

Cambridge **TECHNICALS LEVEL 3**

BUSINESS

Cambridge
TECHNICALS
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Exemplar candidate work

Unit 4 – Customers and communication

Version 1



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INTRODUCTION

This is a guide for teachers so that you can see how we mark work for Cambridge Technicals.

The guide contains exemplar candidate work for this unit and covers learning outcome 1 graded at a pass, merit and distinction and learning outcome 2, graded at a pass and a merit.

The accompanying commentary explains why the work was awarded that grade. Additional guidance has been added to suggest improvements that could be made in order to achieve a higher grade.

Reproduction of candidate work

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Model Assignments

Model assignments are available for the following units from the link below:

http://www.ocr.org.uk/qualifications/vocational-education-and-skills/cambridge-technicals-business-level-3-certificate-extended-certificate-foundation-diploma-diploma-05834-05837-2016-suite/?qualtype_key=cambridge-technicals/

Unit 4 – Customers and information
Unit 5 – Marketing and market research
Unit 6 – Marketing strategy
Unit 7 – Marketing campaign
Unit 8 – Introduction to human resources
Unit 11 – Accounting concepts
Unit 12 – Financial accounting
Unit 13 – Management accounting
Unit 16 – Principles of project management
Unit 17 – Responsible business practices
Unit 19 – International business
Unit 20 – Business events
Unit 22 – Delivering a business project

Plagiarism

Work must be free from plagiarism. Plagiarism is the submission of someone else's work as your own and/or failure to acknowledge a source correctly. Plagiarism makes up a large percentage of cases of suspected malpractice reported to us by moderators. You must make sure you don't accept plagiarised work as evidence.

In line with the policy and procedures of JCQ on suspected malpractice, the penalties applied for plagiarism would usually result in the claim not being allowed.

Plagiarism often occurs innocently when learners don't know that they must reference or acknowledge their sources, or aren't sure how to do so. It's important to make sure your learners understand:

- the meaning of plagiarism and what penalties may be applied
- that they can refer to research, quotations or evidence produced by somebody else but they must list and reference their sources
- quoting someone else's work, even when it's properly sourced and referenced, isn't an indication of understanding.

The learner has to 'do' something with that information to show they understand. For example, if a learner has to analyse data from an experiment, quoting data doesn't show that they understand what it means. The learner has to interpret the data and, by relating it to their assignment, say what they think it means.

LO1 Understand who customers are and their importance to businesses – Pass

P1

Explain who the customers of a specific business are and what influences their behaviour.

Leisure customers- The loyal and returning leisure customers are attracted to Aldwark manor by the high quality rooms, golf course and the spa. Their customer needs include; dining at the time they want, rooms ready to perfection, food on the menu that they like, staff ready to meet and greet them like they are VIPs, their **expectation** is that these needs are met. These customers **expect** a high quality relaxing weekend away and may use things like special offers and discounts. The leisure customers **demographic** is usually wealthy people or couples in an age range of about 40-70 with higher levels of disposable income. Because leisure customers are older they have **cultural differences** and expect better customer service as they are less independent. They do not care about the **location** of the hotel and would be willing to travel a long way in order to get a higher quality service. The **level of satisfaction** is very important to leisure customers and completely determines whether they will become or continue to be a loyal returning customer.

Business customers- business customers have different needs to leisure customers, and they have different **expectations** of their needs being met, they do not expect a perfect service from Aldwark manor as they are not spending their own money. They do not care about discount or special offers as they are not spending their own money, the manager of the hotel told us this usually means that they are less likely to complain. The general Aldwark manor business customers **demographic** is usually 30 -50 years old, middle income and male, this means they will be more independent whereas the older generation expects doors to be help open for them etc. Business customers are influenced to stay at Aldwark manor because of the **location** as they may need to be close by to certain areas. The business customers expect business facilities such as good and fast Wi-Fi over services such as the spa, they want quick and efficient check in and dining services and they want a comfortable bedroom. They are not influenced greatly by **levels of satisfaction** on whether they return because if they enjoy it they may not return to the hotel as they are not on business in the same location very often so they may not need to **interact with the hotel** ever again, but if they did not enjoy the services at Aldwark manor they may still have to return due to business and the person booking the hotel (not usually the person staying in the hotel in a business context) will make the booking based on price, availability and **location**.

One off customers- one off external customers can be those who get deals on things like group on offers and never return. The hotel manager said these customers are loyal to offers not the hotel or anywhere else. The general **demographic** of these customers is 25-35, both genders, with a middle income. Very little of these customers will convert to returning customers at Aldwark manor. They do not care about the **location** as they are getting offers on the services however it will attract more people from surrounding areas. The **level of satisfaction** does not completely determine whether they will return as they rely on offers and may not be able to return even if they enjoyed it as they cannot afford it. Their **needs & expectations** are similar to leisure customers because they may have paid 10% of the actual price, they still expect 100% service.

Aldwark manor also caters for wedding customers and guests, these tend to be one off customers, however they are more likely to be converted compared to the discounted customers above. The general **demographic** of these customers is 25-35, both genders, with a high income. These customer **needs and expectations** are a perfect stay, and perfectly managed day by Aldwark manor staff, they need to feel that their wedding is the only wedding in the hotel this year (although the hotel do at least one a week). Because peoples wedding days are so important and a day they save up for and look forward too for a long time the **level of satisfaction** is high, and this may influence

wedding guests to use the venue for their wedding too, also the wedding couple to return for other events in their life such as anniversaries and christenings. The location of the hotel will influence the customer behaviour as they will want a beautiful venue in a place accessible to a majority of their guests. Cultural changes mean more weddings are being held in hotels (since 1994 this has been possible), this means the whole wedding package has become a larger part of Aldwalk manors business model, however research now shows that the number of church weddings are increasing, even while the total number of marriages continues to decrease, so another cultural shift is influencing customer behaviour.

Internal customers- Are the staff the work at Aldwalk manor and Q Hotels. These customers need and expect to be paid and treated fairly and they need to feel part of a happy and successful team. They have a daily interaction with the business so it is important they are happy or they will leave. They will be influence by the location of the hotel as they will want it to be near their home. The general demographic of these customers is 30-50, both genders, with a low/middle income.

P3

Explain the range of customer services a specific business provides and how each area of the business has responded to the need to provide customer service

Bar done in main coursework.

The hotel reception is vital; Customer service starts with a first impression, a good first impression of the hotel will influence the relationship with the customer in the long-term. Potential and returning customers can be won or lost in the first interactions between Aldwalk manor and its customers, so ensuring reception has everything in place and functioning at all times is vitally important.

