

---

# MODULE ONE: HOSPITALITY MANAGEMENT

---

## *Introduction*

In order to properly learn about hotel and catering management, we need to start with hospitality management, the umbrella under which both careers lay. Whether you are looking for a career that focuses on either hotel or catering, or more likely a career that involves both, you will need to know how to take care of people, which is the primary idea behind hospitality management. As an individual in the hospitality management industry, your job first and foremost will be to make sure that guests and customers are happy and as comfortable as possible. In order to ensure this, you will need to employ a vast variety of skills and a wealth of knowledge in sales, marketing, customer service, employee management, food and beverage management, and more. Because your primary focus is on making your guests and customers happy, you will need to be prepared to utilize any and all of your skills/knowledge at any given time. In this module, we will give you a brief overview of hospitality management, with a focus on making the customer feel safe, secure, and comfortable and running a hospitality business.

### **What you'll learn in this module:**

1.1 Operating a Hotel or Catering Company

1.2 Projecting Comfort and Ease

1.3 Elevating Your Business

1.4 Making a Profit

## **1.1 Operating a Hotel or Catering Company**

Whether you plan on owning or just managing a hotel or catering company, it is important that you know how to properly manage, which includes ensuring that your guests and/or customers are comfortable and happy, and that your employees are doing their jobs properly and have strong morale. In this section, we will briefly discuss some of the basic areas that a great hotel or catering manager needs to be able to cover in order to have a flourishing and successful business.

### **1.1.1 Hiring Practices (1 of 4)**

Having a strong staff of employees who are hard working and always looking to create a memorable experience for your guests and customers starts with proper hiring practices. A good manager can train any employee to do a job properly, but a great

manager knows how to select and hire the right job candidates who can be molded into great employees. Setting your team of employees up for success requires your skill and attention during the following four processes:

**Candidate Selection:** In a perfect world, you will receive resumes from a variety of talented candidates who are eager to help you and your company flourish. One of the hardest jobs for a manager can be deciding which of these talented candidates will best help your company. To ensure that you are selecting only the most valuable candidates, make sure you:

- **Identify your needs.** What are the qualities and experiences that you are most looking for in a candidate? It seems very simple, but taking some time to outline your needs can help you narrow down the field of candidates significantly. The last thing you want to do is allow that perfect employee to slip through your fingers because you weren't prepared during the selection process.



- **Weed through the fluff.** Everyone pads their resume; potential employees work hard to present themselves in the best possible light to prospective employers, so you need to be able to quickly identify what skills and experiences are relevant to the job for which you are hiring.
- **Know what type of candidate you are looking for.** If you need someone to take charge within their respective department and be a leader immediately, you will want to look for candidates who have a lot of experience, preferably in leadership roles. If you have a strong structure already set up to train new employees, it may be more beneficial to spend less money on an employee who does not have experience. With a cleaner slate, it may be easier to train an inexperienced employee specifically for the way your company does things. However, if you are going to interview someone without much experience, they need to stand out somewhere else, either in education or relevant work experience and skills.

### 1.1.1 Hiring Practices (2 of 4)

**Interviewing Potential Employees:** Once you have selected the best candidates for your needs, it is time to bring them in for an interview. This is an integral part of the hiring process because it is your opportunity to get an overall view of each potential employee, and not just make judgments based on what they have written about themselves. Remember, also, that even though you are hiring the potential employees, they still need to decide whether they would like to take the job (if offered). That means

you need to present yourself and your company as a professional and pleasant place to work. During the interview process, use these helpful tips to be as effective as possible:

