

How To Deliver Exceptional Customer Service in Hospitality – Complete Hospitality Training

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Details:

Exceptional service is not warmth. It is three concrete behaviours performed consistently, anticipation, recovery and consistency, and a guest cannot tell a friendly server from an attentive one until one of the three is tested.

Those three are a useful way to think about it. But there is also a formal answer to the question "what does good service actually consist of", and it is worth knowing, because it is what a nationally recognised assessor marks against. The unit is SITXCCS014 Provide service to customers , and it is a core unit in both Certificate III in Hospitality qualifications, meaning nobody completes either qualification without being assessed on it.

The rest of this page sets the three behaviours against what that unit actually requires.

Make the guest feel welcome in the actual room

The source service guide begins with a warm greeting, prompt attention and a clean, inviting space. Those are visible behaviours a team can practise. Agree on a service standard together, ask guests for feedback, and use complaints to improve the process rather than defend it reflexively. Listen and apologise where appropriate, then explain what can be done. Managers need to train new staff and support colleagues across the floor and kitchen so the standard does not disappear during a busy shift.

Good hospitality also depends on safe food handling and hygiene. Friendliness cannot compensate for an unsafe product or an unaddressed hazard. The sections below explain how anticipation, recovery and consistency translate into assessed skills; use them alongside the everyday welcome, teamwork and safety habits described here.

Anticipation

Anticipation is noticing the need before it is spoken: the water jug that is empty, cutlery for a dish that arrives to share, a dietary question asked before the menu is discussed rather than after the order goes in. It is not mind reading. It comes from knowing where a table is up to, seated, ordered, waiting, eating, finished, and what each stage predicts. Staff who work a section rather than a task list can do this; staff who only respond to raised hands cannot.

SITXCCS014 puts this in performance criteria under its third element. The requirements are to establish rapport to promote goodwill and trust , to identify customer needs and expectations, including customers with special needs , to promptly meet all reasonable needs and requests, to identify and anticipate operational problems and take action to minimise the effect on customer satisfaction , and to recognise and act upon opportunities to deliver additional levels of service beyond the customer's immediate request .

Read that fourth one again. Anticipating operational problems, not just guest requests, is an assessed requirement. The service failure a guest never finds out about is the highest form of this skill, and it is in the unit.

Recovery

A failure handled well often produces more loyalty than a meal where nothing went wrong, and the reason is information. A flawless service tells the guest nothing about what happens when something breaks. A well-handled failure tells them exactly that, and it is the thing they need to know before bringing people who matter to them.

The unit's fourth element is complaint handling, and its sequence is precise:

Criterion	What it requires
4.1	Proactively recognise customer dissatisfaction and take swift action to avoid escalation to a complaint
4.2	Respond to customer complaints in a professional manner
4.3	Identify solutions in consultation with the customer
4.4	Resolve complaints according to own level of responsibility and organisational policy
4.5	Escalate complex service issues to higher level staff for action

Criterion 4.1 is the one most venues skip. The complaint is a late-stage event; dissatisfaction is visible well before it. And 4.3 rules out the reflex that most damages recovery, which is deciding the remedy yourself and presenting it. Free rounds and discounts are a poor reflex: compensation is not a substitute for the missing item arriving, and offered too quickly it reads as buying silence. The unit asks you to find the solution with the guest.

Where the problem is bigger than a service failure, the skill set changes. Managing complex or escalated complaints and disputes is a separate unit, SITXCOM010 Manage conflict, which is core in the Certificate IV and the Diploma rather than Certificate III, and which is aimed at senior operational personnel, supervisors and managers. For hostile behaviour rather than a dispute, see dealing with difficult guests.

How much service the unit actually assesses

Elements and criteria describe the behaviour. The performance evidence sets the volume, and that is the part worth borrowing for in-house training, which almost always runs on a single role-play. To be assessed competent in SITXCCS014 a candidate must:

Identify requirements and provide quality service to three different internal customers and three different external customers

Provide that service in line with organisational standards and within designated response times

Apply procedures to respond to and resolve three different customer complaints

Use effective communication techniques, including with at least one customer with special needs

Seek both formal and informal feedback from customers on service quality

Three internal and three external is the number to notice. Half the assessed volume of the national customer service unit is about how you deal with the kitchen, the bar and the next shift. Venues that treat "customer service training" as guest-facing only are training half the unit.