Aldwalk manor reception can cater for the customers' needs in many ways for example if requested they can order local taxis, they can reserve dinning times and usually prioritise the prime dining times for returning customers. They also will know more about the local area than the customers and can suggest local places to visit and give directions to places suggested by the customers. The reception staff are trained to deal with customer complaints and communicate with the areas of the hotel that can solve the problem. Because the spa and golf area has different reception areas the hotel reception is dedicated to resident (people who are staying in the hotel) customer enquiries. Reception staff have a weekly briefing so they know about any special customer needs (such as VIPs and disabled guests). Reception staff also work as part of the hotel administration team to regularly communicate offers and events to potential and returning customers.

The spa staff will be knowledgeable on what spa treatments are suited to different people, for example different treatments are for different types of skin and treatments are offered for different reasons such as stress relief. The staff could also give their opinion on which beauty products the customer should buy for themselves at home. The staff will also be able to answer any questions the customer has on the beauty treatments supplied but they will also have a knowledge on brands and home treatments to help the customer. The Spa staff also offer complementary sessions where they show customers how to apply different products and explain what the benefit the products might bring. The spa staff are also all first aid trained. The Spa area has different reception to ensure all customer enquiries are dealt with by a golf specialist.

Guest service can also take food up to the customers who want to eat in their room. By doing this it lets the customers stay in their room and not have to go downstairs to collect it.

How the RLC creates and offers to manage customer service?

Customer service is the provision of service to customers before, during and after a purchase. The perception of success of such interactions is dependent on employees "who can adjust themselves to the personality of the guest".



The main key points for a business to create good customer service is:

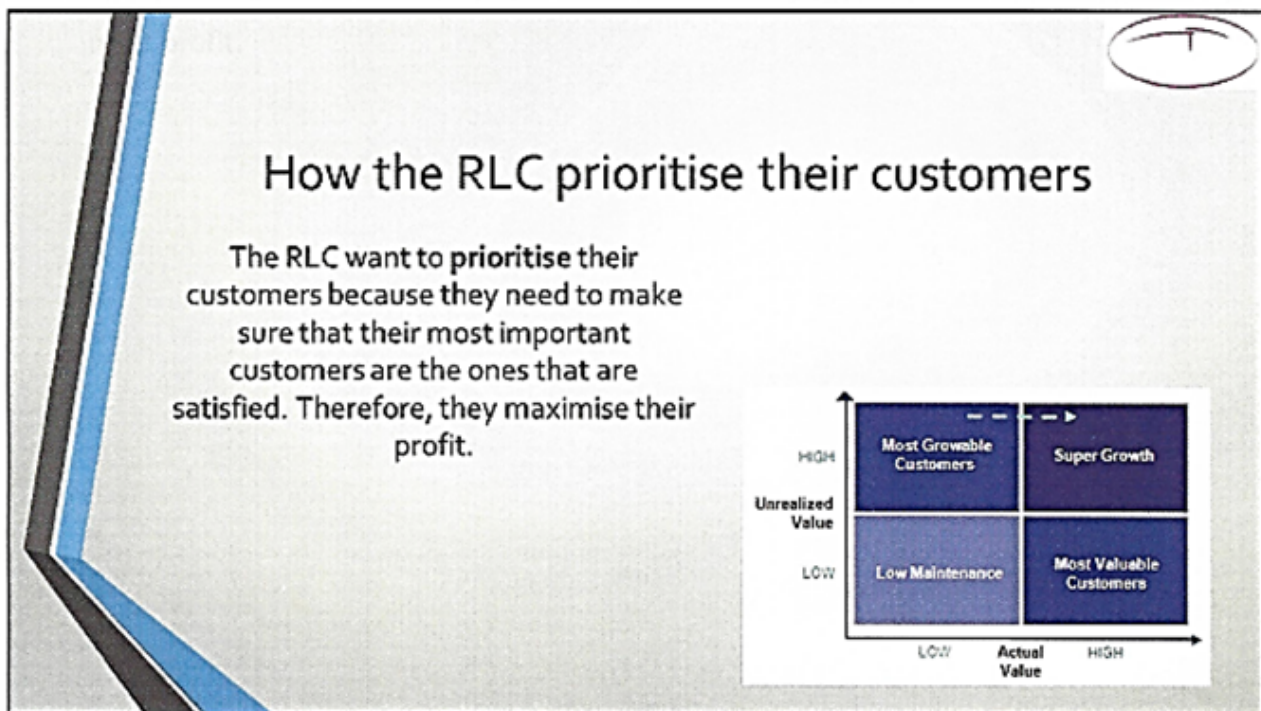
- Empathy
- Positivity
- Patience
- Clarity in Communication
- Continuous improvement



P2

The RLC want to satisfy everyone however they have different ways put in place to do that. The main method of customer service is the "front of house" (reception) this is the most effective method because it is within the building therefore, anyone there that wants to ask anything or tell them anything they can. Therefore, the customers will get the quickest response possible. They also pick up phone calls and deal with different types of customer e.g. membership holders or casual customers. The RLC will treat these customers a little different because they will be a little more lenient to the loyal customer's requests because they don't want to lose them. However, the RLC will answer both their questions or queries as quickly as possible. They also do many other things at the RLC to meet their customers' needs which are try to meet everyone's individual needs (if it helps the RLC). They make sure everything is safe for the customers (facilities) and they employ gym instructors which are specialists therefore, they are all trained to level 4 and 3 at degree level which mean they will know almost everything and can point the customers in the right direction, give them any tips or they can set a program up which they need to do to help them use the gym successfully. This will help the customers and make the more satisfied. If the RLC have any major problems that could escalate into the media, they will try to do anything they can to keep it out of the "public eye"

(interview) which means in the media this is because they would then get bad customer relations and they would probably lose some of their customers therefore losing profit.



P2

The RLC try to give every single one of their customers the same customer service and they try to answer their questions/quires as soon as possible however, the RLC can't always treat everyone the same because sometimes they have an overload and need to answer them one by one and make a queue, the RLC will prioritise certain groups of customers because they can't afford to lose them and they don't want to be giving any customers to the competition. If the RLC had every different type of customer asking questions (loyal, returning, one-off, potential) they would prioritise the loyal customer because they are going to keep coming back and spending money therefore they want to make the experience as best as possible so it will encourage them to come back and spend more money. They will then prioritise one-off and potential customers because they want to try and give them such a good experience they become loyal customers and spend money in specific time gaps e.g. once a week this is because they would like a more stable profit and more profit. Then they will attend to the returning customers however they will deal with the other customer quite quickly so they don't keep them waiting and make them feel unsatisfied. If the RLC could only meet some of their customers' needs then it would go loyal, returning, one-off then potential this is because this is the hierarchy of how makes them the most profit therefore they want to keep the money makers as happy as possible. If the RLC had to prioritise an age group, then they would prioritise 35-50-year-olds because that is the age range that most commonly attend and use the facilities and again they want to help the most people so they make the most profit.



