

8

The service of food and beverages

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Food and beverage service, in any hospitality establishment, is the essential link between the menu, those preparing the food and drinks, and the customer. All service staff have an essential customer service role to fulfil because they communicate and interact directly with the customers. They are required to perform several roles, usually all at the same time, from providing accurate information, answering questions and selling products to dealing with comments and concerns, and complaint handling.

The transferable skills, knowledge and qualifications gained by food service staff can be used between different establishments and sectors of the industry, and throughout the world.

The customers' expectations and the style of service provided will depend on several factors: their requirements, the amount they wish to spend, the location and the type of establishment. For example, for people with high expectations visiting a quality restaurant, the service would be attentive, personal and skilled, while in a fast-food restaurant the emphasis would be on efficiency and speed of service. (See Chapter 4 for more information on menu planning.)

For any food and beverage operation, how the food and beverage service is designed, planned, undertaken and controlled will depend on factors including:

- the type and style of the operation
- the nature of the customers – are they resident, booked/non-booked or 'captive', such as in an aircraft?
- prices to be charged
- production processes in place
- volume of custom
- volume of throughput
- space available
- availability of skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled staff
- hours of operation
- booking requirements
- types of payment accepted
- legal requirements.

Food and beverage service is not just a system of delivering food and drinks to customers. If this were the case the requirements of the operation itself would determine how the service was designed, planned and controlled. In order to be successful, the customer has to be central to the process and an active participant within it. Food and beverage services actually consist of two separate systems operating at the same time:

- 1 the service sequence, which is concerned with the delivery of the food and beverages to the customer
- 2 the customer process, which is concerned with the whole customer experience.

The service sequence

The service sequence is the essential link between the food production system, beverage provision and the customer experience. The service sequence typically consists of:

- preparation of service areas
- meeting and greeting
- presenting the menu, and taking food and beverage orders
- the service of food and beverages
- billing
- clearing

- dishwashing
- clearing following service.

Preparation for service

Within the service areas, tasks and duties that need to be carried out in order to ensure preparedness for the expected volume of business include:

- taking and checking all bookings received from a variety of sources

- checking and ensuring the cleanliness and suitability of glassware, crockery, flatware and
- cutlery used for service
- dealing with linen and disposable items
- housekeeping duties
- arranging and laying up the service areas
- checking deliveries
- stocking hotplates, workstations and display buffets
- setting up bar and lounge areas
- briefing staff to ensure that they have adequate knowledge of the product and the service requirements, as well as the day's bookings and business.

Meeting and greeting

The meeting and greeting of all customers is one of the most important parts of the food and beverage service role – it creates the first impression of the server and the venue to the customer that good customer care will be provided, reflecting well on the business.

Important information can be gained at this point, such as seating preferences and any allergy or dietary advice that is needed.

Presenting the menu and taking orders

Taking food and beverage orders from customers requires time and care. It may involve detailed explanations of the menu, allergen advice, dish or wine recommendations, and more.

The order-taking process provides information to the food production or bar areas and provides essential information for billing.

Whatever system is used, whether manual or electronic, it will be based on one of the following basic methods.

- **Duplicate:** order taken, copied to supply point and second copy retained by server for service and billing.
- **Triplicate:** order taken, copied to supply point and cashier for billing, third copy retained by server.
- **Service with order:** order taken and service provided at one point – for example, in a bar or takeaway establishment.
- **Electronic, with either a hand-held or desktop device:** the hand-held version will send the order direct to kitchen areas, bars and electronic billing systems; with a desktop device, the server writes the order manually then transfers it to the device, which then informs the necessary areas.
- **Self-order from another area:** customers order their food and drinks away from the food service area – for example, room service in a hotel, or pre-ordering a meal by telephone or email.
- **Self-order:** the customer can self-order on a specific electronic device, e.g. on a tablet on the table or via a bespoke app on their smartphone, which can send orders direct to the kitchen, or by ticking boxes on an order sheet – these choices are then entered electronically by a server. This system removes a complete layer of service; it is used in many sectors of

the industry, particularly fast-food establishments and pubs. Service staff still collect and serve the food or the food could be delivered to a central point, with the customer being informed on the ordering device or by staff that the food is ready for them to collect.

While taking orders there are opportunities for personal selling by service staff. Personal selling or upselling refers to the ability of staff to contribute to the promotion of sales. Upselling is especially important where there are specific promotions, special offers or new items on the menu. This technique of selling is about informing customers as to what is available, rather than pushing them in order to sell more, so service staff need to be trained in selling techniques to make this helpful rather than 'pushy'. They must also be fully informed about special promotions, new dishes, and so on, in order to confidently be able to pass on this information to customers.



Figure 8.1 Service staff taking an order with an electronic device

Technology and electronic devices

The introduction of technology and electronic devices for ordering has made a huge difference to food service operations across all types of establishment.

- The food service teams can monitor on screens the exact status of the area – for example, which tables are in use and the stages of their service.
- Food and drinks can be ordered electronically from hotel rooms, or remotely, with this being linked to guests' bills.
- Orders may be taken directly or transferred to electronic devices (as noted above). These orders can be placed with the kitchen instantly, which is much more efficient than using paper, and can also be linked to billing, automatically making additions such as service charge.
- Menus can be displayed on electronic screens or individual customer tablets. Ordering can be done directly by the customer to the kitchen or bar, or may go through a front-of-house server first. Some restaurants have a system where menus are projected on to table tops and often using a QR code so menus and relevant information can be uploaded onto the customer's mobile phone, reducing the need to handle menus, and offering real-time information on ingredients and availability, as well as service times, etc. These can also be linked to loyalty schemes attracting points and discounts for using

the apps, and allowing restaurants to inform users of special offers and promotions to drive future business.

Experts predict that by 2024, 79 per cent of restaurants in the USA alone will be spending more on “off-premise” offerings i.e. they’d be spending more in setting up efficient systems for deliveries, drive-throughs, and takeaways. This is because operators have seen how the demand for off-premises dining has grown exponentially in the last year, which now accounts for 70 per cent of the total restaurant business, according to industry reports. In 2021 and beyond, if you really want to keep your kitchen running, and profitably, you must have a strong online presence – particularly a website and a mobile app that enables customers to place orders at convenience.

Source: Mishra, S. (2019, updated 2021) ‘Top 10 online ordering systems for restaurants to look out for in 2020’, <https://fabled.medium.com/top-10-online-ordering-systems-for-restaurants-to-look-out-for-in-2020-7ea75dbfc6d9>

During the pandemic-related lockdowns in 2020/2021, restaurants were only allowed to serve takeaways, so consumption was entirely off-premises.

The service of food and beverage

The various methods for serving food and beverage are outlined below. The choice of service method will depend on the style of the venue and the customer service specification (see below), as well as on the capability of staff, the capacity of the operation and the equipment available.

Differing service methods affect the speed of service and the time the customer takes to consume the meal, which in turn affects the seat turnover of tables. Generally it would be expected that more time would be allowed in fine dining venues where throughput is not expected to be high but standards of service are paramount; conversely fast food, or fast casual dining, is just that – faster service and a higher, if at all, seat turnover to create volume of sales.

Good food and beverage service is achieved where management continually review, reinforce and support service staff in the maintenance of good standards at all levels. Good service also depends on teamwork, not only among the service staff, but between staff in all connected areas.

Billing

The various billing methods found in food service operations are as follows.

- Order used for billing: second copy of the order used as a bill.
- Separate bill: bill made up from the duplicate order and presented to customer.
- Bill with order: service staff take order and bill at the same time, as with takeaway orders.
- Prepaid: customer purchases ticket, voucher or card in advance, for a specific meal or specific value, or has paid through an app, online or by phone using a credit card.
- Voucher: customer has credit issued by a third party, such as a voucher for a specific meal or value.

Prepayment deals booked online are increasingly popular.

- No charge: customer not paying – for example, if an employer provides a free-of-charge staff restaurant.
- Deferred: this could be function catering, where the bill is paid by an organiser, or a corporate event, where billing takes place after the event and the food is included in the package.

The choice of billing method will depend on the type and style of the operation. Electronic, cashless payment has become the most popular method, especially from smartphones, especially where no hand contact methods can be used, but there is still a significant place for cash sales. Whichever method is used for payment, billing will always be part of a longer process linked to the order-taking method and the revenue-control procedures for the venue.

Clearing

Clearing needs as much thought, attention and planning as every other part of the food service process. Efficient clearing allows for the smooth running of the restaurant as well as maintaining its appearance, tidiness and hygiene. The main clearing methods are as follows.

- **Manual:** dirty crockery, cutlery and glasses are collected by waiting staff, taken to the dishwash area, or loaded on to trolleys for transportation to the appropriate dishwash area.
- **Semi-self-clear:** dirty crockery, cutlery and glasses placed by customers on conveniently placed trolleys or stands for removal by staff.
- **Self-clear:** used trays, dirty crockery, cutlery and glasses placed by customers on to a conveyor belt system for mechanical transportation to dishwash area.
- **Self-clear and load:** dirty crockery, cutlery and glasses placed into conveyerised dishwash baskets by customers. These are transported automatically through the appropriate dishwashing machine.

Fast-food restaurants and high-street coffee shops have become increasingly reliant on disposable food service items that are cleared into waste areas by the customer. This heavy use of disposable items is increasingly under review because of concerns about large quantities of waste being generated, especially the use of single-use plastics and their impact on the environment.

The choice of clearing method will depend not only on the type and standard of the operation but also on the volume of demand being met.

