

Hospitality

**Level 1: Customer service in the hospitality industry
(J/502/4898)**

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This material has been published on behalf of Edexcel and offers high quality support for the delivery of the units or qualifications that make up the Skilled for Life toolkit. The material is provided as an additional and optional resource for tutors and teachers to use and adapt when delivering a programme of units for their learners. For learners to achieve units within a Skilled for Life programme, it is important that every assessment criterion is assessed, fully met and noted. The resource sheets provided for each unit will enable learners to produce evidence for certain criteria. It is not envisaged that solely by completing the resource sheets, learners will fully meet all the criteria. It is the responsibility of tutors and assessors to ensure that all criteria are properly assessed and the evidence recorded appropriately.

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 gain an understanding of the importance of good customer service in the hospitality industry. They will explore the meaning of good customer service by considering their own experiences and they will consider the benefits of good customer service to a hospitality organisation.

By the end of the unit, learners will understand the basic principles of positive verbal and non-verbal communication, which will help them when serving customers. They will also understand the importance of good personal presentation and hygiene, as well as the need to comply with uniform and dress codes when working in a hospitality role.

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

Learning and teaching activities in this unit

Resource sheet 1: What is good customer service?

The purpose of this sheet is to help learners think about the meaning of good customer service. You could show an episode of *Fawlty Towers* or a documentary such as *Hotel Inspector* to stimulate discussion about customer service in general before considering the example of a new café.

Talk about what customer service is and ask learners to share experiences of good customer service. Examples of bad customer service may be used to reinforce the benefits of customer service to the customer, the organisation and the employees.

Help learners to create a simple list of customer service standards for their café, thinking about the following points:

- What matters to them when they visit a hospitality outlet?
- How do they want their customers to feel?
- How should the staff look?
- How should staff speak to customers (e.g. very formal 'Sir' and 'Madam', or more friendly and relaxed)?

Activity 1: Think about it!

This activity will follow on naturally from the stimulus discussion. Encourage learners to think carefully about the questions on the activity sheet. They may work individually or in groups and should consider the type of café they are writing about before they begin to answer the questions (e.g. formal, informal, family-friendly).

Once learners have created their mind map, you could ask them to prepare a brief presentation outlining and explaining their ideas. Alternatively, you could hold a brief one-to-one discussion with each learner, completing an observation record or witness statement as evidence that the assessment criterion has been achieved.



Ask learners to consider how they will find out more about their potential customers, and how they will find out what their customers think. It would be useful for them to visit a range of cafés in the local area, find out what they like and dislike about each one, and choose features they would like to include in their own café.

Resource sheet 2: Why is good customer service important?

Use the image on this sheet as a basis for discussion about good customer service, asking questions such as:

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

Ask learners to give examples of situations in which they have received good customer service, and what made it 'good'. Try to establish the difference between good customer service and excellent customer service. During the discussion, encourage learners to think about:

- the outlet – was it clean/tidy/comfortable?
- the food – did it taste nice? was it well presented?
- the staff – were they polite/friendly/attentive?

When talking about staff, make sure you cover both verbal and non-verbal communication. Try to steer learners away from discussion of bad customer service by asking how negative situations could have been resolved or improved.

Encourage learners to consider the importance of context. For example, customers in a fast food chain are usually less interested in how the food is presented and more concerned about the speed with which it arrives.

If possible, look at a review website such as TripAdvisor and find examples of positive and negative reviews. You may wish to find reviews of local hospitality outlets, so that learners can compare their own experiences with those of the reviewers.

Activity 2: What are the benefits of good customer service?

In this activity, learners should complete the spider diagram by stating the benefits of good customer service. It is important to consider a range of scenarios and think about the ways in which customers' expectations vary between different hospitality outlets.

Resource sheet 3: Types of customer

Use the illustrations on this sheet to prompt discussion about the different types of customer and what they may consider to be 'good' customer service. For example:

- **families with babies or young children:** will need baby changing facilities but may also want smaller portion sizes or a children's menu, facilities for heating baby food, high chairs, etc.
- **disabled people:** may need wheelchair ramps, hearing loops, menus in Braille or large print, etc.
- **vegetarians:** talk about different menu options, people with allergies, the importance of accurate labelling, willingness to adapt recipes, etc.
- **people with different budgets:** talk about the use of fixed price menus to attract customers at quieter times of day (e.g. early evening) or to attract people who could not necessarily afford the usual menu.

