

GFBC – Informal Needs Analysis Interview and Summary

Interview Questions

1. What problem are you facing that an instructional solution might solve? A problem is any situation that needs to change.
 - **Challenges with front-of-house employees not having a good grasp on the menu, both food and drink, and not knowing the questions to ask the customers when taking orders. This is increasing our food costs and also having a negative impact on customer service.**
2. What is happening now that needs to change?
 - **When customers ask questions about ingredients or substitutions, servers don't always know the correct answers and may guess or tell customers incorrectly. This is starting to cause issues with food waste and costs.**
 - **When customers ask for beer or wine suggestions, servers don't have the background knowledge on beer styles and wine varieties to provide a realistic option to the customer based on the customer's preferences.**
3. What should be happening now but is not happening?
 - **Servers should be able to identify which dishes come with what items (condiments, toppings, etc.) and whether those typically come on the item, or on the side, or what substitutions can be made for the item.**
 - **Servers should ask certain questions when a guest orders a dish (for example, a burger: the next logical question should be "how would you like that cooked?")**
 - **Servers should have a basic background knowledge in beer and wine to make a decent suggestion when a guest states their preference (for example: "I'm a Bud Light guy. What could I drink here?")**
4. Who first identified the problem and how?
 - **We've known that training has been an issue for a while; there wasn't really one identifying "moment". We were in a rush to get the doors open in January 2020 after several issues pushed us behind schedule, and the creation of a structured training system fell to the back burner.**
5. Describe a scenario in which the problem does not exist.
 - **Little to no staff turnover with staff that are experienced and confident in solving problems. We want a formalized training program to use with new employees.**

6. How will you know the problem has been resolved?
- **A full training system and finding what works for us and our employees will be a challenge, and we expect that mistakes will happen given the nature of the work. We don't expect perfection, but we hope to make strong improvements. This will be characterized by less food being sent back to the kitchen and fewer complaints from customers to management.**
7. Do you think instruction is the most appropriate way to solve the problem? Why?
- **Yes. Up to this point, there has been so much movement since opening that we haven't gotten a full training program in place like was the initial goal. Every time that COVID restrictions changed, we had to reinvent ourselves and figure out a completely new system using the staff and tools that we had available to us. Sometimes we are so short-staffed that people get thrown in without a real training experience, other than on how to use the computer and where things are in the building. Taking a couple of hours per shift to hash these things out would be beneficial to us, customers, and also employees – they will hopefully experience a gain in confidence and satisfaction (and tips!).**
8. What would be the purpose of this instruction?
- **To familiarize new employees with the menu in order to do the job successfully - meaning improving the guest experience and cutting down on food waste through fewer send-backs.**
9. Who would take this instruction?
- **New front-of-house employees, mainly servers but also bartenders.**
 - Follow-up question: Would the back-of-house benefit from instruction of this nature?
 - i. **No, the kitchen is great and we have no issues at this point to warrant instruction.**
10. How do you want the instruction delivered – face-to-face, online or blended?
- **Mostly face to face. Open to some activities with technology, but lack of equipment is a concern.**

11. When do you foresee employees completing the instruction?

- **We're not open for lunch on Mondays or Tuesdays, so those are times that we could have full staff meetings if necessary. We can also have employees undergo individual training at the beginning of their shift each day.**

12. Is there anyone else I should talk to get a better understanding of this problem?

- **Other front-of-house managers and owners. Employees that have been with us since the beginning.**

Summary of Needs Analysis

A. Context

The client is a small, locally-owned restaurant that opened just 5 weeks prior to the COVID-19 shutdowns in the state of Kentucky. The restaurant lost most of its staff and transitioned to carry-out only for about 2 months, until the state began slowly re-opening public spaces (first at 33%, then at 50%, then at 75%, and finally 100%). The restaurant owners note that it felt like they had to "reinvent themselves" each time the COVID protocols changed, as they were still getting into a groove and figuring out what worked for them as new restaurant owners when the shutdowns occurred. While the kitchen has had very little turnover since January 2020, staffing has been a major challenge with the front-of-house (namely servers and bartenders); with each day for the past 20 months bringing new challenges and employees moving in and out, a structured training program for new front-of-house employees has not been well established and implemented. Many employees are new to the restaurant industry, which also presents challenges due to lack of experience.

B. Problem Identified

My needs analysis identified that a lack of structured training on the intricacies of the menu for front-of-house employees is having a negative impact on the business. First, with food and drink costs: food is being sent back to the kitchen due to employees not having a strong grasp on the menu and consulting patrons incorrectly (for example, which menu items come with which toppings, condiments, or side dishes; which items can be substituted or replaced). Second, in customer service: there are more instances than they would like of food coming out without the proper modifiers (for example, no gravy, no onion, add extra pickle, etc.) and customers asking to speak with management. Additionally, patrons often ask for drink recommendations but servers may not always have a strong grasp of what suggestions to make based on the patron's stated preferences. The restaurant owners accept that mistakes happen, but are hoping to cut down on some of the food waste and improve customer satisfaction.

C. Proposed Instructional Solution

The instructional solution I propose is to create structured lessons for new front-of-house employees covering three main topics: the food menu, the drink menu, and efficient ways to

take notes so that orders are rung into the computers correctly. In covering the food menu, employees will receive instruction on menu items to ensure they have a solid understanding of each one to then communicate to customers. In the drink menu lesson, employees will learn the ingredients of the main drink offerings, and also receive a crash-course in beer styles (so when a customer says 'I like ____, what do you have that's like that?' employees will be able to provide a better answer). Lastly, employees will have a lesson on efficient note-taking while taking orders, and methods for ensuring that orders are keyed into the computer properly, to lessen the number of errors and food coming out without the proper modifiers. This instruction will mostly happen face-to-face.