

Module 4, Session 5

Slide 1 - Customer service and Communication

Introduction to Customer service and Communication

Slide 2 - Session 5

In this session we will talk about efficient communication with costumers to reduce food waste and menu adjustments.

Slide 3 - Introduction of the session

In session 5 you will learn how to communicate effectively, clearly, and accurately with customers to minimize errors in orders. How to reduce likelihood of food waste resulting from misunderstandings or incorrect orders, balance possible adjustments to the menu with customer needs (ex. allergies, special dietary needs...) and wants (preference/aversion for certain food items). And how to enhance overall dining experience by clear and pleasant verbal and nonverbal communication.

Slide 4 – Communication and interpersonal skills in food and beverage service

Communication and interpersonal skills in food and beverage service are highly necessary. It is mandatory for giving good customer service. It also helps the staff cooperate with each other to run the business smoothly.

If you want to run a food service or want to be a part of it, you must have your communication and interpersonal skills well refined. So let us see why communication and interpersonal skills in food and beverage service is important.

Slide 5 – What is Communication and Interpersonal Skills?

Many of us think Communication and Interpersonal skills are similar. They both revolve around interaction and being at your best behavior. But there are some major differences between Communication and Interpersonal skills. Food and beverage service is about hospitality. It is about making people comfortable with delicious foods and a serene environment. Communication and interpersonal skills of the people running the business play a great role to maintain it. In a way, communication skills fall under the radar of interpersonal skills. So we will start with what is interpersonal skills.

Slide 6 - Interpersonal Skills

Interpersonal skills are the ability to understand and interact with other people, individually or in a group. It includes a variety of sub-skills such as speaking, listening or questioning skills. Interpersonal skills also refer to social skills, people skills and soft skills. Furthermore, interpersonal skills are our ability to get along with others on a personal or professional level. It is the level of empathy that we feel toward another person and the situation they are going through. From your customers to your co-workers are people with individual feelings and needs. Therefore, if you understand them and put yourself in their shoes, you can provide quality service. You can also make your co-workers feel valued as well. All this will, in turn, increase the efficiency of your service.

Slide 7 – Aspects of interpersonal skills

Interpersonal skills, therefore, mainly cover the following aspects of our skills:

1. Communication Skills

These include verbal and non-verbal communication and listening skills. Food and beverage services usually take instruction from customers. Communication skills will be discussed in detail in a while.

2. Team Working

Showing a great deal of teamwork spirit and capacity helps to work in a group. In the food and drink business, chefs and waiters need to have a good amount of teamwork skills. It helps to keep the business organized at all times. It also helps to get the orders ready in time and give exclusive services.

3. Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence is the ability to control or manage your own emotions in order to relieve your stress. Having control over your emotions helps you to work efficiently. People usually come to a restaurant or similar places to spend quality time personally or professionally. Emotional Intelligence helps you to connect and empathize with your customers and co-workers.

Slide 8 - Aspects of interpersonal skills

4. Problem-Solving and Decision Making Skills

You need to handle problematic situations, angry customers or unhelpful co-workers. You need the ability to identify and solve problems. Furthermore, you also need to have decision-making skills which will be the best for business.

5. Influencing or Negotiation Skills

With a good amount of influencing and negotiation skills, you can retain your customers. For example, if your orders are running late, you can offer your guests some complimentary treats. With positive reinforcement or inspiring your staff, you can also increase service performance.

6. Conflict Management

You need to work through conflicts and disagreements. Many times customers will not be satisfied with the food or services. You need to have a way with them to keep them pleased as much as possible. Many times there are conflicts inside management. You also need to think through it to get out of it positively without any damage.

Slide 9 - Communication Skills

Communication skills are the ability to convey an idea or message to others in the most understandable way. It includes understanding an idea, message or set of instructions and the ability to take action on it. Communication skills include verbal and non-verbal and listening skills. These skills help you give and take clear instructions. They help you share ideas with your team and co-workers and keep the overall management updated with helpful information and tasks. For effective communication, interpersonal skill is an integral part. Your interpersonal skills will be useless if you cannot understand a message or pass it to another person. On the other hand, conveying a clear message will be useless if you say it in a rude or impolite way.

Slide 10 - Parts of communication skills

There are three necessary parts of communication skills:

1. Verbal Communication is conveying a message from one person to the other by using words and voice. When you speak, you have to be clear, concise, and accurate. While giving food services, you have to speak politely as well. Through verbal communication, you can greet your customers, give instructions to your staff

and co-workers. Therefore, you must have good verbal communication skills to interact.

2. Non-verbal communication is the message that you give to the surrounding people without saying anything. For example, your gesture, body language, behaviour are examples of nonverbal communication. In a food and beverage service, you have to concentrate on non-verbal communication a lot. Your uniform should be clean, and your behaviour should be friendly. It will help send your customer the message that your food and beverage service is hygienic and clean.
3. Listening Skills. Along with great verbal and non-verbal communication, you have to be perfect at listening too. You have to listen carefully to what your customer is asking for. You also need to listen to your co-worker to carry out an instruction perfectly.

