

How to Measure and Improve Your Customer Service - Complete Hospitality Training

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Details:

Five things can be measured in a venue without buying anything: complaints, repeat custom, themes in public reviews, staff turnover and order accuracy. Each is partial and each misleads in a predictable way. A single satisfaction score is the weakest of the set, because it compresses all of them into a number that cannot tell you what to change.

What each measure is actually telling you

| Measure | What it shows | Where it misleads | | --- | --- | --- | | Logged complaints | Failures serious enough that someone spoke up | Most dissatisfied guests say nothing and simply do not return | | Repeat custom | Real behaviour, and the hardest signal to fake | Confounded by location and lack of alternatives nearby | | Review themes | The words guests use, unprompted | Skewed to the extremes and to people who write reviews | | Staff turnover | An early warning on service, since new staff cannot anticipate | Also driven by pay, rosters, study and visa timing | | Order accuracy | Countable, and fixable at the source | Measures the floor and kitchen interface, not hospitality |

The four collection methods the training package names

If you want a defensible list of ways to gather service information, the core unit SITXCCS014 Provide service to customers already has one. Its knowledge requirements name four methods of collecting feedback:

| Method | What it is good for | What it misses | | --- | --- | --- | | Surveys | Volume, and comparison over time | Self-selection. The guests who complete them are not the guests who left unhappy | | Interviews | Depth, and the reason behind an answer | Slow, and easily skewed by who you choose to interview | | Observation | What people actually do, rather than what they report | Requires someone with attention free, which busy service does not allow | | Casual discussion | The fastest and cheapest of the four, and the most under-used | Unrecorded, so it evaporates unless someone writes it down |

Most venues use only the first and wonder why the result is thin. The fourth is the one hospitality is structurally good at and almost never captures.

The training package sorts these into two groups, and the grouping is more useful than the list. Surveys, interviews and structured questioning are the formal methods. Observation and casual discussion are the informal ones. A venue running only formal methods is measuring what guests are willing to write down; a venue running only informal ones has no record and no comparison over time. The requirement is to use both.

The frontline unit also fixes the volume of feedback work, which is the part in-house training usually leaves open. SITXCCS014 requires a candidate to provide quality service to three different internal customers and three different external customers, resolve three different customer complaints, communicate effectively with at least one customer with special needs, and seek both formal and informal feedback on service quality. Six customers and three complaints is a modest bar, but it is a defined one, and it is more than most venue inductions ask for.

The research methods the management unit names

One level up, SITXCCS016 names a different and wider set, because it is researching the market rather than collecting comments on a shift. Its knowledge requirements name:

| Research method | Note | | --- | --- | | Customer service surveys | The formal instrument, and the only one most venues run | | Focus groups | Absent from almost every hospitality feedback system, and the only method on this list that lets guests react to each other | | Qualitative research | Why something happened | | Quantitative research | How often it happens | | Seeking feedback from colleagues | Named as a research method in its own right, not as an internal courtesy |

The qualitative and quantitative split is the useful pairing. A satisfaction score is quantitative and tells you nothing about cause; a focus group or an interview is qualitative and tells you nothing about frequency. A venue that runs only one of the two will either chase a number it cannot explain or act on a story that is not representative.

The same unit separately names the methods for assessing whether your practices are working , which is a different question from what customers think:

examining business performance

monitoring staff compliance with the service policies and procedures

reviewing complaints and disputes

surveying customer satisfaction levels

Note that only the last of those four is a customer-facing measure. Three of the four are internal, and staff compliance is the one venues almost never audit. A policy nobody follows and a policy nobody wrote produce the same guest experience.

Why one satisfaction score tells you little

An average moves for reasons that have nothing to do with service: a hot day, a slow kitchen, one large group. It also cannot be acted on. The number goes down and nothing in it says which section, which shift, or which step. If you track a score at all, track its direction over time, split it by day part and section, and keep a free-text field beside it. The text is where the actionable content is.