Prioritising the RLC's needs

Businesses **prioritise** their needs because they need to make sure the most important and necessary task are being complete or task that aren't really necessary.

PRIORiTiES

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

P2

The RLC prioritise their objectives this is because they are the main aim for the business therefore, once they completed these objectives they will be the successful and will then have new objectives. They do this by trying to encourage more customers to buy their membership which will lead to a reliable source of income which is their goal that SLL set them. Having more customers will increase their bills e.g. utility bills. However, they will be making more profit therefore they will be getting closer to their goal. They will prioritise anything that could get them fined or harm the customers e.g. on safety where the customers won't get harmed, this is because if something like that was to happen then they will get a fine which takes a lot of money from the RLC and will get them bad publicity from the media. Which will lead to less sales and less profit.

How the RLC deals with disabilities

All businesses want to make sure they deal with disabilities, because this not only looks good on the business but also widens their customers and their target audience



P2

The RLC are extremely good because they make sure every type of customer can come and pay to use their facilities. The RLC do this by employing fitness instructors that have a degree at level 3 and 4 this is because they are specialist and can point people into the right direction. The RLC do this because this is something that their competitors don't have therefore, that giving them a competitive advantage on the other businesses and will steal some of their potential customers therefore maximising profits. The RLC have also done this by making every facility accessible by building ramps and lifts for people in wheel chairs. Also, they have staff patrolling which are always there to help. They are also creating a fundraising project that will allow them to buy machines that help disabled people and make their disabilities stronger/easier to cope with. By doing this they offer a good advertising campaign which could influence more customers to come but also they are maximising their customers by allowing disabled people to use their facilities as well which also gives them another, competitive advantage.

P3- Explain the range of customer services a specific business provides and how each area of the business has responded to the need to provide customer service.

Food and Beverages

For food and beverages at Boringdon, staff are and have to be knowledgeable of their menu and the part of the business that they work in. This is a result of staff having significant training over a period of time making them experienced enough to cope with any questions that customers may ask. As the staff working in the food and drink part of Boringdon will be working very close to the customers, they need to be dressed well, in addition to being clean and tidy due to their appearance having a direct view point that the customers may link with the products and services provided at Boringdon. For example if the waiters aren't dressed well and are dirty, customers may develop a view of the food and beverages offered by Boringdon as being dirty by making a direct comparison between the two. Also leading on from this, staff will be interacting with customers frequently so need to be respectful, professional and not discriminate against customers for who they are. This means staff cannot allow their personal feelings about a customer affect how they treat customers; this means that staff cannot treat staff better or worse than other customers. Lastly staffs in the food and beverages department need to be efficient and prompt. This means that they need to satisfy the customers' needs and expectations as fast as they can and if they can't complete the task in an appropriate time in comparison to the customers' expectations then they need to offer some kind of compensation for them.

Green Keepers

For Green keepers at Boringdon, the staff need to make sure that the quality of the greens and the rest of the course is at the standards that Boringdon has promised to its customers. In order for Boringdon to try and ensure the good standards of their course they have recently invested in a new piece of machinery, which required a large sum of cash, to cut the grass to a better standard. Along with just buying the new equipment they have also trained their staff to use the equipment so that they can be as efficient as possible with it, despite it taking longer the results will be neater consequently leading to more satisfied customers. To guarantee that the course is always in prime condition, the green keepers cut the course daily due to the fact that if the grass gets longer, the game will get slowed and customers will be displeased. This means that the green keepers will have to perform routine maintenance on the course which brings problems as they might get in the way of customers who are playing on the day. The solution to this is for the green keepers to find out the tee times for the day/ week so that their work for the day will not clash with the customers. However the standard of the facilities weren't always at a high standard and needed to be matured up to the fine conditions it is in now. This might be hard to keep as a result of vandals or other people using the course who may churn up the grass meaning the facilities are not at the condition which customers expect of Boringdon to provide which will lead to customers being dissatisfied with the quality of the facilities at Boringdon and may move to one of the competitors in the local area.

Golf Professionals

There is an experienced team of 5 PGA Golf Professionals at Boringdon who would have had to of passed coaching training in order to gain their title of golf

professionals and become experienced in their jobs. Golf professional's roles vary for different types of customer however the main roles of their job will be to give advice, stock equipment in the golf shop and work face to face with the customers. The Golf professionals are the face of the golf course which consequently means that their role in customer service and satisfying the customers' needs and expectations will have a direct impact on the customer's view on the golf course. The golf professional's job may involve customer service when dealing with potential/new, one off and returning customers.

When dealing with potential customers the golf professionals may provide taster/introduction lessons to the customers to see if the customers like golf or not, and to see if they want to play it further. The quality of the customer service provided by the golf professionals at this stage will help to increase the amount of golf members at Boringdon. Another aspect of customer service that golf professionals may offer to potential customers is to offer them a tour of Boringdon or offer information about the course, which may include details on costs, terrain and the distance of the course. This is important information to customers with difficulty moving around as if they will not be able to move easily around the course it will result in unsatisfied customers. The last acts of customer service that a golf professional may offer to new customers is that they may offer their expert advice on the sport which may include custom fitting clubs so that the customers can play to the best of their ability.

When dealing with returning customers, Golf Professionals may provide lessons to develop customers skills, which will lead to satisfied customers because they will start playing better and enjoying the sport more. This may result in the customers wanting to play more which helps to satisfy the business needs as Boringdon will be able to make more of a profit. Along with this Golf Professionals can offer advice on the course due them working closely to the customers which means that they can tell them how to play the course with their technique. Also they can offer advice in respect to the weather conditions on each day, which can help to satisfy customers as they can adapt their game on the advice from the golf professionals. In addition to this Golf Professionals at Boringdon update social Medias such as Twitter and YouTube in order to interact, advice and teach the customers of Boringdon.

When dealing with one off customers at Boringdon, Golf Professionals can help to organise bookings which could be online or face to face. In particular when Boringdon host society days for individuals and businesses, Golf Professional's help to organise tee times and advise on what timings are best for the course. They can also give health and safety on the course and can give an update on the condition of the course, which means if bad weather were to hit the course the Golf professionals can inform the customers on this.

