

Does the required skill set of a Food & Beverage employee change, based on the type of business and the type of service that is offered?

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In reflection on my experiences in the food & beverage industry, I have gained lots of valuable experiences in my life because I have worked in different kinds of restaurants as a waitress and a cashier. I worked in Ivy restaurant and I was a cashier in McDonald's a few years ago in London. Ivy is a full service, exclusive, unique restaurant, however, McDonald's is a limited service restaurant. Based on my personal experiences, I suppose that the required skill set of a Food & Beverage employee- specifically in the chef's job role can differ from each other based on the type of business and service.

While I was working in McDonald's, I noticed some required skills for a limited service restaurant. The most significant issues arising from these experiences were teamwork, communication, problem-solving, managing a team, customer service, multitasking, working under pressure, leadership, planning and organising. All of them are necessary if someone works in a fast food restaurant. My tasks included customer service, communication with customers. Comparing Ivy restaurant, subsequently, I realised similar skills, teamwork, communication, problem-solving, multitasking and working under pressure. As a waitress, I was responsible for table service, at that time I noticed the differences between the two business types. I had to solve more problems at both places, for example once I dropped a cup of coffee and it broke, the customer got angry at me and started to shout. I needed to solve the situation immediately. As a compensation, I offered her another free cup of coffee.

I feel this situation arose because I did not pay attention well and I was clumsy. If an employee does not have these required skills, I think it is impossible to do the task properly. For me, the most significant skills, which I highlight, are communication and problem-solving.

According to the Career Guide (2023), a full service restaurant requires a chef to be in charge of controlling and managing inventory, buying ingredients and cooking supplies, controlling the kitchen budget, dealing with the staff, menu, and keeping up safe and hygienic kitchen procedures. It is required that a full service chef have business skills including accounting skills in order to be able to manage the labour and food costs (Doyle, 2022). I highlight the importance of communication because a chef must instruct, encourage the staff based on a good relationship. Furthermore,

he or she must create changeable, interesting recipes so that the dishes can be enjoyable and tasty (Doyle, 2022). Regarding the working hour, long work shifts are common, therefore, a chef must be able to work for many hours without any break. On the other hand, another important characteristic is paying attention to details like quality, portion, etc. (Doyle, 2022). In the Ivy restaurant, it is an essential requirement that a chef can be talented, experienced, and willing to learn (Harry, no date).

Comparing McDonald's to Ivy, in McDonald's the cook must be able to work fast, but efficiently and it is important to possess interpersonal skills because of interaction with clients. The cook is responsible for preparing food, cleaning the equipment, working with POS systems and cash registers, dealing with food and drink deliveries and restocking them (Climb the ladder, 2022). The difference between McDonald's and Ivy is that the fast food restaurant's chef has to follow the recipe based on uniformity, there is no free choice what to cook. Based on the company's standard, the recipe is distributed in all McDonald's restaurants (Job description and resume examples, 2023). In McDonald's, the cook's task also includes cleaning tables, and toilets, and serving customers (Lead Lake, 2023). It is said that patience and kind, polite behaviour are necessary in both cases (Zippia, 2022). Similarities can be seen between them, fast food cooks and ordinary restaurant chefs also do multiple activities at once, like preparing multiple orders, they must follow the safety standards, must be able to work in a team, have good verbal and non-verbal communication skills, work under pressure and during holidays as well (Shrm, 2023).

To sum up, I think it can be said that the job of a fast food employee is more stressful than a full service restaurant chef because a limited service cook must work faster, deal with cleaning and clients as well. In my opinion, the similarities are that both kinds of chefs must have the ability to work well under pressure, solve problems, communicate, work in a team and multitask. This experience has highlighted that I need to develop my skills in order to gain a higher and better-paid position if I want to work in this field more efficiently.

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