There is a useful borrowed discipline here from the budget units. SITXFIN009 Manage finances within a budget requires deviations to be identified and reported according to the significance of the deviation , not simply reported. Service measurement deserves the same filter. A two-point movement in a score is not a finding. A recurring complaint about the same step of service is.

Measurement without a feedback loop is just record keeping

The part of the core unit that actually makes improvement happen is its fifth element, and it is the element most venues never implement. SITXCCS014 requires the person on the floor to:

provide ongoing internal feedback on service practices, policies and procedures, and suggest improvements

identify individual and recurring complaints and provide internal feedback to avoid future occurrence

That second criterion is the whole discipline in one line. A complaint resolved beautifully at the table and never reported upward is a complaint you will receive again. The distinction between an individual and a recurring complaint is not a nicety; it is the difference between a remake and a fix.

Note also that the unit's list of customer types includes internal customers. Your kitchen is a customer of your floor. If you are measuring service without ever asking the pass how the floor is performing, you are measuring half the system.

What the supervisory unit adds

At Certificate IV and Diploma level the relevant unit is SITXMGT004 Monitor work operations , core in both SIT40422 and SIT50422. Its first element is a better specification for service measurement than most commercial frameworks:

monitor efficiency and service levels through close contact with day-to-day operations

ensure workplace operations support overall organisational goals and quality assurance initiatives

identify quality problems and issues and make appropriate adjustments to procedures and systems, with relevant approvals

proactively consult with colleagues about ways to improve efficiency and service levels, including the potential for new technologies and other innovations

provide feedback to colleagues and management to inform future planning

evaluate current and emerging industry trends and practices for relevance to your own work situation

assess and respond to opportunities to improve the sustainability of day-to-day operations

"Close contact with day-to-day operations" is doing a lot of work in that first line. The unit's position is that service is monitored from the floor, not from a dashboard.

Its fourth element is the improvement half, and it is a complete method:

identify and analyse workplace problems from an operational and customer service perspective — both lenses, not one

initiate short-term actions to resolve immediate problems where appropriate

analyse problems for long-term impact , and assess and action potential solutions in consultation with relevant colleagues

encourage the individuals who raise problems to participate in solving them

take follow-up action to monitor the effectiveness of solutions

Step 1 and step 5 are the two that get dropped. Skipping step 1 produces a fix that suits the kitchen and annoys the guest. Skipping step 5 means you never learn whether the change worked, which is how venues accumulate procedures nobody can justify.

At Diploma level the unit that owns this territory outright is SITXCCS016 Develop and manage quality customer service practices , which is core in SIT50422. The progression across the three levels is worth stating plainly, because it answers the question of who in a venue should be doing the measuring:

| Level | Core unit | What the person is assessed on | | --- | --- | --- | | Certificate III | SITXCCS014 Provide service to customers | Delivering service, handling complaints, and feeding recurring issues back | | Certificate IV | SITXCCS015 Enhance customer service experiences, with SITXMGT004 Monitor work operations | Monitoring, adjusting and improving service | | Diploma | SITXCCS016 Develop and manage quality customer service practices | Designing and managing the practices themselves |

See the Certificate IV in Hospitality and the Diploma of Hospitality Management . Note that both diplomas are on our scope in Victoria only.

Who SITXCCS016 is actually written for is worth knowing before you put a supervisor into it. The unit applies to senior managers who operate independently, have responsibility for others, and make a

range of operational and strategic decisions , across tourism, travel, hospitality and event contexts in organisations of any size. It carries no occupational licensing, certification or specific legislative requirement , so nothing external compels it; the reason to do it is the method, not a licence. It is also current on our scope as RTO 3722 at extent "Deliver and assess" to 30 June 2032 , and it supersedes SITXCCS008 of the same name and is equivalent to it, dated 9 June 2022 . If a manager in your venue already holds SITXCCS008, that is the same competency under the old code and does not need repeating.

The Diploma unit in full: a three-stage method you can copy

SITXCCS016 is worth reading in detail even if you never enrol in it, because it is the closest thing in Australian hospitality to a written specification for a service system. It runs in three stages, and each one has a list.

