

Service - Dealing with Complaints

WHY	This course is aiming at making your team more comfortable when dealing with complaints. Additionally to this course, we recommend you/your team to take on the 'Difficult Situations' course (L&D section).
WHO	<p>Audience:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hospitality professionals of all levels - Anyone curious about service <p>Facilitator:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Self-learning - Managers of all levels
WHAT	<p>Content includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Why do customers complaint? - Preventing complaints - Dealing with complaints <p>Content length:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Approximately 30 minutes
HOW	<p>1st Read content and select what you believe to be useful for you/your team</p> <p>2nd Decide what element you/your team will apply and make a plan</p> <p>3rd Set a deadline for application to be reviewed</p> <p>4th Review results, amend methods according to specific needs and apply again until satisfied</p>
PLUS	<p>Internal resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The L&D course on Dealing with Difficult Situations is complementary to this course.

Why do customers complain?

Why do we have to take complaints seriously?

Complaints are our chance to WOW the customer; an opportunity to better oneself and the venue's service, so rather than take them personally or too negatively, they are a chance to prove your true skills! – If we deal with the complaint effectively that customer may become a life long customer! Turn a negative into a positive!

Out of a hundred how many unhappy customers do you think actually complain?

It has been proven that only 4% of dissatisfied customers complain, the other 96% just go away and never come back. Word of mouth can be the best promotion of a venue but can be equally as damaging in negative situations. With this in mind we should be grateful for customer complaints, be thankful that they brought the issue to your attention and gave us the chance to prevent the same mistake from happening to other customers.

4 things for customers to complain about:

- Product – Do you have all the products on the menu? Are customers waiting too long for food? Let them know before they ask. Double check their order and make sure you haven't left anything out. Food Standards, consistently looks and taste the same – will ensure that customers come back.
- People – Are customers waiting too long in queue? If you see one person on the till, and 6 customer's waiting in line, make sure you jump in there and help.
- Price – Customers think the price is too high? I.e. Coffee has been doubled in price – there is now a double shot instead of single shot. The price in NOW hasn't been changed in over a year and this price is matched to market price. Again, if there are any problems, get your manager as soon as possible.
- Place - How does the shop look? Ensure that it always is spotless and clean. Bins empty all surfaces have been wiped down and cleared, chairs are in line and the fridge is refilled and looks delicious!

Preventing complaints

Preventing a complaint in the first place is probably the most important thing we can do in customer service. The best way to do this is by keeping your eyes open. How long have they been waiting for food? How long have they been waiting to be served? Do they look happy with the food? Make an effort to approach seated customers and check back that everything is ok and they are happy with the food.

1. Look for problems – Either on the floor and/or in the kitchen. Make sure all tables are clean and wiped, bins are emptied, and all prep has been done before service and continued during.
2. Good communication – Effective and regular team briefings. This makes sure that everyone is on the same page and has the correct information (pricing changes, portion servings, menu change, etc.)
3. Maintain and clean the equipment – if equipment is looked after and maintained there is a far less chance that it will break down

4. Don't let it escalate – If a customer has a request, is waiting or just looks like they need some assistance, deal with them as soon as possible. Never avoid these warning signs, as it will help prevent a complaint.

Dealing with a complaint:

DO NOT:

- Argue. It will increase the problem and make you look unprofessional
- Interrupt. You need all the information to best deal with the situation
- Take the complaint personally. Just breathe and remain calm

DO:

- Listen** – to what the customer is really trying to say
- Empathise** – you do care and you want to help
- Apologise** – tell them you will find out what is going on – and make sure you do!
- React** – find a solution
- Notify** – inform a manager as quickly as possible.
Give as much information as possible, calmly and clearly.

So to recap: DON'T argue, interrupt or take it personally.
DO – Listen, empathise, apologise, react & inform a manager

Listening skills and general tips:

- Eye contact – shows you are acknowledging them and showing interest
- Nod
- Relax your shoulders
- Respect other people's personal space
- Do not interrupt
- Do not argue
- Show that you understand how they feel

A few helpful points

ALWAYS inform your managers of the complaint (no matter how small), Remember that complaints are our opportunity to shine – if they are handled professionally the customers will come back. You are free to use words that you are most comfortable with, just remember to be polite, **never make excuses** and always solve a problem as soon as possible...