

BMGB5002

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In this reflective essay I would like to demonstrate my knowledge acquired from culinary placement and highlight skills developed along with any challenges and lessons learned. My objective for this practical module is to obtain an authentic knowledge and first-hand experience of kitchen operations by actively assisting in all kitchen operation tasks. Upon the successful completion of my aim, I hope to gain all necessary and valuable culinary skills in order to access the hospitality market as an intelligent and resolute restaurateur.

Figures from the (Office for National Statistics, 2022) argue that stock and supply control has never been more difficult to maintain. Therefore, observing habits on how to effectively conduct supply and stock management measures was a field I profound interest in during my placement. In his research Arreb.K (2023) presents a prospective view about supply management and specify that through managing vendors, business can optimize costs, mitigate risks of supply disruption and ensure product quality and supply chain reliability. This was an accurate finding because it supports my investigation into the business supply procedures. The key supply management tactics that I made me agree with Arreb. K was that the business has chosen their suppliers very carefully by acknowledging the seller registration with the local authority. Additionally, the supply sourcing was controlled by checking if transport of goods was accomplished with food and safety management systems in place, to reduce the risk of accepting expired or damaged products. Furthermore, the business kept their invoices for supply chain traceability which was accurate to ensure product quality and supply chain reliability. The business also focused to create lucrative relationships with vendors through respect, open and honest communication and always representing as a good customer to minimise risks of delivery disruptions.

The business knowledge about stock management was also observed as accurate. First of all, the business was using an ingredient tracker to control the number of supplies available and carried regular stock checks to identify any food that has passed its 'use by' or 'best before' date. I think this was a correct approach because it allowed the business to keep a sensible stock level ensuring compliance with the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and allowed of timely ordering of supplies which is seen as an important practice because timely ordering of stock ensures professionalism and competence to customers increasing their trust and satisfaction (Wong, 2000). Furthermore, the stock management professors (Silver, Pyke and Thomas, 2017) determine that "inventory control leads to cost savings of at least 20%". This may indicate that correct supply management reduces the risk of going through stockouts and excess stock issues, which allows to effectively cut costs and improve the business bottom line. However, this theory does not fully explain that to achieve such results modern inventory system an advanced staff training is needed which may also require investment before reaching the eventuality of cost savings. Now, I understand (Wild, 2017) ideology about stock and supply management, who defines it as a "well developed science not a simple common sense".

The business is also managing their stock through appropriate storage and handling. In particular, I have observed that the temperature, product quality and delivery accuracy was always checked and recorded. Then accurately organised by its category, precisely allocated on shelves and arranged by the rule of First In, First, Out. I agree with these methods because these checks are all to make sure the food was safe. I compared my observations to the ethical methods recommended by (Food and Standards Agency, 2020) showing they were essentially identical, which only proves that the methods used are robust and equitable. Food Standards Agency, however, failed to mention the long-term impact of these methods. For instance, that the correct adaption of the stock management has colossal influence on food waste reduction. My hypothesis seems to be positively interrupted and supported by the national non-profit, and their data, which discovers that if stock management is widely implemented it has the potential to reduce food waste approximately at 20% and save up to 1.3 billion annually for the food business (ReFED,2016). This finding, in conjunction with Food Technologists (Rezaei and Liu, 2017) who point out that “food industry can play a significant role in food waste reduction”, indicate that stock management has also a positive impact on sustainability.

Having defined the importance of stock and supply management it is also important to consider the challenges. One significant challenge that have faced was when I had to manage vendors due to product being undelivered and ended being substituted with double quantity of another item, which was not previously informed by the supplier. I triumphed over this challenge by contacting the supplier to communicate the inconvenience. I have rejected the solution proposed and requested a correct price adjustment according to reconciled stock. I have also made sure the situation will not reoccur in future collaboration to ensure supply chain reliability. The missing product was supplied locally supporting the business sustainability practices and purchased at the best value for price to optimise costs, deliver customer satisfaction and continue profit circulation.

The next element of this essay should reflect on the meat cooking skills, which I have developed during my kitchen adventure. However, this cannot be applied in this reflective writing because the place of my internship, does not include meat in any of the proposed dishes. Therefore, there is not meat cooking skills required. Consequently, in this particular section I will reflect on my experience with pastry craftsmanship. My journey with this particular phenomenon started when I was making traditional Italian cannoli with stracciatella cream. It was a fantastic practice, which greatly developed my patisserie skills because I have mastered my dough kneading skills, I have learned the egg wash technique, working with pasta machine, and how to use cannoli form to create the perfect shell. I have also used a roller cutter to precisely cut consistent shapes. What is more, I have used 'piping' technique during macaroons baking! These skills are essential and seek to be appreciated because they are exact to those reported by (Foskett, Paskins and Rippington, 2019), expected to have high levels of culinary knowledge. What is surprising is that staying consistent was found to be my biggest struggle. Therefore, I have researched the iconic gallery of (Pastry Academy, 2023) and a unique expert in this field (Guichon, 2023), to find out how product consistency influences the presentation, and the results fascinated me. The evidence presented on both of the sources educated that repeatable results provide superior quality and an outstanding presentation. Therefore, I marked this field as my area of improvement.