Marketing/ Sales

Boringdon have recently changed the way they market towards their customers as they have moved away from solely depending on their website and now prioritise their marketing on social media. Boringdon now use 85% of their marketing through Facebook, but also use Instagram and Twitter frequently to advertise their business. This helps to meet customer need as expectations due to the customer demographics that they are trying to market towards. This is because they want to target middle class 30 to 50 year olds as they are the customers who most frequently use the facilities at Boringdon. These customers' needs and expectations are met because most people in this category have some kind of social media which makes it

easier for customers to access and interact with Boringdon. Also social media means that Boringdon has 24/7 marketing and will be constantly advertising towards returning, one of and even potential customers due to the wide variety of people that use social medias. As a result of using social Medias to market, Boringdon's business needs are met because it is cheaper to market on apps such as Facebook than conventional ways used in the past. This is because Boringdon now has a £40,000 budget for marketing which is relatively low in the current market. An example of the costs for marketing on social media is that Boringdon can boost posts on apps such as Facebook for £30 per post which allows them to reach out and interact with a wide variety of customers of different demographics. In addition to marketing on social media Boringdon also still use certain aspects of their website to promote current events and also deliver letters in the local area in order to appeal to every customer that they can, this is mostly used to advertise their one off events such as tribute bands.

Admin, Cleaning, Reception

At Boringdon the staff employed in reception are the face of the business and their work will have a direct effect on the customer's view at Boringdon due to it being the first interaction with the business. The staff need to be trained in order to be knowledgeable about the business in order to answer any questions or queries about the business. As a result of the receptionists being the face of the business, they always need to be friendly, available and accessible, which is important for returning customers as they will be attending the site of Boringdon on a regular basis and will expect a relationship from the staff. Also if they are not meeting customer expectations the customers will become dissatisfied and may spread their bad experience with others which may lead to a bad reputation and less new customers attending Boringdon, which will subsequently lead to less profit being made at Boringdon in the long term. Another way that the receptionists job will include customer service is by how quick and effective they can do their job as they need to make the customers feel important but also not consume too much time as they could cause customers to have to queue which will lead to unhappy customers as their expectations are not being met.

The staff working in admin will also interact with customers; however most of this will be over the phone as they deal with the phone calls to Boringdon. This is important for customer service as they will need to have good knowledge of the business and they need to be friendly and have a good tone of voice in order to deal with the customers over the phone. Which is most important for potential customers who may end up becoming returning customers, resulting in Boringdon having more customers which will lead to more profit coming into Boringdon henceforth increasing the amount they can invest in the business. The staff working in admin will deal with payment transactions which will need to be dealt with swiftly and effortlessly in order to make sure that customers are not getting bored with the paperwork and can just enjoy what they paid for. Dealing with payments is the most important part of admin due to it having to take the most care with it due to the fact that their customer's personal and payment details are being used. This means that Boringdon security needs to comply with the data protection legislation when dealing with payments, for example when dealing with golf memberships that are often paid monthly and directly off of a credit card, Boringdon need to take the correct amount of cash from the correct customers. Also if Boringdon gets this wrong then they will cause a scare

on their customers and will have to offer compensation in order to try and recover some kind of customer satisfaction. Nonetheless, Boringdon admin team did mess up with their data protection when they sent an email to all of their customers regarding personal details, however this was soon resolved and there was not too many unhappy customers and Boringdon were able to gain the trust of their customers back.

The cleaners at Boringdon need to keep the site to a high standard of cleanliness in order to meet the customer's benchmark expectation of what the condition of the site should be. This is because when the customers arrive at Boringdon the first thing that they will see and smell is the work of the cleaners. For example if the site is dirty and has a smell of rubbish as the cleaners aren't doing what they should be, then the customers will make the comparison of the dirty unorganised conditions to the rest of the business, therefore making them not want to take their business there and will most likely move to a competitor. In order to meet the expected level of cleaning expected by customers and required by legislation for health and safety, the cleaners will have to work daily on maintenance as well as on call. This is due to the fact that they might need to clean up any current issues for example vomit as quick as possible as they cannot leave it as it will begin to smell leading to a distasteful odour that customers will associate with Boringdon. Also the cleaners will need to work on a rotor in order to make sure all the rooms are as clean as possible every day, in order to keep customer happiness high. Certain rooms, for example the showers or changing rooms, will have to be cleaned on more frequent occasions as they are more likely to get dirty and might become unsafe if not done so. Although customers will want the place they are in to get cleaned regularly, Boringdon may want the cleaners to work hidden and out of the way so that the cleanliness of the site seems seamless, which means the cleaners will do the majority of their shift at early and late hours.

Commentary

Why the work met the criteria

P1: The teaching content for 1.1 and 1.2 provides learners with a framework to discuss the different types of customer for a specified business as well as what influences their behaviour. The evidence makes use of this framework, identifying a number of different customer types and offering a brief explanation of factors influencing their behaviour. The explanations are relevant to the specified business. This gives the evidence focus and enables the criterion to be met despite the relatively brief explanations provided.

P2: To achieve P2 learners need to describe how a specified business has responded to the differing needs of its customers. The teaching content for 1.3 focuses on actions an organisation can take to manage the competing needs of its customers as well as specific actions it can take to respond to individual customer needs. This evidence attempts to address both aspects and although weak, the criterion has been met. A weakness of the evidence is that it occasionally contradicts itself (e.g. it asserts that the leisure centre treats everyone equally then provides an example of how it will attempt to meet the needs of loyal customers over those of new customers). The assessment criterion has the command word 'describe' and so an explanation of why the organisation takes these actions is not required.

P3: To achieve P3 learners need to explain the customer services provided by the business and how each area of the business has responded to the need to provide customer service. The actual areas of the business covered will depend on the activities of the business, it is not necessary to consider functional areas if the business does not organise by function. The evidence here considers each area of the business in turn and then explains the customer services provided by that area, for example by explaining how the activity meets the needs of customers. The explanations are detailed and specific to each area of the business.

How the work could be improved/strengthened

The extent and depth of the explanations offered is relatively brief. The learner should be encouraged to think analytically by exploring both operational and financial impacts of the activities they have described and explained in P2 and P3. They should be shown how to develop analytical chains of argument. These skills would then be applied when responding to the M1 task.

Other resources that may be useful

www.instituteofcustomerservice.com

Customer Service Pocketbook: https://www.amazon.co.uk/Customer-Service-Pocketbook-Sean-McManus/dp/190661055X/ref=sr_1_1?__s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1525272982&sr=1-17&keywords=customer+service

Alternative formats that the work could be produced in

P1 could be produced as a guide to support the induction of new customer-facing employees.

P2 and P3 could be in the form of a briefing guide for local small business owners, using the learner's chosen business as a case study.

