



HAVE CASE STUDIES

Hospitality, Leisure and Tourism Adding Value for Employability

**Institute of Hospitality
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Preface

The Institute of Hospitality

The Institute of Hospitality was launched on 2 April 2007 and is the new name for the Hotel & Catering International Management Association (HCIMA). The Institute of Hospitality represents professional managers in the hospitality, leisure and tourism (HLT) industries and has a worldwide membership in over 100 countries.

The Institute of Hospitality is managed as an educational charity, and exists to benefit its members in their career and professional development, as well as continuing to improve industry sector standards. The primary purpose of the Institute of Hospitality is to:

“promote the highest professional standards of management and education in the international hospitality, leisure and tourism industries”

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1. Introduction to HAVE

HAVE is a scheme that can enhance your future career prospects after college or university; by using HAVE you can develop the skills employers are seeking.

HAVE helps you to:

- add value to your part-time and vacation work in hospitality, leisure and tourism
- reflect on and record your employability skills and personal attributes
- develop skills which are useful across all industry sectors
- enhance your future career prospects - whatever your career may be
- compile evidence of your 'employability skills' and personal attributes which will be useful in preparing a CV, job applications or job interviews
- make your part-time and vacation work more interesting and challenging as you learn to reflect and record your skills development

You can use the following Case Study material in conjunction with the **Information Pack** to help you prepare your own **Personal Portfolio** using the Reflective Log and the Evidence Portfolio which combines employability skills and personal attributes. The Personal Portfolio and Information Pack are available to download from the Institute of Hospitality website.

2. Case Studies on Learning from Work Experience

Many students don't realise just how much they have already learned from part-time work experience. HAVE will support you in learning even more and help you with gathering evidence of what you have learned. You can then be better prepared to tell prospective employers about your experiences and the skills you have gained.

Below are some case studies showing how two students learned from their work experience and progressed through the learning cycle.

PROFILE: Clare

Clare works part-time as a server in a cafe bar. This helps to support her whilst studying on a Sociology degree.

Not all the customers she comes across are pleasant. Some can be very difficult to please. At first it upset Clare when customers were rude. She talked through the situation with her supervisor. Her supervisor gave some immediate feedback and also arranged for Clare to receive work place training on customer service skills and handling difficult situations.

Clare has now incorporated some of the newly acquired skills into her service technique. Service is now a more positive experience overall. She is also clearer about when she needs to call upon a member of the management team to help resolve a situation.

Clare's experience was negative at first, but she used it as a trigger to help develop her communication skills. She reviewed the experience with her workplace supervisor and reflected upon it. Her on-the-job-training gave her the opportunity to draw conclusions about what had happened and to plan new service strategies. As a result her experiences with customers became better, and work became more enjoyable.

During your part-time work, you will come across many positive and negative situations which can prove useful to your learning. Such situations can demonstrate the employability skills and personal attributes you already have and help identify those you want to improve.

Let's look at another example where a positive approach to work led to good outcomes.

PROFILE: Ravi

Ravi works part-time in the maintenance department of a large leisure complex in a major city. He is doing this to help support himself through his Business Studies degree.

Aspects of the job can sometimes be frustrating, but Ravi takes pride in always having a friendly and professional approach towards both customers and other members of staff.

As a result, Ravi gained a reputation as a good colleague to work with. His positive attitude and professionalism was noticed by management. He received favourable comments about his work performance at team meetings and was delighted to receive the Employee of the Month award.

Ravi's reward was an increase in pay and a free weekend away at a hotel owned by the company.

Ravi's positive approach to work was self-reinforcing. As Ravi reflected upon his experiences with colleagues and customers he concluded that his way of approaching things was working and that more of the same was a good strategy. The experience of receiving the Employee of the Month award was another tangible sign that he was definitely on the right lines in terms of working with others and his communication with customers.

3. Case Studies using the Reflective Log

Reflections on workplace learning

In the reflective log you reflect on your activities and experiences in the workplace. You record your learning from your experiences at work, and also think about what, if anything, you need to do as a result of what you have learned.

Let's look at how Clare (in the example above) could have recorded her initially negative customer experience in the Reflective Log.

