Professional discussion

Apprentice guidance

Here are two example extracts from professional discussions.

- Candidate 1 – The apprentice works as a supervisor in a branded restaurant. The discussion covers **part** of 'Provide examples of how staff are managed effectively, including motivation, training and development of teams and individuals, in line with legal requirements and organisational policies and procedures'.
- Candidate 2 – The apprentice works for as a bar supervisor in a busy city centre pub in Manchester. The discussion covers **part** of 'Provide examples of how staff are managed effectively, including motivation, training and development of teams and individuals, in line with legal requirements and organisational policies and procedures'. In addition, this discussion meets the distinction criterion of 'Explains how effective hospitality supervision, contingency planning, motivation and adherence to company brand standard have been developed and implemented and how this has decreased waste and increased overall team/departmental performance'.

Before starting each discussion, the independent end-point assessor (IEPA) confirms the apprentice's identity and goes over the following:

- the criteria to be covered
- the fact the discussion is to be recorded
- the maximum time on the discussion
- that the IEPA will introduce themselves
- that the IEPA will ask the apprentice to introduce themselves by stating their name and confirming that they agreed to the discussion being recorded
- that supporting evidence can be referred to during the discussion eg the business project or apprenticeship training manual.

The IEPA also ensures that they and the apprentice have a glass of water each. There will be some small talk by the IEPA to put the apprentice at ease.

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Example 1

The audio recording from this professional discussion is available to listen to in SmartScreen as an embedded video. The conversation is also detailed in full below for you to read.

The candidate here works as a food and beverage supervisor for a branded restaurant working lunch and dinner shifts.

Speaker	Discussion
IEPA	It is 2.30 PM on 7th November 2019 and I am in the premises of The Coaching House restaurant with Sarah Marsh. Good afternoon, Sarah. My name is Fiona McFee and I am your independent end-point assessor and today we will be carrying out a professional discussion as part of your Hospitality Supervisor Level 3 apprenticeship end-point assessment. We have already gone over the criteria we will be covering and, as you know, you can refer to your business project and apprenticeship training manual, which you have brought with you. You have agreed that the discussion can be recorded and that the discussion may take up to 90 minutes. Before we continue, can you please introduce yourself by stating your name and that you have agreed to the discussion being recorded.
Apprentice	My name is Sarah Marsh and I have agreed to this discussion being recorded.
IEPA	Now Sarah, tell me a little about the business you are working for, the type of customers that visit the restaurant along with how you manage and motivate your team to meet customer needs.
Apprentice	I am working for The Coaching House, which is a branded restaurant located in the Gloucestershire countryside. The restaurant attracts a wide range of customers including families, retired groups, business people and younger groups; so the team have to be able to communicate with all age groups. It is important that our staff members are trained in customer service skills to identify customers' needs and to know how to deal with issues and complaints. The restaurant is open from 11.30 AM to 11.00 PM serving lunch and dinner. I generally do straight shifts which are either early from 10.00 AM to 6.00 PM, or late from 4.00 PM to midnight. I work in a large front-of-house team, which includes the restaurant manager, supervisors, hosts, bar staff and waiting staff. My main responsibility is to supervise a front-of-house team to ensure brand standards and legislative requirements are maintained, whilst providing excellent customer service. I have worked for the company for three years and started as a waitress, so I have experience of the role I am now supervising, which enables me to support my team and lead by example.

