

Achieving in Tourism

Principles of customer service

AC 1.1 - Principles of customer service

The Customer Experience - Introduction

As you get older you will be able to make more choices about where you go on holiday, the attractions you visit and the tourism activities you take part in.

Hopefully you will be able to enjoy your holidays and have great fun visiting theme parks and other attractions.

But you will only be able to really enjoy yourself if a wide range of people working in the tourism industry do their jobs properly and provide you with help or 'service'. These people include travel agents, hotel receptionists, ride operators, tour guides, resort reps and many more. Without their help, or if they don't do their jobs well, your experience of the tourism industry may well be less than you expected.

That's what this unit is all about.

The customer experience helps you to understand the background to how providing good customer service helps tourism organisations to give their customers a great experience and to be successful.

Of course, you may well find yourself working in the tourism industry in a few years' time providing service to customers. Or you may be working in a wide range of other industries where you are providing service to customers in different situations.

In this first section of the unit you will be investigating some of the principles of customer service. When you have studied this section, you will be asked to write a report on how principles of customer service can be applied to a tourism organisation you have studied.

Video - first impressions

There are many occasions where the interaction between an employee of a tourism organisation and a customer begins before any words are spoken. The body language and attitude of the employee is an important part in helping the customer to feel welcome.

Watch the 6 scenes of a hotel receptionist greeting a customer below before moving on to the related activity. Although there is **no spoken communication**, the attitude and body language of the receptionist changes from scene to scene.

Activity

Notice

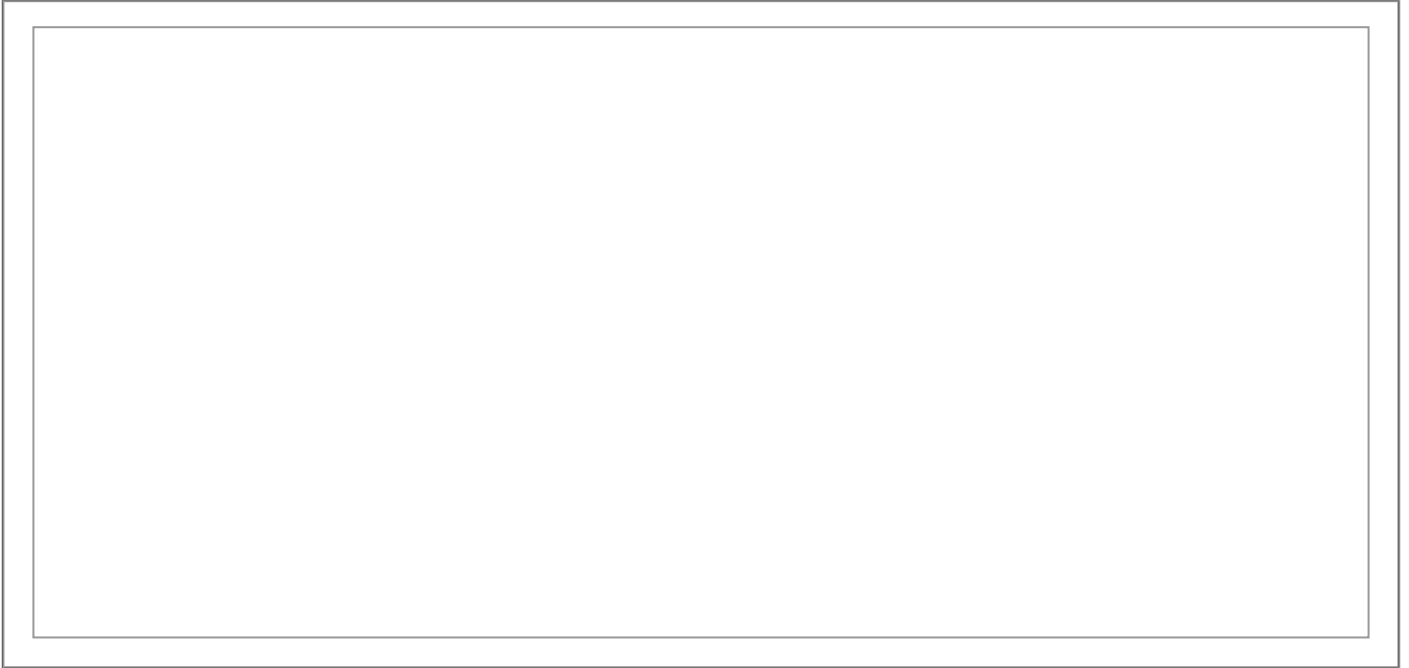
Please login to use this feature

Choose the word (or words) from the work bank above which describes the attitude and body language of the receptionist in each of the 6 scenes. You might think of different words to describe the body language of the receptionist.

