impression. You can consolidate this by including a short video clip (there are quite a few available on YouTube and various company websites).
- Issue learners a tutor designed worksheet which identifies different behaviours a customer service supervisor should display. Ask learners to complete the worksheet by



giving examples of these behaviours in the workplace. Learners can present their ideas to the class. A video or internet clip can be used to show learners the different behaviours needed to be displayed when carrying out customer service.

- Recap the sessions about body language and communication by using a tutor designed quiz to test understanding.
- For B3, hold a class discussion about the different types of customer service settings. Ask learners to work in pairs and record as many different types of customer service settings they can think of. Share the responses and record these on one document for a class handout.
- Learners can work in pairs identifying situations where customer needs will need to be addressed. These could include:
  - verbal (face-to-face, telephone)
  - non-verbal (written, electronic)
  - urgent
  - non-urgent
  - difficult
  - routine

(There are more examples in the specification)

- Introduce learners to the range of communication styles in a class discussion. A tutor presentation can reinforce the importance of these different communication methods.
- Learners can work in pairs on a tutor-designed worksheet to match the correct communication method to a given situation (each pair should work on a different situation). They can present their responses to the class, which can be recorded and given out as a class handout. Communication methods used could be:
  - face to face
  - telephone
  - written
  - internet
- Use a presentation to inform learners of the different barriers to communication and the importance of listening skills.
- You could have a class discussion on the importance of accuracy when dealing with customer requirements. The learners can feedback to the group, and this will allow you to check learning.
- Ask learners to suggest situations that could be problematic, and the class can suggest ways to deal with these issues. You could use video or internet clip to show learners the range of customer service problems and how these can be resolved correctly.
- Learners can work in pairs resolving tutor-designed customer service problems and act out the best way to handle these situations. The class can feedback on the appropriateness of the method used to deal with these situations. Learners can use this feedback to make recommendations for improvement. As an extension task



learners can justify their actions and evaluate the feedback. This exercise will consolidate learning and allow tutor feedback to improve customer service skills.

- Introduce the class to the area in which they will be working for the practical element of this unit. This will either be a simulated area in the centre or their workplace. Encourage learners to ask questions and allow them to become familiar with this area. Demonstrate how to use any equipment correctly.
- Learners should practice working in this environment and be shown how the equipment works. Learners should be asked questions to ensure understanding.
- Deliver a presentation on the situations the learners will encounter for the practical element of this unit. This will allow learners to understand what they will be expected to do when working in a customer service situation. Learners should be reminded that they will be working in different customer service setting in this role. These situations could include:
  - different customer situations learners might face
  - the ability to keep accurate records
  - acting within the limits of the job role
  - dealing with problems that might arise
  - dealing with customer behaviour.

  (More information is available in the unit specification.)
- Encourage learners to ask questions in the class to confirm understanding.
- Please ensure all learners are prepared for assessment prior to providing them with the assignment brief. The next part of this learning aim is the practical assessment.
- Your learners should work in a practical customer service area leading a team to deliver excellent customer service. Learners should work during an event or function as customer service staff. Learners should keep copies of all paperwork (which they should complete) and a record of any jobs undertaken in this role. Inform learners about the skills they will need to show during the observation, including:
  - Attitude
  - Behaviour
  - Motivation
  - Personal presentation
  - First impressions
  - Personal hygiene
  - Appreance, uniform, dress, hair, makeup, jewellery.
- The observation should be an accurate record of each learner's activity. Encourage learners to ask questions to ensure understanding before the practical task begins.
- The learners will need to be observed, and a practical record of performance should be



kept reflecting the work undertaken. The observation records should be retained and given back to learners to allow them to complete the final task in the assessment for this unit.

- Please ensure all learners are prepared for assessment prior to providing them with the assignment brief. The reflect account forma part of the assessment and learners should be given time to complete before handing in to the assessor.