LO1 Understand who customers are and their importance to businesses – Merit

M1

Analyse the benefits to Aldwalk Manor and its customers of maintaining and developing customer service

By making good customer service a priority Aldwalk Manor are spending time and money on staff and training, as well as time and money on customer communications, and ensuring the hotel has facilities to back up its customer service like the spa, golf course and extensive dining options. All this money buys these services staff and facilities but ultimately pay for loyal customers who are returning to the hotel and who advertise the hotel to friends. This investment in customer service is ultimately an investment in repeat and loyal customers.

Rather than go looking for new customers, and paying for expensive advertising & special offers to gain more customers, by investing in customer service the hotel avoid this expense. New customers are important, but making them loyal is more important.

Advantages of their customer service being funded more is that it will improve, which means customers will have a better more positive experience. Obviously this is good for the businesses reputation, because better customer service is likely to get the amount of loyal returning customers increasing. The only negative aspect is that you have to be careful and prepared to understand what areas of your customer service need improving, as investing in an area that doesn't need working on means a waste of money, and areas that are in need don't get the funding or attention they should.

Commentary

Why the work met the criteria

The relevant command word for M1 is analyse. To analyse the benefits to a business we should expect learners to develop chains of argument connecting together improved customer service with its impact on the operations of the business and its financial performance. For example improved customer service can result in fewer complaints, resulting in fewer staff and resources needing to be devoted to investigating them and reporting back to the customer. A reduction in such complaints can therefore result in fewer investigations resulting in fewer staff needed to conduct them. This would reduce business overheads and so help to increase profits. The learner's evidence provides some reasonable analysis of the impact of improved customer service on the business' financial performance but the impact on its operational activities is less developed. Similarly, the analysis of the benefits to its customers is weak. Overall the criterion has been met but to improve further, the evidence should address in more detail the operational impact on the business and how this then results in improved financial performance (profits). Also, the evidence needs to analyse the benefits to the customer in greater detail, for example in less time spent making complaints, less time in future seeking out new suppliers etc.

How the work could be improved/strengthened

The learner has a reasonable understanding of the financial impact of business actions. They should be taught how to make a 'business case' by making plausible recommendations for improvement in business performance and justifying them by exploring their operational and financial implications. This can then be applied when responding to the task for D1.

Alternative formats that the work could be produced in

M1 could be in the form of a briefing guide for local small business owners, using the learner's chosen business as a case study.

LO1 Understand who customers are and their importance to businesses – Distinction

D1- Recommend and justify changes to the customer service provided by a specific Business to improve the customer experience.

I am going to make three recommendations that I think Boringdon could incorporate into their business. My first recommendation is a digital ordering system in the catering department which will help to improve customer experience through the allowance of customers to enjoy their time more. My second recommendation is the introduction of training in special dietary needs for the hotel food ordering and preparation staff. My third recommendation is the addition of a foot golf course which will help to bring in young customers who might become returning customers in the future.

Food and Beverages

In the food and drink department at Boringdon, I would recommend that a digital ordering system was brought in to enhance a positive experience for the customers. I think this because by having a digital ordering system there is less chance of human error, for example when the bar staff take the wrong order or charge the wrong amount for the food or Beverages. This will help satisfy customers as they will always be able to get what they wish and will have a more positive experience within this service of the business. Also 65% of Boringdon's profit comes from the catering department so by bringing in the use of technology, not only does it help to modernise the club, which is an aim of the business, but it also helps to maximise the ease for customers to buy products offered by Boringdon. This means that customers will have less waiting time at the bar which will allow the customers to socialise more which may help to optimise sales as the customers will be enjoying their time with the business more so might want to spend more money on the products and services provided. Although the introduction of technology into this department will be expensive it should be able to be financed easily because they can use retained profit to finance this relatively small investment, which is good because the business will not have to find an alternative source of finance which may end up costing more than necessary for example the interest on a loan. However this means that the retained profit will not be going into other aspects of Boringdon that may need the expansion, consequently meaning that Boringdon may not be able to improve on their Business which may lead to the customers becoming dissatisfied in the other products and services provided at Boringdon.

Also by having this ordering system, the waiting staff can perform better customer service to the customers as they can interact with the customers at the table more allowing for the customers to have a more positive experience with the staff and subsequently the business. However the introduction of technology in this sector means that the staff will need to be trained how to use the equipment efficiently and still be able to satisfy the customers' needs and expectations. In addition to this there are some extra drawbacks due to the fact that there can be technological errors, for example the ordering systems may have a glitch which may result in the orders being wrong, which will lead to the customers being dissatisfied with the services provided as well as their having to be an excess cost for maintenance and fixing the systems for Boringdon. In addition to this the increased use of technology can lead to a lack of experience for other members of staff for customer service. This may lead to unsatisfied customers at Boringdon as they will have a negative experience with the staff which will lead to the customers being dissatisfied with their overall

experience with Boringdon, furthermore they may start to spread their bad experience by word of mouth, subsequently giving Boringdon a bad reputation. Overall the addition of the digital ordering system will help to improve customer service as customers will be able to spend more time enjoying the facilities and socialising with their time that they will only have a positive experience with the business.

Dietary needs

My second suggestion I would recommend for Boringdon to improve their customer service is training for restaurant staff in special dietary needs. Many people these days have special needs eg gluten-free, dairy-free, kosher, halal, vegetarian, vegan etc. Some of the staff have said they do not really understand the different dietary needs and which foods cater for these needs. By having this training staff would be more knowledgeable when talking with customers about the menu and can offer suggestions and possibly also advise on how menus can be adapted. This will make customers more confident in using the restaurant and hopefully more bookings and more income for the catering department. Obviously there will be a cost to having the training and it may need to be repeated with new staff from time to time but if it results in customers feeling that their needs are being met then it should result in both more food orders and also more repeat customers. This should raise revenue more than the cost of the training and so increase profits from the catering department.

Foot golf

The final suggestion that I would recommend for Boringdon to improve their customer service would be to add a foot golf course. This would be a reasonable idea as Boringdon have the area and the staff available to implement this idea. Boringdon's green keepers can alter their maintenance for the golf course in order to create a foot golf course. This would be effective for Boringdon's business needs as there would be no extra costs for wages. However by not keeping up with the full standards of the maintenance of the golf course, golf members may become dissatisfied with the work of the green keepers and may wish to play on a more looked after course. In order to keep customers satisfied Boringdon may need to up their customer service in the period of the creation of the foot golf course. The staff at Boringdon could offer to clean clubs or golf shoes to keep customers happy during this period of time and also take their mind off of the lowered standards of the course, despite this seeming like extra work for staff, it won't be permanent so they shouldn't mind. The making of the course should not be too expensive as the foot golf courses aren't huge and Boringdon also has the land available, which means that it should be a short and not very costly project.