There is no right answer. Discuss your answers with your class mates.

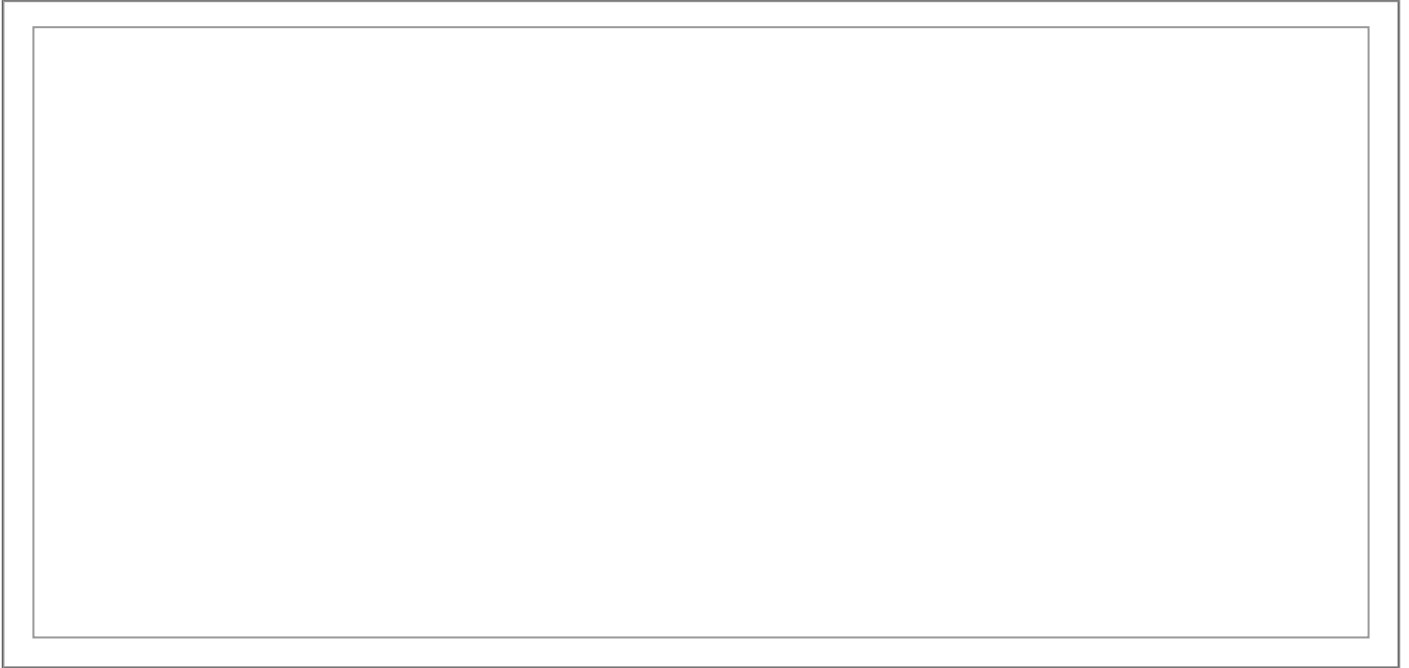
Scene 1

Your thoughts on the attitude and body language of the receptionist

A large empty rectangular box with a double border, intended for writing thoughts.

