

ENC 3250 | Professional Writing

Writing Assignment Three (Memo & Informal Report)

Scenario

Improving Bistecca's Sales

You are the general manager of an upscale casual restaurant in Cape Coral called Bistecca Grill. Bistecca's specializes in affordable but high quality steaks, innovative cocktails, and trendy appetizers. During the pandemic, you've adjusted your operations to include family meals for takeout and delivery. There are three Bistecca restaurants in Southwest Florida, all owned by restaurateur Jim Santorini, and all doing fairly well despite the circumstances.

However, over the past two months, profits have been down in your location, and Jim decides to come down and watch the dining room on a busy Friday night to see what's happening. Throughout the night, Jim observes patrons and delivery drivers waiting a long time for orders to come out. He notices a few customers complaining that their food is cold or not cooked to their liking. Finally, he notices that the wait staff seem to congregate at the POS (point of sale) computer and chitchat while they wait to put their orders in.

Because Jim has to leave for the Bonita Springs location early the next morning, he can't sit down for a formal meeting with you, but he quickly shares what he observed. Since you're the one who really knows what's happening in the day-to-day operations, he asks you to write up an informal report. In the report, he wants to know what's causing sales to dip, and what you think should be done to correct the problem(s). He makes it clear he wants two specific and effective long-term solutions based on solid information.

Needless to say, you're embarrassed that your restaurant isn't performing better. It's very important that you quickly identify the problems, come up with good solutions, and convince Jim that your recommendations will work. You begin by collecting customer reviews posted online in the last two months and analyzing them for patterns. Also, you call a morning meeting with the front of house (FOH) and kitchen staff to get their take on what's causing the delays and mistakes.

Assignment

Review the data and findings on the following pages. Then form your conclusions and recommendations. Think carefully about how you can justify your recommendations based on the findings and on what you know about the scenario. The video should be a great help to you in doing so. Be certain to think about your recommendations in terms of specific outcomes Jim can expect if he approves your recommendations.

Write a 1-2 page **e-mail/memo** to Jim (jsantorini@bistecca.com) that functions as a **recommendation report** outlining and justifying your two specific recommendations.

Your letter will be graded on correct use of language and overall professionalism as well as the Red, Orange, and Yellow Level Strategies listed on the next page. Please review them before writing and then use them as a checklist for revision.

Red Level Strategies

- Establish purpose and audience
- Use simple, concrete, and direct language -- align language and purpose
- Use the direct organization
- Ensure completeness and accuracy
- Write informative and purposeful subject lines

Orange Level Strategies

- Use goodwill-building techniques
- Emphasize reader benefits
- Write with a positive emphasis
- Write with a reader-based emphasis

Yellow Level Strategies

- Refine information to make it more useful
- Design information using SSPD
- Use lists
- Write with parallel structure
- Craft informative headings

Assignments that use strategies well, but that do not exhibit appropriate, professional use of language will be given a grade of zero. You will have one week to meet with the Instructor to solve the problem, and a new deadline will be given for a resubmission with reduced grade.

See next pages for Data and Findings. Findings may be most helpful. They are on the last page of this document.

Collected Data

NEGATIVE CUSTOMER REVIEWS – 20 posted in the last two months on Google, Yelp, & Tripadvisor

Reason for Negative Review	Source of Problem	Actionable Item?	Potential Resolution
Steak was overcooked	Kitchen	Y	Training or Menu Revision
Delivery order was missing items	FOH	Y	Training
Food was served cold	FOH	Y	New POS Tablets or Food Warmers
Not enough vegan options on the menu	FOH	N	
Meal was too expensive	Kitchen	Y	Menu Revision
Excessive wait to be served food	Kitchen	Y	New POS Tablets or Menu Revision
Cocktails were not strong enough	Bar	N	
Excessive wait to be served food	Kitchen	Y	New POS Tablets or Menu Revision
Food was too greasy	Kitchen	Y	Training or Menu Revision
Steak was overcooked	Kitchen	Y	Training or Menu Revision
Steak was undercooked	Kitchen	Y	Training or Menu Revision
Portions too small	Kitchen	Y	Training or Menu Revision
Excessive wait to be served food	Kitchen	Y	New POS Tablets or Menu Revision
Food was served cold	FOH	Y	New POS Tablets or Food Warmers
Bar was too busy; couldn't find a socially distant seat	Bar	N	
Food was cold and under-seasoned	FOH & Kitchen	Y	New POS Tablets, New Food Warmers, or Training
Delivery order was missing items & containers were unsealed/spilled in bag	FOH	Y	Training
Excessive wait to be served food	Kitchen	Y	New POS Tablets or Menu Revision
Food was served cold	FOH	Y	New POS Tablets or Food Warmers
Steak was undercooked	Kitchen	Y	Training or Menu Revision

ANONYMOUS COMMENTS COLLECTED DURING STAFF MEETING

“The whole kitchen staff needs to be replaced. They’re the ones making mistakes, and then the customer reams me out and gives a crappy tip. It’s not fair.”

“We desperately need a new POS computer. That thing is so slow and ancient, it takes like five minutes to put in an order. By the time I get to the kitchen, I’ve got multiple dishes waiting to go out.”

“With the new family take-out dishes, there’s just too much to juggle in the kitchen. We need fewer items on the menu. There’s only so many things I can cook at one time.”

“We really need a different to-go person. Suzy is totally lazy and never remembers to check the orders before they go out. Also, I’m really tired of doing everyone’s side work. Whatever happened to the side work chart we used to use? We need to bring that back so everyone does their fair share.”

“The menu is too complicated. Things get forgotten on takeout orders because there are too many components to the dishes. We can’t be expected to remember which of the ten different sauces go with which dish!”

“Can we pleeeeeease get another POS computer or two? Every time I have to put in an order, Josh corners me and tries to ask me out again. Can we also get corporate to do some sexual harassment training or something?”

“The servers are too slow to pick up dishes. It’s not my fault if plates are sitting under the heat lamp forever. Though I think we need new heat lamps, too. They don’t put out as much heat as they used to.”

“Omg Suzy is the worst. And Paco – he never gets orders right and I swear every time a customer sends food back, Paco is the one who made it.”

“We need to streamline the menu, cut down the number of entrees and have more components like sauces that can be prepped in advance or used on more than one dish. Between the two menus (regular and family takeaway) you’re asking the cooks to do too much. We’re doing the best we can as fast as we can but we’re not magicians.”

“Give us all raises LOL Maybe if I was paid more, I’d hustle more.”

“I’m not gonna name names, but I see the servers taking smoke breaks out back all the time while food just sits under the lamps.”

“New heat lamps, new POS computers. Maybe put some of these kids on the wait staff through training again. That’s what I think we need. I know ya’ll don’t want to spend the money, but you gotta spend money to make money.”

Findings

20 negative customer reviews total; 17 are actionable

Source of restaurant problems:

- 12 from the kitchen (60 percent)
- 7 from the front-of-house (35 percent)
- 2 from the bar (10 percent)

Categorization of problems:

- 7 complaints related to excessive wait for food or delay in serving (35 percent)
- 7 complaints related to quality of food or cooking (35 percent)
- 6 service or miscellaneous complaints (20 percent)

Potential Strategies for Addressing Actionable Complaints:

- 9 complaints can be addressed with additional training of kitchen and front of house staff (52.9 percent)
- 11 complaints can be addressed with revision and streamlining of the menu to make food preparation quicker and easier (64.7 percent)
- 8 complaints can be addressed by purchasing POS tablets for each server for faster order entry (47 percent)
- 4 complaints can be addressed by purchasing new food warmers (23.5 percent)