Foot golf has been in demand as it has emerged and has widely attracted the younger generations to make their way to a golf course. This means that through the addition of foot golf, Boringdon have the ability to attract a younger audience which not only helps to widen the customer demographics at Boringdon but it also helps to promote Boringdon to the younger customers who might become the future customers of the business. As a result of having more young customers come to Boringdon also means that there will be parents of older customers who have to come with them, who might also enjoy their time at Boringdon that they wish to return to try out one of the other services provided. This means that Boringdon's

customer service needs to be to its highest quality as it can help turn an abundance of new customers into future returning customers.

Overall I think that the addition of the foot golf will help Boringdon in the short term as there will be a flurry of new customers attending Boringdon, which should cover the cost of making the course. However to make these customers return Boringdon's customer service will have to make the customers enjoy their time so much that they wish to return.

In conclusion, I think that the most useful recommendation for Boringdon to implement into their facilities to help to improve their customer service would be the addition of a digital ordering system. This system has many positives, the main one is that the customer experience will be improved due to the fact that there will be higher standards of customer service as a result of the staff having less work in relation to customer service, which means they can really focus and have the best quality service on the aspects they still have to provide. As well as the impact on customer experience the fact that there is less effort in ordering and that staff will be catering to the needs of the customers, customers are more likely to buy more products, consequently leading to the satisfaction of the business needs as they will be making more sales. This is why I think that the digital ordering system will be more useful for Boringdon than the Gym or Foot golf, because it is optimising the sales instead of trying to produce sales. In addition to this, Boringdon make most of their sales in this department which means the development of the ordering system and the customer service will have the most financial profit. Also the digital ordering system should not take much time to put in place, and should not get in the way of the customers while doing so, subsequently meaning that it does not affect the customer experience while it is in development. Alternatively, the gym and foot golf are quite large investments that are costly in both price and labour time, which means that the customer experience will be negatively affected as certain parts of Boringdon will be closed or not at their full potential, consequently resulting in dissatisfied customers.

Commentary

Why the work met the criteria

The relevant command word for D1 is recommend. This means that the recommended improvements should be appropriate (e.g. based on evidence of a current issues) and also justified (e.g. an explanation as to how the recommended change will result in improvements to the business). In making these justifications learners should consider both the operational as well as the financial impact on the business. This evidence makes three recommendations. All three are appropriate and are justified well, however only the first two are improvements to customer service. The third is a recommendation for a new service the business should provide, not an improvement to existing customer service provision. The first two recommendations are sufficient to enable the criterion to be met. It would be better had the learner not confused *customer services* with services offered to the customer.

Alternative formats that the work could be produced in

D1 could be produced as a briefing/proposal for senior managers/directors/owners of the business.

LO2 Understand how to communicate with customers – Pass

P4 New Task

1. Aldwalk Manor has many different types of communication which are used to advertise and attempt to gain the interest of potential customers. One of the communication methods used is a membership application form. The application form is used for customers who are joining the spa.

The form is fairly plain and simple, meaning that it is appropriate for all ages. Because of the subject of the form, there doesn't need to be complex designs and colours, although if there was this could make the form more attractive. The layout is slightly complicated as there is lots of questions on the front page that need answering, which although appropriate when signing up, it may be time consuming and not as efficient, and the layout may seem a little cramped. There are some inappropriate questions, for example, the company name question, this type of question is not relevant, and it may be relevant to hotels in a city centre that may have company members, but not Aldwalk Manor. The form also has the QHotels logo at the top, which is following the corporate standards that QHotels set. Apart from the membership form being appropriate for age, although the small print may make it hard for older people or people with bad vision to read especially as the main clientele for the business are 45-60 year olds. The form is appropriate for people of both genders, as there is nothing on it that would appeal more to a certain gender, apart from the fact that women are usually more likely to be interested in going to the spa in general. The only problem customers that have special needs are facing, could be the short sighted issue and possible customers with dyslexia may find it hard to read, especially the small print located on the back of the form, which contains the terms and conditions of signing up. As the direct debit details questions are on the front of the application, customers might not feel confident about answering these questions, this issue can be avoided by having a separate application which can be filled out with direct debit details, so the information is more protected and secure.

Advantages of using this form of communication is that it is done in person, when a member is at the spa, so the employees can make sure the information is filled in correctly and the interaction is more personal, so if the customer has any questions they have the ability to ask staff. If the application form was filled in online, the customers do not have the chance to ask questions which may lead to uncertainty about the membership. Overall this form is not suitable for the customers of Aldwalk Manor because the writing on the back of the form is too small and not clear to read, especially for an older audience, the direct debit information has to be filled in at the front and some of the questions asked are inappropriate. Despite the form being inappropriate, the method of communication is good, as customers of that age do not tend to go on websites, and filling out the form on the internet may be complicated.

2. The Aldwalk Manor website, located on the QHotels page is not only for attracting customers in the UK, because there are potential customers from European Countries which should also be in mind when creating the website and thinking about customer service in

the hotel. The website is clear for someone from the UK, but there are improvements that can be made for those that a customers outside of the UK. First of all, a setting to change the language shown on the website so customers can have a clearer understanding, as they might want to read it in English or a different language they understand. Another point that can help is if the map which shows the location of the hotel, and the other hotels belonging to QHotels was clearer, they should add a map showing the location and ways to travel to all the hotels in the UK. This means the directions of the hotel, and the area in which it is located is simpler for customers who have never been to the area, or been to the UK at all. Regarding the age of the customers that visit this website from outside of the UK, the website is fairly appropriate because it is simple and clear to navigate, but might be difficult for an older audience, which is usually the main demographic for Aldwalk Manor, this also applies to the UK customers, meaning overall the website could have less on the screen to make it a little easier for the older generation to navigate. It is suitable for the UK customers and applies to the demographic that Aldwalk Manor aims to get approval from.

Advantages of the website, is that its overall a very good looking, attractive website. With a colour scheme suggesting royalty and luxury. It also is very informative about the hotel, showing off all the facilities available and explaining as much information as you would need to know about them. Although as mentioned previously the layout is good, it could have some improvements, which is a disadvantage of the overall website. Other disadvantages of the website are that there is a lot going on the screen which may be confusing and if much more is added could look really bad and cramped.

As well as the suggestions made before, other improvements that could be made for European customers is a converter of how much money it would cost in a different currency, so they have clearer understanding of how much money they are paying. Also, a way of contacting staff, which could include their email, phone or a direct message on the website for any questions they may have, but someone who can translate or speak different languages so that the conversation is clearer for the European guest. These types of customers are going to have to travel to the hotel, and as it is not in a large city, and more in the middle of nowhere, it would be helpful to have a transport map of the UK, showing train lines, airports and bus routes etc, so that ways of transport are easy to find, and it the hotel becomes more accessible.