Slide 11 – What is Communication and Interpersonal Skills in Food and Beverage Service?

Interpersonal skills sum up the whole, effective communication process. It also includes interacting and cooperatively working with someone or in a group. It means that you have a way with people. Good interpersonal skills help to know people and their needs and acting on them while profiting your business.

Communication skill is the ability to interact with another person. You convey your message to someone through written or verbal communication. You have to talk to someone in a polite, well-mannered, and yet persuasive way to running a food business. Also, actively listening, understanding and taking the right action on a message is part of communication skills.

Slide 12 - Why is it Essential to have Communication and Interpersonal Skills in Food and Beverage Service?

Miscommunication or weak interpersonal skills in business can lead to bad customer service. It can create misunderstanding and a bad environment. Moreover, communication and interpersonal skills in food and beverage service can hamper overall business performance and impression.

When people enter a bakery or a restaurant, they want the restaurant host to be well-dressed and well-mannered. This gives the customer the first non-verbal impression. In addition, it sends the message that this restaurant and food service is clean and well-organised. There are many roles like this; that's why communication and interpersonal skills in food and beverage service are essential. We will be discussing these below.

Slide 13 – Reception and Front Office

Whether you are running a small food business or a large one, the reception area is important. If you are involved in this section, you need to have a high level of interpersonal skills. From etiquette, body language and posture and most importantly, your communication skills should be at their peak. You have to lead your staff so that they get a heads-up on how to deal with the customers.

Customers will come to you with the queries, requests, and complaints. So you have to know how to help them with their need and issues in the best way possible.

Slide 14 - Management in Food and Beverage service

Managers at different levels of the food and beverage business also need great interpersonal skills. It helps to handle customers, to organise staff and their work. They have to be great at problem-solving, have patience and be polite in times of crisis. Manager watch over if the staff are working in harmony. They have to appreciate positively and motivate everyone who works

under them. When any kind of serious problem arises in food service they have to manage the whole situation.

They have to be able to interact positively with other people by showing good interpersonal skills. Managers must appraise the staff for good work. While giving feedback, they should do so positively. All this should be done in a way that the staff member does not feel 'put down' or criticised.

Slide 15 - Food Services

The person behind the beverage or food counter, managers and waiters are responsible for looking after the customers. Effective communication and interpersonal skills are very important among them. It helps to look after and carry out customer orders and needs. It helps to run the business swiftly, hospitably and efficiently.

Slide 16 – Department of Food Preparation

Staff or chefs who are behind the food preparation doesn't have much interaction with customers. But they need to carry out instructions and show great team performance to prepare food. A head chef needs the most effective interpersonal skills to lead a chef team and motivate members to do their tasks efficiently. Here interpersonal skills involve how staff talk to each other, listen to, show respect and create bonding that positively boosts their work. Good interpersonal skills help to build a positive working environment. It helps employees to feel valued. As a result, there will be a positive working environment where everyone feels valued. All these, in turn, will increase productivity and loyalty, which is good for the business.

Slide 17 – Food Delivery Person

As a food delivery person, you also need to have a great deal of interpersonal and communication skills. This helps you get instruction, understanding the food requirements you will be delivering. In addition, you need to be timely, well managed and behave well with your customers and colleagues.

Communication and interpersonal skills in food and beverage service are key to run a successful business. Customers who come to you want great hospitality along with delicious foods and drinks. Food with outstanding service will keep your customers and service unsatisfied.

Slide 18 - How to Take Guests' Orders

Taking orders in a fine dining restaurant is an art that goes beyond simply writing down what the guests want to eat. It involves engaging with the guests in a professional and courteous manner, ensuring accuracy, and maintaining a smooth flow of service. Here are some key guidelines to follow:

When taking orders, waitstaff should:

- Stand Upright: Maintain a professional posture to convey confidence and attentiveness.
- Maintain Eye Contact: Engage with guests by looking them in the eye, which helps build rapport and trust.
- Speak Clearly and Confidently: Ensure that your voice is clear and confident, reflecting the high standards of the restaurant.

Note-Taking

- Use a Notepad: Even if you have an excellent memory, it's advisable to take orders using a notepad. This minimizes the chance of errors and shows guests that you are thorough and attentive.

Slide 19 - How to Take Guests' Orders

Repeat Orders

- Confirm Orders: After taking an order, repeat it back to the guest for confirmation. This step ensures accuracy and demonstrates your commitment to providing a precise and personalized dining experience.

Special Requests

- Be Attentive: Pay close attention to any special requests, allergies, or dietary restrictions mentioned by the guests.
- Communicate Clearly: Ensure these special requests are communicated clearly and promptly to the kitchen to avoid any mistakes.