Dishwashing

The capacity of the dishwashing system should always be greater than the operational maximum required, to allow for efficiency in the busiest periods. Slow and inefficient dishwashing increases the amount of equipment required to be in use at a particular time and therefore the storage space required for it. Service may also be slowed down waiting for clean items to be ready for use, actually becoming more costly to the business.

The main dishwashing systems are as follows.

- **Manual:** physical washing by hand or brush machine. This is slower than machine methods and usually less hygienic because lower water temperatures may be used, and drying cloths may be used for reasons of speed (this should be discouraged for food safety reasons – see Chapter 14 for more information).
- **Semi-automatic:** manual loading by operators into a free-standing dishwashing machine. Detergent is added in liquid, tablet or powder form.
- **Automatic conveyor:** items are often pre-rinsed using a hand-held spray, then manually loaded into baskets on a conveyor for automatic transportation through the dishwashing machine.
- **Flight conveyor:** similar to an automatic conveyor, but items are loaded vertically on to pegs on a conveyor.
- **Deferred wash:** this occurs when there are no immediate dishwashing facilities on-site, such as at an outside event. For reasons of hygiene and to avoid attracting pests, debris should be scraped from plates and they should be neatly stacked, preferably in a container with a lid.

The volume that can be accommodated, and the efficiency of the dishwashing process, increases from the manual method to the flight conveyor, and the choice will depend largely on the scale of the operation. It is often necessary to employ a combination of methods, especially where there is more than one food service area or satellite areas.

For best practice with dishwashing, the recognised requirements are a good supply of hot water at a temperature of 52–60°C for general cleansing, followed by a sterilising rinse at a temperature of 82°C for at least one minute. Alternatively, low-temperature equipment is available that disinfects using specific chemicals.

For more information on dishwashing machines, see Chapter 2.

Clearing following service

Throughout service periods clearing will take place, but there are additional tasks that need to be completed at the end of service to prepare for the next service. The efficient management of the clearing stage can have an immediate impact on the potential reuse of an area.

Cleaning programmes require planned management. To ensure that all cleaning activities are coordinated and carried out, detailed cleaning schedules need to be developed to cause the least disruption to business. Planned cleaning tasks may be completed on a daily, weekly or monthly basis – for some items, over longer periods; for example, a chandelier may be cleaned once a year. Alongside these cleaning schedules, it is necessary to incorporate maintenance checks for all equipment.

Maintenance checks, together with regular cleaning, can help to ensure that equipment and facilities are always

available and in working order, and these regular checks are likely to prolong their usable life.



Figure 8.2 Self-service salad bar



Figure 8.3 Signs used on a salad bar



Figure 8.4 Fine dining

Service methods and the customer process

(This section has been adapted from Food and Beverage Service, Cousins and Weekes, 2020)

Many different service methods are found in the hospitality industry. These fall into the five customer process groups identified in Table 8.1 and described in more detail below.

The 'customer process' is the process of fulfilling the customer's requirements and striving to exceed their

expectations. If food and beverage service were to be viewed only as a delivery process, then the systems and procedures of an establishment would be designed and viewed only from the delivery perspective. However, for a food and beverage operation to work well, the customer must be seen as central to the whole process.

Table 8.1 Simple categorisation of the customer processes in food and beverage service

Service method	Service area	Ordering/selection	Service	Dining/consumption	Clearing	Customer processes
Table service	Customer enters and is seated	From offered menu	By staff to customer	At laid table/cover	By staff	1 Waiter service 2 Bar/counter service
Assisted service	Customer enters and is usually seated	From menu, buffet, service trolleys or passed trays	Combination of both staff and customer	Usually at laid table/cover	By staff	3 Assisted
Self-service	Customer enters	Customer selects items on to a tray	Customer carries	Dining area or takeaway	Various	4 Cafeteria service
Single-point service	Customer enters	Orders at single point	Customer carries	Dining area or takeaway	By staff or customer clearing to central points	5 Consume on premises 6 Takeaway 7 Vending 8 Kiosks 9 Food court 10 Bar
Specialised or in situ service	Where the customer is located	From menu or predetermined	Brought to the customer	Served where the customer is located	By staff or customer clearing	11 Tray service 12 Trolley 13 Home delivery 14 Lounge service 15 Room service 16 Drive-in

The customer processes mentioned in Table 8.1 are defined as follows.

1 Waiter service

- (a) Silver/English service: presentation and service of food on to a customer's plate by waiting staff from a food flat or dish.
- (b) Family service: main courses such as fish or meat are plated. Vegetables are placed in multi-portion dishes on tables for customers to serve themselves. Any sauces are offered separately.
- (c) Plated/American service: food is pre-plated by chefs in the kitchen.
- (d) Butler/French service: food on a food flat or dish is offered individually to each guest. Using the serving spoon/fork the guests serve themselves. Sauces and accompaniments may be offered separately.
- (e) Russian service: table laid with food for customers/guests to help themselves.

- (f) Guéridon service: food served on to a customer's plate from a side table or a trolley at the customer's table. May include the preparation of salads, carving, simple cooking and flambé dishes.

2 Bar/counter service: service to customers seated at a bar counter.

3 Assisted service

- (a) Some parts of the meal are served to seated customers; the customers collect other parts. Used for breakfast and carvery service.
- (b) Customers are assisted to select food and drink from displays, buffet tables or passed trays; the meal is eaten either at tables, standing or in lounge area.

4 Cafeteria service

- (a) Counter: customers collect their food choices from a service counter, at different points or even separate counters. The customer places the items on a tray, may collect cutlery, condiments, etc., and may proceed to a cashier desk to pay before going

to the seating area. Some establishments may use a 'carousel' – a revolving, stacked counter area that saves space. These are popular for plated desserts and salads.

- (b) Free flow: food selection occurs as in counter service. Customers move at will to various areas and service points, exiting via a payment point.
- (c) Echelon: the arrangement of counters within a large or busy free-flow area at angles to the flow of customers, to save space and speed up the flow.
- (d) Island service points – separate 'islands' with different food and beverage items within a free-flow area.

Note: call order – cooking individual items to order – may also feature in some self-service areas.

- 5 Consume on premises: this is the service of customers at a single point, where they consume food and drinks on the premises. Examples include ordering at a pub bar or ordering and collection at a service point in a fast-food restaurant.
- 6 Takeaway: customer orders are served from a single point, usually at a counter, service hatch or stand; the food is normally consumed off the premises, although some takeaway establishments provide limited seating. This category also includes drive-thrus, where the customer drives a vehicle past order, payment and collection points.
- 7 Vending: automatic retailing of food and beverage products from a specialist machine, usually coin or card operated.
- 8 Kiosks: service provided in outstations during peak demand in specific locations, such as at festivals or sport events.
- 9 Food court: a group of autonomous counters where customers may either order and eat in a central eating area or buy and take away. These are extremely popular in places such as shopping centres and airports
- 10 Bar: a selling point for the consumption of alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks in licensed premises or with special licences at events.
- 11 Tray service: service of a meal or part of a meal on a tray to the customer in situ, such as in hospitals or in an aircraft.
- 12 Trolley: service of food and beverage from a trolley to customers not in dining areas – for instance, at their seats on aircraft or trains, and at their desks in offices.
- 13 Home delivery: food and beverage delivered to a customer's location, such as pizza delivery to a home or sandwiches to offices.
- 14 Lounge service: service of food and beverages in a lounge or garden area – for example, afternoon tea in a hotel lounge.
- 15 Room service: service of food and beverages in hotel guest rooms or in meeting rooms. There is often a more limited menu than in the restaurants, but the service is popular for early-morning beverage trays, and for late-night food and drinks. Smaller establishments provide a limited service along with in-room mini bars, and tea and coffee facilities.
- 16 Drive-in: customers are served food and beverages to their vehicles.

Other customer processes and related terms include those described below.

- **Event/function catering:** food and beverage operations that are providing service for a specific number of people at specific times in a variety of dining layouts. Service methods also vary, with plated service and silver service being the most popular. The term banquet/function catering therefore refers to the organisation of service rather than a specific service method.
- **In-room dining:** this has increased in popularity as part of the service provided in luxury hotels. It differs from room service in that a full menu and choice of wines are offered. These are then served within a guest's suite at a fully laid dining table or at a portable laid table brought to the suite. The service is completed by hotel butlers or by specific in-room dining waiters. This service offers fine dining along with privacy, which would not be available in an open restaurant. A similar service may be offered in some restaurants and hotels that offer private dining rooms.

Service of food when travelling

Food provision is done in a wide variety of ways for people using different modes of transport. The food service offer will vary greatly according to the types of food being served and the facilities available.

- **Aircraft:** provision varies from elaborate meal choices to snacks served from a trolley. Most airlines make provision for vegetarian and vegan customers, and for some special diets. These often need to be pre-ordered. It is especially important that accurate allergy advice is given even if this is done verbally as, once the aircraft is flying, providing assistance for a severe allergic reaction is very difficult or impossible.
 - Some budget airlines have a limited offer of sandwiches and other simple items that can be ordered and purchased from cabin crew.
 - Customers are charged for each item ordered, and the selection is usually limited and pre-packaged. The significant challenges are those of space and weight restrictions.
 - At the higher end of the market, menus will be presented by cabin crew, and food assembled or finished to order. Simple cooking may also be completed within the constraints of the facilities on the airliner. Some airlines wanting to capture the exclusive market now offer a small personal suite, a butler and a chef to produce dishes of their choice in a specific galley area. These services are charged for accordingly.
 - For most passengers, trays of food are prepared by specialist providers within the airport.
 - Cold items are kept in a chiller and hot items are reheated in specific ovens/trolleys in the aircraft before being distributed from a trolley by cabin crew.
 - Airports also have a wide variety of food and service provision, from snacks and fast food to high-end dining. There must be enough provision for passenger use in the case of delayed or cancelled flights.