Clare's reflections on her workplace experience

REFLECTIVE LOG

REFLECTIONS ON WORKPLACE EXPERIENCES

NAME: Clare

DATE: 9 June 2006

PLACE: Le Languedoc Restaurant

What happened? Give an account of what happened.

The customers' food was late coming out of the kitchen. A customer complained. It was worse still because, when I did serve it, one of the orders was wrong. The customer lost his temper and swore. I was really upset.

Reflections on Experience

Looking back, why did the event or situation turn out that way?

I didn't keep the customers informed of the difficulties in the kitchen.

What did you do?

When they complained the first time I didn't take it seriously. I was stressed and tired and didn't record the order accurately.

What did others do?

The kitchen staff said it wasn't their fault and they blamed me for the wrong order.

How did you feel?

I felt really upset and angry with the kitchen for not defending me and with the customer for their bad language.

How do you feel now?

I feel better now because I've learned how to defuse these kinds of situations.

Learning from the Experience

What have you learnt from this experience regarding your use of employability skills and personal attributes?

Communication and Problem Solving: I need to communicate better and explain what is happening. I didn't realise how fed up the customers were becoming. I am trying to be better at understanding and handling difficult situations.

Working with others: The kitchen and the floor staff weren't working well with each other. The kitchen was badly understaffed and we could have helped each other more.

Time Management: I was tired and stressed because I'd stayed up all the previous night to finish off a university assignment. I shouldn't have needed to do this if I'd planned ahead.

What would you do differently in the future?

I try to be more attentive to customers when they place their orders and to check the whole order through at the end of writing it down. I keep a careful eye on my table and the progress of the order and I try and keep them informed on any delays or likely order complications.

Action Plans

What actions, if any, do you need to take as a result of this experience to continue the learning?

Communication and Problem Solving: My supervisor has agreed to give me training on customer service skills and handling difficult situations. I've also talked through with her how to handle a complaint better and when to call upon her for help.

Working With Others: We talked over the difficulties at the next pre-shift meeting. The duty manager will move people about more. Some people are going to be trained in food production as well as the service area. I don't know yet whether this will involve me, but I was quite assertive in saying that I would be happy to acquire any new skills and that I was very happy working in the restaurant customer area.

Time Management: I need to write my coursework deadlines in my diary and work back from there to plan what I need to do and when.

Now let's look at how Ravi could have recorded his positive experience of winning the Employee of the Month award.

Ravi's reflections on his workplace experience

REFLECTIVE LOG

REFLECTIONS ON WORKPLACE EXPERIENCES	
NAME: Ravi	
DATE: 15 June 2006	PLACE: Leisure4all Ltd
What happened? Give an account of what happened.	
<p>I received the Employee of the Month award for May. The award is given to recognise exceptional employee performance in contributing towards the hotel's success. As well as the rather embarrassing fact that I was featured in the hotel's in-house magazine, I got a wage increase and a free weekend stay at another hotel!</p>	
Reflections on Experience	
<p>Looking back, why did the event or situation turn out that way? I have made it a rule to always be positive at work and I think it was my attitude and behaviour over a period of time which got me the award.</p> <p>What did you do? There was one occasion recently where I was asked to cover staff absence in housekeeping, where I hadn't worked before.</p> <p>What did others do? I think the managers were impressed by my willingness to give this a go, even though I was worried. I know that customers have also commented on my helpfulness in customer feedback questionnaires.</p> <p>How did you feel? I felt pleased to have received the award, but embarrassed by the attention.</p> <p>How do you feel now? Very pleased to have won the award and I think it's unusual for a new work placement student to have had this award.</p>	
Learning from the Experience	
<p>What have you learnt from this experience regarding your use of employability skills and personal attributes?</p> <p>I think that my motivation and willingness to be flexible and adaptable helped me get this award. Being positive with colleagues and customers over a long period was also important. This is to do with communication and working with others.</p> <p>What would you do differently in the future?</p> <p>I don't think I need to do anything differently but it has reinforced my thoughts about being positive and willingness to help others.</p>	
Action Plans	
<p>What actions, if any, do you need to take as a result of this experience to continue the learning?</p> <p>It is a question of building on this, rather than changing anything substantially. I think I need to keep up the good work!</p>	

4. Identifying Learning Opportunities: Three Workplace Scenarios

We've already given you examples where events happened in the work place which became learning opportunities for Clare and Ravi. Learning opportunities vary for different people and different jobs. It is a question of you spotting the opportunities for learning in your part-time, placement or vacation job. Think about what you are good at and how you can keep up the good work or improve. And think about what you would like to get better at and how you might do that.

