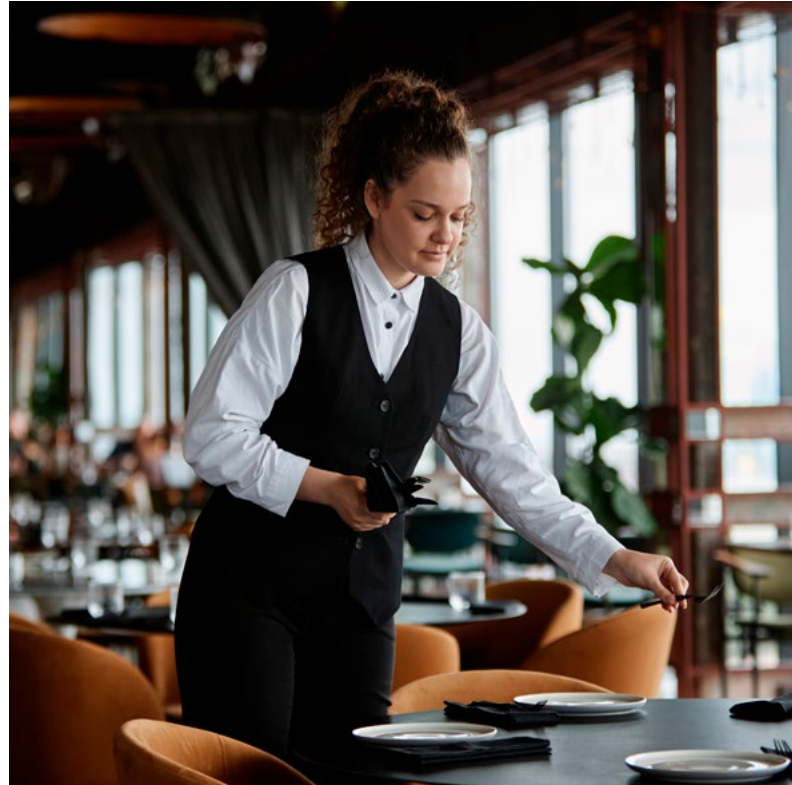


## Work Design Case Study 1

# Hospitality sector

Example case studies illustrating organisational and team level work design, and team and task level work design



## Organisational context and work content

A busy, ageing, regional, local sport organisation has a bar, restaurant and gambling facilities associated with their club. It has extended opening hours, so staff need to do shift work and be able to move between the bar, restaurant, or gaming room depending on how busy each is. There is also a courtesy bus. Most customers on the courtesy bus are elderly and may require help to get on and off the bus.

- The club employs a large number of part time female workers from racially diverse backgrounds
- The club also employs casual workers for special functions who are typically less experienced
- There are frequent staff shortages
- The layout of the bar and restaurant is poor which increases the manual handling risks and slows service
- Inexperienced staff usually take longer to do tasks.
- These factors lead to regular customer complaints about bar and restaurant wait times. This is made worse as the poor stock ordering system means some favourite drinks and food frequently run out.

Club staff are expected to help create a friendly welcoming environment. However this is challenging when customers are often rude about wait times, intoxicated and young female staff frequently complain about being threatened and racially harassed. Frequent late roster changes are also creating problems for workers trying to plan childcare and home duties.

While no staff have recently put in a stress claim, the organisation is finding it hard to recruit and retain experienced staff as stressed and dissatisfied workers are easily employed by other clubs and restaurants in the town.

## Psychosocial hazards and risks

The club, through their worker consultation forums and exit interviews, identified a range of psychosocial and physical risks leading to staff stress and fatigue. These included: frequent exposure to harassment and aggression from customers, high workloads, emotionally demanding work (being polite to rude customers), low job control, hot working environments in kitchens, hazardous manual handling of kegs and food and drink supplies, unpredictable and inflexible shifts and inadequate training for new staff. They also identified that floor managers felt rushed so didn't always feel they had enough time to give practical and emotional support.

## Work design process and control measures to manage psychosocial risks

The house and duty managers began to review daily takings, check online reviews, staff notes on issues that came up during their shifts, and upcoming functions to make sure they rostered enough experienced staff on when needed. Rosters were now published two weeks in advance and staff were encouraged to approach managers if they needed changes.

Instead of fixed roles, all staff were now expected and trained to do multiple roles across the club so they could help out whenever needed. To ensure staff were clear on the new responsibilities, this was included in their job descriptions. Staff suggested it would be helpful to have QR Code stickers (which took staff to an online version of the instructions), or quick reference sheets placed near the task. This was especially important where the task had to be done in a particular order for safety and efficiency reasons, such as tapping the kegs.

Staff said the varied roles made the shifts more interesting and they appreciated learning new skills. While staff were undergoing training some extra staff were needed. As they became confident the extra staff were no longer needed.

The ordering systems were reviewed and updated to make sure appropriate stock was available. Where it was not, floor staff could let customers know.

Most staff worked in teams of two or three and now at the beginning of each shift would meet to discuss how to divide tasks up to share the load. This improved their sense of job control, made work more interesting and junior staff were able to develop new skills.

Staff suggested that courtesy bus customers were more respectful when older rather than younger staff drove. Whenever possible, older staff were rostered on. This also allowed the staff to get to know their regular customers and build relationships. The bus was fitted with a radio in case the driver needed assistance or there was a medical emergency.

The club organised for staff representatives to meet with the architect and discuss the planned staged club refurbishment. This meant staff could help produce ideas to improve the workflow and reduce manual handling risks associated with the kitchen and bar areas. This also identified some quick fixes which were introduced immediately: co-locating ice and glassware; putting in floor mats to reduce leg fatigue; and making sure the heaviest food and drink supplies were in the middle shelves in the cool room and staff moved them using trolleys.

Staff were trained to politely ask customers about any service complaints but reminded and supported to use the club's no abuse tolerance policy. If customers repeated the unacceptable behaviour the duty managers or security staff member escorted them off the premises.