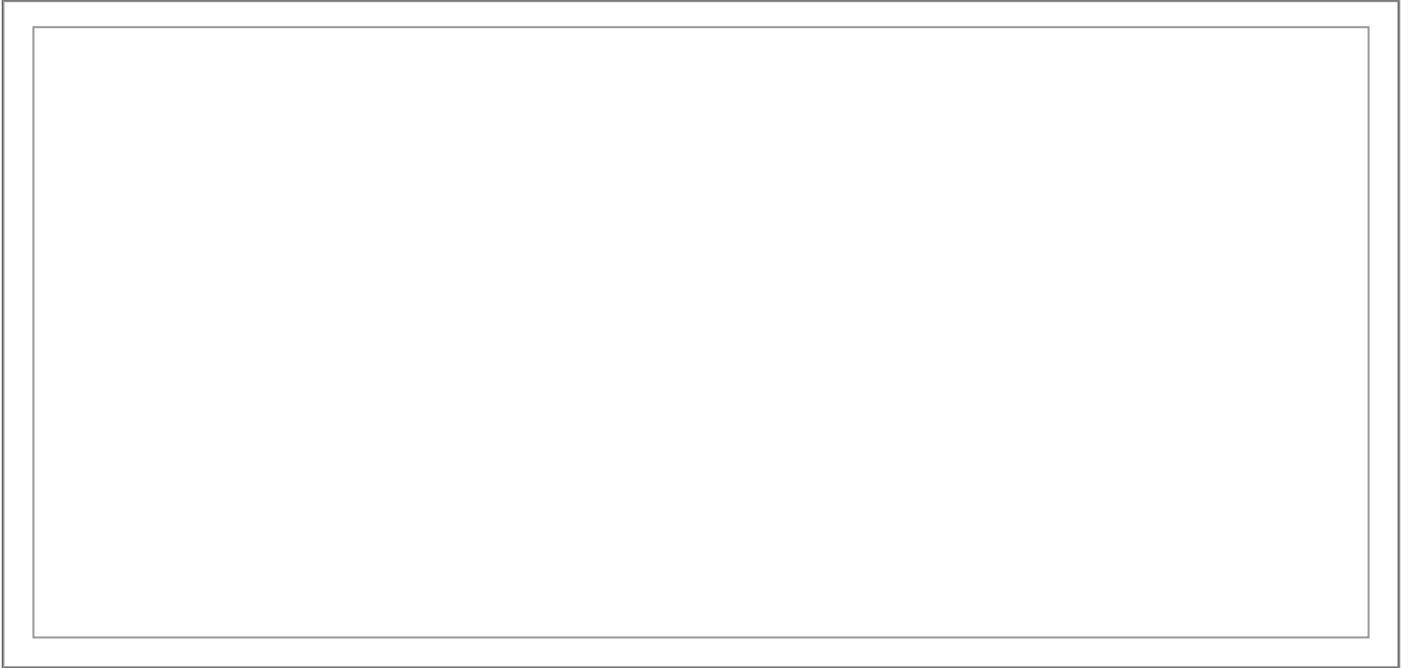
Scene 2

Your thoughts on the attitude and body language of the receptionist

A large rectangular box with a double border, intended for writing thoughts. The box is empty and occupies the lower half of the page.