- **Ships and ferries:** food service provision and style will vary depending on prices charged and customer expectations. Cruise ships will have a number of different restaurants and dining areas, with varying food and service styles to choose from. They will also have in-room/cabin service offers. Ferries and other ships may have facilities from cafés to fine dining. Fast-food outlets may also be seen on ferries and in ferry ports.
- **Trains:** these vary hugely in terms of types of food service offered. Generally, train restaurant cars offering waiter service have been replaced by either a trolley service or a self-service counter, but on luxury train services fine dining is part of the experience. Larger

stations offer a wide variety of coffee shops and fast-service restaurants, and even hotels. The provision is usually by recognisable high-street/franchise names.

- **Motorway service areas:** rather than one large food and drinks service area these now tend to be different and smaller franchised outlets that are almost always self-service with payment at the point of sale. They are supported by shops selling food and drinks. In the busier motorway service areas, small franchised food and drinks kiosks may be available in the parking areas.

For more on different food outlets in a variety of places, please see Chapter 1.

Roles in food and beverage service

Although the types of establishment and the skills required from staff will vary greatly, there are some key elements that are required from all staff serving food and beverages:

- sound knowledge of the menu and products they are offering, including accurate allergy information
- competence in the relevant food and beverage service skills
- good communication and social skills
- the ability to work effectively as part of a team.

Over time there have been many changes in food and beverage service; a more modern approach has been to have less emphasis on high-level technical skills, but this applies in only some sectors, and the key requirements remain for all staff. However, the emphasis on each technical skill varies according to the type of establishment and the service methods being used.



Figure 8.5 Working in food service

Food and beverage service has never been just about delivering food from the point where it is cooked to the customer. The service staff play an important role in providing the overall customer experience; as well as

product/menu knowledge and service skills, time must also be invested in delivering customer care. Well-trained food and beverage staff, with the required experience, should be able to predict the individual needs of customers and read their body language.

Customers respond well to individual attention and being given a personalised service. With time customers may not remember everything about a meal they had, but they do tend to remember exceptional service and the person who provided it; equally, they will remember bad service and this will be shared more often than their experience of good service.

Traditionally there were a number of specific food service roles, each with its own finite tasks depending on the menu, levels of service required, and the employee's past experience and skill levels. This is much less likely to be the case in the modern restaurant industry, except perhaps in the finest and most prestigious hotels and restaurants. Even then some of the traditional roles may be merged, with more of an expectation for staff to 'multitask'. For example, wine service may no longer involve a sommelier and wine will be served by a wine waiter or a general restaurant waiter. A head waiter or restaurant supervisor role may also include the duties of a reception head waiter. Under supervision, the apprentice or trainee may be given more responsibility than used to be the case, and a counter server may also assist in clearing tables. These changes are partly due to modern service styles, with a preference for simplicity, and are also due to considerations of the very high cost involved in providing the more traditional restaurant systems. Modern expectations are for a professional friendly service and excellent customer care without the necessity of a large, traditional restaurant team to provide this.

Much of fine restaurant service was traditionally based on French-style cuisine and as a result the roles often had French titles rarely seen now. The roles are outlined in Table 8.2.

Table 8.2 Traditional food service job roles

Food and beverage manager	● in large organisations, responsible for implementing or assisting in setting food and beverage policies ● ensures required profit margins are achieved for each area ● updates and compiles new wine lists according to availability, current trends and customer needs ● compiles menus, in liaison with senior chefs, for food service areas, events and banqueting ● purchases all materials and stock for food and beverage service areas ● ensures quality and standards are maintained ● with chefs, sets portion size and selling price ● plans staff training, sales promotions and maintenance ● employs staff and deals with staff issues ● attends regular section head meetings to ensure all areas are working effectively and efficiently
Restaurant manager (or supervisor)	● has overall responsibility for specific food and beverage service areas (this may include lounges, in-room dining, function suites, etc.) ● sets service standards, and is responsible for staff training and development ● manages staff rotas, holiday lists and individual working hours ● contributes to all operational matters to allow the service areas to run efficiently
Station head waiter or section supervisor	● has overall responsibility for a team of staff serving a section of the restaurant ● must have a good knowledge of food and wine, menus and wine lists, as well as required service methods ● provides some instruction and training to other staff
Station waiter (chef de rang)	● provides service to a set of tables ● will normally have less experience than the station head waiter The assistant station waiter (demi-chef de rang) assists the station waiter and is directed by him or her
Waiter or server (commis de rang)	● works on instruction from the more senior staff ● collects and carries food and other items into the restaurant (the waiter is often called a runner) ● lays tables and prepares the restaurant ● may serve vegetables or sauces, bread and accompanying items ● helps to clear the tables after each course and at the end of the meal
Trainee (commis, apprentice or débarrasseur)	● keeps the restaurant well stocked with equipment, and areas replenished with the relevant food during service ● serves items such as cheeses ● helps to fetch and carry ● carries out some cleaning and preparation before opening
Carver	Carving at the table is now rarely seen, but hot buffet tables where meat is carved for customers remain popular; completed by a trained carver and buffet carvery server (trancheur) , or chefs may come into the restaurant to complete carving
Lounge waiter	● serves morning coffee, afternoon teas, aperitifs, liqueurs and coffee before and after meals ● sets up the lounge, and maintains its cleanliness and presentation ● employed within larger hotels (in a smaller establishment, members of the food service staff take over these duties on a rota basis)
Sommelier	● a knowledgeable wine professional, working in restaurant areas specialising in wine service ● advises customers on wine to accompany specific foods ● develops wine lists along with a food and beverage manager ● may decide on stock of other drinks for the bars ● may supervise or manage wine waiters and bar staff, as well as providing training and staff development ● may also have other specialist knowledge, e.g. of cigars
Wine waiter	● works with the sommelier (where there is one) to the standards set ● presents the wine list and advises on wine choices ● serves wine correctly and replenishes wine throughout the meal ● needs a good knowledge of wines and of pairing wines with food ● may (along with the sommelier) manage the stock and cellars, order wine and ensure correct storage ● sells wine (wine sales are especially important to the profits of a hotel or restaurant)

Bar tenders and mixologists	Bar tenders: ● prepare and serve drinks, including wine, spirits, mixed drinks/cocktails and soft drinks ● need thorough knowledge of all alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks (including alcoholic content) offered within the establishment, and the ingredients for mixed drinks ● need to serve alcoholic drinks responsibly and know enough about licensing law to ensure legal compliance A mixologist is an employee who mixes and serves alcoholic or non-alcoholic beverages; this term is often used for people who prepare any mixed drinks, but usually cocktails; cocktails have significantly increased in popularity and those who are skilled in making them are in demand
Barista	● works in a bar or coffee bar serving hot and cold beverages, and occasionally alcoholic drinks ● although baristas complete other tasks, the term usually refers to a skilled coffee maker, especially in popular coffee shops
Counter server	● serves food at a counter or service table ● may be seen in hotel/restaurant buffets, fast-food restaurants, staff restaurants, serving school meals, at events, and more ● serves or portions food for customers ● may complete some cooking or finishing tasks
Cashier	● makes up bills from food and drink orders ● takes payments and records sales ● charges to a specific room number or, in a self-service area, charges customers for their food ● deals with cash, vouchers, credit or debit cards, and a range of non-cash options ● Note: some of these functions may now be completed electronically, e.g. ordering food and snacks from a minibar
Table clearer	● works in self-service/buffet service areas ● clears tables efficiently using trolleys specially designed for stacking crockery, glassware, cutlery and disposable items

Functions, events and banqueting

Food and beverages may be served by permanent, casual or agency staff. An events company may manage and staff the whole event in the client's premises. Where banqueting and events are managed in-house, staff will

usually include a banqueting and conferencing manager, assistant managers, and a food and beverage service team including bar staff. Depending on the size and type of event, a number of casual staff may be engaged as required on a casual basis.



Figure 8.6 Presenting wine



Figure 8.7 Hotel bar

Provision of drinks

The drinks offered by any establishment will depend on its type and its clientele. For example:

- A fine dining restaurant will need a good wine list to enhance and complement its food offer; it will also need a good selection of quality soft drinks and bottled water, aperitifs, spirits, beers, and possibly ingredients for mixed drinks and cocktails.
- A family restaurant may include more soft drinks that appeal to both adults and children, and a range of more budget wines and beers.
- A city-centre bar would have a range of wines to sell by the bottle or glass, spirits, beers, ciders, and ready-mixed or ingredients to produce cocktails.
- A fast-food restaurant would have a good range of soft drinks with perhaps a few types of wine or even individual bottles of wine (25 cl), and one or two beers if there was sufficient demand.

Alcoholic drinks

Alcoholic beverages account for a significant part of the overall offer and revenue in a wide range of venues. Wines may enhance menus, and bar areas can bring in their own custom and revenue. Alcoholic drinks may also be provided for purchase in hotel rooms, in lounges, and as part of banqueting or in-room dining.

An alcoholic beverage is a drink containing ethanol (a type of alcohol). To produce an alcoholic drink, a liquid (water) along with grains, fruits or vegetables may have sugar and yeast added (if these are not present in sufficient quantities naturally), and they will then go through a process called fermentation. Fermentation produces ethanol and carbon dioxide. For more on different types of alcoholic drinks, see Chapter 6.