Timing

- Prompt Communication: Send orders to the kitchen promptly to ensure that courses are delivered in a timely manner.
- Pacing: While it's important to maintain a good pace, avoid rushing the guests. Each course should be well-paced to allow guests to enjoy their meal without feeling hurried.

By following these guidelines, waitstaff can ensure that guests have a seamless and enjoyable dining experience, reflecting the high standards and meticulous service that fine dining restaurants are known for. This attention to detail not only enhances the guests' experience but also upholds the reputation of the restaurant.

Slide 20 - What are the Alternative ingredients for food allergies?

- We talked about food allergies in session 1 of this module. Now we will talk about alternative ingredients you can maybe offer. Restaurants are increasingly catering to customers with food allergies by offering a range of alternatives and modifications to their menu items. Here are some common food allergies and the alternatives restaurants might provide to accommodate guests with these allergies:

1. Milk/Dairy Allergy

Alternatives: Plant-based milks (almond, soy, coconut, oat), dairy-free cheeses, and yogurts, and using oil or margarine instead of butter.

Modifications: Preparing dishes without cheese or cream-based sauces and offering dairy-free dessert options.

2. Egg Allergy

Alternatives: Applesauce, mashed bananas, or commercial egg replacers in baked goods; tofu or chickpea flour for scrambles or omelets.

Modifications: Omitting eggs from salad dressings or mayo-based sauces, and providing egg-free bread or cake options.

Slide 21 - What are the Alternatives?

3. Peanut/Tree Nut Allergy

Alternatives: Seeds (sunflower, pumpkin) or seed butters (sunflower butter), and nut-free pesto's made with herbs and seeds

Modifications: Ensuring that dishes and desserts are prepared without nuts and cross-contamination is minimized.

4. Fish/Shellfish Allergy

Alternatives: For dishes that typically feature fish or shellfish, alternatives might include chicken, tofu, or legumes.

Modifications: Preparing seafood dishes separately to avoid cross-contamination and offering non-seafood options for set menus.

Slide 22 - What are the Alternatives?

5. Soy Allergy

Alternatives: Tamari (for those not allergic to wheat) as a soy sauce alternative, coconut aminos for soy-free seasoning, and milk or cream in recipes that may use soy milk.

Modifications: Using soy-free oils (like olive or canola) in cooking and offering soy-free protein options like meats, poultry, or legumes.

6. Wheat/Gluten Allergy (Celiac Disease)

Alternatives: Gluten-free grains such as rice, quinoa, or gluten-free pasta, and using gluten-free flour blends for baking.

Modifications: Offering gluten-free bread, pizza bases, and ensuring sauces and dressings are gluten-free.

Slide 23 - What are the Alternatives?

7. Sesame Allergy

Alternatives: Using other seeds (like sunflower or pumpkin) or oils (olive, avocado) in recipes that usually call for sesame or sesame oil.

Modifications: Ensuring dishes are free from sesame seeds and oil, including in bread, buns, and dressings.

Slide 24 - General Practices for Allergen Management

- Cross-contamination prevention: Using separate utensils, cookware, and preparation areas for allergen-free cooking.
- Ingredient transparency: Providing detailed ingredient lists and being open to customer inquiries about food preparation.
- Staff training: Educating staff on food allergies, cross-contamination, and how to communicate effectively with guests about their dietary needs.
- These alternatives not only help ensure the safety of guests with allergies but also enhance their dining experience by providing them with a variety of safe and delicious options. It's important for restaurants to stay informed about food allergies and continuously adapt their offerings to meet the needs of their customers.

Slide 25 - Vegan Options or Alternatives in Restaurants

- Vegan options in restaurants are designed to cater to customers who avoid all animal products, including meat, dairy, eggs, and honey. With the rise of veganism, many restaurants now offer a variety of delicious and creative vegan alternatives.
- Restaurants offering alternatives can attract not only vegans but also health-conscious diners and those with dietary restrictions. By creatively incorporating a range of plant-based ingredients, restaurants can diversify their menus and cater to a growing demand for vegan options.

Slide 26 - Vegetarian Options and Alternatives in Restaurants

- Vegetarian options in restaurants cater to customers who abstain from eating meat, poultry, and sometimes fish, but are typically open to consuming dairy products and eggs. Unlike vegan offerings, vegetarian dishes can include a wider range of ingredients, making them versatile and appealing to a broad audience.
- Restaurants offering a variety of vegetarian options not only accommodate vegetarians but also provide appealing choices for customers looking to reduce their meat intake or simply enjoy a vegetable-focused meal. By including a range of vegetarian dishes that highlight fresh produce, whole grains, and vegetarian proteins, restaurants can cater to diverse tastes and dietary preferences.



Slide 27 - Good practices and information:

In these videos you can learn about good practices around the world.

Slide 28 - The end

This is the end of session five. Thank you for your time.