- **Keep people informed.** Without proper communication, you could lose a potential employee before they even walk through the door. Make sure you have everything organized before you make contact. Set very specific meeting times and timelines. Keep to your word, and try to avoid rescheduling.
- **Be honest and straightforward.** If you are not upfront about job expectations right from the start, you could end up wasting everyone's time. Know what you are looking for and express your needs to the interview candidates.
- **Make your questions matter.** Whether you decide to do one interview or multiple, the amount of time you have to assess a potential employee is limited, so make the time that you have with them valuable. Ask questions that get to the heart of what you are looking for. Make the candidate be specific about relevant experience. Ask the candidate what he or she would bring to your company, and why they would be the best employee out of the group.
- **Listen.** Make sure that you listen very carefully to the answers that your candidates give, otherwise there is no reason to hold the interview. Pay special attention to the qualities you are looking for in an employee. Does the candidate project confidence? Does he or she seem like they would be good with customers? Can he or she handle the responsibilities of the job?
- **Jot down your thoughts.** After each interview, take a few minutes to put your thoughts about the candidate in writing. You can do this with a simple pros and cons list or just a few short sentences, but these notes will be invaluable to you when you are trying to remember the qualifications of each employee.

### 1.1.1 Hiring Practices (3 of 4)

**Hiring:** Once you have conducted interviews of all of your candidates, it is time for you to make a decision. Remember, that there are a lot of factors that go into this decision, and you need to make the choice that will best help your company. Here are some tips for making the right hire:



- **Weigh experience against overall value.** Usually, you want to choose a candidate who has experience, but remember that experience does not always mean quality. The more experienced a candidate is, the more you will have to pay him or her, so it can be beneficial to your company to hire an inexperienced employee who has a lot of potential. This is why the interview process is so

important; it allows you the opportunity to make judgments about the value of your candidates.

- **Expedite the process.** While you don't want to rush a decision, you want the hiring process to be fairly quick. Be honest with candidates about timelines and stick to those timelines. You should make an offer to your top choice within a day or two of when the interviews have ended. That will give you time to contact your second choice if your first choice declines. If you wait too long, the candidate you want to hire could accept a job somewhere else.
- **Be welcoming right to the end.** Calling a candidate to make an offer is the last chance you will get to make an impression before they accept or reject the offer. Make sure that you speak confidently, but warmly. You want to let the candidate know that you run a professional, organized business, but that they will be welcome and enjoy working for you.

### 1.1.1 Hiring Practices (4 of 4)

**Training:** You've made the perfect hire, but the process is not over. The first few weeks are extremely important for new employees because this is when they will learn how to behave to succeed in your company. If you are not careful, you could very quickly teach the wrong behaviors. Here are some tips:

- **Model behavior for your employees.** Once again, continue to be professional and welcoming around new employees, and make sure that your veteran employees do the same. New hires will naturally look to emulate the current employees, so make sure that the behavior that they are emulating is desirable. If a new employee sees other employees act disrespectfully or in an unruly manner, then he or she will learn that those behaviors are acceptable. You want new employees to be happy to work for your company, but not because they know they can slack off.
- **Delegate responsibility.** A great manager knows how to lead, but also knows how to create leaders. Make sure that you are constantly supervising, but let your current employees do a lot of the training for you. This helps new employees learn from people who are not their boss, but it also reinforces proper practice with established employees.
- **Monitor new employees.** If a new employee is displaying behaviors that you do not like, it is important that you step in. Let him or her know what you are not pleased with, and what he or she can do to correct the behavior. If the employee does not adjust, do not be afraid to let them go. You may not want to go through the interview process again, but if you know someone is not going to work out, it is best to cut ties.

The hiring process may seem tedious, but if you truly want to set your hotel or catering company up for success, the attention you give to this process will definitely pay off.

### 1.1.2 Customer Service

One of the most important facets of hospitality management is customer service. Once you have built a staff of talented and dedicated individuals, it is time to make sure they are properly trained in customer service. If you followed the previous steps for hiring employees, then you should already have employees who have what it takes to make people feel comfortable and taken care of, but here are some simple and effective practices that you should instill in your employees.