Stage one: develop the practices

The unit requires the practices to be developed consultatively , not written in an office. Specifically:

obtain information on customer needs, expectations and satisfaction levels using both formal and informal research methods

provide opportunities for customers and staff to give feedback on products and services — staff are not an afterthought in this unit

review changes in the internal and external environment and integrate the findings into planning for quality service

involve staff in the development of customer service practices

develop policies and procedures for quality service provision

The unit then names the areas those policies and procedures should cover, and this is the most immediately useful list on this page:

| Area the policies should cover | | --- | | Acknowledging and greeting customers | | Complaint and dispute management | | Authority levels for staff to resolve complaints and provide compensation | | Loyalty programs | | Presentation standards | | Pricing and service guarantees | | Product quality | | Refunds and cancellation fees | | Response times | | Staff training requirements |

The third row is the one most small venues have never written down, and it is the one that decides whether a complaint is resolved at the table or escalated into a bad review. If a floor staff member does not know what they are permitted to do about a wrong dish without finding a manager, the response time row is unachievable no matter what it says.

The "changes in the internal and external environment" criterion is not left vague either. The unit names the environmental factors it expects a manager to be tracking: changes in the competitive environment, the economic climate, technology, changes in management, recruitment practices, and shifts in customer service preferences . Four of those six are internal or economic rather than about guests at all, which is the point: a decline in service is as likely to start with a hiring market or a system change as with the room.

Stage two: manage the delivery

Writing the policy is not the competency. The unit requires the manager to:

communicate the policies, procedures and expectations clearly to all staff

make the policies readily available to both customers and staff — availability to customers is explicit, not implied

monitor customer service in the workplace to ensure standards are consistently met

initiate staff training where it is needed to lift service capability

take responsibility for service outcomes and dispute resolution

act as a positive role model for the professional standards expected in the industry

Two of those are quiet tests of whether a policy is real. A service guarantee that customers cannot read is not a guarantee, and a manager who exempts themselves from the presentation and conduct standards has already communicated the policy that matters.

Stage three: monitor and adjust

The final stage is the loop, and its wording is sharper than the usual "continuous improvement" language:

seek ongoing feedback from both staff and customers to identify areas for improvement

assess the effectiveness of current practices

identify systemic problems in customer service and adjust the policies and procedures accordingly

develop and communicate new approaches to the staff involved in service delivery

"Systemic" is the operative word. The Certificate III unit distinguishes individual from recurring complaints; the Diploma unit goes one step further and asks whether the recurrence is caused by the system rather than by the shift. A wrong order twice in a week is recurring. A wrong order twice in a week because the docket printer sits where nobody passes is systemic, and only the second framing produces a fix that lasts.

Three areas and four service periods: the numbers the unit sets

The three stages above are the method. The performance evidence is where the unit sets how much of it you have to actually do, and these are the two numbers to take away from this page. To be assessed competent a candidate must:

| Requirement | The number | | --- | --- | | Research and develop customer service policies and procedures meeting industry standards | For at least three different areas of the business | | Implement and monitor practices for quality customer service in line with those policies | Over four service periods | | Evaluate the practices for quality service provision | And identify failings | | Review the policies and procedures, adjust as necessary | And communicate the new practices to staff |

Four service periods is the honest answer to "how long before we know whether the change worked". It is not a week of watching and it is not a quarter. It is four trading periods of the practice actually running, with a written evaluation at the end that is required to name what failed, not only what improved. A review that finds nothing wrong does not satisfy the unit.

And "three different areas of the business" rules out the single-policy approach. One complaints procedure is not a customer service system. The unit expects the method applied across three parts of the operation, which for a venue usually means something like the floor, the bar or counter, and bookings or functions.

That pairing of numbers is also the sharpest available answer to a provider offering this unit as a short course. Four service periods of monitored practice cannot happen in a classroom day.