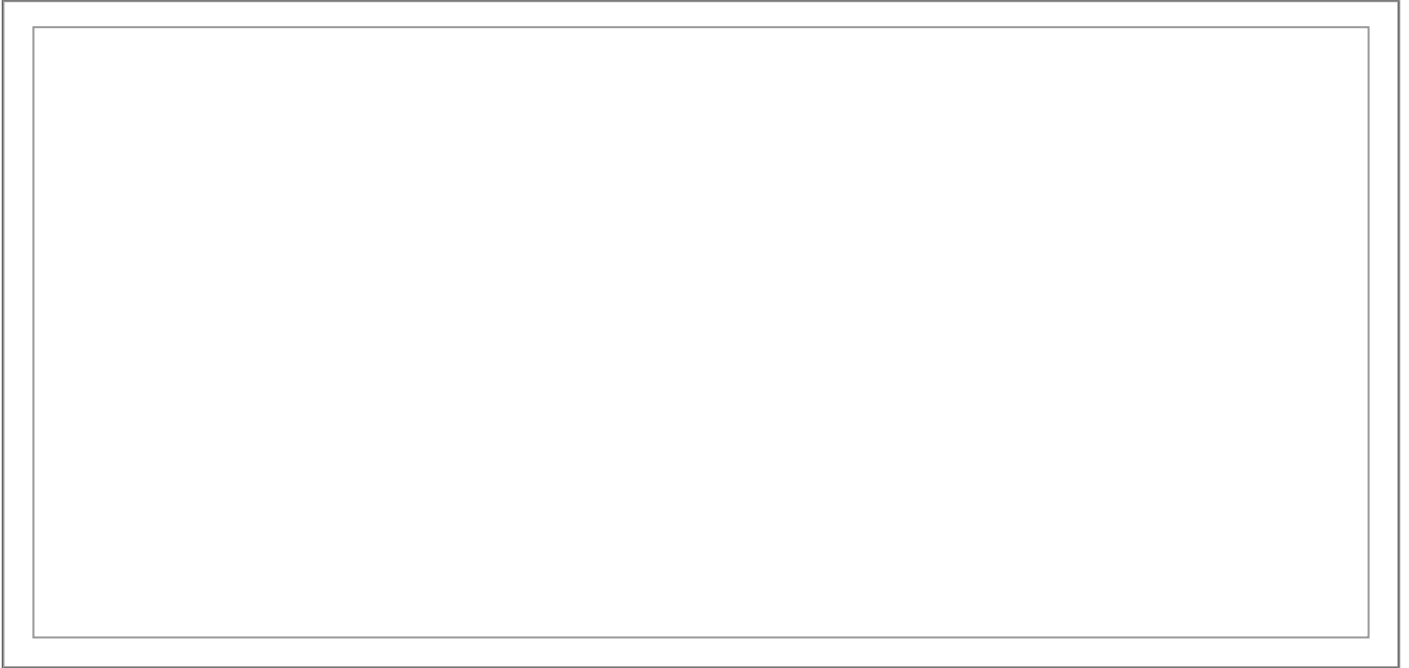
Scene 3

Your thoughts on the attitude and body language of the receptionist

A large empty rectangular box with a double border, intended for writing thoughts.

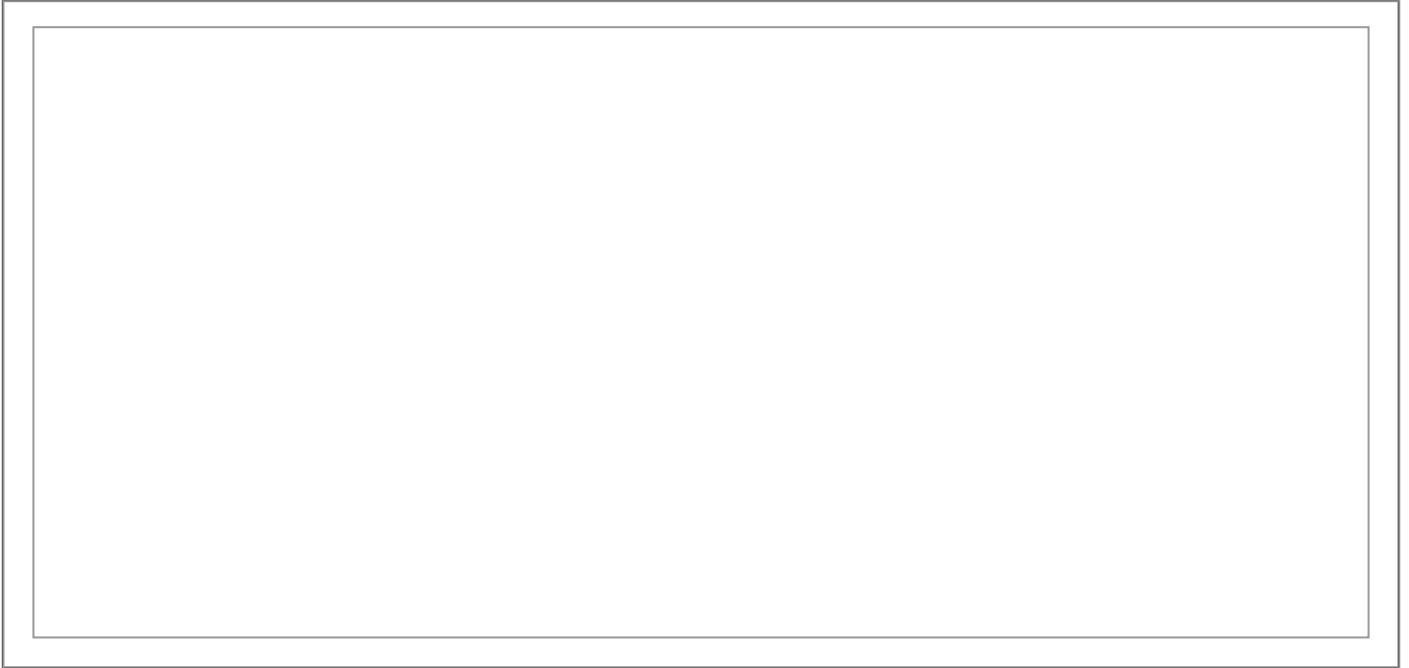
Scene 4

Your thoughts on the attitude and body language of the receptionist

A large empty rectangular box with a double border, intended for writing thoughts.

