

5 Ways Social Media Can Impact Your Hospitality Business – Complete Hospitality Training

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Details:

A photograph of a plate is a claim about that plate. Caption it gluten free and the venue has made a dietary representation the kitchen has to meet at every service, not only the one the photo came from. Social media brings people through the door, and it also turns a venue into a publisher, which carries obligations most operators have not thought through before the first post goes up.

A note on what this page is. Social media marketing itself is not a regulated subject and there is no unit of competency in the hospitality training package that teaches it. So the marketing judgements below are practical guidance, and this page is deliberately shorter than the compliance pages on this site rather than padded to match them. What is grounded, and cited at the end, is the food safety side of dietary claims, the service and conflict competencies behind review handling, and the one skill set on our scope that addresses the digital channel directly.

The marketing opportunities in the original guide

The source article describes five commercial uses for the channel. The first is brand identity : show the venue's people, service style and values rather than posting only a product photograph. The second is audience fit : tailor messages to the guests a venue can actually serve, including its location and the kind of occasion it suits. The third is promotions and events : make the offer, dates, booking path and conditions clear, then remove or update a post when it expires. The fourth is collaboration with creators whose audience and presentation fit the venue. The fifth is reputation management : listen and respond to feedback, a subject covered below. None guarantees bookings by itself; the operational basics and accurate claims matter throughout.

1. Discovery and bookings

A venue's profile is often the first thing a prospective customer sees, ahead of the venue's own website. Trading hours, the current menu, the location and a way to book are the details that turn interest into a table. When those details go stale, the channel works against the business. Keeping them current is unglamorous and it is the part with the clearest commercial return.

There is a competency point buried here. SITXCCS014 Provide service to customers , core in both Certificate III in Hospitality qualifications, requires staff to select a medium of communication appropriate for the customer and the situation , and to communicate within designated response times . A direct message asking whether you can seat a wheelchair at 7pm is a service interaction, assessed on the same criteria as one made at the counter. If nobody has defined how quickly messages are answered, the channel has no standard.

2. Claims about food become obligations

Anything posted about a dish is a representation to the customer. Allergen and dietary claims are the sharpest example: gluten free, dairy free, nut free and vegan are read by customers as absolutes, and a kitchen that cannot control cross-contact should not make them online. The same applies to provenance and method claims such as house made or locally sourced. Written claims are durable in a way a verbal exchange on the floor is not, and when the menu changes the posts describing the old one still exist.

The underlying obligation is food safety, not marketing. Under Standard 3.2.2A of the Food Standards Code , which commenced 8 December 2023 , anyone engaging in a prescribed activity involving unpackaged potentially hazardous food must have completed training covering four topics — safe handling of food, food contamination, cleaning and sanitising of premises and equipment, and personal hygiene — or possess skills and knowledge commensurate with the activity . Food contamination is one of those four topics, and cross-contact is a contamination question.

On the kitchen side, the relevant competency is SITHCCC042 Produce food to meet special dietary requirements , a core unit of SIT30821 Certificate III in Commercial Cookery. If your venue posts dietary claims and nobody in the kitchen holds that unit or its equivalent skills, the claim is running ahead of the capability. See food handling .

A workable rule: do not publish a claim the kitchen could not defend to an authorised officer. A softer caption costs nothing and is far easier to live with than a retraction.

3. Photographs of staff and customers

Staff appearing in venue content is normal and often welcome, but consent should be asked for rather than assumed, and it should be revisitable, because a person who leaves the business may reasonably want their image taken down. Customers photographed in the room are a separate question again: a wide shot of a busy dining room is not the same as a close portrait of an identifiable guest. A short written policy, agreed once, prevents most of this.

There is also a competency-level duty that bears on what a venue publishes about people. SITXCOM007 Show social and cultural sensitivity , core in both Certificate III in Hospitality qualifications, requires knowledge of the requirements under State, territory and Commonwealth anti-discrimination law to treat customers and colleagues fairly and equitably , not to discriminate, show partiality or grant special favours based on social and cultural attributes, and not to threaten, humiliate or intimidate people because of their social or cultural attributes.

That last duty is the one to hold in mind before posting. Content that makes a joke at the expense of a customer, a staff member or a group is not a tone problem; it runs at a duty the training package treats as knowledge every hospitality worker is assessed on. See understanding cultural awareness in hospitality .

