

Hospitality

Entry Level 3: Customer service in the hospitality industry (D/502/4874)

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Introduction

Our Skilled for Life resources are designed to provide you with ideas for delivering the unit content and engaging tasks and activities that will help learners work towards assessment.

The materials consist of standalone sheets that can be used in a range of ways to suit most situations. Whether you are working in a classroom or a less formal learning environment, with individual learners or with groups, it is hoped that you will find these sheets and the accompanying tutor guidance notes useful.

The sheets are in PDF format; they are downloadable and may be photocopied for use only within your institution. Alternatively, learners can access them on-screen – the write-in sections are interactive so that answers to activities can be recorded electronically.

Each sheet addresses one or more of the assessment criteria in the unit (ACs are clearly marked at the top of each page). Page 1 of each sheet provides a starter stimulus or introductory idea based around the suggested unit content in the specification; it can be used to explain key concepts, or as the basis for a discussion. You could use the stimulus to draw together key learning points and encourage learners to engage with the topic or concept from the outset. There is plenty of scope for you to introduce your own content or ideas as well.

Page 2 of each sheet includes tasks that will consolidate learners' knowledge and understanding and, in some cases, may provide evidence for assessment.

This tutor guidance document provides detailed suggestions for how to use each of the resource sheets in the unit, and includes tips and advice together with suggested extension activities, alternative ideas, useful reference sources and answers to activities where applicable.

Unit overview

In this unit, learners will develop an understanding of good customer care skills and learn basic principles of positive verbal and non-verbal communication which will be useful when serving customers.

The unit will also help learners to understand the importance of good personal presentation and hygiene, as well as the need to comply with uniform and dress codes when working in the hospitality industry.

Learners will gain some practical skills in customer service and will be required to communicate well and present themselves appropriately in order to serve customers.

Learning and teaching activities in this unit

Resource sheet 1: What is good customer service?

Use the cartoon on this sheet as a basis for discussion about good customer service. Consider the following questions:

- Why might the customer be keen to return?
- Why is it important that customers want to return?

Ask learners to give examples of situations in which they have received good customer service and what made it 'good'. Discuss the difference between 'good' customer service and 'excellent' customer service.

Try to steer learners away from discussion of bad customer service by asking how negative situations could have been resolved or improved. For example, you could ask questions such as:

- What could have been done differently?
- What could have been said or done to make you feel better about the situation?

Activity 1: Why is good customer service important?

In this activity, learners need to fill in the spider diagram to explain why good customer service is important. It may be helpful to encourage discussion of different scenarios. For example, if you visited a café or restaurant where the staff were rude and unhelpful, how likely would you be to go again? What if the staff had been polite and helpful?

Suggested answers are provided at the end of this document.

Resource sheet 2: What should you say?

This stimulus is designed to prompt discussion about the differences between the illustrated communication styles and the importance of context. Ask learners to consider:

- where they might be greeted in each way
- how each greeting might make them feel
- how they have been greeted in different hospitality outlets.

Remind learners that context can be very important. For example, in a friendly, family-run café, a simple 'Hi, what can I get you?' may be appropriate. However, customers in a five-star hotel would probably expect a more formal style of greeting. Try to introduce other examples to expand the discussion.

Learners should also consider non-verbal communication and body language. Role play may help them to develop these skills and can be linked with Resource sheet 3 and Activity 3.

Activity 2: How can you communicate?

In this activity, learners should give examples of different methods of communication. Answers should include verbal and non-verbal communication methods.

Tutors may wish to suggest scenarios for learners to role play, for example:

- making an announcement
- greeting someone at a hotel reception
- taking a booking over the phone.

Encourage learners to think carefully about their body language, facial expressions and tone of voice as well as the words they use. Suggested answers are given at the end of this document.

Resource sheet 3: How can you help?

This stimulus should help learners to develop their verbal and non-verbal communication skills and may be linked with Resource sheet 2 and Activity 2. It is important that all types of response are considered, including tone of voice, facial expressions and body language.

Make sure learners understand the importance of offering an apology, even if they are not to blame (for example, 'I'm sorry you're unhappy with the service you've received') and that they know how to work effectively as part of a team.

The third example highlights the importance of greeting customers promptly and politely. If a customer feels ignored from the moment they arrive, they are unlikely to form a positive view of the organisation!

Activity 3: What would you say?

In this activity, learners should work in pairs or small groups to role play their responses to the different customers. Remind them that they must consider verbal and non-verbal methods of communication.

If possible, record the role plays or fill in observation records or witness statements. These records can then be used as evidence for Assessment criterion 3.2 (*Present self appropriately to serve customers*). Answers will vary depending on the context of each scenario; you may wish to specify a context for each customer or allow learners to develop their own ideas. For example, you could ask learners to consider the following options for the first scenario:

- a business customer arriving at a casual B&B
- a family arriving at a budget hotel
- a customer who is ringing to cancel the room he booked.

Resource sheet 4: What is personal presentation?

Use this stimulus to discuss the three aspects of personal presentation and explore why they are important. Encourage learners to draw on their own observations of how the staff look and behave at different hospitality outlets and try to provide catalogues from commercial clothes suppliers, so that learners can look at the range of uniforms available.