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	My daily tasks include: supervising the preparations for service, allocating roles and responsibilities to my team, monitoring and maintaining stock, supervising and motivating my team throughout service, dealing with customer issues, supporting my team to meet customer needs, debriefing the team and ensuring payments balance for my section. I begin by firstly attending a morning briefing with the manager who will inform us of any issues, customer feedback, menu changes, and any promotions or bookings we need to be aware of. I then check the rota to see who is working so I can plan the allocation of roles for my team and ensure all tasks are covered to meet service deadlines. I also check the bookings for any large parties so that the team can arrange the tables to accommodate them. As soon as my team members arrive, I check their uniform standards and carry out a short briefing to allocate roles and pass on any relevant information from my meeting with the manager. When everyone is setting up their stations, I carry out stock checks to ensure there are sufficient supplies for the shift and report any shortages so that they can be ordered. Prior to customers arriving, I check the stations and carry out the pre-service briefing. It is really important that staff receive allergen training and understand the impact of providing inaccurate information to the customer. The pre-service briefing focuses on the menu and allergen identification, which dishes are unavailable for that service and which promotions are running, as well as any bookings and information on customer requests or dietary needs. I need to make sure that my team are motivated to provide a positive customer experience and feel I achieve this by leading by example; I do not ask the team to do anything I would not do myself. If there are active promotions, I ensure the team are aware of their progress against targets and discuss what needs to be done to achieve them. I collect and check the floats for my section and make sure the card machines are working, with sufficient receipt roll. When customers arrive, I support the host to ensure customers are greeted and seated quickly. I introduce them to the team member who will be waiting on their table and they then take over the service procedures. If the customers ask any questions that members of my team are unable to answer I will assist. Throughout service I will be monitoring my team and assisting where needed to ensure standards of service are maintained. I also liaise with the kitchen, other supervisors and the manager throughout service to ensure key information is passed on and everyone is aware of what is happening.

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	If the bar is busy and struggling to keep on top of drink orders, I will assist so that my team can remain in the customer areas and do not get stuck behind the bar preparing drinks. If there are any service delays from the bar or kitchen, I make sure the customers are kept informed and support my team to eliminate delays. If a customer complains my team will deal with it if they can and then inform me of the outcome. But if they are unable to, I will listen to the issue without interrupting and then summarise details before suggesting a solution. It is important that any complaints are dealt with quickly and that the customers leave happy. We will then discuss this as a team during the debrief to identify why it happened, how it was resolved and how to prevent it happening in the future. I will make sure the team member does not take the complaint personally and understands how it was dealt with, to maintain their motivation. At the end of the shift, the takings are balanced, and the sales report and card machine reports are printed so that the shift report can be completed. We have a team debrief to ensure the team members are given the opportunity to contribute to discussions about any issues, so that they are involved and feel valued. It is important that everyone ends their shift on a positive note even if they feel it has not gone well. I complete a handover with the supervisor coming onto the late shift informing them of any stock shortages, issues that have arisen and any other key information to maintain the service and brand standards. It is often difficult to finish a shift on time as you can't just walk away from customers and leave the team, so I take time to make sure everything is in order before I leave. If I just walked out at the allotted time it could lead to a breakdown in communications, poor team work and ultimately a poor customer experience, which would impact on the restaurant's reputation. It is important that I am flexible in my role and help my colleagues to build working relationships and to show the manager I am keen to progress within the organisation. If I am on a shift when it is quiet, I sometimes shadow the manager to see what their role entails, such as the paperwork they complete and the quality checks they carry out.
IEPA	You are obviously very aware of your responsibilities in managing and motivating your team at The Coaching House. Can you give examples of how you have supported your team with any individual (or group) development needs? How has any training you've organised contributed to meeting legal requirements, organisational policies and procedures and contingency planning?

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	For instance, think of how the team may have tackled waste, as well as improvements on overall team performance.
Apprentice	Of course, the manager is ultimately responsible for everything that happens in the restaurant; they have to report to the area manager who then reports back to head office. The manager also deals with communications from head office in relation to menus, promotions, customer feedback, audit reports, sales versus targets, budgets and profitability of the business. The manager is the designated premises supervisor for the sale of alcohol and so is responsible for ensuring that the there are no breaches in relation to the sale and service of alcohol. In addition, they are responsible for ensuring all other pieces of legislation are complied with, such as: food safety and hygiene, weights and measures, allergen labelling, health and safety and consumer rights. It is my responsibility to ensure that my team supports the manager by complying with legislation. When they receive training during their induction I need to ensure that it is reinforced and kept up-to-date. I do this by implementing short training sessions prior to service and asking my team members questions to check their knowledge and understanding. If an issue arises with the standard of customer service not being met, I will then focus on refresher training for the whole team to ensure compliance with the brand standard and to avoid complaints. When a new member joins the team, they will generally work with an experienced team member before being allocated their own station. I spend time with them to ensure they are confident with the brand standards and procedures to be followed, providing coaching to support them. If underperformance is identified, then I will carry out refresher training with the individual and mentor them until they are meeting the required standards It is important that all team members are motivated and confident in their role and that they feel valued at all times. I make sure my team follow waste management procedures to help the environment and that they also understand how it contributes to costs. Our manager is a very good role model as he is proactive and motivational. He is hands-on and encourages us to use our initiative, take responsibility and to share in the values and vision of the business.
IEPA	You have mentioned your manager being very proactive. Can you tell me about a time when you have taken a proactive approach to planning and supervision of your team, with regards to brand standards and customer service? To educate and monitor the brand standards for customer service.