Alcoholic drinks are a detailed and complex subject, and those working in front-of-house hospitality areas are strongly advised to increase their own knowledge.

WEBLINKS

The Wine and Spirit Education Trust offers different courses in wines and spirits:

www.wsetglobal.com

Plumpton College Wine Research:

www.plumpton.ac.uk/courses/wine-division



The nature of alcohol and how it affects the body

Alcohol, when consumed, can alter the physical, mental and emotional state of the drinker; it is therefore classed as a drug.

Alcohol is absorbed into the blood and reaches all parts of the body. Most of the alcohol is absorbed rapidly into the

bloodstream, and nearly all the alcohol has to be burned up by the liver, while the rest is disposed of either in sweat or urine. A person becomes drunk when alcohol is consumed faster than the body can eliminate it, to a point where it affects the body.

The amount of alcohol in the bloodstream is measured by blood alcohol concentration (BAC). BAC varies according to a person's gender, weight, body composition and speed of drinking. BAC is measured in milligrams (mg) of alcohol in millilitres of blood, e.g. a BAC of 80 mg of alcohol in 100 ml of blood, or the equivalent in terms of micrograms in ml of breath (35 micrograms in 100 ml of breath). This can be measured using a breathalyser and is the level above which it is an offence to drive in England.

The amount of alcohol that gets into the bloodstream, and the speed with which it does, depends on the following factors.

- **Quantity:** how many drinks a person consumes and how strong the drinks are.
- **The size of a person:** the same amount of alcohol will produce a higher BAC in women than men.
- **Food eaten:** the presence of food in the stomach slows down the rate at which alcohol enters the bloodstream.

Usually about 20 minutes after the last drink, BAC starts to fall. As a rough guide, it takes about one hour to remove one unit of alcohol from the body.

The strength of an intoxicating drink depends on how much alcohol it contains. The amount of alcohol contained is expressed as percentage of alcohol by volume (ABV). The formula for expressing ABV on labels is 'alc % vol' or '% vol'. So if a fortified wine, such as sherry or vermouth, is labelled as 'alc 8% vol' this means that 8 per cent of any given quantity is pure alcohol. For the purpose of UK licensing law, where the alcohol by volume (ABV) is more than 0.05 per cent, the drink is classed as alcoholic.

- Most spirits are around 40 per cent ABV.
- Wines vary from 8 to 16 per cent ABV.
- Beers range from 3 to 9 per cent ABV; ciders range from 3 to 8.5 per cent ABV.

To be classified as alcohol-free, a drink must contain no more than 0.05 per cent ABV; to be classified as low alcohol, more than 0.05 per cent but no more than 1.2 per cent ABV. Both must be labelled accordingly.

Units of alcohol

A single unit of alcohol = 8 grams (g) or 10 millilitres (ml) of pure alcohol. Any quantity of drink that contains 8 g or 10 ml of alcohol is said to contain one unit. Each of the following drinks, for example, contains about 8 g of alcohol, and is therefore one unit:

- half a pint of 3.6 per cent ABV beer
- one 25 ml measure of 40 per cent ABV whisky.

Recommended safe limits of alcohol

Excessive drinking can be harmful to health; therefore everyone is advised to consume alcohol in moderation.

In 2016, at the request of the UK Chief Medical Officers, experts evaluated evidence from all over the world about the health implications for consumers and the life expectancy effects of alcohol. For the first time, the consumption of both men and women was considered together, rather than separately. Recommendations were made under three headings, as follows.

- 1 A weekly guideline on regular drinking:** men and women should drink no more than two to three units a day (e.g. a pint of beer of 3.6–5.2 per cent or a 175 ml glass of wine of 12 per cent ABV) and no more than 14 units per week. People are also recommended to spread their consumption over more than one day and have one or two alcohol-free days a week to enable the liver to recover.
- 2 Advice on single episodes of drinking:** (also referred to as 'binge drinking') this advises on consumption of alcohol on a single occasion, recommends limiting the amount, and provides strategies such as alternating alcoholic drinks with water, consuming alcoholic drinks with food, and remaining safe when drinking alcohol.
- 3 A guideline on pregnancy and drinking:** the guideline is to not consume any alcohol when planning for pregnancy or pregnant, to avoid the risk of a range of conditions referred to as foetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASDs).

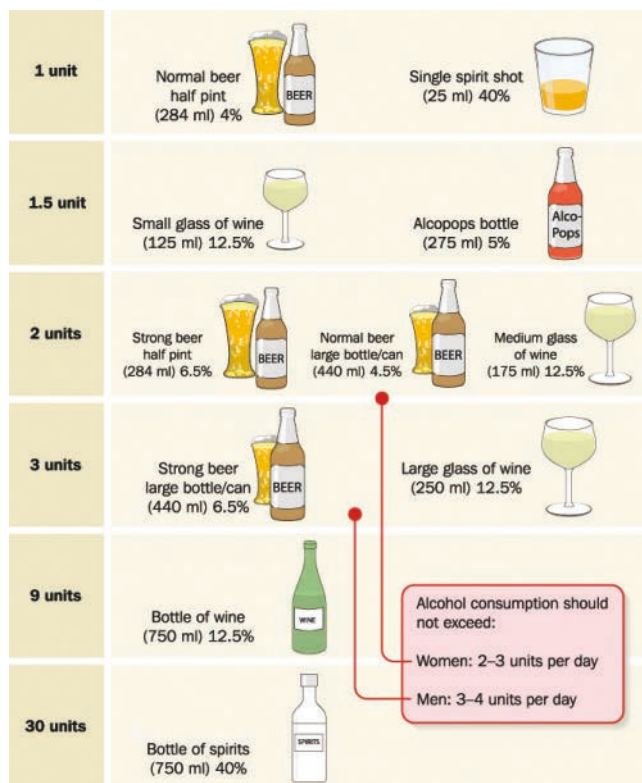


Figure 8.8 Units of alcohol in different drinks

Soft drinks and water

A good range of soft drinks should be provided. People may choose soft drinks:

- because they prefer not to drink alcohol
- because they are under 18
- because they have been refused alcohol
- because they are going to be driving or operating machinery
- for health reasons
- for religious or cultural reasons.

Having a good and interesting selection of soft drinks available will be beneficial for overall sales.

When bottled water is offered to customers, the only equipment required will be the necessary refrigerated storage space. Increasingly, however, customers are requesting 'tap water' to drink. This isn't usually about the cost of bottled water but more about environmental considerations of packaging and shipping water long distances. Tap water should be served well and given the same service considerations as bottled water. Some restaurants now automatically place a bottle or carafe of tap water on the table, sometimes with an explanation card. If the customer prefers not to have the water it can be taken away. Environmental sensitivity has made it common to ask customers if they require water to be served. This step can also reduce dishwashing and glassware requirements. If water is desired, a source of ice and clean, clear water is needed in the main (table) service area and/or remote waiter stations located closer to the customer/tables.

Many restaurants now have the facility to carbonate water and a charge is usually made for this.

Licensing

In England and Wales the sale of alcoholic drinks is subject to the Licensing Act (2003). Other areas and regions may have different regulations. Businesses, organisations, and individuals who want to sell or supply alcohol in England and Wales must have a licence or other authorisation from a licensing authority, usually based within a local council/authority.

The licensing requirements outline four key objectives:

- 1** the prevention of crime and disorder
- 2** public safety
- 3** the prevention of public nuisance
- 4** the protection of children from harm.

The usual requirements of the Act are:

- the display of a summary of the premise's licence, including the days and times of opening, the name of the registered licence holder, the licence number, and a valid date
- drinks price lists to be displayed
- restrictions on under-aged persons (under the age of 18) being served alcohol and employed to serve alcohol
- the need for an authorised person (or the personal licence holder) to be on site at all times.

A personal licence is required by anyone authorising the sale of alcohol from a licensed premises. All licensed premises must have an allocated personal licence holder,

known as the Designated Premises Supervisor (DPS). The DPS must authorise every sale of alcohol.

Temporary Event Notice

Sometimes alcohol is served away from the usual licensed premises at special events and functions. An authorisation – Temporary Event Notice (TEN) – would need to be applied for from the local authority and the personal licence holder must be present at all times.

The event must:

- have no more than 499 people at all times, including staff running the event
- last no more than 168 hours (seven days).

You must be at least 18 to apply for a TEN.

- A TEN is needed for each event on the same premises.
- Personal licence holders can submit a maximum of 50 TENs per year, ten of which can be late TENs (a late application).
- Anyone over the age of 18 can submit a maximum of five TENs per calendar year, two of which can be late TENs (a late application).
- A single premises can have up to 15 TENs applied for in one year, as long as the total length of the events is not more than 21 days.
- If organising separate but consecutive events, there must be at least a 24-hour gap between them.
- Contact your council to apply for a TEN. You must do this at least ten working days before your event.
- You can apply for a TEN only as an individual, not an organisation.

Temporary Event Notices can be used for small-scale or one-off events. You will probably need to submit a TEN if you are planning an event where there will be:

- entertainment
- alcohol for sale
- hot food or drink for sale (between 11 pm and 5 am).

A TEN can be used instead of a premises licence for events involving the following licensable activities:

- plays or films
- indoor sporting events, boxing, wrestling
- live/recorded music
- performance of dance
- sale/supply of alcohol
- provision of late-night refreshment (hot food and drink between 11 pm and 5 am).

It can also be used to authorise an event outside of the terms of an existing premises licence. Alternatively, it can be used to provide authority for an event where there is no existing premises licence.