It is important to talk about legal requirements such as health and safety and food hygiene regulations. Encourage learners to think about the clothing they would wear to serve customers in different situations. This can be linked with the role play in Activity 3: learners should dress and present themselves appropriately for the scenario they are acting out.

Discussions should touch upon the following points:

Appearance

- Discuss the needs of different outlets – e.g. bar staff are often casually dressed while staff in a five-star hotel should be much smarter; some outlets will have specific rules regarding make up or piercings.
- Discuss health and safety and hygiene regulations – e.g. in a kitchen, hair should be clean and tied back or covered; hands should be clean and free of nail varnish, false nails or jewellery; cuts or grazes should be covered by non-skin-coloured plasters; footwear should be flat and non-slip.

Clothing and uniforms

- Discuss why some companies ask their staff to wear uniforms – e.g. company image; so that staff are easily recognisable.
- Discuss different types of uniform – e.g. different outfits for different roles; some companies will provide a full uniform while others may provide a shirt or branded top only.
- Discuss appropriate clothing – e.g. lengths of tops/skirts/trousers (over-long trousers could present a trip hazard; a mini skirt is not formal).
- Discuss differences in fabric – e.g. cotton versus nylon; chef's whites must be safe in the heat.
- Discuss protective clothing – e.g. apron, gloves, hat or hair net; will be related to safety and food hygiene.

Behaviour

- Discuss the relationship between behaviour and personal presentation – e.g. attitude (customers will not be impressed by your smart appearance if you are rude to them); posture plays a part in your appearance.
- Discuss hygiene considerations – e.g. do not touch your hair or face when preparing food (unless you wash your hands afterwards); always follow correct hand-washing routines if preparing or serving food or drink.
- Discuss other aspects of behaviour – e.g. chewing gum; using a mobile phone; chatting with colleagues when you should be serving customers.

Activity 4: How should you look?

In this activity, learners should consider their own appearance and personal presentation. This should be linked to Activity 3 if possible, so that learners can demonstrate how they would present themselves appropriately when serving customers.

Answers may lead to further discussion of what is acceptable and what is not acceptable. Suggested answers are given at the end of this document.



Encourage learners to find and annotate pictures of people who work in the hospitality industry, explaining the reasons for different aspects of their appearance.

Useful resources

Textbooks

Barrows, C., Powers, T. and Reynolds, D. (2011) *Introduction to the Hospitality Industry, 8th Edition*, John Wiley and Sons (ISBN: 978 0 470 39916 3)

Batten, S., Carysforth, C., Dale, G., Holmes, S., Ingle, S., Mead, T., Neild, M., Richer, W. and Wilson, P. (2011) *BTEC Level 2 First Hospitality*, Pearson Education Limited (ISBN: 978 0 435 02659 2)

Hayes, J. and Dredge, F. (1998) *Managing Customer Service*, Gower Publishing (ISBN: 978 0 566 08005 0)

Kadampully, J., Mok, C. and Sparks, B. (2011) *Service Quality Management in Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure*, Routledge (ISBN: 978 0 789 01141 1)

Journals

Caterer and Hotelkeeper – Reed Business Information

Videos

Many 'fly on the wall' documentaries are well suited to discussions about customer service. The BBC's Learning Zone also features programmes on customer service.

Serving Your Best Interests (1997) (Sponsored by the Confederation of British Industry)

Who Cares Wins – Customer Care (2000) (BBC Business)

Fawlty Towers (1975–9) (BBC)

Websites

www.bbc.co.uk/learningzone BBC Learning Zone – schedule

www.bha.org.uk British Hospitality Association

www.people1st.co.uk People 1st – Sector Skills Council for Hospitality, Leisure, Travel and Tourism

Answers to activities

Answers are provided only for tasks or activities that have a definitive answer or range of suggested answers. For other tasks, accept any suitable answer.

Activity 1: Why is good customer service important?

Answers may include:

- benefits to the organisation: customer loyalty, repeat business, good public image, new customers, customers likely to spend more money, customers likely to recommend the business to other people
- customers will feel as though they have received value for money
- customers will feel looked after (especially customers with special requirements or requests).

Activity 2: How can you communicate?

Answers may include:

- one-way communication (e.g. over a public address system)
- verbal communication (e.g. over the telephone, face-to-face) – consider language, tone of voice, etc.
- non-verbal communication (e.g. body language, facial expressions, eye contact)
- electronic communication (e.g. by email)
- written communication (e.g. letters, leaflets, flyers) – consider business communications such as flyers: what impression are you trying to make? What do you want customers to read into your advertisements?
- listening – remind learners that communication is usually a two-way process, so they must listen to what is being said to them and respond appropriately.

Activity 4: How should you look?

Answers may include:

- hair: tied back, covered in the kitchen, clean
- hands: clean, short nails, no nail varnish, no jewellery, cuts or grazes covered with non-skin-coloured plasters
- footwear: flat, non-slip
- clothing: uniform or smart own clothes, any specific protective clothing (e.g. apron, gloves)
- requirements regarding make-up, perfume, aftershave, piercings, etc.