You cannot learn this in a classroom, and the unit says so

The assessment conditions for the quality-service management unit are unusually specific, and they are a useful test of any provider offering to teach it. The skills must be demonstrated in an operational

business environment where customer service actually takes place . The assessment must also give the candidate access to:

current plain-English regulatory documents distributed by government consumer protection regulators

codes of practice and standards for customer service issued by industry groups

sources of information on customer needs, complaints and feedback

customer surveys and feedback collection tools and templates

team members the candidate can interact with during the assessment activities

The first two items are the ones people are surprised by. Consumer protection law is part of the customer-service competency, not a separate legal topic. The unit's knowledge requirements name the specific consumer protection matters it expects a manager to understand: cancellation fees, price increases, refunds, and product substitution . Price increases and product substitution are the two that catch venues out, because both feel like operational decisions rather than regulated ones. A venue writing a refund policy, repricing a set menu after bookings are taken, or swapping a listed product for another without reading the regulator's own plain-English material is making a decision the unit treats as a compliance matter.

The knowledge requirements also include industry schemes and accreditation aimed at improving customer service , which is an area most venues never look at. If there is a recognised scheme in your segment, knowing what it asks for is cheaper than designing a standard from scratch.

And "team members the candidate can interact with" rules out the purely online version of this unit. If a provider offers to assess service management with no operational environment and no team, ask how.

The seven skills the unit assumes you already have

The unit also lists the foundation skills required, and on a page about measurement one of them stands out.

| Foundation skill | What it is needed for | | --- | --- | | Reading | Interpreting customer service surveys and complex documents on industry trends | | Writing | Producing policies and procedures that are comprehensive and accessible | | Oral communication | Discussing customer service needs with both staff and customers | | Numeracy | Calculating and interpreting customer satisfaction statistics and business performance data | | Problem solving | Evaluating the organisation's characteristics and designing service practices that fit it | | Planning and organising | Establishing and regularly monitoring every component of the service system | | Self-management | Taking responsibility for customer service outcomes |

The unit adds two more that matter on a measurement page. Learning skills are required to contribute to change management in workplace customer service, and technology skills to use software to analyse customer satisfaction data. The second is worth noting because it is the only place the unit mentions tooling at all: the competency is in the analysis, not in the platform.

The numeracy line is the answer to anyone who treats customer service as the soft half of hospitality. Interpreting satisfaction statistics is a named requirement of the competency, and it is why the caution earlier on this page about single scores matters: the skill being assessed is not collecting a number, it is knowing what the number can and cannot support.

The writing line is worth noting too, because of the word "accessible". A procedure nobody on a Friday night can read is not a procedure. If your service standards run to a document that new staff never finish, that is a competency failure and not a staff failure. Where the gap turns out to be skills rather than systems, coaching is itself a unit — SITXHRM007 Coach others in job skills is core in SIT30622, SIT30722 and SIT40422, which means every qualified supervisor in the venue has been assessed on

it.

The short route: SITSS00077

If the Diploma is more than a venue needs, the whole measurement and improvement layer is available as a skill set. SITSS00077 Customer Service Management is current on our scope and contains exactly three units:

| Unit | Title | | --- | --- | | SITXCCS015 | Enhance customer service experiences | | SITXCCS016 | Develop and manage quality customer service practices | | SITXCOM010 | Manage conflict |

It is aimed at people who already hold frontline customer service skills and now need the management layer, so it assumes SITXCCS014 rather than including it. For a supervisor who is being asked to own the venue's service standard, that is a tighter target than a full qualification. Confirm with us what is currently scheduled.

The improvement cycle, in practice

Pick one failure that shows up in two measures. Define the change in terms specific enough that someone could tell whether it happened. Brief it, including to the kitchen. Re-measure the same way over a comparable period. Then decide whether to keep it.

Broad instructions to improve service fail because nothing measurable is expected to move. Where the fix is a skills gap rather than a procedure gap, it becomes a training question, and a plan beats a briefing. See how to create an effective training plan for your hospitality business and how to deliver exceptional customer service in hospitality .