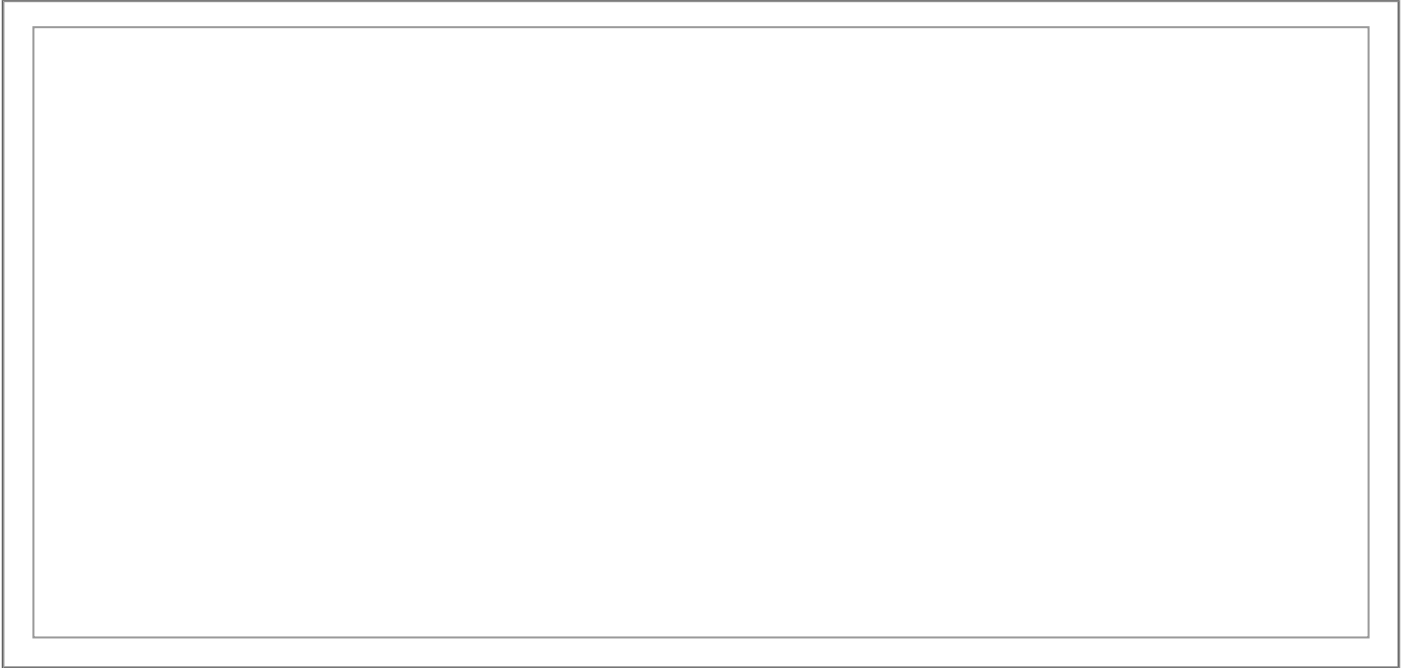
Scene 5

Your thoughts on the attitude and body language of the receptionist

A large rectangular box with a double border, intended for writing thoughts on the receptionist's attitude and body language. The box is empty and occupies the lower half of the page.

Scene 6

Your thoughts on the attitude and body language of the receptionist

A large rectangular box with a double border, intended for writing thoughts. The box is empty and occupies the lower half of the page.

First Impressions

Activity 2

Notice

Please login to use this feature

Write two short scripts between a customer and an employee in a restaurant. In one the employee is helpful and in the other the employee is less helpful.

Activity 2

Write two short scripts between a customer and an employee in a restaurant. In one the employee is helpful and in the other the employee is less helpful.

Activity 3

Notice

Please login to use this feature

Study the website of a local hotel, looking at the hotel's facilities and prices. When you have done this, work with a partner to develop a script for a telephone conversation with a customer who calls the hotel. The customer is not sure what type of room they will require and know nothing about the hotel.

Receptionist: Good morning, the Imperial Hotel

Customer: Hello, I need to book a room for next Tuesday. I'm nearly 80 years old and don't understand the internet thing. I'm attending my friend's funeral the next day.

Receptionist: ???.....

You could make a recording of your script.

Activity 3

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A large empty rectangular box with a double border, intended for writing a script. The box is composed of two concentric rectangles, creating a wide border around the central area. The interior is completely blank, providing space for the student to write their telephone conversation script.

Building Rapport

People working in different types of organisations in the tourism industry all need to build a rapport with their customers, but will interact with their customers for different amounts of time.

