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Introduction

Customer service is one of the most important parts of the hospitality industry that creates good customer experiences. Without good customer experience, customers are unlikely to keep coming to your business. Of course, without the customers, there will be no demand for the business, (Group, 2024). It was noted that the customer service was not, quite excellent at times, at the Indian restaurant Shukran in Whitley Bay, Newcastle Upon Tyne.

Customers go online and write bad reviews when they are upset with an experience. This will have dire consequences to any business and over time lose customers. However, if these issues can be resolved immediately and customers are pleased with the outcome then it will become an opportunity to build on a good, loyal relationship, as these relationships become stronger than new ones, (Keanu Ribs, 2025). The need of customer service training was crucial for the team at this restaurant to be able to excel in the competitive market. It would equip the staff with skills to interact with consumers and represent the company as well as resolve issues. This will help retain consumers with good skills, cultural sensitivity and make the business more efficient and successful.

Communication skills

Excellent customer service is created through effective communication. It is crucial to understand customers' needs and to clearly communicate accurate information.

It has been noticed at the Shukran restaurant; their focus was not on consumer service as it was witnessed the waiters would usually show the customers to their table and carry on with other duties. They sometimes took a while to take orders and would not always check on them to see if they needed anything else after getting the food.

The training session started off with the employees being asked about customer service and what they thought it meant. Questions asked were questions such as:

What do you think about customer service?

How important is customer service to customer experience?

How does it make the guests feel?

What are good outcomes of customer services?

And what are the negative ones?

How would you manage a customer complaint?

Asking questions at the beginning of the training session helps understand the employees' existing customer service knowledge.

These questions can identify the areas of gaps in knowledge, where their understanding could be incorrect, therefore it will indicate the level of experience and knowledge they have.

These sessions of training allow management to understand the specific areas of needs and to be able to work on those areas that require a little more attention. This could be soft skills, where understanding that time management is vital. They need to understand that they should not leave customers waiting for a long time after showing them to the table. From when a time is given to customers, it should also be carried out according to the given time, (Tidio, n.d.). Delays are inevitable sometimes however, if that is the case the customers should be updated on it accurately and apology should be given.

Asking questions, encourages employees to really think about what is being discussed and it becomes a way of engaging and a productive learning environment.

This is also a way to measure the effectiveness of the customer service training session.

Inclusivity of learning

Inclusivity of learning is when everyone feels included and could learn regardless of their abilities, and to be able to succeed. They should feel supported whilst learning, (Imperial College London, 2019).

There are different types of learning, but the main ones are, visual, auditory, kinesthetics and reading and writing types. Other ones are, analytical or logical, linguistic or social, solitary and nature learning, (Bay Atlantic University, 2024).

This specific training created for the Shukran restaurant in customer service is mostly spoken auditory listening learning. Auditory learners would learn by listening and hearing better than other types. Questions that will be asked will also fall in this type of learning. Those that learn better with read/write learning would learn better by reading from the slides on the computer that would be up. Visual images on the slides will be showing for visual learning. A quiz is included in the training for all participants, and this is kinesthetic learning which is experiencing and doing, type of learning. Through participation, it supports and strengthens ideas. With using this mix of inclusive education, engagement with everyone will be ensured, and boost engagement and performance, which makes the training more effective, (Moen, 2024).

KPI

KPIs are important for effective and efficient outcomes in restaurants, they are a good way of measuring performances in a business. By using KPIs, it will enable employees and enhance customer experiences, (Dakshta Bhambi, 2025). There are many KIPs available to measure the success of a business. There are customer satisfaction KIPs that business can track, as well as spend per head, rate of employee turnover, gross profit etc, (Revolution Ordering, 2025). The spend per person and customer satisfaction KPIs would be the ones that would be useful when discussing customer service in the training as this will result in enhanced customer experience which means consumers will spend more when happy with service, (Bronotte, 2023). The spend per head rate will go up as each customer spends more. The total revenue amount divided by the number of customers gives the spend per person rate.

The right customer service makes all the different.

It takes just one negative customer experience to result in half the consumers switching to another competitor. 73% of customers will decide to make the switch after multiple bad experiences. You will also have a 56% of customers that will not complain but move to a competitor after an unpleasant experience, (Bishop, 2021).

Unhappy customers can go on and write bad reviews, and the consequences would mean that not only have they decided not to come back but it will warn other potential customers not to visit the restaurant. However, the negative complains, can be turned into an opportunity to act on and fix the problem. A big percentage of consumers do not complain but leave. When complains are promptly acted on and effectively resolved, it can become a customer retention tool. Consumers will feel their concerns have been heard and understood which will create loyalty towards the business, (MacDonald, 2019).