If turnover is one of your two signals, be careful about the diagnosis. Staff leave for pay and roster reasons as often as for cultural ones, and rostering is itself a competency with defined requirements, including consulting colleagues for input and monitoring roster effectiveness in consultation with them. See steps for rostering and time management .

And if what you are actually measuring is a shift in what guests expect rather than a decline in what you deliver, that is a different problem with a different fix. The Certificate IV core unit SITXCOM010 Manage conflict and the monitoring unit's requirement to evaluate current and emerging industry trends and practices both point at it. See understanding and responding to changing customer expectations , the key to building a loyal customer base and dealing with difficult guests .

Feedback and complaints are not the same thing

Feedback is information. A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction that the organisation has to handle through a defined process, and the distinction carries real obligations for a registered training organisation.

Under the 2025 Outcome Standards for RTOs , Standard 2.7 requires a complaints management system that affords procedural fairness, identifies reasonable timeframes for responding and resolving, makes the process publicly available and easily accessible, and provides avenues for further action where a complaint is not resolved. A separate standard, 2.8 , covers appeals against a decision that adversely affects a student, and that is where the right to review by an independent party , at no or low cost, sits. Feedback attracts none of this.

The failure modes the regulator names for complaints systems transfer almost unchanged to a venue: third parties not escalating complaints; not capturing informal complaints , such as a verbal conversation with a trainer; not letting all parties respond; not acting on trends; and ignoring root cause. The second of those is the same problem as the unrecorded casual discussion at the top of this page, and the last two are the same problem as skipping step 1 and step 5 of the improvement method.

A venue is not an RTO, but the discipline transfers: decide in advance which is which. The common failure is a complaint being recorded as feedback, where it produces no response and no record. We publish our own complaints and appeals processes under policies , which set out the difference in full, and enrolled students can raise an issue through student support .

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 have held RTO code 3722 since 1 June 1994 , and its current registration period runs to 30 June 2032 under the National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011 . Our scope carries 17 current qualifications, 81 current skill sets and 579 current units , including the customer service skill sets SITSS00078 Customer Service and SITSS00077 Customer Service Management for teams that want the competency without the full qualification.

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.

SITXCCS016 Develop and manage quality customer service practices

SITXCCS014 Provide service to customers

SITXMGT004 Monitor work operations

SITSS00077 Customer Service Management

SITXCCS015 Enhance customer service experiences

Outcome Standards for Registered Training Organisations 2025 (full text)

How many complaints is too many?

There is no benchmark worth quoting. What matters is whether the same cause repeats and whether the trend is moving. The training package makes the same distinction, between individual and recurring complaints.

What are the recognised ways to collect customer feedback?

SITXCCS014 names four: surveys, interviews, observation and casual discussion. The training package groups surveys, interviews and structured questioning as formal methods, and observation and casual discussion as informal ones. Using only surveys is the most common mistake.

What research methods does the management unit name?

Customer service surveys, focus groups, qualitative research, quantitative research, and seeking feedback from colleagues. Focus groups and the qualitative and quantitative pairing are the parts almost no venue uses.

How do I assess whether my service practices are working, as opposed to what guests think?

The unit names four methods: examining business performance, monitoring staff compliance with the policies, reviewing complaints and disputes, and surveying satisfaction levels. Three of the four are internal, and staff compliance is the one most often skipped.

How long do I have to run a change before it counts?

The Diploma unit sets it at four service periods of implementing and monitoring the practices, followed by an evaluation that identifies failings, a review of the policies and procedures, and communication of the new practices to staff.

How many parts of the business does the unit cover?

At least three different areas. One complaints procedure is not a customer service system, and the unit's performance evidence says so.

Should every guest be asked for feedback?

No. Asking at every table produces low-quality answers and irritates people. Ask at the points where the answer could change something.

Is a single satisfaction score useful at all?

Only as a direction over time, split by day part and section, with a free-text field beside it. On its own it cannot tell you what to change.

What should a customer service policy actually cover?

