

## 6.1 The importance of effective teamwork

In the hospitality and catering industry, it is usual to work as a member of a team. One chef cannot cook all the dinners, one room attendant cannot clean all the rooms and one waiter cannot serve all the guests.

### Teamwork

The industry relies heavily on teamwork. This is essential within departments, such as between the kitchen and house-keeping, but also across different departments. For example:

- Reception staff need housekeeping staff to tell them when rooms are ready.
- Housekeeping staff need the reception team to let them know when customers have checked out so that they can clean the room.
- Restaurant staff need the chef to tell them whether any food has run out and when food is ready to serve.
- The kitchen staff need the banqueting manager to tell them when to dish up the next course.
- The kitchen staff need the reception team to tell them how many people are booked into the hotel so that they can begin their preparation.

### What is a team?

A team is a group of individuals working together towards a clearly defined goal or objective.

So a restaurant team has a goal of serving all guests safely and systematically so that the best customer satisfaction is achieved.

A housekeeping team has a goal to clean all the rooms to a specific standard as quickly as possible.

Teams work best if all members are committed to the job and have the resources to do it properly. The team must also be open and democratic so all ideas and concerns can be shared by its members. It also needs the support of senior management within the organisation.



Teamwork is important at all levels of the industry

### CASE STUDY

Nico, the restaurant manager at the Punch Bowl restaurant in Slough has a daily briefing with his staff before service. He goes through the daily specials on the menu explaining what ingredients are in each dish, exactly how they are cooked and what they are served with.

- Why is it important that the restaurant manager has this daily briefing
  - a to the kitchen staff?
  - b to the restaurant staff?

All teams need a team leader. The success of a team depends on this person. They:

- decide who works in the team – a head chef interviews and employs kitchen staff – not the hotel manager
- decide what the team has to do – divide up the work – a restaurant manager allocates sections of the room to different staff
- take responsibility for the standard of work produced – a head chef usually checks every meal sent out of the kitchen
- make sure that the task is carried out safely – that rules – and the law – are kept to.

A team leader must:

- set a good example
- be respected by all the team members
- be consistent in decisions made
- encourage, motivate and support team members.

### The benefits of teamwork

The two most important benefits of working in a team are that more gets done, and because of that, there is better customer service.

Other benefits are:

- a higher output of work – achieved for less effort
- a happier workforce – people are usually happier working in a group
- increased loyalty – gives a feeling of worth and improves the desire to give good customer service (also likely to reduce absenteeism)
- less staff conflict – because responsibility for work and decisions is shared
- a more creative workforce as a happy team member is likely to come forward with ideas to improve work practices and reduce costs or increase efficiency
- increased sales – a teamwork approach is likely to increase sales, for example, if the team has a target of selling 50 portions of onion rings for a night – all the team work towards this and help each other.

Working as a team member also has advantages such as:

- feeling more valued at work
- being able to learn from others – e.g. a commis chef will learn from a pastry chef
- being able to share knowledge, e.g. one waiter showing another a different napkin fold
- greater job satisfaction
- having the support of others
- benefiting from team 'perks', such as a productivity bonus.



A team leader has an important role in training

### ACTIVITY

Write about a team you have worked in. Think about the benefits of this teamwork. What did you learn?

### CHECK YOUR KNOWLEDGE

- 1 What is teamwork?
- 2 What does a team leader do?
- 3 What skills will a team leader have?
- 4 Why is a team workforce likely to be more creative?