The guide book excerpt could also be used to discuss the importance of reliable and accurate information: it is no good telling customers you can cater for their needs if they are going to be disappointed when they arrive.

Activity 3: What do they need?

In this activity, learners should make notes in preparation for a presentation to the rest of the group. Encourage them to think about what each customer might need and what they would say to and do for the customer. Learners should also consider how company policy might influence their decisions and actions. For example, are guide dogs allowed? Are there health and safety issues around heating baby food in the kitchen? and so on.

Presentations may be recorded as evidence for this assessment criterion. If learners are reluctant to present to a large group, they could tell you their ideas during a brief one-to-one discussion instead.

Resource sheet 4: How do you communicate?

This stimulus is designed to prompt discussion about the differences between the illustrated communication styles. 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 will probably expect a more formal style of greeting. Try to introduce other examples to expand the discussion.

Consider the importance of first impressions (for example, appearance, behaviour, body language, facial expressions, language and how long the customer is kept waiting). Discuss the ways in which first impressions can affect business and try to link to local examples if possible. For example, ask learners whether they know of any hospitality outlets where the staff are really friendly, or particularly rude, and encourage them to think about how the staff make them feel.

Consider all different types of communication, including:

- 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 in particular, asking learners how they respond to flyers or adverts
- listening – remind learners that communication is usually a two-way process and that they will need to listen carefully to what is being said in order to respond appropriately.

Role play will be helpful in consolidating these ideas, so you may wish to link this activity with resource sheet 5.

Activity 4: What are the benefits of good communication?

In this activity, learners should research the benefits of good communication. They may work in groups to carry out their research but each learner should complete the spider diagram individually.

Resource sheet 5: How can you help?

This stimulus should help learners to develop their verbal and non-verbal skills so that they are able to deal with a variety of routine situations. Use the examples to cover all types of response, including tone of voice, facial expressions and body language.

Make sure learners understand the importance of offering an apology as soon as possible, even if they are not to blame (for example, 'I'm sorry you're unhappy with the service you've received'). They should also 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 5: What should 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.

You must provide signed observation records or witness statements as evidence for assessment criterion 2.3 (*Communicate positively in a hospitality environment (to include verbal and non-verbal communication)*).

Answers will vary depending on the exact context of each scenario, so you may wish to specify a context for each situation or allow learners to develop their own ideas. For example, you could ask learners to consider the following options for the fourth scenario:

- The customer is on a business trip and will need a quiet room with internet access.
- The customer is a parent who will be staying with their partner and two young children. They will need a cot and would like to know what childcare facilities the hotel can offer.



Ask learners to consider other scenarios, for example:

- giving information about future events at a hotel or restaurant
- giving directions to customers.

Resource sheet 6: Would you eat here?

Use this resource sheet to prompt a discussion about the importance of good personal presentation, helping learners to identify all the negative points visible in the cartoon and to suggest improvements. For example, you could talk about:

- scruffy clothing: implies a lack of professionalism and might make you doubt the quality of the food
- stained clothing: suggests staff are not particularly concerned about hygiene
- spills on the counter: suggests poor hygiene standards and implies that staff do not take pride in their work
- staff texting when they should be working: rude, will make customers feel unwelcome.

Make sure the discussion covers all aspects of personal hygiene and presentation (e.g. dress, hair, make-up, jewellery, cleanliness) and help learners to identify the importance of each aspect. Try to elicit answers from learners, drawing on their own experiences of different hospitality outlets and their observations of the staff. One-to-one discussions between you and your learners could be recorded as evidence for this assessment criterion.

Activity 6: Why is personal presentation important?

Following the discussion of Resource sheet 6, learners should use this sheet to record their ideas. They should understand and be able to explain why personal presentation is important. For example, they may make comments such as:

- clothing must be appropriate for the role: e.g. protective clothing in a kitchen, an apron for waiting staff, a smart uniform for a receptionist in a five-star hotel.
- hair must be covered in the kitchen so that hairs do not fall into customers' food.

Learners should be aware of legal requirements such as health and safety and food hygiene regulations. This information will be useful when learners come to write their own dress code for Activity 7.