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Apprentice	Everybody in the restaurant has a part to play in the team. It is important that we all do our part to make sure the brand standards are maintained and that we offer a high level of customer service. This will make it more likely that the restaurant gets good reviews from satisfied customers, which will encourage more people to book, increase our takings and sometimes better tips. Also, if we are all working together the service will be more efficient and we can serve more customers throughout the day. We all understand that for the restaurant and brand to be successful we have to all work towards the same, shared goals. Within my role, I am continually monitoring the levels of customer service to ensure they meet the brand standards. This should become a natural process for the team that they do automatically. However, there are times when this does not happen and rather than the manager picking up on this, I will take the individual to one side to find out if there is a problem. I check they understand the importance of the standards and the consequences of not meeting them, and then provide any support or training they may need. If it continues to be a problem, I will then speak to the manager about the individual to ask for advice on how to deal with it. If I feel my team are becoming complacent with delivering customer service standards I will plan and implement a more focused training session to re-establish the standards. Generally, I plan to focus on one element of the customer service standard each day and cover it in the briefing so it is an ongoing process.
IEPA	Can you tell me about the techniques you use to motivate your team and why they are successful?
Apprentice	Our restaurant is part of a group brand, so head office set each restaurant weekly targets. The manager then uses these to set specific targets for the restaurant sales, the bar sales and the kitchen. We are given individual targets so we know what we are aiming for. This is related to customer numbers and spends per head. We also have targets for delivering brand standards. I feel it is important to motivate the team to meet their targets so I make sure they are realistic and achievable and that the team fully understand how they can be achieved. By setting team targets, team members are encouraged to work together for a common goal; but I also provide them with individual performance levels so that they can be nominated for employee of the month. If they win then they receive a complimentary meal for two in one of the company's restaurants. There is also a nomination for team of the month where we all receive vouchers.

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	These incentives help to motivate the team generally, but it is also important that the team feel valued on a daily basis. I do this by presenting a positive image and encouraging the team to upsell and exceed customer's expectations. This will not only provide a sense of achievement and improved job satisfaction, but it can also result in higher tips. I liken serving the customers to performing on stage: you have to smile at all times and present the image they are expecting, with nothing being too much trouble.

Assessment analysis: example 1

The apprentice has shown sufficient competency to **pass** of 'Provide examples of how staff are managed effectively, including motivation, training and development of teams and individuals, in line with legal requirements and organisational policies and procedures'.

This has been achieved by showing the following from the standards relating to:

Business: an understanding of their own role in motivating the team, contributing to monitoring operational procedures, monitoring the team to ensure the follow processes and procedures.

People: plan, resource and organise the team to meet expected standards, encourage team to demonstrate personal pride and professionalism, demonstrate effective methods of communication, actively support the team.

Customer: coordinate the team to deliver to customers according to their needs.

Leadership: lead by example to maximise performance.

However, the apprentice has not sufficiently explained how she has 'demonstrated effective hospitality supervision, contingency planning, motivation and adherence to company/brand standard have been developed and implemented and how this has decreased waste and increased overall team/departmental performance' and so could not be assessed as meeting the distinction criteria for this part of the standard.

Had she answered these correctly by providing examples and explaining contingencies she's implemented to avoid waste and improve team performance, then the distinction criteria could have been met.

This could have meant the difference between an overall pass and distinction.

Examples have been provided from the workplace that will also be used towards some of the criteria in 'Clearly articulate examples from the workplace relevant to evidencing competence across the standard'.