Services & Facilities

Services and facilities for customers

Watch this video of the services and facilities provided for visitors to Cardiff before completing the two related activities below.

Activity 1

Notice

Please login to use this feature

Having watched the video of the services and facilities provided for visitors to Cardiff, write an email or blog to a friend who has never been to Cardiff, saying why they might enjoy a visit to the city.

Include references to the facilities and services for customers you noted while you watched the video.

Activity 1

Having watched the video of the services and facilities provided for visitors to Cardiff, write an email or blog to a friend who has never been to Cardiff, saying why they might enjoy a visit to the city.

Include references to the facilities and services for customers you noted while you watched the video.

Activity 2

Notice

Please login to use this feature

Have a good look at the [Visit Cardiff](#) website. Describe the range of services and facilities for tourists visiting Cardiff provided by the website.

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Identifying customer needs

Customers of tourism organisations have a range of needs. These can be classified as:

- Information needs
- Assistance
- Advice and guidance
- Products and services
- Accessibility
- Communication

Activity 1 (Offline)

For any tourism organisation produce a PowerPoint presentation of 13 slides. One slide should be a heading and then use two slides for each type of customer need identified above.

You can use the website of the chosen organisation and suitable images you can find online.

Responding to feedback

Modern communication methods and social media have made it much easier for customers to review the experience they had from a tourism organisation.

There are two ways that tourism organisations can obtain information about their customers' experience. They can ask customers what they thought about the organisation, or they can look at review sites such as Trip Advisor.

What's important is that tourism organisations do something about negative comments or feedback so future customers are not put off. Also, they can use positive feedback to promote the organisation or reward their staff.

Complete the activities below.

Activity 1

Notice

Please login to use this feature

The review in the box below is real and was taken from reviews of a hotel in London.

Read through the review and suggest ways in which the owners of the hotel could respond to the negative feedback.

I never write reviews but want to save anyone from staying here! You can't beat the location and with a bit of upkeep this property could be fantastic....BUT..... It is appalling! The superior family apartment with patio is not fit for purpose and in my view should not be used for guests.

When I got to the room (top floor with no one there to offer the 'help' with bags their website promised) the room was made up but not clean. When I tried to call the manager, I discovered the phone did not work. (Also, advertised as an 'amenity' on the website). So, I went down 3 flights of stairs again and knocked on her door. She pretended to not understand me

but did tell me that the phones would be fixed on Monday (this was Saturday). Of course, Monday rolled around and no one fixed the phones. The phones were out the entire week I was there. The internet service was marginal at best and a good part of the time I had not internet at all, and when I did the service was painfully slow. The couple in the room across from mine were livid because the husband needed the internet to work. They checked out after one day. I would have left but I was ill in London and didn't have the energy or strength to find a new hotel. Several other guests I spoke to also left early. I met them as I wandered around the hotel with my computer desperately trying to get online.

When I complained, I was literally screamed at and told that I was a troublemaker who was just trying to get a free holiday! A man named David who I spoke to on the phone asked me why I was so difficult and accused me of being a racist because I complained that the woman at the hotel site (who, let me add, was hardly ever there) didn't speak English well enough to communicate effectively. He told me that I was breaking the law - that racism was against the law in England! Unbelievable.

Again, I only remained there all week because I was traveling alone and too ill to find another hotel.

Do yourself a favour - steer clear of this hotel.

Activity

Read through the review and suggest ways in which the owners of the hotel could respond to the negative feedback.

Activity 2

Notice

Please login to use this feature

Look at the [Trip Advisor](#) website and see if you can find examples of reviews where customers state that customer service is better than it was the last time they visited.

Review 1

Review 2

Review 3

Equalities

Tourism organisations must ensure that all their customers are treated equally and laws have been passed to make sure that all customers are treated the same. The most recent law is called The Equalities Act.

However, there are many examples where some customers are unable to use all of the services and facilities which are provided by the organisation. A good example is young children not being able to go on the 'white-knuckle' rides in theme parks.

Some tourism organisations produce what is known as an Access Statement which sets out how the organisation can help people who may have disabilities or who require special assistance. It may also inform customers of issues that they might encounter when they visit the organisation. This helps to ensure that all customers have a good experience with tourism organisations.

Activity

Notice

Please login to use this feature

Set out below is an Access Statement for a hotel in Swansea. Read through the statement carefully then respond to the email requests which follow when you open the online writing-frame.