Among other things, a TEN must also provide details of the following:

- the licensable activities
- the location of the event and how long it will last
- the times when licensable activities will take place
- the maximum number of people to be allowed on the premises at any one time.

Other licences

Other types of licence may include licences for music (live or pre-recorded), dancing, gambling, theatrical performance and television display. In all cases the supervisor and the staff must be aware of the provisions and limitations of existing licences to ensure compliance.

Alcohol sales and young people

There is a responsibility placed on those selling alcohol not to sell it to those under the age of 18. Many venues in the UK operate Challenge 21 or Challenge 25; this may be part of the venue's operating schedule and requires servers to check the customer's proof of age if they suspect them to be under 21 or 25 years of age. It is advisable to ask for ID as proof of age. If no ID can be provided, refusal is the best option.

Challenge 25 is a scheme that encourages anyone who is over 18 but looks under 25 to carry acceptable ID when they want to buy alcohol. Challenge 25 builds on the Challenge 21 campaign introduced by the British Beer and Pub Association in 2005, which represents the beer and pub sector. It is now run by the Retail of Alcohol Standards Group, which represents alcohol retailers.

Acceptable forms of ID include:

- a photo driving licence
- a passport
- a proof of age card, such as the PASS card from the National Proof of Age Standards Scheme; the PASS card has a unique hologram that is trademark registered, which means that it is a criminal offence to manufacture cards with a similar hologram.



Figure 8.9 Challenge 25 notice

It is a criminal offence to use false or borrowed ID to gain entry to licensed premises or to buy alcohol. The maximum penalty is a £5,000 fine and up to ten years in prison.

It is illegal for someone else to buy an alcoholic drink for someone under 18. The only exception to this is that young people who are 16 or 17 years old and accompanied by an adult can consume – but not buy – beer, wine and cider on a licensed premises if it is consumed with a proper meal eaten at a table.

Refusal of alcohol

The sale of alcohol should be refused:

- to anyone under the age of 18 years
- to someone already intoxicated
- outside of permitted licensing hours (this may vary according to the establishment)
- where associated with rowdy or disruptive behaviour.

Individual establishments may have their own additional rules on the sale and non-service of alcohol.

WEBLINKS

Further information regarding licensing in the UK can be found by visiting:

www.gov.uk/guidance/alcohol-licensing

Wine and Spirits Trade Association:

www.wsta.co.uk/facts-figures

PASS cards:

www.pass-scheme.org.uk

Drinkaware:

www.drinkaware.co.uk/facts



UK legislation for sales of alcohol



Figure 8.10 Notice to show legal age verification policy, and legal weights and measures in the UK

In the UK, the measures of alcoholic drinks are controlled and monitored by the Trading Standards Authorities. Anyone selling alcoholic drinks must comply with legislation for measure sizes, as follows.

- **Spirits:** a whole bottle, or *either* measure sizes of 25 ml or 35 ml or multiples of these, but not both 25 ml and 35 ml.

- **Wine:** a whole bottle, or measure sizes of 125 ml, 175 ml or multiples of these.
- **Fortified wine:** a whole bottle, or measure sizes of 50 ml, 70 ml or multiples of these.
- **Beer (on draught):** pint, half pint, third/two-thirds of a pint (multiples of half a pint); where bottles and cans are also sold, these are considered to be a complete measure.

A sign *must* be displayed stating the measures used in a venue for gin, rum, vodka and whisky, as well as wine by the glass (figure 8.10).

Matching food to wine/drinks

Food and its accompanying wine/drink should harmonise well, with each enhancing the other's flavours, strength, and textures. However, the most successful combinations are those that appeal to the individual and provide what the customer wants.

When matching food and wine there are guidelines, but there will always be some exceptions.

Table 8.3 General guidelines for matching wine and food

Characteristic	Food considerations
Acidity	Can be used to match, or to contrast, acidity in foods – for example, crisp, dry wines to match lemon or tomato, or to cut through creamy flavours
Age/maturity	As some wine ages and develops it can become delicate, with complex and intricate flavours; more simple foods, such as grills or roasts, work better with older wines than stronger-tasting foods, which can overpower the wines
Oak (wine matured in oak barrels or sometimes flavoured using oak chips)	The more oaked the wine, the more robust and flavoursome the foods need to be; heavily oaked wines can overpower more delicate foods
Sweetness	The wine should be sweeter than the foods or it will taste flat or thin; sweet dishes need contrast for them to match well with sweeter wines – for example, acids in sweeter foods can harmonise with the sweetness in the wines; savoury foods with sweetness such as carrots or onions can match well with ripe fruity wines; blue cheeses can go well with sweet wines, also sweeter wines can go well with salty foods
Tannin	Tannic wines match well with red meats and semi-hard cheeses such as Cheddar; tannic wines are not good with egg dishes and wines with high tannin content do not work well with salty foods
Weight	Big, rich wines go well with robust (flavoursome) meat dishes, but can overpower lighter-flavoured foods

Source: Cousins and Weekes (2020)

There has been increasing demand for beers with food, either alongside or as an alternative to wines, especially in popular chain or budget restaurants and also in pubs. As with wines it is a question of trial and error to achieve harmony and match between particular beers and foods. Generally, considerations for the pairing of beers and foods are similar to those for matching wines with foods; in particular, take account of acidity, sweetness/dryness, bitterness, tannin, weight, and complexity of the taste. Cider has also increased in popularity and is often requested with food; similar considerations apply.

Making recommendations to customers

A few general points of advice are set out below for advising the customer on which drinks to choose to accompany a meal. However, customers should be given complete freedom in their selection of wines or other drinks.

Aperitifs are usually alcoholic beverages that are drunk before the meal. If wine will be consumed with the meal, then suggest that the aperitif should be a grape (wine based) rather than a grain (spirit based) aperitif, since the latter may spoil or dull the palate. Grape aperitifs are more common. Aperitifs are meant to stimulate the appetite and therefore should not be sweet: dry and medium-dry sherries, dry vermouths, and Sercial or Verdelho Madeira are all good examples.

- Starter courses are often best accompanied by a dry white or dry rosé wine.
- National dishes should normally be complemented by the national wines of that country – for example, Italian red wine with meat-based pasta dishes.
- Fish and shellfish dishes are often most suited to chilled dry white wines.
- Red meats such as beef and lamb blend and harmonise well with red wine.
- White meats such as veal and pork are acceptable with medium white or rosé wines.
- Game dishes require the heavier and more robust red wines to complement their full flavour.
- Sweets and desserts are served at the end of the meal, and here it is acceptable to offer well-chilled sweet white wines that may come from the Loire, Sauternes, Barsac or Hungary. These wines harmonise best with dishes containing fruit.
- The majority of cheeses blend well with port and other dry, robust red wines. Port is fortified wine traditionally served with Stilton cheese.
- Grain- and fruit-based spirits and liqueurs all harmonise well with coffee.

Serving wine

Some guidelines when selecting and serving wines are given below.

- Dry wines should be served before sweeter wines.
- White wines should usually be served before red wines.
- Lighter wines should be served before heavier wines.
- Good wines should be served before great wines.
- Wines should be at their correct temperature before serving.
- Wine should always be served to customers before their food.

Cellar management

Alcoholic drinks may form a significant amount of the revenue and expenditure of an establishment, and managing, monitoring, and controlling the stock is essential. The term cellar may be used for any room or area where drinks are stored. This may be a central storage area from where restaurants, bars and other areas dealing with alcoholic drinks draw their stock.

The traditional cellar book or ledger has generally been replaced by electronic systems for monitoring cellar stock and these may form part of a wider system in an establishment such as a hotel.

Information that needs to be kept and updated as part of the cellar management will include:

- goods received
- name and contact details of supplier
- order number
- date of delivery
- delivery note/invoice number
- units and total quantity delivered
- unit cost, total cost, and any discounts
- charge made on any returnable containers.

Cellar stock ledger (or file)

This should show movement of all stock in and out of the cellar area; deliveries as received would be recorded along with issues out to the various bars, restaurants, room service areas, etc. – if cost of stock is recorded here it is usually at cost price rather than selling price. Information from the stock ledger and/or bin cards informs the cellar manager of when new stock needs to be ordered.

See Chapter 5 for an example of a store's ledger sheet.

Bin cards

Bin cards show the physical amounts held of each stock item. See Chapter 5 for an example of a bin card. Once again this may now be part of an electronic system.

Ullage

This is the recording of cellar wastage, which could be due to cleaning and changing barrels, broken bottles, unusable stock, etc.

Storage of alcoholic beverages

Because of the high costs of alcoholic beverages, careful and efficient storage is essential.

- The cellar should always be clean and well ventilated; a room that is dark when not in use is ideal.
- Temperatures should be kept even at around 13–15°C; there should be no vibration or draughts, and humidity of 70 per cent is about right.
- Store most wines horizontally on racks with the label uppermost. Horizontal storage keeps the wine in contact with the cork, which prevents the cork from drying out. Horizontal storage also makes it easier to select wines in stock and for stock-taking. Champagne and sparkling wine is often stored upright.
- On delivery, beer casks should be placed where unnecessary moving will not be needed.

The security of these areas is also especially important, to avoid unnecessary loss of stock.

- Limit the number of people who have access to the cellars.
- Invest in secure locking systems and maybe CCTV with recording.

- Use recording systems/ledgers to keep track of stock arriving and leaving the cellar and investigate any discrepancies promptly.
- When stock is issued to different areas, have a proper ordering system (paper or electronic) and record any returns.

