



Institute
of **Hospitality**

Management Guide



Rebuilding Trust with our
Customers & Colleagues

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Introduction

Trust is at the core of all relationships. Without it relationships are much more likely to fail.

When considering the impact of COVID-19, the trust we have with our guests, customers or clients is crucial. Trust is how you build customer loyalty.

Building trust with your team is equally important. Without it how can they perform at their best?

As we emerge from lockdown, large sections of the general public will likely be slow to return to hospitality businesses due to fear of a second peak of the virus.

It's therefore critical that all hospitality businesses take careful steps to rebuild trust with everyone, including the UK government. Behind the scenes, Kate Nicolls, Chief Executive of UK Hospitality, has been working tirelessly to rebuild trust with the government and allow our sector to re-open.

Consider the following statistics:

48% of people in the UK say they are 'very' or 'somewhat' scared that they will contract COVID-19.

69% of people in the UK say they are avoiding crowded public places.

Source: YouGov, June 2020

This guide has been created to help you, your business and your team prepare to restore faith and rebuild trust in your business from a customer and colleague perspective in a post COVID-19 world.



What needs to happen in order to build trust

In order to build trust, we must consider our behaviours and our track record of delivering what we say we will. This includes adhering to legislation.

Creating a values-led culture

Our behaviours are born from our personal values, house rules or 'how we do things around here'. Everyone has their own perspective on what right and wrong behaviour looks like. This can sometimes cause conflict and disagreement.

To avoid this, some organisations create a set of organisational values - an outline of 'how we do things in our business'. There are huge benefits to doing this, such as encouraging people that share your business values to become an employee, a customer, or associate with you on social media.

A values-led culture is a culture where people live and breathe the values, and change their behaviours to align with these. Creating this kind of culture requires commitment and discipline.

What would it be like if everyone lived this way?

Generally speaking, it would be amazing! Of course, how long this would last depends on the values you choose.

Defining 'how we do things around here' helps to build confidence and reassures people that they're likely to be treated with respect. When employees feel this way, they can relax and focus on what they need to do to make a difference within your business.

Building a fresh track record of trust

As you and your team deliver on expectations, your personal and business reputation will grow. From an individual perspective this can be as simple as showing up on time. We all know people who are renowned for being late. This behaviour can be changed to rebuild trust with colleagues.

When people demonstrate the right behaviours and deliver results, management and teams build a mutual trust. This passes on to guests, customers, clients and suppliers.

It's crucial that the hospitality industry restores trust in society. The general public want and need to see that businesses are doing the right thing to ensure they are safe and cared for as human beings. It requires time and patience to strike the right balance between behaviours and delivery.

Things to watch out for

Be very mindful of other's thoughts and feelings. It's like we are starting out in a new life, where things are different to how things used to be. This can cause anxiety, confusion, concern and loss of confidence amongst customers and employees.

As hospitality professionals we can prepare and be considerate of these emotions, always keeping in mind our focus on rebuilding trust.

With regards to watching behaviour, the first step is self-awareness; recognising in yourself if you feel uncomfortable, anxious, concerned, worried or frustrated. Stop and think about what's causing this and consider where you want to get to emotionally.

Explore what help you may want or need to assist you, then take steps to access this. You are important. If you're not calm, your team and customers will pick up on it. Customers don't want to step into a business that's oozing anxiety.

Does your business deliver trust in these four key areas?

Customer satisfaction. Colleague or team satisfaction. Revenue or profit. Legislation.

Let's consider what you want and need to do to build trust in each of these areas.

Consider your customers

What measures have you, or will you, put in place so that customers feel safe?
 What are you doing to ensure no cases of COVID-19 are born from a customer experience within your business?
 How are you communicating your actions to your customers?
 How easy is it for customers to ask you questions and share their needs and concerns?
 How will you and your team behave in a way that instils trust, calmness and hospitality?
 How can you feel confident that customers will want to return?

Consider your colleagues

What are you doing to ensure no cases of COVID-19 are born from a colleague working within your business?
 What information do your team need to ensure they address the above considerations for your customers?
 How will you ensure that each individual has fully understood your new ways of working?
 How will you ensure that each individual is confident and not worried or anxious about returning to work?
 How will you ensure that team behaviours promote trust, confidence and reassurance, now and in the future, so that you build a reputation as an exceptional employer?
 How will you ensure your team is trained to deliver for the customer, team, business and in line with legislation?

How will you ensure they can communicate effectively with you, expressing any concerns or asking questions about information you have shared?
 Is your team confident handling tricky, concerned, anxious or frustrated customers or colleagues?

Consider your business

What adjustments do you need to make to maximise revenue?
 What steps do you need to take to ensure this revenue converts to profit in the most efficient and effective way?
 What information might you need to share with your team to get their help with this?
 What systems and processes need to be considered or re-considered, updated or renewed?

Consider your adherence to legislation

Do you and your team fully understand the new legislation and guidelines?
 What evidence do you have that you have adhered to all legislation?

You will have many more things to consider, these are just a few to get you started. If you are unable to answer any of these basic questions, the likelihood of building trust is low.

If you are doing something that's not related to these four areas, ask yourself why are you doing it?

Look out for changes in behaviour

Statistics show your team's feelings towards returning to work might be the trickiest thing you have to deal with. If individuals are concerned in any way, this is likely to show in their behaviour.

If you notice a change in behaviour, try this approach:

- Speak to them in private, explain what you have noticed in their behaviour
- Ask them about it
- Listen with the intention of fully understanding
- Ask if you can help
- Seek solutions and offer reassurance
- Follow up to see how they are getting on

There are some great resources on the NHS website to assist with mental health conditions such as anxiety, stress and depression. Alternatively, you can seek professional support from a coach, councillor, physiotherapist or GP.

The reality

Customers will enter your business with caution. Trust will only start to be rebuilt when they are received by a confident, supportive and reassuring team. When customers see the signs that you have adhered to all legislation, faith in your business will be restored.

Be aware that customers who are anxious or concerned may not be as polite as usual. In these circumstances, you and your team should remain calm, behave aligned to the values-led culture you have created, and respect the customer's wants and needs.

Be mindful of what results your customers want from your business. Be open and honest with them about what you can deliver and how you plan to do this.

No matter what your personal or organisational track record may be, your challenge now is to take steps every day to make changes that begin to rebuild trust.

Be patient and true to yourself and the culture of your business. Over time the results will show.

If every individual and team is calm and considerate, together we will deliver the results required for our customers, our teams, our businesses and the whole of the hospitality industry.

Further resources, guidance and advice
www.zfltd.com
www.nhs.uk
www.yougov.uk
www.ukhospitality.org.uk

This Management Guide was written for the Institute by IoH Member Sally Prescott, Director of Zest for Life.

