

Handling Complaints Training Guide



INTRODUCTION

This guide is about handling customer feedback and ensuring you can take action to rectify any problems so that complaints are not repeated. Research shows that 69% of customers would not return to a pub due to the indifferent attitude of staff and so we must all look for ways to handle complaints professionally, consistently and quickly.

Why staff should be able to handle customer feedback?

- They are your pub!
- They represent everyone in the pub to a customer when they complain
- Opportunity to turn a bad experience into a good one straight away
- Diffuse customer arguments and to encourage our customers to return

If a customer comes into the pub and has a bad experience they are likely to tell 10 more.

They in turn will tell a further 6 people and these 6 people will tell a further 3 people. In total 180 from just one bad visit!

In contrast one person will only tell 3 people of a good visit.

So it takes a long time to build up a good reputation but overnight to damage that reputation.

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The common issues that customers complain about are:-

- Cold food, not cooked as liked, wrong food delivered
- Beer flat, warm, sour
- Dirty toilets
- Dirty tables
- Rude team
- Slow service
- Dirty Glass

Only 3% of customers will complain actively **the other 97% will simply walk out and not return** and so we need to look for the none verbal clues to a dissatisfied customer too!

Customers who complain generally want:-

- To be listened to
- To be taken seriously
- To be treated with respect
- Immediate action
- Compensation
- To let you know so that it doesn't happen again



COMPLAINT HANDLING USING L.E.A.R.N.

There are five golden rules to complaint handling for a successful outcome:-

LISTEN

How would you let the customer know you are listening?

- Introduce yourself and let them know your role in the pub. This makes the customer feel important and informed straight away of whom they are speaking to
- Never interrupt or argue when they tell you of the situation
- Present yourself with positive body language; maintain eye contact, open arms, and nodding, showing interest

ESTABLISH

How could you establish what the exact problem is?

- Establish what the problem is by asking open questions these are questions which cannot be answered with yes or no and usually begin with who, what, when, where, why and how

APOLOGISE

How could you establish what the exact problem is?

- You should never pass blame or responsibility because the customer is only interested in rectifying the situation and not where the fault lies. As far as the customer is concerned you are the pub business. Blaming the suppliers or other colleagues only serves to lessen the customers confidence that you will help

RECTIFY

- You need to let the customer know that you are there to help
- Ensure that you always take away the offending item from the customer because it will always be a point of reference for them and they will become even more frustrated by it
- If the customer is away from their seat sit them back down and don't leave them waiting
- Ensure that the outcome is the right one for the customer

NOTIFY

- If you can't face the situation find someone that can and don't keep the customer waiting
- It is important that you explain all the details to the person you ask. Do not ask the customer to go through the whole story again, as this will only serve to annoy them further. It also shows that you were listening and understood the complaint showing professionalism

Ensure that staff report any complaints to:-

- Stop the problem reoccurring
- To prevent comeback from the customer
- Improve procedures and policies
- Improve service and products



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Use the guide below to prompt answers from your staff by asking the questions relevant to your business or posing an example scenario for their ideas on how they would respond in a given situation.

WHEN TO TRAIN

Complaint handling is the way a business responds to dissatisfied customers. The response given can determine the likelihood of whether customers feel valued and confident enough to return. To enhance customer service skills by handling customer feedback - complaints or compliments effectively.

SIGNS OF POOR PRACTICE

- Failure to build rapport with customers
- New customers are not returning
- Number of regular customers declining
- Member of your team being rude or abrupt with customers
- Slow service

SAMPLE QUESTIONS OR 'SCENARIOS' TO USE WITH YOUR STAFF

Questions

- How can you make our customers feel welcome?
- How can you exceed their expectations?
- Why is it important that you are smart?
- How well do you know who our regular customers are and what they expect?
- Why do you think customers choose our pub?
- What occasions can you think of that customer's come to our pub for?
- How can we ensure we offer what they expect and more?

What would you do/say in the following situations?

- My glass has lipstick on
- This food is cold
- My steak is not cooked properly
- How long will our food be?
- This beer is flat
- That's very expensive!
- Customer waving money at a busy bar

SIGNS OF GREAT PRACTICE

- Identifies signs of a potential complaint and pro-actively seeks to rectify it
- Promotes high standards of service and encourages colleagues to do the same
- Actively listens to a customer complaint without interrupting
- Presents themselves with positive body language; maintains eye contact and shows interest
- Uses open questions to establish the exact problem
- Informs customer what action will be taken to rectify the situation
- Notified manager on duty of the complaint