- **Safety:** If you are managing a hotel, you are likely going to be helping a lot of tourists and visitors. That means you and your employees need to be experts on the surrounding area, including where the safest attractions, restaurants, and other tourist draws are. Your guests need to feel safe, and they will respond if you are honest with them about areas that they should avoid. This goes hand-in-hand with being prepared to make appropriate recommendations when a guest is asking for advice. For catering companies, it is important that you are aware of dietary restrictions and that your employees know all the ingredients that are in each dish/hors d'oeuvre. Employees should also be knowledgeable enough about the food to help guests who are unsure of what they will like.
- **Comfort:** Your employees should be doing everything to make the guest feel taken care of. The littlest things can go a long way. Every responsibility that you can take away from a guest is a weight off his or her shoulders.
- **Accommodate above and beyond:** When you are helping out a guest or a customer, be over the top with your accommodations. People will pick up on if you are only doing the bare minimum, and they will notice every little thing that you do beyond what you have to. Encourage employees to go the extra mile for their guests and customers. Do you notice that a guest only likes one of the appetizers? Maybe you can make a point to get to them whenever you are serving it. A guest asks for a dinner recommendation? Give him or her several different options, and offer to make a reservation. Any little thing you do will go a long way.
- **Listen actively:** Encourage your employees to engage with the guests when they want to talk. Sometimes, you can find ways to accommodate them above and beyond just by listening. If nothing else, show that you are actively participating in a conversation with a guest and they will not forget it.

Taking care of the customer should be your primary concern in hospitality management. Simply doing enough to pass is not enough; the guest will leave and forget your service and the experience immediately. Go above and beyond for your guests, and they will remember it forever, and return often.

### 1.1.3 Sales and Marketing

As much as good hospitality is important in hotel and catering management, it's pretty hard to be hospitable to your guests and customers if you don't have any. Sales and marketing can be an extremely integral part of running any successful business, and a business in the hospitality field is no different. In short, here are some tips that will help you improve your company's sales and marketing strategies:

- **Know your brand.** Every hotel has its strengths and weaknesses the same way that every catering company has types of events that they work best with. The important part of sales and marketing is to know what you have that other companies do not. When marketing your business, highlight whatever aspect of the business will draw more guests in. Don't make false promises, though, because if your marketing convinces a guest to go with your company because of something specific and your company does not deliver, you have lost that guest forever.
- **Look at things from the guests' perspective.** This is a good strategy for any business, but is especially important in the hospitality industry. Look at your business through the eyes of your clients, and approach sales and marketing using that perspective.
- **Embrace technology.** Most of your potential customers will do a lot of research on social media and travel sites, so it is important to understand the sites that these guests are using and monitoring them. You may even want to encourage guests to write reviews because oftentimes it just takes the suggestion to motivate someone who has had a good experience.
- **Invest in whatever you do.** Do not be stingy when it comes to marketing tools. Your website is the face of your company, so spend some money to get