Assessment must be in an operational business environment where customers are served, which may be an industry workplace or a simulated industry environment set up for the purpose, with access to the organisation's own policies, procedures and templates for service standards, response times,

presentation standards, complaint procedures and feedback collection, and to internal and external customers the candidate can actually interact with.

Consistency

The third visit is where a venue is judged. Consistency is the systems half of service: standard steps of service, a real handover between shifts, pre-service briefings that cover what is out and what is slow tonight. It is also what makes anticipation possible, because staff who are not firefighting have attention left over for the room.

Two of the unit's elements are about exactly this, and they are the two people forget it contains.

Element 2 is standards, not niceness. It requires high standards of personal presentation and hygiene according to organisational requirements, following organisational customer service policies and procedures, and adhering to the professional standards expected of service industry personnel . Service is a standard you meet, not a mood you are in.

Element 5 is the feedback loop. It requires you to provide ongoing internal feedback on service practices, policies and procedures and suggest improvements , and to identify individual and recurring complaints and provide internal feedback to avoid future occurrence . That word recurring is the whole of consistency in one adjective. A complaint resolved at the table and not reported upward will arrive again next week. Turning that loop into a system is the subject of how to measure and improve customer service .

The part of the unit nobody expects: communication as a technical skill

Element 1 treats communication as a set of specific competencies rather than as a personality trait: communicate with customers in a professional manner within designated response times , using appropriate verbal and non-verbal communication

observe and respond to the non-verbal communication of customers

use active listening and questioning to facilitate effective two-way communication

select a medium of communication appropriate for the customer and the situation

"Designated response times" is a measurable standard. If your venue has not defined how quickly a seated guest is acknowledged, or how quickly a phone enquiry is returned, then nobody on the floor can meet a standard and nobody supervising can assess one.

The unit's knowledge requirements go further and name things most in-house training never covers:

Knowledge area	What the unit actually names
Non-verbal communication	Body language, culturally specific customs , dress and accessories, gestures, voice tonality
Customer types	External, internal, new, regular or repeat, and visitors
Customer service policies	Acknowledging and greeting customers, complaint management, loyalty programs, service guarantees
Special needs	Customs and practices of various social and cultural groups; assistive technology and interpreter requirements

Feedback methods	Surveys, interviews, observation and casual discussion
Legal context	Skills must be applied in accordance with Commonwealth and State or Territory legislation, Australian and New Zealand standards, and industry codes of practice

Note "internal" in the customer types row. Your colleagues in the kitchen are customers of the floor under this unit. That single reframing fixes more service problems than any amount of guest-facing polish.

The customer service unit family, with codes

Because this is a unit-based field, the fastest way to work out what training you actually need is to read the family. These are the customer contact and communication units currently on our scope as RTO 3722, every one at extent "Deliver and assess" with an end date of 30 June 2032:

Code	Title
SITXCCS010	Provide visitor information
SITXCCS011	Interact with customers
SITXCCS012	Provide lost and found services
SITXCCS013	Provide club reception services
SITXCCS014	Provide service to customers
SITXCCS015	Enhance customer service experiences
SITXCCS016	Develop and manage quality customer service practices
SITXCCS017	Use a computerised booking system
SITXCCS019	Prepare quotations
SITXCOM006	Source and present information
SITXCOM007	Show social and cultural sensitivity
SITXCOM009	Address protocol requirements
SITXCOM010	Manage conflict

Two details in that table are worth knowing before you go looking for a course. There is no SITXCCS018 on the register, so a provider offering one is quoting a code that does not exist. And the numbering is not a difficulty ladder: SITXCCS017 is a booking-system unit, not an advanced version of SITXCCS016.

Cultural competence is a separate core unit, not a sub-point

The other core unit sitting alongside SITXCCS014 in both Certificate III qualifications is SITXCOM007 Show social and cultural sensitivity, and it is assessed in its own right. It covers communicating with people from a range of social and cultural groups with respect and sensitivity, and addressing cross-cultural misunderstandings when they arise. It applies to all personnel at all levels across every tourism, travel, hospitality and event sector. Its knowledge requirements include the cultural and

religious protocols of the main social and cultural groups in Australian society, including Australian Indigenous people , the protocols of the main inbound tourist markets to Australia , different types of disability and their workplace implications , and State, territory and Commonwealth anti-discrimination law .