Resource sheet 7: What is a dress code?

Use the images to discuss dress codes for different roles in the hospitality industry. If possible, use catalogues or the internet to provide examples of other hospitality uniforms. You should also draw on learners' own observations of how staff look and behave at different hospitality outlets.

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 discussion should be linked with Activity 6 and may touch on the following points:

- 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 may have rules regarding make-up or piercings.
- Discuss health and safety and hygiene regulations – e.g. long hair should be clean and tied back or covered in the kitchen; hands should be clean and (in the kitchen) free of nail varnish, false nails or jewellery; cuts or grazes should be covered by non-skin-coloured plasters; footwear should be appropriate to the role.

Clothing and uniforms

- Discuss why some companies ask their staff to wear a uniform – 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 usually smart).
- 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 (you may look smart but your customers will be unimpressed if you are rude); posture.
- Discuss hygiene considerations – e.g. do not touch your hair or face while 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 7: How should you dress?

This activity should be linked with Activity 1 and will help learners to think about dress codes and appearance in general. They may work individually or in pairs or small groups to consider the different roles in a café and to create a dress code for each role.

Ask learners to think about:

- clothing – uniform? own clothes? smart? casual? type of material? (consider fire safety if working in a kitchen)
- hair – tied back? covered?
- face – make-up? piercings?
- hands – clean? jewellery? fingernails (short, unvarnished)?
- shoes – flat? heeled? non-slip? colour?
- any extra clothing – apron? gloves? hat?

Learners may use magazines, journals, catalogues or the internet to find out more about appropriate dress codes for different job roles. It would also be helpful for learners to visit different cafés in their area and compare the ways in which staff dress.

Encourage learners to justify the rules they have made, referring back to their answers to Activity 1. For example, if they have said that they want their café to have a friendly, relaxed atmosphere, they may choose not to ask staff to wear a uniform. Answers will vary and should lead to further discussion of what is acceptable and what is not.

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

Serving Your Best Interests (Confederation of British Industry)

Who Cares Wins – Customer Care (BBC Business)

Fawlty Towers (BBC)

Hotel Inspector (Channel 5)

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
www.tripadvisor.co.uk	A website offering customer reviews of hospitality outlets worldwide

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: Think about it!

Answers will vary depending on the type of café chosen but may include the following:

- **What kind of customers do you want to attract?** Learners should think about: opening times (mornings, lunchtimes, afternoons, evenings); speed of service (if appealing to business people); awareness of local culture; customers requiring food or drinks or both.
- **How will you appeal to customers?** Learners should think about needs of different customers, e.g. free WiFi for business people, a children's play area for families, etc.
- **What sort of atmosphere do you want to create?** Learners should think about staff behaviour (formal, relaxed, etc.), dress codes (though this is covered in more detail in Activity 7), menus, etc.

Activity 2: What are the benefits of good customer service?

Answers may include:

- benefits to the organisation: customer loyalty; repeat business; good public image; new customers; customers likely to spend more; customers likely to recommend the organisation to friends or colleagues
- benefits to the customer: value for money; accuracy and reliability; information and advice; assistance and help; special needs dealt with; healthy, safe and secure environment
- benefits to the employee: positive working environment; job satisfaction.

Activity 3: What do they need?

Answers could include the following:

A blind person with a dog

- a menu in Braille, or someone to read the menu to the customer
- tolerance of guide dogs (and perhaps providing water for the dog as an extra touch)
- alert, attentive staff ready to help if necessary

A family with a baby or young children

- a highchair
- facilities for microwaving baby food or, as a minimum, willingness to allow parents to bring in food for the baby
- baby changing facilities
- a children's menu or smaller portions for children
- space for pushchairs

An elderly couple

- may need help with the menu (perhaps large print, willingness to help if they are struggling to read small type, offering to read the specials board to them)
- may require smaller portions
- may struggle with stairs (consider a lift if the restaurant is upstairs)

Activity 4: What are the benefits of good communication?

Answers could include:

- create a good company image
- establish customer needs
- deal with situations effectively
- build a rapport with customers (which will make them feel welcome and encourage repeat business)
- prevent misunderstandings which could cause problems later (e.g. reading back a customer's order to make sure you have got it right)
- reduce complaints
- increase customer satisfaction
- allow effective teamwork.