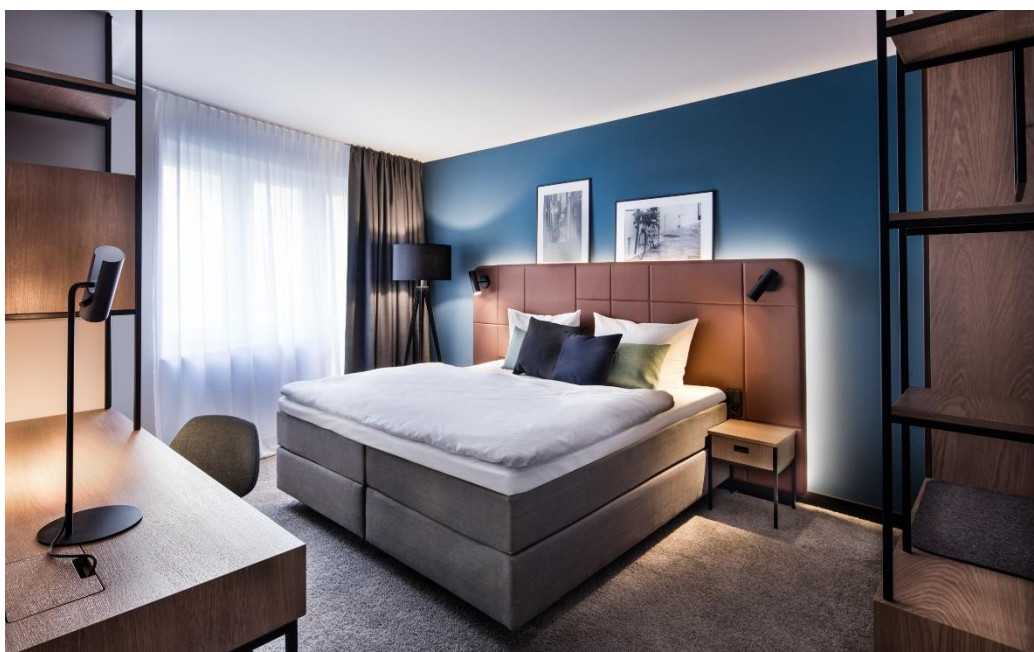


professional photos done and have everything put together by a professional web design specialist. If you are going to advertise, be smart about how you spend your money (based on your target audience and what you are offering), but don't be afraid to spend it when you figure out a plan. Always present your best self.

### 1.1.4 Design

Keeping up with trends in design and food can be exhaustive, but there are simple things you can do to keep up without making drastic changes. Here are some simple ideas that you can run with:

- **Be unique.** In your hotel, look for ways to use your space in a unique way. Do something in your lobby that helps make it stand out. For your catering company, experiment with interesting food combinations that can set you apart from the crowd.
- **Accessorize.** Properly using accessories can be an inexpensive way to add a luxurious feel to a hotel room. Unique fixtures, oddly shaped mirrors, or antique or futuristic fixtures are just some examples. Just make sure that all the accessories fit an overall theme or concept, otherwise it could come off as tacky.
- **Combine function with design.** Think about your customers. The lobby does not just have to be where the guests check-in. If you make the lobby a spot where people can meet, can do work, and can relax, you are more likely to get traffic in the restaurant/bar or shops that you have in the hotel.
- **Lighting.** The right lights can add style, set the atmosphere, and impress guests. Look for unique ways to light your rooms and lobby so that guests feel more comfortable and not like they are in a hotel room that just came out of a box.



Have an idea of the design you are looking for, but don't be afraid to create that design using unique items and ideas.

### 1.1.5 Food and Menu Planning

Every catering company needs to be prepared to work with the staples of catered meals, but you can set your company apart by also offering options that are outside the box. Here are some basic strategies you need to keep in mind, as well as some ideas for how to make your brand unique:

- **Understand your client.** Take some time to get to know your clients by asking questions and listening to their answers. Then, make recommendations that fit their event, desires, and restrictions. This seems very simple, but you'd be surprised how much of a difference you can make simply by listening.
- **Always offer a variety.** Customers like choices, so be prepared to give them options. Even once you have planned the menu for an event, you should still give the event guests a choice within the menu.
- **Anticipate needs.** Go the extra step for your clients even when they do not ask for it. If you pay attention to their needs, you can anticipate places where you can go above and beyond for them.
- **Embrace local cuisine and customs.** Do not be afraid to make what your area is known for. Many clients will jump at the chance to offer their guests authentic local cuisine.
- **Follow food trends.** Your menu options should be fluid, and if you get an idea from a current culinary trend, go with it and see what you can come up with. Every catering company is going to offer clients the typical catering menu, but if you are able to offer something new and delicious, you'll be more successful.
- **Presentation.** Just because you are making food in bulk does not mean you are allowed to slack on presentation. People eat with their eyes before they eat with their mouths, so make sure that everything is properly put together and looking good.

If you can find unique ways to differentiate yourself from the competition, you will book more events and clients and be more successful. The extra revenue will allow you to continue expanding your reach and the variety of foods and services you can offer.