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Example 2

The audio recording from this professional discussion is available to listen to in SmartScreen as an embedded video. The conversation is also detailed in full below for you to read.

The candidate here works as a bar supervisor in a busy city centre pub in Manchester, working a range of shifts throughout the week.

Speaker	Discussion
IEPA	It is 4.00 PM on 17th July 2018 and I'm holding a remote professional discussion with Mike Ascot. Good afternoon. My name is Jared Tailor and I am your independent end-point assessor. Today we will be carrying out a professional discussion as part of your Hospitality Supervisor Level 3 apprenticeship end-point assessment. We have already gone over the criteria we will be covering and, as you know, you can refer to your business project and apprenticeship training manual, which you have brought with you. You have agreed that the discussion can be recorded and that the discussion may take up to 90 minutes. Before we continue can you please introduce yourself by stating your name and that you have agreed to the discussion being recorded.
Apprentice	Hello. My name is Mike Ascot and I have agreed to this discussion being recorded.
IEPA	Thank you. Now Mike, tell me a little about the bar you are working for, your job role and your responsibilities in your supervisory role.
Apprentice	I work as a bar supervisor in a busy city centre bar where the customers include business people, tourists and a large clientele from the younger population enjoying a night out. The bar is owned by a company that has a number of bars in the north west, but we are not part of a brewing company so we're not tied to the products we sell. We currently do not offer food but the owners are looking to develop this in the future. The opening times are 10.00 AM to midnight, seven days a week. I work five days a week on a rota system that includes weekends. The shifts I work are 8.30 AM to 4.30 PM or 5.00 PM to 1.00 AM. The team is made up of the manager, three full-time supervisors, four full-time members of bar staff, part-time bar staff and glass collectors. The number of staff working per shift will depend on the day of the week, but weekends are generally the busiest time with peaks and troughs throughout the weekdays. My main responsibility as a bar supervisor is to ensure compliance with the Licensing Act when selling and serving alcoholic beverages. I am a personal licence holder so I make sure to fully understand my responsibilities. This is important

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	particularly with the younger age groups when checking proof of age and also when dealing with people that may be intoxicated. If I was to breach the legislation I could lose my licence and also my job, as well as it having an impact on the business. I supervise both full and part-time staff when setting up and closing down the bar and throughout opening times when serving customers. My day would generally start with carrying out stock checks to ensure there is sufficient stock for the day. The bar staff have to complete a requisition for restocking the bars to ensure stock control is maintained and all items can be accounted for. I check that first-in, first-out is being followed. When on an early shift I am responsible for the cellar management and for cleaning the beer lines to maintain the quality of the products. This is an area where I train members of my team so they can develop their knowledge and skills to undertake the role of cellar management. This entails cleaning and tidying the cellar, receiving deliveries on certain days and storing products safely and securely. It also involves rotating the stock to make sure the oldest stock is used first so we avoid waste, which is a key consideration and one that I am continually reinforcing to the team. When receiving a delivery, we need to ensure all the empty kegs and crates are ready for collection and that the new stock is accurate. To do this, I check the delivery note and record any breakages or shortages. I then pass the paperwork to the manager to process. Health and safety is paramount when working in the cellar to ensure members of staff do not sustain any injuries. I ensure everyone is provided with and wearing relevant PPE when in the cellar, whilst following manual handling and COSHH regulations to prevent injuries. The temperature in the cellar has to be checked to maintain the quality of the beers. We do not sell real ales so do not have to worry about the procedures for preparing the casks. The security of beverage items in the cellar is very important so spirits are kept in a locked cage and I am responsible for holding the keys to all cellar areas when on duty. Prior to the bar opening, I check the bar has been stocked up and walk through the customer areas including the toilets to make sure we are ready for opening. I collect the floats from the manager's office; counting them to make sure they are correct, as I am responsible for the takings on my shift. I also check the card payment machines are working and that there are sufficient receipt rolls. Before putting the float in the till, I check the X and Z readings were taken at the end of the previous shift and that there is sufficient till roll. We have promotional materials around the bar so I also check they are current and undamaged to present a professional image to customers.