Continuing, the most valuable feature that I have learnt was the science behind baking and knowing how to work with ingredients to create unique and peerless flavours. I have achieved that through precise measuring and weighing, identifying product characteristics and careful following of the recipes. This was an imperative element of my training because according to research, 88% of customers state, taste is a primary factor in their purchasing decisions. (International Taste Institute, 2023). This was an advantageous finding because it showed weather sense of flavour is important for customers and if it should be my key focus and key criteria going forward. However, the research only measured taste as the main component leading me to believe that there may be other factors influencing customer purchase decisions. This finding could me more interesting if it had included other significant influences in order to accelerate my understanding about customer buying decisions. (Jadhav and Chavan, 2019) study, however, has found these major elements and supports my thinking. For instance, it has exposed that customer purchase decisions are influenced by the presentation, which also advocate with the Pastry Academy ideology reviewed above.

Therefore, in the next element of this reflective portfolio I will reflect on the development of plating skills that I have learned to ensure the excellent presentation standards. Furthermore, I will discuss my experiences and skills learned in preparation of dishes. The (Institut Disciples Escoffier, 2023) supports the view that food plating has been elevating the dining experience and that it intrigues guests by creating a visual appetency. A broadly similar point has also been made many years ago by the old adage, ascribed to Roman gourmand Apicius who writes that "We eat first with our eyes" (Apicius, 1936). These findings are useful for my education because both maintain consistency in describing

that physical appearance of food influences perception and expectations. In that vein, exploring the art of food plating was undoubtedly essential experience in order to delve into how to create the visual stimulants in gastronomy. Firstly, I have learned that food plating is like an empty canvas, and every element is vital to consider. For example, proportion, contrast or colour. Also, balance and harmony. This is a practical knowledge to collect because according to evidence from (Wada et al., 2010) and another research from (Zellner et al., 2011) the visual sphere of foods influence people's eating behaviours. Some of the most important food arrangements I learned include the rule of third, view plate as a clock, moist ingredients first or mix textures. Visual techniques practiced include, plate selection, odd quantities, colour diversity, adding height, garnishes and using sauce angular lines which gives the dishes movement in appearance. I have also acquired a knowledge of modern plating techniques, and these are, landscape plating, hide and seek, bathing and free form plating. Using these tactics during my kitchen duty, was fascinating and I never felt more task engaged and satisfied. I am happy to confess that apart from this experience being useful for my development, the techniques learned have the potential to improve the gastronomy sector. The reason for this particular circumstance is that as observed by (Hobday, Denbury and White, 2020) there are still significant plate arrangement issues in a gastronomic sector thesedays. This may indicate that more education must be implemented to improve the ethic of the art of plating.

Furthermore, the preparation of the menu items was fundamental in developing my culinary skills. For example, I have learned proficiency when I had to thinly carve one of the greatest Italian excellences: Prosciutto Leg. Also, by being involved in the cooking process of macaroons and variety of mousse cakes I learned how to apply the aeration and an egg folding technique. Lastly, I have also developed a stove control skill and speed whilst custard making and learned a thickening by heat method. This was a fantastic first-hand kitchen experience that allowed me to further enhance my knowledge and skill in culinary science as well as find knowledge deficiencies.

Despite the positive elements of my kitchen experience one of the main challenges, I have faced was time pressure during food preparation and presentation accuracy when servings dishes. I overcome these limits by taking a responsibility for my physical workstation and practicing mise en place technique to develop deep concentration and mindfulness. My resolution is well supported because according to (Fisher and Louw, 2020) mise en place "signifies a much higher cognitive process of thinking". What is more, I have created photograph references in order to establish required plating standards. I have also monitored my presentation accuracy during kitchen service and seek for constructive feedback from chef, to identify areas for improvement. These challenges taught me that every day gives new opportunities to learn and establish new solutions in order to grow. This has also helped me grow as a chef because it boosted my resilience, shaped charisma and strengthen a passion for the industry, which is an asset because according to (Roberts et al., 2016) working as a chef can be emotionally laden and complex.

Familiarizing myself with kitchen and broadening my horizons in culinary skills has been an extraordinary experience. I am so grateful for this experience, which has allowed me to find my purpose and narrow down my career choices. I am confident enough to say that I have a great passion to be a business owner with a clear vision and strong ability to create an efficient, customer focused business with the high potential of market prestige and recognition. Therefore, I will closely work with the placement providers to discover business opening ethics and further management secrets. Nevertheless, observing and experiencing the functioning of the kitchen has been useful for my future career aspirations because now I feel more conscious about factors affecting successful kitchen performance and I have the abilities to effectively address them.

My experience with developing culinary skills has been a journey of self-discovery and growth. I have observed that by undertaking a variety of tasks within the sections of the kitchen and not being afraid of failure my culinary skills greatly developed and my knowledge has sharpened. I have also learned that challenges provide opportunities and are a source of growth. By bravely facing them I developed confidence, assertiveness, and intelligence to prioritise tasks and problem-solve. I will apply these skills in my future career to effectively supervise my business and to successfully motivate and collaborate with my personnel.

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