Designing a food service business

The process of designing a food service facility is complex. It involves many facets of business planning, right through to the development of layout drawings, interior designs, and equipment specifications. It is certainly not unusual for an operator to consider or actually open a new restaurant without knowing what type of facility will have the best chance of success and a failing business may be the result. A potential operator may have sufficient money to invest, a location or a theme in mind, and a great amount of enthusiasm, but they may not have adequately considered the total concept of the operation – and that is vital.

The concept and business plan

Concept development in the food service industry means planning the menu, developing a theme or the decor and developing a method of serving food to an identified target market to achieve an acceptable level of profit. Concept development should also encompass a strategy for growth and for a reasonable financial return on investment.

In order to have a successful food service operation, an operator must combine several elements into a comprehensive and cohesive plan: the menu, market, finance, and methods of management and operation.

The menu

The importance of getting the menu right cannot be overemphasised. The menu design and concept could be the deciding factor between success and failure. The menu must appeal to the anticipated clientele and be within their expected price range. (See the section on menu engineering in Chapter 4.)

The dishes must be within the capabilities of cooking and serving staff, and must be achievable in the time available, even at busy times.

The following are some of the major operational and design factors influenced or driven by the menu:

- the selling price of the food
- the type of preparation and cooking equipment that will be needed
- the production capacities of the various pieces of cooking equipment that will be used
- the size of refrigeration and storage areas required
- the size of the dishwashing area, as well as the capacity of the machines
- the total amount of floor space that will be needed
- the type and capacity of tables and seating
- the design and type of service area(s)
- the total financial investment needed.

The market

Conduct market research before developing a concept and constructing a food business. Some of the basic questions that should be addressed include those listed below.

- What is the target market/market segment or potential customer base?
- Is the identified market large enough to generate acceptable sales and profits?
- What are the tastes, preferences, and motivations of the target market?
- What are the best methods of marketing communication to reach the target customers?
- What are the appropriate messages that will influence and motivate the target audience?
- Consider other restaurants in the area. What is the competition? Are they successful, and if so why?
- Will the target audience need or want the facility and menu items that are being planned?
- Will the operation's internal and ongoing marketing strategies be successful in selling the customer additional products and services?

For more on market research, see Chapter 10.

Finance

One of the primary causes of the high failure rate of food service operations is lack of available finance or money – in particular, lack of money set aside as working capital. The operator may have sufficient funds to get the proposed business off the ground, but unfortunately fail to plan for the day-to-day cash requirements of product purchases, maintenance, repairs, and payroll. As a result, they quickly find themselves in a working capital deficit position.

In addition to sufficient working capital, the business must have sufficient funds for:

- professional planning and design
- new building construction or the renovation of an existing building
- professional interior design and decorating
- various pieces of equipment and supply items
- furniture and fixtures.

Finance for these items must be identified and committed before any serious planning can begin.

However, such commitments may not be made simply because all of the costs are not known or may change.

Therefore, the planning process for capital funds needs two phases.

- 1 In the initial phase, the financial needs of the business set-up are estimated and, if the prospective operator or owner does not have sufficient personal funds, then sources of financial support should be contacted to determine the possibility of raising the necessary finance.
- 2 Next, lenders and investors make firm financial commitments after the concept development has taken place, preliminary designs and construction estimates have been made and market research has been completed.

Management

The quality and style of management in any food service business are the most important elements in achieving success. The following questions need to be addressed by any owner and investor.

- Who will actually run the day-to-day affairs of the facility? Will it be the owner or majority shareholder, or will an outside 'professional' manager be hired?
- What kind of educational background, personal qualities and food service experience must the manager and management team have?
- What level of assistance will be available to the manager? Who will assist the general manager in covering the long hours often required to operate a food service facility?
- What level of salary will the manager and the other staff members receive?
- Will the remuneration package contain an incentive for performance?
- How will operational policies be established, and by whom?
- How will these policies be communicated to the management team?
- How will the management team communicate with the rest of the operation's employees?

The answers to these and related questions will help determine the organisational structure of the operation and the kind of management team needed.

Many successful restaurants are owned and operated by one individual whose personality becomes a part of the guests' dining experience. On the other hand, the food and beverage department of a large hotel, or the food service in a large hospital or events company, may be under the management of more than one person and is usually part of a more complex organisational structure. In these cases, the policies and procedures of the food service facility should be laid out in an operations manual, to ensure consistent implementation of management policies.

Method of execution

The final step in the concept development process concentrates on operational issues. The areas that need to be addressed deal with methods of production, control systems and personnel issues.

Methods of food production raise questions such as 'Will fresh food and traditional cooking methods be used, or will prepared or semi-prepared foods be used?' This decision will have a major influence on the size of refrigerated and dry storage areas, and on the size of the kitchen. The chosen production method will also greatly influence the number of employees in the kitchen, as well as the skill levels of these employees and the amounts of organisation needed. Areas that should be looked at include:

- cash control
- sales analysis
- control of the guests' bills and receipts
- food production forecasting
- control over stock levels and the various storage areas, including refrigeration
- purchasing and receiving control
- portion control and control of wastage
- ongoing quality control.

How management deals with key staffing issues can significantly affect the success of any operation.

Areas that need to be addressed include:

- determining the amount of labour required to run the business successfully
- employee work schedules and hours of work
- business operating hours
- staffing patterns
- benefits and enhancements that will be offered to employees
- provision for ongoing education and training for employees
- the varying skill levels and skills mix needed among employees
- levels of qualifications initially needed by employees
- the level of supervision that will be required
- payment levels for staff.

These, plus associated issues, must be addressed as part of the concept development process.

Running a feasibility study

Once the concept development process has been completed satisfactorily, the next phase assesses the feasibility of the concept: whether the proposed operation is likely to generate sales and make a profit.

This will in turn have a direct impact on the ROI (return on investment) analysis, which is critical to each investor.

This is often termed a feasibility study and consists of many components. One of these is the market feasibility study. This analyses all the issues associated with the marketplace, including:

- the demographics of the geographical area where the business is to be placed; this would be comprehensive and should include age, gender, income level, size of household, occupation, ethnicity, and anything else relevant to the area
- the buying and eating-out habits of the individuals in the area; information could be obtained through a

- questionnaire, survey, or by simply looking at what already exists in the area and which are most popular
- the traffic patterns of the area, including an assessment of roadway access, congestion at certain times of day, future street development, availability of public transportation and parking facilities
- general economic factors, such as employment statistics, industry growth, future economic development plans, tax structure, and commercial growth/new housing development in the area
- the competing businesses, to include size (number of seats), estimated customer counts, menu items, pricing, decor or theme, and professionalism of the staff at existing food service operations
- projected sales, based on an estimated customer count over a specific period of time, as well as an estimation of what the average spend per customer might be.

Understanding and properly responding to the target market are important factors in the success of any food service operation.

Once the feasibility study is complete, it is up to all concerned to make the critical decision. If, after a careful analysis of the findings and projections, the project looks financially sound, the market is identified and can be reached easily, a need for the proposed food service facility exists, and sufficient funding and working capital is available, the decision to proceed can be made with confidence.

However, if one or more of the critical elements is uncertain, one of the following options may be considered.

- The proposed facility may be too large, so consider something smaller.
- The staffing cost estimates may have been too high, so a different style of service may work.
- The menu may be wrong for the identified market, which can be solved by changing the menu.
- The proposed prices may be too high based on the customer demographics. The price structure and menu need to be changed.

- The local competition may be stronger than originally thought. This may mean selecting an alternative location or concept.

The second option is to abandon the project altogether. If the projections and conclusions in the feasibility study do not paint a positive picture, then there is no point in trying to 'force' the numbers.

The third option is to delay the decision until a later date. This is the least desirable option as the project will lose its momentum, initial findings may change, costs could rise, premises could be lost and there may be costs just to keep the proposed project alive.

The design process

Assuming that a 'yes' decision is made, the design process moves into an entirely new phase: the hiring of a professional food service facility designer or a food service design consultant. Restaurants are complex and expensive. For the operation to run smoothly and effectively the facility has to be designed properly, taking into consideration numerous factors, such as labour, space, equipment and energy requirements, traffic flow and menu, as well as other factors. This requires the services of a professional who understands the intricacies of food service operations, so prospective operators rely on food service design consultants to provide their expertise.

The operator should have a constant dialogue with the consultant throughout the design process, to ensure that requests are being handled to their satisfaction. Excellent communication will mean that mistakes and misunderstandings are less likely.

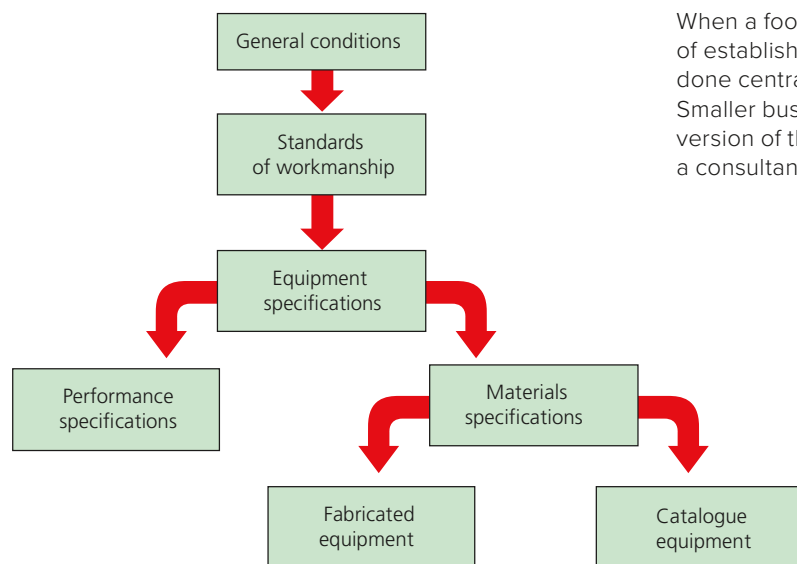
The design function may progress through nine phases. All phases are critical and are totally interdependent on the other stages. Table 8.4 outlines the natural sequence of events that takes place between the design consultant and the operator/owner.