Its performance evidence is as concrete as the service unit's. A candidate must demonstrate verbal and non-verbal communication with at least three different colleagues or customers, including representatives of different social groups and different cultural groups , must make attempts to overcome language barriers, and must identify when assistance is required and seek it through the appropriate channels. The unit names the language-barrier techniques it expects: communicating through gestures and signs , using simple words in English or the other person's language, giving simple directions and instructions, accessing interpreter services , and using assistive technology for customers with particular communication needs. Its named sources of assistance are government agencies, diplomatic services , disability advocacy groups, interpreter services and local cultural organisations. Assessment must give access to current organisational anti-discrimination policies and to plain English regulator documents on anti-discrimination law.

In a country where the guest list and the staff room are both genuinely international, treating that as an optional extra is a commercial mistake as well as a compliance one. See understanding cultural awareness in hospitality .

Where service skills sit in the qualifications

Nationally recognised training in this area is unit-based. Successful completion of one or more units can be recorded on a Statement of Attainment and may support credit towards a qualification. For nationally recognised training, a Unique Student Identifier (USI) is generally required before a qualification or Statement of Attainment can be issued , unless an applicable exemption applies. See the official USI exemption guidance . A USI is free at usi.gov.au . If you already have one, recover it rather than creating another.

Qualification	Total units	Where service sits in it
SIT30622 Certificate III in Hospitality	15, of which 6 core	SITXCCS014 and SITXCOM007 are both core . Delivering service on the floor and working effectively with others
SIT30722 Certificate III in Hospitality (Restaurant Front of House)	20, of which 9 core	The same two units are core, at table-service standard. RSA and cash handling are also core here rather than elective
SIT40422 Certificate IV in Hospitality	21, of which 9 core	SITXCCS015 Enhance customer service experiences and SITXCOM010 Manage conflict are core. The shift from delivering service to supervising it
SIT50422 Diploma of Hospitality Management	28, of which 11 core	SITXCCS016 Develop and manage quality customer service practices is core. Designing and monitoring the standard itself

That progression is the useful thing in the table. Certificate III assesses you on providing service. Certificate IV assesses you on enhancing it and on managing conflict. The Diploma assesses you on

developing and managing the practices other people deliver. If you are trying to work out which level you need, that is the question to answer rather than comparing course lengths.

The three service skill sets, and exactly what is in them

If a full qualification is more than you need, three skill sets on our scope target this work directly, and it is worth seeing their contents rather than their names, because two of the three overlap almost completely.

Skill set	Units it contains	Who it is for
SITSS00078 Customer Service	SITXCCS014 Provide service to customers; SITXCOM007 Show social and cultural sensitivity	Frontline service personnel who deal directly with customers daily
SITSS00091 Service for International Visitors	SITXCCS014 ; SITXCOM007 ; plus SITXLAN007 Conduct basic oral communication in a language other than English	Frontline personnel dealing with visitors from international markets daily
SITSS00077 Customer Service Management	SITXCCS015 Enhance customer service experiences; SITXCCS016 Develop and manage quality customer service practices; SITXCOM010 Manage conflict	People who already have frontline service skills and now need customer service management skills

The useful comparison: SITSS00091 is SITSS00078 plus one language unit, so if you are weighing them up, the only question is whether basic oral communication in another language is worth the third unit to you. SITSS00077 shares no units at all with the other two, because it is the supervisory layer rather than a bigger version of the frontline one.

We hold 17 current qualifications and 81 current skill sets on our scope of registration, built from 579 current units , every component at the extent "Deliver and assess". That is considerably more than the site advertises, and it reaches well beyond hospitality: the skill sets span hospitality, business and cyber, community services, health and infection control, retail, creative arts and horticulture. Others relevant to service teams include SITSS00090 Product Sales for International Visitor Markets , SITSS00087 Mentoring and Supervision and SITSS00070 Hospitality Compliance .

If you need a specific unit or skill set rather than a full qualification, ask through the course enquiry page. Confirm current fees and intakes directly rather than from any article.

About us

We are Complete Hospitality Training , RTO 3722, CRICOS 04242E. Level 3, 28 Elizabeth Street, Melbourne VIC 3000, and 410 Elizabeth Street, Surry Hills NSW 2010. Contact melbourne@cht.edu.au or +61 3 9654 1554 .