Image not found or type unknown

Email 1

From: FWJones34@aol.com

Sent: 23 May 2018 11:30

Subject: access

My husband and I are planning a 60th wedding anniversary party for my parents. My father uses a wheelchair and my mother walks with a Zimmer frame. Please could you let me know if they can gain access to the bar and restaurant.



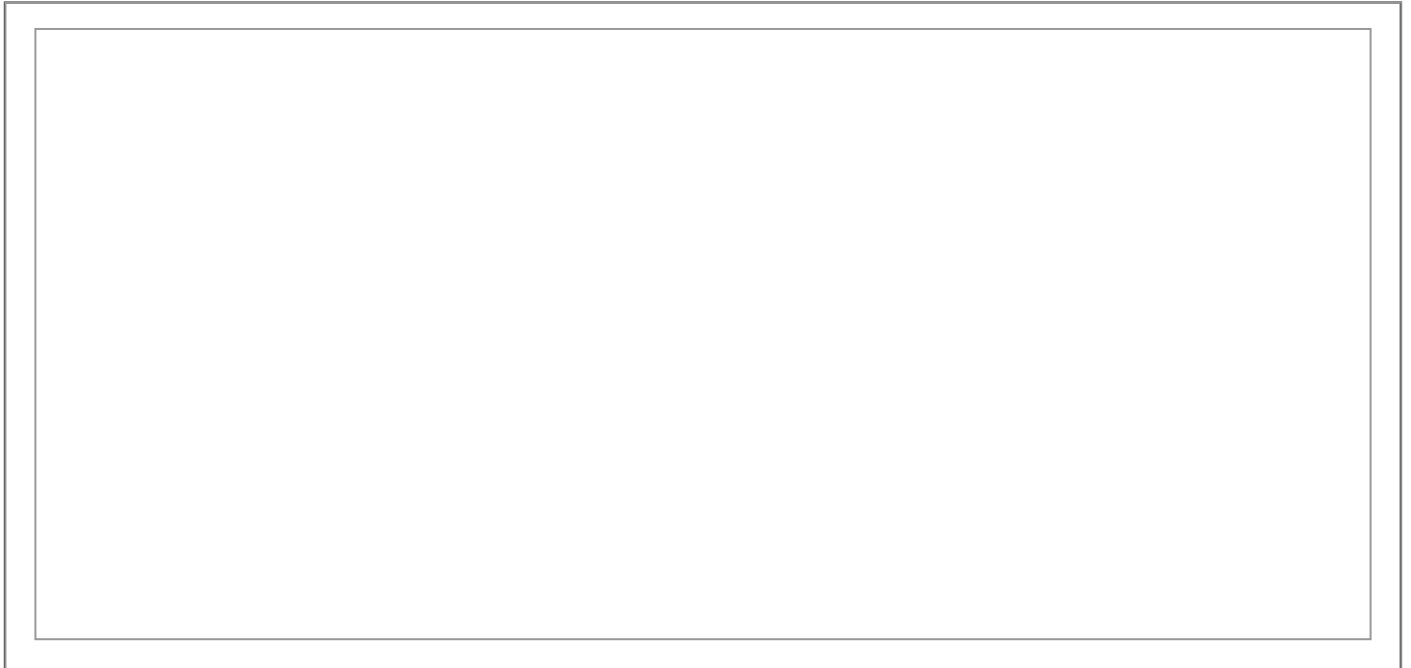
Email 2

From: RJThomas@virgin.net

Sent: 21 May 2018 07:40

Subject: dietary requirements

My partner and I are hoping to stay with you for two nights. My partner requires a gluten free diet. Will that be a problem?