4. Reviews and public complaints

Responding to a complaint publicly is not the same as resolving it. A public reply shows other readers that the venue engages; the resolution itself, whether a refund, a replacement or an explanation of what went wrong, usually belongs in a private channel. Arguing the facts in a public thread rarely reads the way the venue intends, and staff named in a review should never be discussed publicly. Deciding in advance who replies, how quickly, and what they are authorised to offer keeps this consistent.

The complaint-handling element of SITXCCS014 maps onto this almost exactly:

Criterion	What it requires	What it means online
4.1	Proactively recognise customer dissatisfaction and take swift	The review is the late stage. Dissatisfaction was visible in the

	action to avoid escalation to a complaint	room
4.3	Identify solutions in consultation with the customer	Do not announce a remedy in a public reply. Agree it with the person
4.4	Resolve according to own level of responsibility and organisational policy	Whoever runs the account needs a defined authority to offer something
4.5	Escalate complex service issues to higher level staff	Some reviews are not for the person holding the phone
5.2	Identify individual and recurring complaints and feed them back internally	A pattern in your reviews is an operational finding, not a reputation problem

Where a matter is genuinely escalated, the relevant unit is SITXCOM010 Manage conflict , core in the Certificate IV in Hospitality and the Diploma of Hospitality Management and aimed at senior operational personnel, supervisors and managers . It requires the holder to identify and evaluate the impacts of conflict on business reputation and legal liability before choosing a response, and its named techniques include assertiveness , meaning standing firm on organisational policy while remaining respectful, acknowledging all parties , and minimising the broader impact on other colleagues and customers. That is a considerably better framework for a hostile review than instinct.

Where behaviour rather than dissatisfaction is the problem, SIRXCEG008 Manage disrespectful, aggressive or abusive customers , an elective in SIT30722, requires incidents to be comprehensively documented and reported to a supervisor, with alternative approaches identified to avoid or mitigate a repeat. It also requires de-briefing with a supervisor afterwards, which matters when the abuse arrived through a public channel and the staff member named in it has read every word. See dealing with difficult guests .

How to turn review themes into something actionable is covered in how to measure and improve customer service , which also sets out the four feedback collection methods the training package actually names.

5. The labour cost of doing it properly

Photography, scheduling, answering messages and monitoring reviews take hours out of somebody's week, and when that somebody is a supervisor rostered on the floor it competes directly with service. A venue is entitled to decide the channel is not worth those hours. Abandoning a live profile with an old menu on it, however, is worse than never having started.

The decision itself belongs to a named competency. SITXMGT004 Monitor work operations , core in the Certificate IV in Hospitality and the Diploma, requires the supervisor to proactively consult colleagues about ways to improve efficiency and service levels, including the potential for new technologies and other innovations , to assess current workloads and schedule work to maximise efficiency and customer service quality within budget constraints , and to take follow-up action to monitor the effectiveness of solutions . Adopting or dropping a channel is a workload decision with a review date, not a matter of enthusiasm.

What is posted	What it commits the venue to
Dietary or allergen claim	Kitchen controls that support the claim every service

Menu or price list	Matching what the customer is offered on arrival
Trading hours	Being open when stated
Staff photograph	Consent, and a way to withdraw it
Content about a customer or group	The anti-discrimination duties in SITXCOM007, including not humiliating people
Reply to a complaint	Following through privately on whatever was offered
A live profile at all	Keeping it current, or closing it

Building the judgement in-house

In a small venue these calls usually fall to whoever is running the floor.

Our scope of registration carries 17 current qualifications and 81 current skill sets , built from 579 current units , every component at the extent "Deliver and assess". One skill set addresses this subject directly: SITSS00088 Online Engagement for Small Business . A skill set is a defined group of units rather than a short course, so each unit completed still produces a Statement of Attainment on the national record. Also relevant are SITSS00077 Customer Service Management , for designing the standard the channel is held to, and SITSS00078 Customer Service .

On the qualification side, we deliver SIT40422 Certificate IV in Hospitality , 21 units of which 9 are core and three of the nine are HR units , at supervisory level; and SIT50422 Diploma of Hospitality Management , 28 units of which 11 are core, at AQF level 5 and delivered in Victoria only per our scope records. Venues developing staff on site can look at workplace training or start with a course enquiry , and should confirm current fees and intakes directly.

