Dining Guest Journey Course: Service Standards, Recovery and Repeat Visits for Venues

11 – 15 January 2027
Geneva

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Ref: 802_37758 **Date:** 11 – 15 January 2027 **Location:** Geneva **Fees:** 5500 GBP

Programme Summary

The dining guest journey is the subject of this one-week training course for managers of restaurants, cafes, catering and food and beverage operations, ending in a dining guest journey plan for one venue. Guests judge a meal in moments, from booking to farewell, yet standards differ between shifts and complaints are handled by instinct. The programme moves from mapping the journey to diagnosing service gaps, then to writing front-of-house standards and a recovery and repeat visit routine. Mars Training Centre UK delivers this programme on the dining guest journey to mixed-organisation cohorts of venue managers.

The Business Case

Restaurants, cafes, caterers and hotel dining rooms compete on repeat custom, and a single poor moment can cancel a good meal. Managers who define the journey and respond well to failure keep guests who would otherwise leave quietly.

- Repeat Visits: Rise when guests meet the same standard on every shift and are invited back after a problem.
- Guest Satisfaction: Improves as waiting, ordering and billing moments are managed on purpose.
- Complaint Cost: Falls when staff recover quickly within set limits instead of escalating every case.

Principles and Evidence Base

- Customer Journey Mapping: Lays out each guest step from booking to departure, applied in Session 1 to the dining journey map.
- Moments of Truth: Identifies the brief contacts that shape the guest's judgement, applied in Sessions 1 and 3 to the standards that govern them.
- Service Recovery: Turns a failure into a fair resolution through a defined response, applied in Session 4 to the recovery ladder.
- Net Promoter Score: Asks guests how likely they are to recommend a venue, applied in Session 4 to follow-up and repeat visits.

Intended Participants

- Managers who answer for the guest experience of a restaurant or cafe.
- Catering and banqueting leaders who run service for events.
- Hotel food and beverage managers who lead several outlets.
- Shift supervisors who brief and coach floor teams.

Typical settings include restaurants, cafes, contract catering and hotel dining.

Learning Outcomes

1. Participants will be able to construct a dining guest journey map from booking to departure.
2. Participants will be able to diagnose service gaps from observation, comments and timing data.
3. Participants will be able to design front-of-house standards for the moments that matter most.
4. Participants will be able to evaluate complaints against a recovery ladder and decide the right response.
5. Participants will be able to prioritise improvements by guest effect and effort.
6. Participants will be able to justify a dining guest journey plan to an owner or area director.

Programme Structure

Day 1: The Dining Guest Journey and Moments of Truth

What does a guest experience between booking and departure?

- Dining Journey Map
- Moments of Truth Inventory
- Guest Expectation Grid
- Booking to Departure Timeline
- Venue Type Comparison Sheet

Day 2: Diagnosing Service Gaps

Where does the experience fall short of what guests expect?

- Service Observation Checklist
- Guest Comment Review
- Wait Time Log
- Kitchen to Floor Handover Audit
- Peak Period Pressure Map

Day 3: Front-of-House Service Standards

How are the key moments written into standards a team can follow?

- Greeting and Seating Standard
- Order Accuracy Rule
- Table Check Timing Guide
- Allergen Question Routine
- Bill and Farewell Standard

Day 4: Service Recovery and Repeat Visits

How is a failure turned into a guest who returns?

- Service Recovery Ladder
- Complaint Response Script Bank
- Staff Authority Matrix
- Net Promoter Score Follow-Up Plan
- Returning Guest Outline

Day 5: Dining Guest Journey Plan for One Venue

Do the earlier tools combine into one plan an owner can approve?

- Applying the Session 1 Dining Journey Map
- Testing the Session 2 Service Observation Checklist
- Checking the Session 3 Greeting and Seating Standard
- Rehearsing the Session 4 Service Recovery Ladder
- Completing the Dining Guest Journey Plan

Methodology

The programme uses structured exercises built on prepared case material for two venues, one a city restaurant and one a hotel banqueting operation, each with booking records, guest comments, wait time logs and shift notes. Participants work in groups, walk the journey as guests, role-play difficult tables and defend their plan to peers acting as an owner.

- Suggested activity: Walking the same journey as three different guests and comparing what each notices.
- Suggested activity: Rewriting a seating routine so that a late party is welcomed rather than questioned.
- Suggested activity: Practising a recovery conversation after a wrong dish reaches a guest.

Capstone Output

Each participant completes a dining guest journey plan for one venue. It holds a journey map, a gap diagnosis, front-of-house standards, a recovery ladder and a follow-up routine. The plan is used at work to brief the floor team, to set shift routines and to show an owner how repeat visits will be pursued.

Frequently Asked Questions

Is a training programme on the dining guest journey suitable for managers new to guest experience work?

Yes. The dining guest journey is taught through prepared cases and templates. The programme assumes responsibility for a venue or a shift team, but no earlier work on journey mapping.

Which models does the dining guest journey rest on?

The dining guest journey rests on Customer Journey Mapping, Moments of Truth, Service Recovery and the Net Promoter Score, each applied to prepared venue cases.

How is the plan from the dining guest journey used at work?

You use the dining guest journey plan to brief your floor team, set shift routines and standards, and show an owner how repeat visits will be pursued.

How does the dining guest journey differ from a general customer service programme?

The dining guest journey concentrates on the stages of a meal, table standards and recovery in food and beverage, while a general customer service programme covers every channel and sector.