3. The scenario of a complaint email wrote to the hotel regarding a meal in the restaurant, where a chicken had been undercooked. There are 2 emails that could have been written in response, this is the first email;

"Mrs Hodgson,

Thank you for your email of 21st May regarding your lunch in the restaurant. Can I sincerely apologise for your meal and hope this is a one off situation. I have passed your comments regarding the chicken onto the chef. As you are a regular customer I would like to offer you a voucher for the value of 2 lunch meals in the restaurant to be used any time in the next year. I will forward this voucher by email by the end of today. Once again can I apologise and hope you return here.

If you require any extra help please do not hesitate to contact me.

Regards

Jo Smith

Receptionist."

This email is the correct response regarding a complaint made by a customer, the hotel willingly accepted they were at fault and made the effort to correct what had happened and make the customer as happy as they can be. The email was worded formally and was very professional. The correct language was used, and there was no slang words that may make the business seem as they don't care about the customer's issue. The customer was also addressed formally and the business addressed her as a regular customer too, which can make the customer feel more important and valued, which increases the businesses customer service. Also, the business also made a good attempt to make up for the issue by providing a voucher, which makes up for the disappointing meal that they customer they had this time they stayed. The business did not respond in a defensive way, saying that the customer was wrong and that the incident didn't happen, which would have a large negative impact on the overall customer service standards that the hotel try to achieve.

"Dear Val, thanks for your email.

I am sorry about your meal and have asked the chef what has happened and he doesn't really know. Would you be able to pop in some time and ill sort a refund for you.

Thanks

Paul

Reception."

The second email is much less appropriate, less formal and professional. The language used isn't suitable and the issue is hardly addressed, the only way it was solved was asking the customer to come in and issue a refund, it doesn't mention the customer's loyalty and how the business would like to keep one of their regular customers. The customers first name was also used which is very unprofessional when writing a business email. The customer having to come in to get a refund may make them very unhappy if they live far away.

Overall it is obvious that Jo Smiths response to the email is the only appropriate one that should be sent. ✓

P5- Summarise the corporate standards and corporate profile of a specific business and explain their importance to that business

On Boringdon's website they have their logo in large in the top banner of their page. The owner created the logo, not for advertising but to try and create a simple image that can be linked to Boringdon, the logo can be interpreted to both grass and the sky to show that the golf course is raised up into the sky and all you can see is the green horizon. This logo is recognisable within Boringdon's customers and uses a basic colour scheme of blue and green. This colour scheme is incorporated within all of Boringdon as they have used blue text on their membership form. This repetition of the colour scheme used in the logo is an attempt made by Boringdon to produce some kind of brand identity. Also situated on the top banner alongside the logo is the title of the web page, which says Boringdon Park Golf Club. The Boringdon Park is in a large, bold and blue font, in comparison to the small green font of Golf Club. This shows the idea that Boringdon Park would prefer customers to not just think of them as a golf club but instead to recognise the many other facilities and services that they offer. The title comes across at the same height and colour as the logo, hence trying to reinforce the idea of creating some kind of brand identity as customers who visit the website will be able to recognise the logo as they have seen it with the title so much. This attempt at creating a brand identity to try and make customers aware that Boringdon is more than just a Golf club, resulting in Boringdon trying to expand the rest of their Business to be at the same standard as their golf business, hence increasing the amount of profit that they will make.

Website

The bold blue title shows that Boringdon want to continue to reinforce their colour schemes, which helps the webpage flow and allows for a more fluent form of communication. Following on from this the first sentence shows that Boringdon pride themselves on their quality of customer service as they have hinted at two sections of customer service that is expected from staff, this being a warm welcome as well as a friendly and relaxed atmosphere that will be present due to Boringdon being able to provide and cater for many needs and expectations. They are also trying to communicate that their location is an ethos or cultural vibe as they describe their site as the 'perfect location'. Although this is key information, Boringdon use specific vocabulary in order to try and advertise their good points explicitly to try and subsequently gain customers in the process of informing customers.

Social media post

Boringdon's corporate profile will gain a positive boost from this post as only good information is being spread via a reliable source of media, which may help this information to spread further via word of mouth. The article is promoting aspects that Boringdon can offer, henceforth helping Boringdon to create a successful brand identity while also improving reputation within Boringdon's target audience. This also helps to increase Boringdon's customer profile and lets a wider form of potential customers know about Boringdon's versatility. Leading on from this, Boringdon's

contact information is situated on the article, which may allow for a spike in interest in Boringdon's other services and facilities as customers reading the article may have an immediate form of communication with Boringdon allowing them to inquire and even plan for future events. Overall the Herald article shows that Boringdon can be trusted and can cater for any requirements or needs, subsequently it can be interpreted as a form of advertisement in the form of a newspaper article, however most customers will not realise that Boringdon would have paid for this article to appear in the Herald, making a false sense of the idea that all of the truth is being portrayed.

Corporate profile- Trust

Although customers of Boringdon in the present day can have full trust in Boringdon, this was not the case in their early years. This is because there was a leak in personal details of many customers of Boringdon when an email containing these details was sent to all customers, instead of individually. However, this did not receive much backlash as customers were unhappy, and apart from the few exceptions customers seem to have forgiven Boringdon as nothing really came from the event. Alternatively, if something had happened it may have been hard for Boringdon to recover from as they would have been the source of financial crimes and would have had to pay compensation, not mentioning the fact that they would have really struggled to regain the trust of their customers. On the other hand though, in the present day customers may feel that they can trust Boringdon because they may believe that Boringdon will take extra precautions in having higher standards of data protection to ensure that an event like this will never occur again. Following on from this since Boringdon is quite a young business and is trying to portray itself as a modern club, customers may feel that Boringdon have an unprofessional feature about their business making customers weary when having to put trust in them.

Corporate profile- Reputation

A major objective that Boringdon has is to have a good reputation that can attract customers and help Boringdon stay competitive within their market. One way that this reputation is built up is by their high levels of customer service which is important for building a good reputation as it affects what experience the customers have with the business and can help to satisfy expectations that customers will feel entitled for, giving them a sense of wellbeing and worth within the business. Another reason that reputation is important to Boringdon is because they no longer want to be known as just a golf club but want to utilise their ability to advertise effectively to ensure that customers know they offer such a wide variety of events across their many facilities, to help the business as a whole progress. Since Boringdon already have a good reputation from their existing well known businesses, customers may feel that the other events will have such high standards in quality that they will attend them or use Boringdon's other facilities, which if successful may help Boringdon's turnover succeed.