Table 8.4 The sequence of events between design consultant and food service facility operator/owner

Phase 1: initial contact and proposal	The operator explores with the consultant the services they can provide, and the costs; this initial phase establishes the working relationship between the design consultant and client
Phase 2: feasibility study (see above)	The food service design consultant assists the prospective operator/client in conducting a proper feasibility study; this will assist with various aspects of the work
Phase 3: programming	This describes the function of each area and how each space will be used, and the number of square metres required. A typical programme includes: - the room number/name of the room (i.e. kitchen) - the relationship of this room to the other rooms - a description of use - the amount of square metres required - the finishes for floors, walls, and ceilings The key element in this phase is the establishment of space relationships among the areas of the facility once the total square metre space requirements are discussed with the client; if changes need to be made for any reason, they are initiated

Phase 4: initial design and cost estimates	This will show the shape of the building, the various entrances and flow patterns, plus the location of all the functional areas; these drawings will show elevations of the outside of the building (if applicable), site plans for the building plot, and the location of roads, parking areas, etc. In addition, and if required, schematic drawings are often used to gain preliminary approval from local authority planning departments
Phase 5: design development, equipment	This phase starts the detailed work, working drawings – the detailed plans that will guide and be used by contractors who build the facility – are developed during this phase of the process; the selection of all the specification and engineering important equipment to be used in the facility, the assembly of equipment literature, writing performance specifications and the development of utility schedules will be accomplished; from a design consultant's perspective, the 'best' piece of equipment is the piece that matches the specification exactly
Phase 6: bidding and awarding the contract	This is a process that can vary in length of time taken, depending on the complexity and size of the project under consideration
Phase 7: project construction	During this phase, the role of the food service design consultant is primarily to: - work closely with the general contractor and architect - inspect the fabricated equipment to make sure it has been built to specification and that it meets all of the requirements written into the specification documents
Phase 8: inspection and acceptance	The new food service facility will be inspected at least twice by the design consultant, owner/operator, equipment dealer and all other parties who may have been involved in the process
Phase 9: implementation and training	Demonstration of all the equipment found in the facility, along with thorough and specific training sessions designed to explain the layout and design of the equipment to all employees, is an important function

Source: Foodservice Equipment Association



When a food service operation is part of a group, or chain, of establishments some of the design procedures may be done centrally and then adapted for the individual outlets. Smaller businesses would probably have a simplified version of the process or may hand the whole procedure to a consultant company.

Figure 8.11 Types of specification

Designing the restaurant

In any establishment a customer may be gained or lost on their first impressions alone. The creation of a welcoming atmosphere, by the right choice of decor, furnishings, and equipment, is therefore a major factor in the success of the food service operation.

Although there are significant differences in the physical layout, menu, and method of service between the various types of food service facility, there are some underlying design principles that are consistently followed by all food service design consultants. Every food service project design should:

- have flexibility and modularity built into it
- be designed for simplicity and ease of understanding
- be designed so that there is an efficient flow of materials and personnel
- have ergonomic design of fittings and equipment in mind
- facilitate the ease of cleaning
- make it easy to supervise the employees of the venue
- make efficient use of the space and services available.

Careful selection of items in terms of shape, design and colour enhances the overall decor or theme, and contributes

to a feeling of total harmony. The choice of layout, furniture, linen, tableware, small equipment and glassware will be determined by considering:

- the type of clientele expected
- the site or location
- the layout of the food and beverage service area
- the type of service offered
- menu items
- the finance available.

Customer expectations of their 'dining experience' vary greatly according to type of restaurant. In most cases, the customer has made a personal choice about the type and level of service desired, as well as the atmosphere in which they wish to dine. Sometimes speed of service is paramount; sometimes they want a friendly bar with plenty of noise and comfort food. On special occasions, they may want an intimate booth or table, a great wine list, impeccable service, and classic cuisine. All customers expect a clean dining area, adequate seating, appropriate heating, air conditioning and lighting, plus clean plates and cutlery, or service-appropriate disposables.

Behind the scenes

The service areas behind the scenes are often referred to as 'back of house'. These areas are usually between the kitchen and the service areas and are important parts of the design of the operation. These areas are meeting points for staff of various departments as they carry out their duties, and therefore there must be close liaison between the departments to ensure the smooth running of the operation.

In general – especially in large operations – five main back-of-house service areas can be identified.

These are:

- 1 Still room:** the area directly between the production area and the service area, and where certain food items – such as cold sauces, accompaniments and beverage items – are prepared that are not catered for by the other major departments, such as the kitchen, larder and pastry. Hot beverages are usually prepared in this area.
- 2 Silver or plate room:** for the storage of all metal service equipment and cutlery. These items may have a high value so require careful handling and safe storage.
- 3 Wash-up:** needs to be convenient for used items being returned from the restaurant and close to the still room area.
- 4 Pass or hotplate:** this is the division between food service areas and kitchen and is where orders are received (manually or electronically) and collected from the food production area by service staff.
- 5 Linen store:** used for all restaurant linen, if used, and disposable items.

A well-designed layout of all these areas is important to ensure an even flow of work by the various members of staff. The layout itself will vary, depending on the type of operational needs.

The general considerations for the planning of the back-of-house service areas are:

- appropriate siting and logical layout of equipment
- ease of delivery access

- ease of service
- meeting food safety standards, and following health and safety requirements
- ease of cleaning
- sufficient storage space for service equipment and food items
- secure storage.

A smaller establishment is unlikely to have all of the above as separate areas so, for practical and operational requirements, may need to use space as available. For example, serving equipment may be stored in the wash-up or kitchen area or linen/disposable items may be in a restaurant cupboard.

For more information on layout of these areas, see the section on product flows in Chapter 2.

Front of house

The 'front of house' is one of the most critical components of any commercial food service operation. If the kitchen is the manufacturing plant, the dining area is the showroom where 'the food meets the customer', and the 'stage' where good food, personal service and atmosphere come together to deliver a memorable dining experience. The establishment's success depends on equal attention being paid to both of these vital components.

The front-of-house areas are used by both customers and staff, and include:

- food service areas such as restaurants
- reception – the place for taking bookings, receiving customers and processing bills
- licensed bar with or without additional seating
- coffee lounge (bar facilities may be used for this)
- customer cloakroom/washroom facilities – cloakrooms, powder rooms, etc., will be staffed in a large establishment; in small businesses facilities may be shared between staff and customers because restricted space may not allow for separate facilities.



Figure 8.12 Restaurant reception area

The general considerations for planning the front-of-house areas will vary, but include:

- style of decor and lighting
- heating and ventilation needs
- noise level (consider noise from wooden flooring, uncovered wooden tables, etc.)
- the size and shape of the areas

- the style of establishment – fine dining establishments generally allow for more space
- size of furniture, fittings, and equipment.

Important features of a food service area are as follows.

- **Proximity of the service and kitchen areas to the dining room:** a shorter distance between the service and kitchen areas can reduce labour costs and provide a higher-quality food product. It also reduces staff fatigue, which improves their attitude and the impression they make on the customer. A greater distance between these functional areas increases the cost of labour and makes it more difficult to deliver foods at an optimum serving temperature.
- **Proper equipment to maintain quality and temperature of food, and to ensure microbial safety:** both hot and cold foods must be held for service at the correct temperatures. In a professionally designed and functioning service area, appropriate holding equipment should be used to ensure that these temperatures are maintained. Temperatures should be monitored and recorded.

In most food service operations the back-of-house and front-of-house areas are quite separate so that customers cannot see into the back-of-house areas, especially the kitchen. More recently, some restaurants are making the cooking area a central feature, or at least part of the restaurant – it is in full view of customers, and the cooking aromas and bustle of the operation contribute to their meal experience.

A further development has been ‘the chef’s table’, where in some establishments a table can be booked at the edge of the kitchen, so the customer feels very much part of the whole process.

Space considerations

The amount of space required per customer varies. The customer’s comfort has to be offset against the number of customers you are trying to fit in to the restaurant to generate maximum revenue. The more upmarket the restaurant, the more comfortable and spacious it should be in order to fulfil customer expectations.

Space allocation requires consideration not only of the construction costs but also the resulting operational costs. While allocating less space for some areas may reduce building costs, insufficient space can increase operating costs, reduce efficiency and affect profitability. Stringent space requirements were introduced after the closure of restaurants due to the Covid-19 pandemic that began in 2020, when there was a requirement of at least 1 m between each table, with social distancing of 2 m.

Some of the major decision criteria that any facilities designer or operator should consider include the following.

- How many individual customers are to be served, and over what period of time?
- What are their typical food requirements?
- How many customers will need service at any one time?
- What types of food are to be offered and what preparation methods will be used in the dining area, if any?

- What kind of service will be provided and on what schedule?
- What type and amount of storage space will be needed?
- What are the space requirements for maintenance, offices, employee facilities, toilets, and so on?
- Is there enough space allocated or left over for checkout, waiting, a cloakroom and service areas?

Space requirements should take into consideration customers’ comfort, and the type and quality of service. The amount of serving equipment to be used in the dining area, and in the case of a cafeteria the queuing space, will impact the space allocated for each seat.