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	Just before opening, I brief the team so that they are aware of any issues with products, whether there are any customers to be aware of, which promotions are running and any other information that is relevant to ensure the shift runs smoothly and customer needs are met. If there are any new promotions I will organise time to train staff to ensure they have accurate information and are confident in promoting the product. If there is a new drink that needs to be mixed, I will demonstrate how it is made and encourage them to taste it so they can accurately inform and recommend it to customers so we can meet sales targets. It is important to motivate the team to meet the sales targets and I do this by leading by example; setting individual targets and on occasions offering incentives. The progress against targets for promotions is displayed so the staff can see how they are doing. Overall results are also presented, discussed and the success is shared. The team enjoy a challenge and there is healthy competition between them to ensure targets are achieved. During the shift I supervise the bar staff selling and serving alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages. I do this to ensure accurate measures are served, that waste is minimised and service standards are met. I would say I adopt a democratic style of leadership with my team, unless there are any major issues when I may have to become more autocratic to control the situation. If there are any concerns about serving a customer I will support the bar staff in obtaining proof of ID or explaining why they cannot be served. If barrels need changing during service or additional stock is required from the cellar, I will either sort it out myself or give the keys to a member of the bar staff to deal with; making sure the keys are returned to me and that the stock has been recorded. We have an additional float for change behind the bar, which I am responsible for. I hold the keys for this so it is my job to replenish change when needed. On a busy weekend, I am responsible for the glass collectors. These team members also wash the glasses and replenish the shelves with glassware, so I need to monitor and record any breakages. If this is excessive I will speak to the team and ensure they understand the impact of breakages on costs and profits. At the end of the shift, the till readings are taken and the bar staff have to balance the takings so that the sales analysis can be completed; which I then pass to the manager. If there is a shortage, I first check the change float to make sure that it is accurate. I then recount the takings and check the card machine report. If we are unable to identify why there is a shortage, I have to speak to the manager.

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	During a team debrief I will provide feedback to the team on their performance, any customer comments, issues relating to safety and/or security and licensing compliance. I will always end on a positive note by thanking the team for their hard work to show how much they are appreciated, particularly after a long, busy night. Although the manager has ultimate responsibility for the bar and is the designated premises supervisor, on a daily basis I run my shift making decisions whilst keeping the manager informed. I have to make sure that my team work safely and hygienically at all times following health and safety and food hygiene regulations. While I do work long hours and late shifts, it is important that I am professional at all times to lead my team by example and to present a professional image to customers. Within my job role I am able to continuously learn and develop my knowledge of the business which makes my job more interesting. I encourage my team to take responsibility and develop their skills, which will help them to progress to supervisory roles and motivate them to progress within the business. I am keen to work with the manager to learn the other aspects of running the business, as I would like to manage my own pub in the future. I have been assisting the manager in weekly stock takes and analysing the business performance, which has been really interesting and helps me to understand the importance of managing waste, upselling and stock control. I feel that if staff see how motivated I am this will help to motivate them. Whereas, if I was negative about my role this would influence my team negatively.
IEPA	Thank you Mike. You have told me a lot there about your responsibilities and how you manage and motivate your team. Can you now explain how you have implemented contingency planning to decrease waste and improve overall team performance, whilst adhering to company standards?
Apprentice	I work very closely with the manager and other supervisors as it is important that we provide a high standard of product and service whilst adhering to all legislative requirements. The manager sets sales targets, which include promotional activities and customer feedback targets, as well as control of stock to manage waste. I share the sales targets with my team and keep them up to date on how we are performing. It is important to motivate the team to achieve these targets as it builds team morale, which then benefits the business. Customer satisfaction is analysed and any negative comments are discussed to identify the issue and how it can be prevented in the future. We have a target of 100% customer satisfaction.

