

Title = Student Learning Log

Module = Managing Food and Beverage Operations

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I conducted my placement at Maldron hotel, and I attended the orientation meeting for my placement. There were several students with me, and the placement supervisor described the purpose of my placement job. I was informed of the rules and regulations of the hotel. I was informed of the health and safety procedures, emergency procedures, fire and safety procedures and the emergency escape route. I was also given examples of previous students and their experiences including their achievements, job scopes and shortcomings. This is to ensure that me and my fellow students can achieve our goals at the food and beverage jobs without making mistakes and encouraging innovation. The supervisor gave us certain learning objectives and things to do during our placement. The supervisor emphasised the importance of food and beverage department. The extent of this job is very crucial and will reflect in the performance of the hotel. In my placement, some of my objectives were to be a server/waitstaff, kitchen staff, host, barista, let higher ups know when the customers want to pay, patience with the customers and to ensure all the tables and food were up to good sanitary standard. My own learning outcomes were to gain operational skills, good knowledge in customer service, communication skills, teamwork skills, time management skills and skills that help working under pressure. During my work in the food and beverage department I served food to customers who ordered, I did this 20 times. I took orders from customers, I had to make drinks, tea, and coffee. I also let higher ups know if a customer wanted to pay and I cleaned the tables once all the people left. My self-reflection is that I have developed some skills (customer service skills, time

management skills and teamwork skills) and these have evolved under my time at this placement as I had to use these under pressure. I have also gained cultural awareness from this placement.

I have experienced a few problems during this placement, some have arisen from missed opportunities, some from customer pressure, and some from time management. This main issue of management of Maldron hotel is that at some times there is an exceptionally high workload. The issue is that at certain times, the food and beverage industry can be exceptionally fast paced. This is mostly during peak hours or when nearby events are commencing. This increase in people leads to more workload on each staff member and increased pressure on each staff member leading to an overload in workload. This also means that customers experience exceedingly high waiting times and sometimes some of their needs are not catered. The solution to this problem is developing effective time management skills and prioritizing some tasks. This can be done by creating a timetable or a plan of action during times of unusually high pressure.

Communication with colleagues is particularly important to ensure a good workflow even during times of chaos. Another problem is keeping a balance of quality and speed during times of high pressure at Maldron hotel. This links with the previous problem. This problem is when the hotel faces extremely high demand, and the supply is not meeting this. During this time, staff may subconsciously decrease the quality of food making it hard to maintain a high standard of food. They are doing more quantity but less quality. The solution of this problem is the implementation of highly efficient workflows which streamline process and reduce the amount of stress on each member of staff. A focus on consistent training to keep quality standards should be implemented to ensure the quality of the food stays the same while not compromising the time. The addressing of all these challenges needs a combination of teamwork and

resilience while implementing proactive management strategies which navigate and overcome these issues.

Self-management and development are crucial in a food and beverage setting as it is a dynamic environment that demands these traits. This is as an individual working in this setting lots of skills (like self-management, task management, application of initiative, communication, and knowledge application).

Task management is paramount in the fast-paced world of food and beverages. This is as I had to prioritise and organise tasks during peak times to ensure the efficiency and smooth flow of all hotel operations. For example, once during a busy time I had to take orders for multiple tables and orders by using allocation strategically. I organised all the orders and customer input by looking at the customer needs and the workflow of the kitchen. I also consistently checked the progress of each table and told higher ups if they were ready to pay. During my placement I anticipated peak hours, setting up tables before use, communication with staff and coordination with kitchen staff to increase my task management skills. This enhances the dining experience while minimising the risk of errors and delays of service.

The application of initiative is particularly important as it is a key component of self-management, most importantly when I was confronted with numerous challenges in the workplace. This is particularly important in the food and beverage industry as unexpected issues are frequent and cannot be avoided. For example, I experienced an influx of customers suddenly which delayed the food preparation and taking the input of customers. The ability to take initiative is particularly important as it helps identify the problem and helps to communicate with the kitchen to salvage solutions and update the customers on their situation. During my placement, a kitchen experienced difficulties in making food to meet all the customers demand and I tried to manage all tables to maximise experience.

Communication is one of the most vital skills as it is in the pinnacle of success in this department. This skill ranges from customer interaction, colleague collaboration and relaying information between the front and back of all operations. For example, I encountered situations when communication between server and consumer was hard due to language barriers and in many instances some customers may have severe allergies which needs to be successfully relayed to the sever.

Application of knowledge is important as this department is very dynamic and fluctuating. Throughout my placement, I used my knowledge to make recommendations. In one instance, a customer had a cup of coffee and requested another but was not sure what kind. She told me about her tiredness and her needs as well as her tastes and I advised her to try bullet coffee. The customer was incredibly pleased as she liked this recommendation. I had to use my knowledge of food and beverages to advise customers after hearing about their allergies. There was a leaflet on every table with information on gluten – free foods and I helped customers choose. There were also organic items that customers could choose.

In conclusion, I gained lots of knowledge and opportunities of self-reflection at Maldron hotel and has been a transformative journey. The navigation of the fast-paced environment required lots of effective self and task management and the application of clear communication and initiative. I utilized knowledge that I acquired through my time here. Task management was especially important as I organised and prioritised responsibilities during peak hours which helped ensure smooth operation. I took initiative to face some challenges, like customer surges that came unexpectedly, and this allowed me to contribute to problem solving effectively to maintain the ambitious standards at Maldron hotel. I communicated clearly with both customers and staff, and this played a pivotal role in the guest experience and staff stress, The dynamic, fluctuating

and fast paced nature of this department emphasised the need of all the skills mentioned earlier. This placement improved my operation skills and interpersonal skills but also helped myself management and learning in this extremely fast-paced environment.