Learning aim C: Use information to suggest improvements to customer service

- Learning aim C is allows learners to investigate the different sytems used to ensure customer satisfaction is met. Learners will research how hospitality businesses meet their organisational targets for customer service and how they use this information to achieve customer satisfaction. Learners will reflect on their own performance using feedback gathered to suggest improvements to performance.
- For C1, learners need to be introduced to the different sytems used to ensure customer expectations are met and how these expectations can be measured.
- You can begin this learning aim by using a presentation to discuss with learners the importance of monitoring and evaluating customer service. Learners can then work in pairs to suggest who would give feedback on performance and in what format.
- Use a class discussion to establish different methods that are used to monitor and measure feedback. You can also cover the importance of evaluating feedback to make improvements.
- Small group activity where each group must record as many types of methods to monitor feedback as they can think of. The groups could then present their work to the class, and this should be recorded to make a class handout.
- Learners can work in pairs completing different types of feedback forms for a given role play scenario. The groups can then swap feedback forms and discuss how they would deal with the information from the comment cards they have been given to improve customer service. The feedback forms should include:
  - mystery customer
  - staff observations
  - customer feedback
  - informal comments

More examples are available in the specification. The learners can be given feedback to ensure understanding.

- For C2, you can use a class discussion to consider how businesses can evaluate the effectiveness of customer service. You should discuss financial data, competitor activity and repeat business. Questions and answers should be used to ensure understanding.
- You can use a presentation to discuss with learners the importance of monitoring and evaluating customer service. Learners can then work in pairs to design a diagram of all the different areas that are affected when organisational targets for customer service are not met. Learners can display their diagrams.
- For C3, Use a presentation to inform learners of the importance of achieving customer



satisfaction. A video or internet clip can be used to support the presentation. Give learners a tutor-designed worksheet with a short case study. The learners should write SMART objectives to match to the scenario. Learners should feedback to the class explaining why they chose their objectives.

- Ask learners in small groups to design a presentation to share with the class about the importance of business meeting organisational targets. Encourage learners to include
  - financial, turnover
  - level of sales
  - repeat customers, new customers.

More examples are available in the specification. The learners can be given feedback to ensure understanding.

- Use a presentation to explain the difference between organisational targets and legal obligations. A tutor designed work sheet can be used to test understanding.
- Ask learners to discuss the benefits of job satisfaction to staff and how this can impact on my improvements to customer service.
- Please ensure all learners are prepared for assessment prior to providing them with the assignment brief.
- Learners should work individually to complete the final part of the assignment. Learners should produce a written document that outlines a review of their own practice making recommendations for improvements.



Details of links to other BTEC units and qualifications, and to other relevant units/qualifications

This unit links to:

- Unit 1: Working in the Hospitality Industry
- Unit 2: Hospitality Workplace Skills
- Unit 5: Planning and Running a Hospitality Event
- Unit 9: Serving Food and Beverage
- Unit 10: Accommodation Services in Hospitality
- Unit 11: Hospitality Front Office Operations
- Unit 12: Merchandising and Promotion
- Unit 16: Barista Skills
- Unit 17: Work Experience in Hospitality
- International GCSE/core curriculum

Resources

Pearson website at: (http://qualifications.pearson.com/endorsed-resources) for more information as titles achieve endorsement.

Textbooks

Cousins, J., Lillicrap, D., *Food and Beverage Service*, 8th Edition, 2010, ISBN: 9781444112504 An introductory textbook that covers customer service in practical hospitality areas. This textbook is suitable for all learners.

Foskett, D., Paskins, P., and Pennington, A., The Theory of Hospitality & Catering, 13th Edition, Hodder Educaion, 2016, ISBN: 9781471865237 A well-respected student and teaching book covering the essentials of hospitality and catering in detail. Suitable for all learners.

Videos

Search YouTube for the following:

- Sodexo: Delivering the difference. (This video introduces contract catering/hospitality services.)
- How Does Franchising Work? (This video explains franchising.)
- Hilton Worldwide: Hospitality Careers
- Industry Insight: Careers in Hospitality
    - Radisson Blu Hotel. (This video interviews employees from Radisson Blu, giving an
    - insight into working for the brand).
    - Jersey tourism. (This video interviews employees from Jersey Tourism and gives an
    - insight into working for the organisation).
    - Catering. (This video interviews employees working in catering to give an insight
    - into working in the sector).



Websites

TED – an NGO devoted to spreading ideas of a variety of subjects, usually in the form of short (18 minutes or less) powerful talks in more than 100 languages; marketing examples are available

TED-Ed – has a growing library of lessons and educational videos

Pearson is not responsible for the content of any external internet sites. It is essential for tutors to preview each website before using it in class so as to ensure that the URL is still accurate, relevant and appropriate. We suggest that tutors bookmark useful websites and consider enabling students to access them through the school/college intranet.