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

SITXCCS016 Develop and manage quality customer service practices

SITXCOM010 Manage conflict

SITXCCS015 Enhance customer service experiences

Unique Student Identifier (USI) requirements for RTOs

Can service be trained, or is it personality?

Most of it is trained. Anticipation and recovery are procedures with defined performance criteria, which is why SITXCCS014 can be assessed at all. What cannot be trained is the willingness to notice, which is a hiring and rostering question.

What unit actually covers customer service?

SITXCCS014 Provide service to customers, which is core in both SIT30622 and SIT30722. At supervisory level it is SITXCCS015 Enhance customer service experiences, core in the Certificate IV and the Diploma. At management level it is SITXCCS016 Develop and manage quality customer service practices, core in the Diploma.

What are the five elements of SITXCCS014?

Communicate with internal and external customers; follow defined organisational standards when delivering service; provide service to customers; respond to customer complaints; and provide internal feedback on customer service practices.

How many customers and complaints does the unit assess?

Three different internal customers, three different external customers, and three different customer complaints, plus effective communication with at least one customer with special needs and both formal and informal feedback collection. That is the minimum evidence for a competent result.

Do my colleagues really count as customers?

Under this unit, yes, and it is not a figure of speech. Half the assessed volume is internal, and the knowledge requirements list internal customers alongside external, new, regular or repeat, and visitors.

Is complaint handling really part of the core unit?

Yes. It is element 4, and it has five performance criteria of its own, starting with proactively recognising dissatisfaction before it becomes a complaint.

Can the unit be assessed without a real venue?

It must be an operational business environment where customers are served, but a simulated industry environment set up for assessment satisfies that. The assessor still needs access to real organisational service standards, response times and complaint procedures.

Should floor staff be allowed to fix problems themselves?

Within a defined limit, yes, and the unit says as much. Criterion 4.4 requires resolution according to own level of responsibility and organisational policy, and 4.5 requires escalation of complex issues. So the venue has to define the limit. The delay while a guest waits for a manager usually costs more than the remake.

What does "designated response times" mean?

The time your venue has defined for acknowledging a customer or responding to an enquiry. The unit assesses communication against it, which means a venue that has never set one cannot hold anyone to a standard.

Who counts as a customer under the unit?

External, internal, new, regular or repeat, and visitors. Internal customers include your colleagues in other departments, which is deliberate.

How do I collect feedback properly?

The unit names surveys, interviews, observation and casual discussion, and requires both formal and informal collection. The mistake is relying only on the first, because the guests who fill in surveys are not a representative sample of the guests who leave unhappy.

Is there a short skill set for customer service rather than a full qualification?

Yes, three of them. SITSS00078 Customer Service is SITXCCS014 plus SITXCOM007. SITSS00091 Service for International Visitors adds SITXLAN007 to those two. SITSS00077 Customer Service Management is a different, supervisory set: SITXCCS015, SITXCCS016 and SITXCOM010. Each unit completed still produces a Statement of Attainment. Ask us which are currently scheduled.

Is there a SITXCCS018?

No. The current customer contact units run SITXCCS010 to SITXCCS017 and then SITXCCS019 Prepare quotations. If you are quoted a SITXCCS018, check the code.

Do you need a qualification to work in service?

No, but licence-type requirements are separate and do apply. RSA (/rsa/) is required before serving alcohol, and food handler training (/courses/food-handling-course/) before handling unpackaged food.

What is the difference between accredited and in-house training?

Accredited training produces a Statement of Attainment that transfers between employers and states and appears on your national transcript. In-house training produces a certificate of attendance, which does not.

Is cultural awareness part of customer service or a separate thing?

A separate core unit. SITXCOM007 Show social and cultural sensitivity is core in both Certificate III qualifications and is assessed in its own right, with its own performance evidence of at least three different colleagues or customers from different social and cultural groups, and its own knowledge requirements covering cultural and religious protocols, disability, and anti-discrimination law.

I already do this work. Do I have to sit through the training?

RTOs must offer recognition of prior learning, and it is raised at the pre-training review. RPL is a genuine assessment against the same evidence requirements as the taught unit, not a waiver, so you will still be assessed against the performance criteria on this page.

Which qualification should a venue put its floor staff through?

If they are delivering service, a Certificate III. If they are running a section and handling escalations, the Certificate IV, where managing conflict becomes core. If they are setting the standard for the venue, the Diploma. See also the skills hospitality employees should have ([/news/skills-hospitality-employees-should-have/](#)).