The Diploma unit names ten areas: acknowledging and greeting customers, complaint and dispute management, authority levels for staff to resolve complaints and provide compensation, loyalty programs, presentation standards, pricing and service guarantees, product quality, refunds and cancellation fees, response times, and staff training requirements.

Which of those is most often missing?

Authority levels — what a staff member may do about a problem without finding a manager. Without it, a response-time standard is unachievable and complaints escalate that did not need to.

Do the policies have to be shown to customers?

The unit requires them to be made readily available to both customers and staff. A service guarantee customers cannot read is not doing the job the policy claims.

Which consumer protection matters does the unit expect a manager to know?

Cancellation fees, price increases, refunds and product substitution. The last two are the ones treated as operational decisions when they are regulated ones.

Do online reviews need a reply?

A short, specific, non-defensive reply is useful because it is read by future guests, not the reviewer. Arguing the facts in public never reads well.

Is a complaint register worth keeping in a small venue?

Yes. Date, what happened, what was done, who handled it. One page is enough to expose a pattern that memory will not.

Who in the venue should be doing the measuring?

Whoever holds the supervisory competency. SITXMGT004 requires monitoring efficiency and service levels through close contact with day-to-day operations, so it is a floor role rather than an office one. SITXCCS016 itself is written for senior managers who operate independently and make operational and strategic decisions.

Should the kitchen be surveyed too?

Yes. SITXCCS014 counts internal customers, including colleagues in other departments, as customers. Measuring only guest-facing service measures half the system. The Diploma unit also requires feedback opportunities for staff as well as customers, and names seeking feedback from colleagues as a research method.

What is the difference between a recurring problem and a systemic one?

A recurring problem happens more than once. A systemic problem recurs because of how the system is arranged, and only the second framing produces a durable fix. The Diploma unit specifically requires systemic problems to be identified and the policies adjusted.

How do I know whether a change actually worked?

By re-measuring the same way over a comparable period. SITXMGT004 element 4 requires follow-up action to monitor the effectiveness of solutions, and it is the step most often skipped. The Diploma unit's own evaluation requirement goes further and asks the review to identify failings, so a review that finds nothing wrong does not satisfy it.

Who should solve a problem once it is raised?

The unit's answer is to encourage the individuals who raise problems to participate in solving them. It is both better diagnosis and better retention than taking the problem away from them.

Is customer service a numbers skill?

Partly, yes. Numeracy is one of the foundation skills named in the quality-service unit, specifically for calculating and interpreting customer satisfaction statistics and business performance data, alongside technology skills for using software to analyse that data.

Can service management be assessed entirely online?

The unit's assessment conditions require an operational business environment where customer service takes place, plus team members to interact with, regulator material, industry codes of practice, and survey and feedback templates. Four service periods of monitored practice is the other reason a classroom-only version does not work. Ask any provider how those conditions are met.

Is there a licence or legal requirement to hold SITXCCS016?

No. The unit states that no occupational licensing, certification or specific legislative requirement applies to it. The reason to do it is the method.

I hold SITXCCS008. Do I need to redo it?

No. SITXCCS016 supersedes SITXCCS008 of the same name and is recorded as equivalent, dated 9 June 2022, so it is the same competency under the current code.

Is there a short course rather than the whole Diploma?

SITSS00077 Customer Service Management is the skill set, and it contains three units: SITXCCS015, SITXCCS016 and SITXCOM010. It assumes you already hold frontline service skills.

What is the difference between feedback and a complaint?

Feedback is information with no attached process. A complaint triggers a defined process with procedural fairness, timeframes and an avenue for further action. For an RTO that is set by Standard 2.7 of the 2025 Outcome Standards, with appeals under Standard 2.8.

Which qualification teaches this properly?

Certificate III covers delivering service and feeding recurring issues back. The Certificate IV adds monitoring and improving. The Diploma adds developing and managing the practices themselves. See [SIT30622 Certificate III in Hospitality \(/workplace-training/sit30622-certificate-iii-in-hospitality/\)](#), or to discuss which level fits a specific team use course enquiry ([/contact/](#)), and confirm current fees and intakes directly.