Table 8.5 provides some generally accepted ‘space allowances per seat’ for various types of food service operation.

Other factors that should be taken into consideration include those listed below.

- **The use of service stations:** estimate based on one small unit for every 20 seats or a large central service station for every 50–60 seats. Service stations are important when the production area or kitchen and dining areas are on different floors or located some distance apart. Plated food may require fewer service stations.
- **Table size:** this will have an influence on the comfort of the patron and the efficient use of space. For example, in a cafeteria where patrons are more likely to dine from trays, it is important that tables are large enough to accommodate the size and number of trays expected.
- **Aisle space:** carefully calculate the aisle space between tables and chairs to include the passage area, plus the area occupied by the individuals seated at the tables.

Table 8.5 ‘Space allowances per seat’ for various types of food service operation

Type of operation	Space allowance per seat
Commercial cafeteria	1.5–1.7 m ²
College	1.1–1.4 m ²
School cafeteria	0.8–1.1 m ²
Counter service restaurant	1.7–1.9 m ²
Table service at a hotel, club or restaurant	1.4–1.7 m ²
Table service (minimum)	1.0–1.3 m ²
Banquet room	0.9–1.0 m ²

The size and configuration of the dining room or rooms will have a major impact on the atmosphere and, ultimately, the dining experience. New facilities offer an opportunity for control and creativity in the room layout and to build in some flexibility.

Existing buildings and room layouts often place fundamental limitations on seating capacity, seating type and room configuration. A good consultant or interior designer should be used to ensure current guidelines regarding accessibility

and good customer/workflow are achieved; they can also generate creative solutions.

Lighting considerations

Lighting is an especially important component of the overall dining room design. The amount of light required is dictated by the area and the activity that occurs there. Lighting design in a restaurant or commercial dining facility should encompass five basic principles:

- 1 space relationships
- 2 perspective
- 3 contour
- 4 special details of intrinsic beauty
- 5 imaginative and subtle qualities.

These five principles apply to the following three general types of illumination found in all food service facilities.

- 1 **Overall general illumination:** general lighting is designed to perform and function day and night. It must achieve a perfect balance. If it doesn't, 'dark spots' or

'dead spots' will occur, creating a 'misreading' of the space.

- 2 **Sparkle and excitement:** a burst of colour or a strategically placed light can enhance an otherwise monotonous lighting plan, making certain areas stand out. This kind of lighting is appropriate for reception areas, windows, cathedral ceilings, partitions, special flooring, or changes in flooring.
- 3 **Specific focal points:** subtleties of light placement can direct the patron's eyes away from 'trouble spots' or create an illusion of extra space. Special-effect spotlights, uplights, etc., can highlight artwork, a table, the patrons, a bar, a stairway, or the food. The various methods include:
 - silhouetting – allowing interesting objects to be emphasised
 - grazing light – used to emphasise various textural qualities
 - modelling – designed to give depth and character to objects.

The design of cafeteria and serving areas, and equipment for the hot and cold holding of food, is discussed in Chapter 2.

Creating a customer care specification

Increasingly, quality of the service and the customer experience have become the main differentiators between similar establishments seeking customers. Understanding how the customer is involved in the process, their needs, and expectations, and identifying the experience they are likely to have is critical to the success of the business.

Like the food, beverages and other product specifications used in hospitality businesses, there must also be a customer service specification, frequently referred to as standard operating procedure (SOP). For food and beverage operations, the customer service specification is focused as much on identifying the procedures that need to be followed as on the way they are carried out. This is because food and beverage is more than a delivery system; it also needs to be completely customer focused from the time the customer makes their booking until the time they leave. Much is achieved by good communication and positive interaction between staff and customers.

A customer care specification needs to consider the entire experience the customer has within the establishment and needs to be supported by planners and management at all stages. A customer service specification takes account of five key characteristics.

- 1 **Levels of service:** the service methods, and the extent of the individual care and personal attention that is given to customers.
- 2 **Availability of service:** days and times at which the service is available, the variation in the menus and how often menus change, extent of wines and other drinks lists on offer.
- 3 **Level of standards:** quality of food and drinks, surroundings and decor, furniture, and equipment costs, staffing and professionalism.

- 4 **Reliability of the service:** the extent to which the product is consistent in practice, and especially at busy times.
- 5 **Flexibility of the service:** the provision of alternatives or variations in the standard product, including variation of service locations such as bar service, room service, garden, etc.

In designing a food service operation to meet a customer service specification, care needs to be taken to ensure the profitability of the operation through efficient use of the available resources. The resources used in food service operations are as follows:

- **Materials:** commodities and equipment
- **Labour:** staffing and staff costs
- **Facilities:** the premises and the volume of business that the premises are physically able to support.

Managers must therefore take account of the effect of the level of business on the ability of the operation to maintain the required service. At the same time they need to ensure maximum productivity, and the best and most efficient use of resources.

The operation must be physically capable of supporting the desired customer service specification. In addition, the staff must be capable (through support and training) of delivering the intended customer service specification. This takes account of the technical and interpersonal skills, product knowledge and team-working capability of the staff.

As well as customers, service staff also interact with staff from other areas, such as the kitchen, reception, accounts office, stores, and many more. It is important that the provision of the food and beverage product is seen as a joint effort between all departments, with each understanding

the needs of the others in order to provide the best possible service and meet (and possibly exceed) customers' expectations.

In order to avoid any problems with customer relations, careful attention needs to be given to the physical aspects of the service and how it is operated, along with the care and interaction between customers and staff. Knowing what the potential for customer satisfaction is from the food and beverage product can help to ensure that there are procedures in place for dealing with any difficulties that might arise. The potential for satisfaction should already have been built into the initial design of the product so that it meets the expectations the customers may have. Remember too the added importance of review sites. These have become very powerful, and a review – good or bad – that may influence other customers could be 'live' in a very short space of time.

However, there will always be a potential for dissatisfaction and customer complaints, and these may be considered in two categories, as follows:

- 1 Tangible:** those that can be controlled by the establishment, such as untidy areas, unhelpful staff, or overcrowded conditions.
- 2 Intangible:** those that are uncontrollable, such as the behaviour of other customers, the weather or transport problems.

Being able to identify all of these possibilities enables an operation to develop procedures to deal with them when they occur. Suitable staff training on how to deal with certain situations effectively will prove to be a good investment. See also Chapter 10, on sales and marketing, and Chapter 11, on customer service.

CASE STUDY 1

A country house hotel wishes to extend its food service provision. It has a good-sized, well-equipped kitchen and a large dining room that presently provides breakfast and dinner mainly for residents.

- 1** What else could it offer to increase its food provision within and outside of the hotel?
- 2** How could it publicise its new offers?
- 3** Should any new legal requirements be considered?

CASE STUDY 2

After successfully completing their hospitality qualifications, three friends decided to open a small restaurant in the high street of a market town. The premises they chose to lease already had an equipped kitchen though some of the equipment was quite old and not working properly. Finance for everything else was sourced through a loan and advertising for the new venue was all done on social media.

Because they wanted to reflect a variety of world foods the menu was large with a number of choices of each

type of food supported by an extensive list of world wines. After a promising start in the opening week, numbers started to decline, with some evenings seeing no customers at all. A large loss started to accumulate, and the friends could not agree on what to do to put it right.

- 1** What mistakes were made with the set-up of this restaurant?
- 2** How could it have been done better?
- 3** Should the friends try to save the business? If so, what steps should they take?

CASE STUDY 3

A busy hospital has a large staff dining area that, at peak times over lunch, is having difficulty coping with the pressure. The kitchen has problems keeping up with demand for food on the hot counter, long queues form, and it can take a long time to get through the payment point. There are numerous complaints, especially as there is nowhere else in the immediate area to buy food and

some staff get only short breaks, not allowing them time to queue.

- 1** Make a list of suggestions that may help to solve the problems in this dining area.
- 2** Underline or highlight a selection of your proposed solutions that could be used together to solve the problem.

Further reading

Cousins, J. and Weekes, S. (2020) *Food and Beverage Service*. Hodder Education.

Foodservice Equipment Association (FEA) *An Introduction to the Food Service*. Online at <https://fea.org.uk>

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

- 1 In a large, busy restaurant what are the measures you could introduce to develop good working relationships between kitchen staff and food service staff?
- 2 Suggest a suitable method of food service for each of the following:
 - a fine dining restaurant in a luxury hotel
 - a city-centre brasserie
 - an events company dealing mainly with weddings
 - a large staff restaurant.Give reasons for your choices.
- 3 Discuss the main reasons why food service staff need to be knowledgeable about the food dishes they will serve. How can staff be given this knowledge?
- 4 In a newly refurbished country house hotel with 60 bedrooms/suites, an à la carte restaurant seating 100 covers and a 40-seat bar/lounge, what are the food service staff and bar staff you would require? What would their job titles be?
- 5 When deciding on wines for a new restaurant's wine list what should your main considerations be?
- 6 Suggest 12 suitable wines to include, based on your considerations.
- 6 Discuss some of the technological developments used in food service areas (such as use of electronic devices) to make service faster and more efficient. List and describe some current ways in which technology is used and how these enhance service.
- 7 In a bar area when would you refuse to serve a customer with alcoholic drinks? Is it the responsibility of bar staff to encourage customers to drink alcohol responsibly? How could you do this?
- 8 Describe five important factors that need to be considered when designing a food service system.
- 9 As a hotel food and beverage manager, what are the various areas of legislation that may affect the food service operation? How can these be communicated to food service staff?
- 10 What is meant by a feasibility study and how would it apply to the opening of a new high-street brasserie?