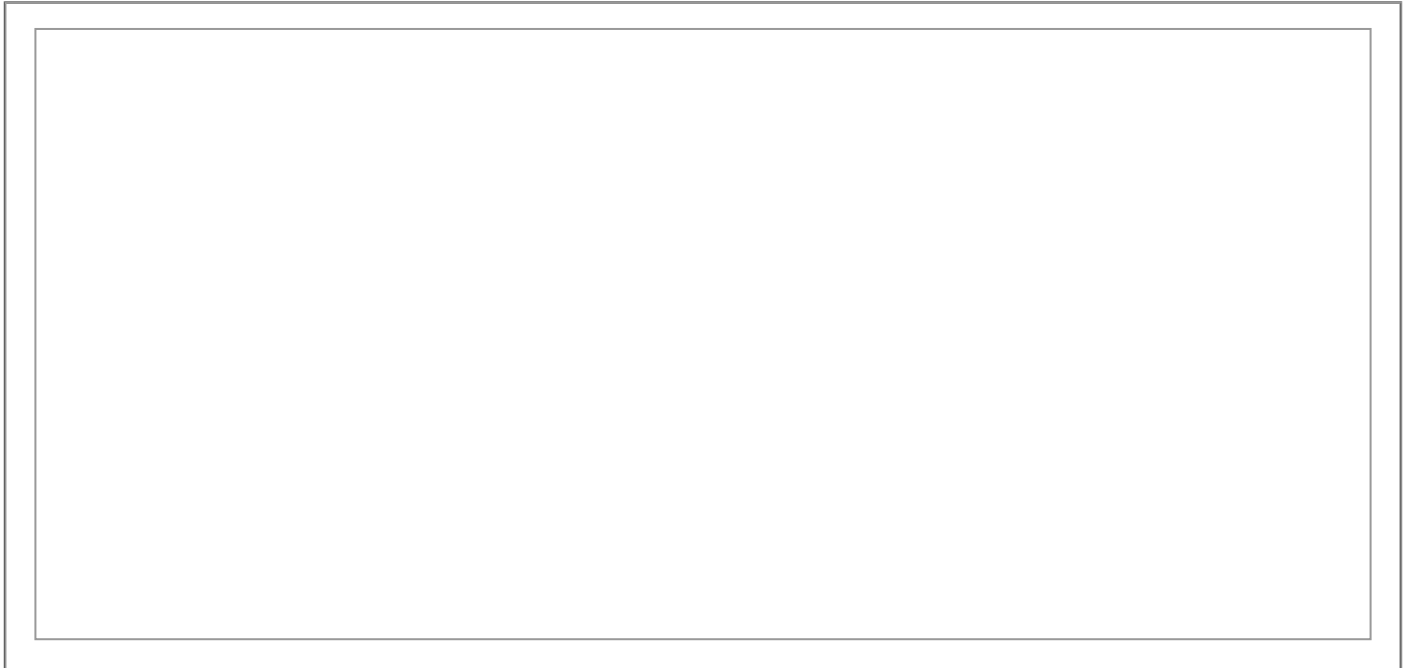
Email 3

From: MTMacey@gmail.com

Sent: 1 June 2018 11:34

Subject: arrival

I am hoping to stay with you next week, but it looks as if I will be arriving very late. I am a wheelchair user. Will I be able to gain access to the hotel?



Email 4

From: MJAllen45@sky.com
Sent: 2 March 2018 09:40
Subject: access arrangements

I am planning to stay with you next month. I have severe asthma and can only walk a short distance. I am hoping to drive to the hotel. Please could you let me know about the access arrangements?



Email 5

From: SRHolloway@BTOpenworld.com

Sent: 14 January 2018 09:43

Subject: nearest station

My wife is partially sighted and is registered as a blind person. We are booked in for two nights next week. Please could you confirm access to the hotel from the railway station.



Health, Safety & Security

Tourism organisations are responsible for the health, safety and security of their customers. They are also responsible for their employees. There are thousands of laws, rules and regulations covering all sorts of tourism organisations. A few examples of rules and regulations would be:

- The welfare of animals in a zoo and security of zookeepers and customers
- The safety of rides at a theme park
- Rules about the safety of customers using a swimming pool in a hotel
- Regulations about the safety procedures on board an aircraft.

There are many other examples.

One part of health and safety is the range of signs which must be displayed around any tourism organisation.

Activity (Offline)

Study the signs and other information in the images in the downloadable activity below and for each one explain why they are important to the health, safety and security of customers and staff.

Putting it all together

You have now investigated principles of customer service in tourism organisations in a number of ways and you should understand a lot more about what customer service is and why it is important in making sure that customers have a good experience.

You can summarise your learning by applying your knowledge and understanding of principles of customer service to one tourism organisation in the Assessment Activity on the next page.

Assessment Activity

Notice

Please login to use this feature

Choose an organisation you have studied and with which you are familiar.

Consider each of the principles of customer service covered in the unit and describe fully how it is covered by your chosen organisation.

Use the Power Point presentation on the previous page to help with your report.

You might be able to add further information to describe the principles of customer service more fully. Remember to apply the principles of customer service to your chosen organisation.

Activity

Choose an organisation you have studied and with which you are familiar.

Consider each of the principles of customer service covered in the unit and describe fully how it is covered by your chosen organisation.