For the venue's own written position on consent and complaints, the discipline worth borrowing is the one an RTO has to apply: decide in advance what is feedback and what is a complaint, and give the second a process with timeframes and an avenue for further action. We publish our own under policies . And the commercial underpinning of all of this, that repeat custom comes from consistency, recognition, recovery and retention rather than from reach, is set out in the key to building a loyal customer base . On the operational side of selling online, see tips for taking your restaurant online .

About us

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We link to the relevant course and regulatory sources in this guide. Check those sources for current requirements, and confirm course availability, delivery, fees and entry requirements with us before enrolling.

Source records and further guidance

We link the unit records and regulator guidance relevant to this page below. Check the current source before making an enrolment, licensing or employment decision.

SITXCCS014 Provide service to customers

SITXCOM007 Show social and cultural sensitivity

SIT30821 Certificate III in Commercial Cookery

SITSS00088 Online Engagement for Small Business

SIRXCEG008 Manage disrespectful, aggressive or abusive customers

Food Standards Code — Standards 3.2.2 and 3.2.2A (food safety practices and food safety management tools)

Is there a unit of competency that teaches social media marketing?

Not in the hospitality qualifications. The closest thing on our scope is the SITSS00088 Online Engagement for Small Business skill set. The service, conflict and food safety obligations that social media engages are covered by units; the marketing craft itself is not.

Does a venue need consent to photograph a staff member for social media?

Consent should be obtained rather than assumed, and recorded in a way both parties can point to later. It is also worth agreeing up front what happens to the images when the person leaves.

Can a venue advertise a dish as gluten free?

Only if the kitchen can control cross-contact well enough to stand behind the claim at every service. If it cannot, the claim should not appear online or on the menu. The underlying obligation is food safety: food contamination is one of the four topics food handler training must cover under Standard 3.2.2A.

Which competency covers cooking to a dietary claim?

SITHCCC042 Produce food to meet special dietary requirements, a core unit of SIT30821 Certificate III in Commercial Cookery.

Is a public reply enough to resolve a complaint?

No. A public reply shows other readers that the venue responds, but the resolution normally happens privately. SITXCCS014 criterion 4.3 requires solutions to be identified in consultation with the customer, which a public announcement is not.

Who should be answering reviews?

Someone with a defined authority to offer something. Criterion 4.4 limits resolution to the person's own level of responsibility and organisational policy, and 4.5 requires escalation of complex issues, so the venue has to set the boundary before the review arrives.

What should we do with a pattern in our reviews?

Treat it as an operational finding. Criterion 5.2 of SITXCCS014 requires identifying recurring complaints and feeding them back internally to avoid future occurrence. One bad review is noise; the same complaint four times is a fixable cause.

A review names one of our staff. What now?

Do not discuss the person publicly. SIRXCEG008 element 4 requires the incident to be comprehensively documented and reported to a supervisor, and element 5 requires de-briefing with the staff member afterwards, which matters a great deal when they have read it.

Is a hostile review a conflict-management matter?

If it escalates, yes. SITXCOM010 Manage conflict is core in the Certificate IV and the Diploma, and it requires the holder to identify and evaluate the impacts of conflict on business reputation and legal liability before choosing a response.

Can we post content that makes a joke about a customer?

Think hard. SITXCOM007's knowledge requirements name the duty not to threaten, humiliate or intimidate people because of their social or cultural attributes, and to treat customers and colleagues fairly and equitably. That is assessed knowledge for every hospitality worker, not a matter of taste.

How quickly should we answer a direct message?

Within whatever your venue has set as its designated response time. SITXCCS014 criterion 1.1 assesses communication against that standard, and criterion 1.4 requires the medium itself to be appropriate for the customer and the situation.

Can we just stop posting?

Yes, and that can be the right call. But an abandoned live profile with stale hours and an old menu actively misleads customers, which is worse than never having started. Close it or keep it current.

Do a venue and a training provider have the same obligations here?

No, and the two should not be conflated. A hospitality venue has no obligations under the standards that apply to registered training organisations; a venue's obligations come from consumer, privacy and food law.