Below are some typical positive and negative scenarios which can occur in your workplace. Which employability skills do you think are involved in the following situations? (You may need to refer back to your self-assessment exercises in your Personal Portfolio).

SCENARIO 1
You and your work colleagues have a paid night out at a local bowling alley to celebrate being awarded full marks in a recent 'mystery' quality inspection.
Which employability skills do you think were involved in bringing about this success?
SCENARIO 2
Your manager receives a very critical report following a visit from a food hygiene inspector. At a staff meeting held to consider the report, all staff (yourself included) are criticised.
Which employability skills are involved in responding to the report both at and following the meeting?
SCENARIO 3
The following more personal scenario presents an opportunity to identify both employability skills and personal attributes: Your shift supervisor fails to show up for work. You step into the breach and take a key role in ensuring that everything nevertheless runs smoothly.
Which employability skills and personal attributes are you drawing upon here? For feedback on workplace scenarios 1-3 see below.

Feedback on workplace scenarios

There are no 'right' answers in terms of how you responded to these workplace scenarios. What you read into the situations is personal to you. For example, you might suggest the following:

SCENARIO FEEDBACK 1

The night out at the bowling alley was a celebration of effective teamwork and also an opportunity for further teambuilding. For a fast-moving and complex hospitality business to deliver a quality service, all members of the team have to perform well individually and together. Working with others effectively is crucial. It needs to be encouraged and can never be taken for granted.

Playing a full and positive role in any team in which you are a part is important. Someone who was involved in this situation may identify in their Reflective Log ways in which they have been a particularly effective team member. They may also have noted aspects of team work where they need to improve. They may have judged that not every member of the team is equally well motivated and may want to investigate this further.

As well as working with others you might have identified employability skills such as communication, problem solving and willingness to improve own learning and performance which helped bring about this success. Of course all this would not be worth noting if it were not supported by a base of technical knowledge and expertise which someone had already used to plan the hospitality concept and its operating procedures. Key aspects of this will have been passed on to members of the team.

SCENARIO FEEDBACK 2

The situation where there was a difficult staff meeting following a critical food hygiene inspection provides a learning opportunity regarding the importance of just about all the employability skills. Here there is undoubtedly a problem that needs to be investigated and solved. To solve it may take innovation and creativity as well as analysis and logical thinking. People involved will need to draw upon specialist business and technical knowledge regarding food hygiene and food safety. Again it will take teamwork if a bad situation is to be turned around. Effective communication, in particular the ability to give and receive criticism constructively while working with others is crucial.

A person involved in the overall situation will have focused on their personal learning agenda. They will have noted in their Reflective Log areas where they need to further develop their expertise or areas where they feel they have performed well.

SCENARIO FEEDBACK 3

This scenario presented an opportunity for you to demonstrate both employability skills and personal attributes. Depending upon where you worked and the circumstances of that particular shift, you may well have called upon all of the employability skills. This would have included information technology proficiency to record orders and revenue. It is also likely that you will have handled quite substantial quantities of cash (application of number). You have also demonstrated important personal attributes. These include business awareness and understanding of your employer's operational and business systems. Most importantly you will have demonstrated leadership skills and awareness. Many students reach supervisory level during their part-time work, so it may be appropriate to reflect on what has been learned (improving own learning and performance) and the self confidence required.

5. The Evidence Portfolio: Employability and Personal Attributes

Looking back at Clare's Reflective Log on pages 6 and 7, it shows that she was determined to take action as a result of what she had learned. One of the actions she planned was to receive on-the-job training from her supervisor in customer service skills and handling difficult situations. Successful completion of such training provides an opportunity for Clare to generate evidence. It will be even stronger if, as a result of the training, Clare has demonstrated the ability to deal with difficult situations more effectively.