Corporate profile- Brand

Following on from reputation, Boringdon want to create a Brand identity that isn't engulfed by golf and want to expand the amount of Business their other services and facilities get in comparison to the golf club. If Boringdon can create a brand identity that is not just golf club but also incorporates their other services and facilities then

they should be able to make an increased amount of profit as they will have a larger abundance of all types of customers. Furthermore, Boringdon also try to present themselves as a modern club, in comparison to other golf clubs in the local area, which is important in their Brand as they want to try and mainly target a younger target audience in order to try and encourage as many long-time customers who may end up using the facilities for other events such as weddings, henceforth allowing for a more sustainable source of income.

Corporate profile- Perception

In direct correlation to the Brand identity that is trying to be created at Boringdon, the main factor that certain customers may look to Boringdon as opposed to competitors in the local area is the fact that they are a modern club. This will appeal to customers involved in families, especially those with children as they would most likely prefer to bring their kids to a more modern club that might have a more modern idea about the sport. This is a competitive advantage that Boringdon has over its local competitors as they have almost tried to structure their target audience to be families, as it is a long term customer, in addition to accepting all forms of customer's as well. However they also offer their facilities and services at an affordable price, which gives them the competitive advantage over Boringdon Hall as they offer high prices in correlation to the facilities and standards provided.

Corporate profile- Ethos

Boringdon have many ways that they that they can be considered ethical as they have implemented many ethical things into their business. An example of this would be that Boringdon have a food source from within the local area which not only gives Boringdon an ethical advantage over competitors who may import food, but it also allows Boringdon to give a personal touch to their customers, henceforth furthering their advantage against competitors. Following on from this Boringdon have implemented many schemes to help attract young people to the golf course, for example Boringdon have something called Bread and Putter which attracts younger generations and will help get these customers into Boringdon.

Commentary

Why the work met the criteria

To achieve P4 there must be an assessment of written communications in terms of their form content and layout. In this instance three communications have been covered. In the case of the email, the centre has generated an example of both a good and poor response to a customer query and the learner has assessed each in terms of its content. Across the three documents form layout and content are all assessed and the learner has made appropriate judgements about each document.

To achieve P5 there must be a description of the corporate standards and corporate profile of the business. The importance of these to the business must then be explained. The teaching content for corporate standards emphasises the visual look of written communications and the evidence here describes these well. Corporate profile is not defined by the teaching content but can be thought to consist largely of the image of the business that the organisation wishes to create in the minds of the public. For example the corporate profile of an airline targeting leisure travellers is likely to be different from one targeting business travellers. The evidence here focusses mostly on corporate profile and this is covered well. There is also a reasonable attempt to describe the corporate profile of the business but this aspect could be more developed. Overall there is a reasonable attempt to explain their importance to the business.

How the work could be improved/strengthened

The evidence for P4 could be improved by explicitly covering form, content and layout for each document.

For P5 the evidence could be improved by a more specific focus on discussing corporate profile.

Other resources that may be useful

Business Communication, Peter Hartley: https://www.amazon.co.uk/Business-Communication-Peter-Hartley/dp/0415640288/ref=sr_1_12?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1525950720&sr=1-12&keywords=business+communications

A Quick Guide to Writing Better Emails (Better Business Communication), Heather Wright: https://www.amazon.co.uk/Writing-Better-Emails-Business-Communication/dp/151755652X/ref=sr_1_17?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1525950720&sr=1-17&keywords=business+communications

The Business of Being Social: A practical guide to harnessing the power of Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube and other social media networks for all businesses: https://www.amazon.co.uk/Business-Being-Social-harnessing-businesses/dp/1780591454/ref=sr_1_6?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1525955135&sr=1-6&keywords=business+social+media+management

Alternative formats that the work could be produced in

P4 could be produced as a guide for new employees. It could be written as a House Style guide for a new or existing organisation.

P5 could be a set of training materials for new employees, to help them reflect on existing communication practices. It could be a report for an existing small business-owner, advising them on improvements they could make to their existing communications.

LO2 Understand how to communicate with customers – Merit

M2

Explain how a specific business manages its corporate profiles through media activity

Aldwark Manor uses different types of media to communicate with customers and advertise the business. These types of media include newspapers, the internet and social media. They use social media as it is the most popular form of communication in modern times. Examples of social media they use include Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Youtube. The hotel also appears on TripAdvisor where customers can leave reviews. The social media activity on these websites is managed by the hotel manager. This helps to ensure that only specific senior staff can post messages. The organisation also tries to minimise negative publicity by asking staff not to use social media themselves to comment on the work they do. For example if a reception staff were to be given a hard time by an angry customer then the receptionist can't use their own social media account to tell their friends about it. Any employee doing this would be in breach of company policy and some kind of disciplinary action could follow. This helps to ensure that the hotel speaks to the world with 'one voice' and so does not make the headlines for the wrong reasons which would give negative publicity that might result in fewer customer bookings.

The hotel has a policy that all review on social media sites such as TripAdvisor receive a reply from the hotel manager. Some hotels have a policy that this should only happen for negative reviews but at Aldwark Manor all review, good or bad, get a response. This helps to maintain the desired profile of an open and caring hotel.

Apart from social media the hotel advertises via other methods of communication. One of these is newspaper adverts and press releases. Any messages placed in newspapers, be they written adverts, press releases or quotes given in response to questions, have to be managed by a press officer who is supervised by the Q Hotels' brand manager. This ensures that Aldwark Manor's corporate profile is consistent with the wider corporate image of Q Hotels because its messages can be controlled in the same way as all the other hotels in the group.

It is important that Aldwark Manor use these communication methods to get more popular and attract more customers. Many Q Hotel customers like to stay at a local Q Hotel when they are in the area and so it is important that Aldwark Manor looks and feels like a Q Hotel when customers see it in print or interact with it online.

Commentary

Why the work met the criteria

For M2 evidence must explain how the corporate profile of the selected organisation is managed. There needs to be a discussion of the internal actions that the business takes to control the image that the wider world sees of the organisation. This could include discussion of how style guides are used or how communication channels are managed. The evidence here focusses on how messages are controlled both by having a social media policy and also by ways in which its own social media accounts are limited to specific named users within the organisation. The evidence, although relatively brief, does explain how these actions help to manage the way that the business' profile is presented in various media.

How the work could be improved/strengthened

The evidence could be improved by considering a wider range of actions that the organisation takes, for example by explaining the role of house-styles and style-guides.

Alternative formats that the work could be produced in

M2 could be written as a briefing guide for local entrepreneurs, explain how and why they should manage their media profiles.



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