Customer service training was provided to the front of house employees, at the Shukran, Indian restaurant. The purpose was to equip staff with customer service skills to enhance their customer's experiences. The combined experience, not just the food is what customers seek for when visiting a restaurant to dine out in.

It is about how they are made to feel, how comfortable and at ease they are whilst there, (Rathnasiri et al., 2025). Not just being there, but how they feel from the beginning to the end, from when they walk in to how they feel after leaving the venue, (Artauk.com, 2024).

When the service is good and the servers are nice, they meet and greet and are friendly then the customers have an enjoyable experience and feel happy, (Akhoondnejad, 2024).

Communication, if done effectively, is an essential element in hospitality as consumer satisfaction is what makes the business successful. Excellent, effective, communication can influence positive outcomes. They create strong relationships, loyalty, and long-term business profitability, (Stojkanović, Zdravka Petković and Zuber, 2025).

Effective communication plays a crucial role in achieving these goals, as it helps participants clearly convey their interests, understand the needs of the other parties, and resolve conflicts constructively. One of the key strategies for effective communication in business negotiations is active listening.

Hungry customers usually arrive in restaurants, wanting their needs met, professionally and quickly in a limited time. In this case, the employees become the face of the brand therefore the skills of customer service are crucial to engage with the consumers, (Pandey, 2025).

The Shukran restaurant, have a few unresolved negative reviews on customer service. They are still on the review, on trip advisor having not being responded to. This is likely to warn customers to keep away from this business or they may have to face the same issues. The best way to deal with complaints is to resolve it promptly before any negative review is posted. However, if it has already been posted online then responding to it promptly and in a professional manner would be the right thing to do. The ideal response should be addressing concerns, while promoting the strengths and reinforcing the value of the restaurant, (Ross, 2014). The most important thing the Shukran business could have done was to quickly apologise to the customer, showing understanding and empathy for the unpleasant experience, they had. Shukran should have tried to take the matter offline and offer a solution and make them feel understood, and valued, (Eisenberg, 2021).

Regardless of how amazing the food is, how extravagant the decor looks, none of these things will encourage guests to come back if the service and the atmosphere is terrible, (OpenTable, 2022).

There are a few things the Shukran restaurant can do to improve the customer service. The first impression is especially important so the first thing would be to greet and welcome the guests with a warm, friendly smile. Promptly showing them to their table. They should be given accurate waiting time. Using customer data to personalise customer experience adds that warmth when greeted by their name, (OpenTable, 2022).

After the training course ended, there was a quiz for all the employees to take part in. This quiz is to understand how effective this training session has been for the staff members of the Shukran restaurant.

The quiz questions were:

1. A customer complains about food taking too long. What is a good response?

- A] "we're extremely busy sorry."
- B] "Let me find out what is happening."
- C] "It will be served when it is ready."
- D] "You should have ordered faster."

2. A customer is worried about allergies and asks about ingredients in a dish.
What do you do?

- A] Guess the ingredients.
- B] Explain to them that you do not know.
- C] Check with the chef or the manager and give them accurate information.
- D] Tell them not to worry as allergies are not that serious.

3. Over the phone, what is the most important thing to do?

- A] Put them on hold.
- B] Help, after promptly answering.
- C] Say "hello".
- D] Sound bored so they know.

4. A customer complains their food is not cooked properly.

- A] Tell them it is cooked.
- B] Tell them it is always done that way.
- C] Apologise and offer to have it cooked again.
- D] Put the blame on the chef

5. What should the restaurant do when a customer writes a negative review online?

- A] Ignore it.
- B] Give a defensive answer.
- C] Publically argue with the customer that gave the negative review.
- D] Apologise to the reviewer and offer to solve the issue.

Answers

- 1] B
- 2] C
- 3] B
- 4] C
- 5] D

Questions would be asked at the beginning of the training session. At the end of the training session, all the employees would be involved in this quiz, that would be completed, and the results would be looked at to see how much information they retained from the beginning of the session.

Conclusion

In conclusion, employee training, with a mix of inclusivity in learning in mind, to engage all employees learning in customer services is a crucial part in developing excellent skills that are necessary to develop to provide brilliant consumer service that enhances customer experience. The use of spend per head and customer satisfaction KPIs, before and after delivering the training is a valuable tool to measure employee performance and how much has been learnt and retained after the training session.

Businesses that invest in such training courses, improve consumer satisfaction, enhance staff performance and increase profitability, (Brooks, 2023).

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