Where evidence is being used to demonstrate employability skills and personal attributes, it is best if another person can support that what you say is true. The other person will most usually be your employer or supervisor. Clare can use the expertise she has acquired to provide evidence of employability skills in the area of problem solving and communication. She may also consider that the evidence demonstrates her self-confidence and good judgement. The same evidence can therefore be used to demonstrate both employability skills and personal attributes.

HAVE is designed so that you can record information in a systematic way and includes documents to make the recording process easier. But you needn't be constrained by these; you can modify them or include other evidence, such as a customer's compliment letter. It's up to you to do whatever shows your evidence best. The following examples illustrate how Clare might have used the Evidence Portfolio in HAVE.

Employability Skills Evidence Sheet
Name: Clare
Employability Skill: Communication
Reference Number: C1 Communicating effectively with customers / customer empathy / awareness
<p>Evidence</p> <p>On 23 June 2006 I received training from my supervisor, Jane Smith, regarding how to deal with difficult people. I completed the company training module. This involved watching a training video and carrying out role plays. The video covered both standard company procedures and specific techniques to help ease difficult situations. I was able to relate to the examples and felt that I handled the role plays confidently.</p> <p>A few days later I was able to put my new expertise into practice. We had a potentially very difficult situation with an upset customer who complained about her meal. I think that I handled it okay and the customer was happy about the solution.</p>
<p>Employer/ Supervisor Comment</p> <p>Clare handled the customer's complaint really well. She showed concern for the customer's complaint, used listening skills and displayed empathy for the customer, then offered a sincere apology. Clare then suggested solutions to the problem and gave the customer options, which diffused the situation. She quickly returned the meal to the kitchen, discussed the situation with the chef, and ultimately served a new, satisfactory meal that met the customer's expectations. While in the kitchen, Clare showed creativity by obtaining her supervisor's approval to offer the customer a complimentary pudding and coffee following her meal. The customer and her party were quite pleased with Clare's resolution and informed the m'aitre d that they would definitely dine in the restaurant again. Handled improperly, this sort of complaint could ruin the customers' dining experience and cost us valuable patrons. Instead, Clare's deft handling of the situation assured us return customers. Clare participated in the company training session on customer service skills and handling difficult situations and she appears to have a sound grasp of the important techniques and policies. It was good to see her deal with the difficult situation so well.</p>
Employer/ Supervisor Signature: <i>Jane Smith, Restaurant Manager</i>
Date: 2 July 2006

The same event can be used to demonstrate different employability skills e.g. Clare's experience with customers could also count as evidence of problem solving ability.

Employability Skills Evidence Sheet
Name: Clare
Employability Skill: Problem solving
Reference Number: PS5 Implementing Practical Solutions
Evidence
A report of a situation where a customer was quite unhappy with a meal.....

The same event can also be used to demonstrate personal attributes evidence. Claire's experience with customers shows here her creativity and initiative in the situation.

PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES EVIDENCE SHEET
Name: Clare
Personal Attribute: Creativity and Initiative
Reference Number: C11 Ability to develop new ideas C13 Ability to act independently in appropriate situations
Evidence On 9 June 2006, I had to deal with an angry customer who was unhappy with her meal.. She was very upset, but I managed to get her to relax by listening to her complaints, apologising and making suggestions for another dish that could be quickly prepared so she could eat with her friends. She liked being offered a solution with options and loved the free pudding, which I cleared with my supervisor while I was out in the kitchen making certain the chef would make the replacement meal a priority. It may seem a simple idea, but I was under a lot of pressure at the time from the woman and her party. For a further report see section C1.
Employer/ Supervisor Comment
Employer/ Supervisor Signature:
Date:

Building up a full portfolio providing evidence of your employability skills and attributes need not be too daunting a task. Remember that you can use the same evidence to support a number of different skills and attributes. What type of evidence you put in the portfolio is a matter of your own and your employer's or supervisor's judgement. You can use any type of evidence that is relevant to your job, e.g. video or sound recording, PowerPoint presentation or customer feedback.

You can download your own HAVE Personal Portfolio from the Institute of Hospitality website and start working on building your evidence. Good luck with HAVE!