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	I ensure any waste is recorded as the information is used in the stock take; the results of which are shared with the team as they are accountable for any shortfalls. As the British weather is very unpredictable, it can be difficult to know how busy the bar will be on a daily basis and the type of drinks that will be popular. It is therefore important to plan for contingencies to keep stock from being wasted due to quality issues or over stocking, and to ensure customers are not disappointed if we run out of a stock item due to excessive demand or delivery shortages. The way this is managed is firstly by checking sell-by dates on deliveries and ensuring stock is rotated. But if there is still an issue we would look at putting on a special promotion to increase sales of excessive stock or motivating the team to upsell a particular beverage. If there is a similar product that has a longer shelf life, we may take that off the menu so that customers buy the item we need to sell instead. If a promotion is used then we need to make sure it complies with the responsible retail of alcohol and is not encouraging binge drinking. If the issue is that we are running out of stock, we would not make excuses to the customers, but identify the problem in advance and see if it is possible to obtain more stock. If this is not possible then we would identify similar products that can be offered as an alternative and ensure all the bar team are aware. It is important to identify these issues as early as possible so that a contingency can be put in place to avoid customer dissatisfaction. Another area where I plan contingencies is for any staffing shortages due to illness. I will always make sure that the staff are included in the rota to cover the skills required and that I am able to reallocate roles if I have a late notification of staff absence. I cannot afford to rota extra staff onto a shift just in case of absences, but it is important to ensure customer service is not compromised.
IEPA	Can you expand on this, for example? What responsibility do you take for identifying possible development opportunities for yourself and the team in relation to licensing activities and customer service?
Apprentice	I am always keen to learn. This is why I applied for an apprenticeship with this pub company. I want to learn more about the business side of the pub industry so I can progress to management level and eventually run my own pub. It is important to understand how to run a business and in particular how it applies to a bar and the products and services offered. I would like to stay with the business if they develop a food offer, as this will provide an opportunity to learn more about the industry and how to meet customer needs. Another area I am interested in is learning more about wines and maybe completing a Wine and Spirit Education Trust

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	(WSET) course. Or diversifying and learning about cocktails to become a mixologist. These skills would give me the opportunity to consider different areas of the beverage industry and make me more versatile. One key area of training for my team is the Personal Licence Holder qualification so they understand their responsibilities when serving alcohol. The company provides the opportunity for all bar staff to complete this qualification online, so I support them with their learning by implementing short training sessions relating to the legislation; as well as questioning them to check their knowledge and understanding. Customer service is paramount within the hospitality industry and it is something that we pride ourselves on within the company. The company has introduced a customer service 'standard of the day' which the team have to focus on. It is my responsibility to ensure they understand the standard and how they can implement it. I do this through more short training sessions in the daily briefing. In addition, the daily standard is displayed behind the bar to remind the team throughout their shift. If we receive a complaint from a customer then we talk about it during the debrief to identify why it happened, how it was resolved and how it can be prevented from happening in the future. By doing this, it is current and the team can relate to it rather than using fictitious examples. The manager will analyse customer feedback on social media and highlight any extra strengths and weaknesses that I need to make the team aware of and focus on.

Assessment analysis: example 2

The apprentice has shown sufficient competency to **pass** part of the 'Provide examples of how staff are managed effectively, including motivation, training and development of teams and individuals, in line with legal requirements and organisational policies and procedures' standard.

The candidate has also met the **distinction** criteria by explaining 'how effective hospitality supervision, contingency planning, motivation and adherence to company/brand standard have been developed and implemented and how this has decreased waste and increased overall team/departmental performance' and partly demonstrating 'how a proactive approach to planning and supervision has been implemented, including proactively educating and monitoring staff on customer service, brand standards, health and safety and risk matters beyond legislative minimum'.

This has been achieved by showing the following from the standards in more depth relating to:

Business: an understanding of their own role in motivating the team, contributing to monitoring operational procedures, exercising strict resource control to minimise waste, monitoring the team to ensure the follow processes and procedures.

People: plan, resource and organise the team to meet expected standards, contribute to review process of team, encourage team to demonstrate personal pride and professionalism, demonstrate effective methods of communication, actively support the team, actively support

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team to maximise potential, encourage team to see the importance of their role within the wider business.

Customer: coordinate the team to deliver to customers according to their needs, be proactive in supporting sales and marketing activities.

Leadership: lead by example to maximise performance, use leadership styles and supervisory management skills appropriate to the business situation.

Bar Supervisor: understand how to keep bar operations running smoothly and deal with any customer concerns, identifying where potential conflict could occur, in accordance with the law.

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