Research assessment: Investigating and responding to client needs (Essay)

This sample is intended to inform the design of assessment instruments in the senior phase of learning. It highlights the qualities of student work and the match to the syllabus standards.

Dimensions assessed

- Inquiring

Assessment instrument

The response presented in this sample is in response to an assessment task.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic Areas</th>
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<tr>
<td>Kitchen production</td>
<td>Food and beverage services</td>
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Context

You have been studying meeting client needs in specific hospitality contexts related to Kitchen production and Food and beverage services.

Issue

The Australian hospitality industry must meet the special needs of various customer groups. To remain successful, businesses must respond to the demands of an ever-increasing number of customers with special needs by offering products or services relevant to those needs.

Task

Investigate the issue of meeting the special needs of a particular customer group within the local hospitality industry. Develop arguments and draw conclusions about the issue including the ways these needs may have been responded to and the changes that may be required where these needs have not been met. Respond in an essay of 1000–1500 words.

Guidelines

- Name the customer group you will investigate.
- Identify the special needs of this customer group — what may be required to meet their needs, e.g. in terms of menu design, kitchen production practices?
- Investigate a local precinct of the hospitality industry and analyse current industry practices aimed at meeting the needs of the customer group.
- Based on the evidence gathered from the local precinct, develop arguments about whether the customer group’s needs are being met. Draw conclusions from your research to identify possible changes that may be required.
- Within the essay response, refer to the sources of evidence used. These sources must be referenced appropriately and listed in the bibliography. Include any surveys, questionnaires, tables or graphs referred to in an appendix.

Note: Bibliographies and appendices are not included as part of the sample responses.
Instrument-specific criteria and standards

Student responses have been matched to instrument-specific criteria and standards; those that best describe the student work in this sample are shown below. For more information about the syllabus dimensions and standards descriptors, see www.qsa.qld.edu.au/18155.html#assessment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inquiring</th>
<th>Standard A</th>
<th>Standard C</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The student work has the following characteristics:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• in-depth understanding and examination of hospitality issues</td>
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<td>• synthesis of information from a wide range of relevant sources that support well-reasoned arguments with valid conclusions drawn</td>
<td>• synthesis of information from sources that support arguments with conclusions drawn</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• effective use and sustained control of genre and language conventions to communicate ideas.</td>
<td>• use of genre and language conventions to communicate ideas.</td>
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</table>

**Note:** Colour highlights have been used in the table to emphasise the qualities that discriminate between the standards.

**Key:**
- Quality words
- Cognitive (thinking and doing) words
### Indicative response — Standard A

The annotations show the match to the instrument-specific standards.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comments</th>
<th>Appeal to Young Diners</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In-depth understanding and examination of hospitality issues</td>
<td>Child-friendly businesses are more prominent than ever, as children become the main focus with local restaurants, bistros, pubs, clubs and cafes. Many establishments are now better prepared to accommodate young diners, considering their special needs, while successfully increasing business flow. According to the research conducted, 62% of local hospitality outlets have changed or are rapidly changing to integrate this current trend to suit young diners, and are ultimately benefiting from their new approach and creating a positive impact, particularly with families in the company of children. As the national average age of new parents increases to 32-35, this combined customer group of adults with a generally higher income in than in the past is a clever market to tap into (M. Moore 2012).</td>
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<td>Synthesis of information from a wide range of relevant sources that support well-reasoned arguments with valid conclusions drawn</td>
<td>In contrast with previous times, eateries are currently aiming their business towards young children and their parents, finding that they are now one of the industry’s biggest consumers (M. Moore, 2012). Prior to this development, there was little thought given to the needs of children and they were treated as a side issue. Now, “...kids are the star focus in order to make them feel special,” stated a representative for McDonalds (Appendix 1.5). With beer gardens a thing of the past, pubs and clubs have joined the movement to allow children to be with their parents inside the venue within designated areas; ............, a mother of three, considers this an attractive option compared to not being permitted access inside the building at all. Not only are these facilities allowing admission to the building, hospitality outlets have adapted finger foods and child friendly options to their menus. Restaurants and bistros are providing indoor or outdoor play grounds, crafty workshops, technology that will keep children amused and live shows intended for them (Appendix 1), in the belief that it will entice children to be with their parents inside the venue within designated areas; ............, a mother of three, considers this an attractive option compared to not being permitted access inside the building at all. Not only are these facilities allowing admission to the building, hospitality outlets have adapted finger foods and child friendly options to their menus. 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<td>To maintain the attention of the customers, children’s special requirements need to accounted for. Debra Nicholson (Food and Beverage Service Learner Guide, year unknown, p.13) suggests highchairs, smaller dishes, activities, adequate food that children are more likely to eat and serving them before the adults, are features that make it easier on the parent, therefore impressing upon good service and the remarkable manner in which the restaurant presents itself. Further elements are nutritious meals included in the menu to ensure children develop properly, maintaining a healthy balanced diet (Juliette Kello, 2011). By maintaining a healthy balanced diet that includes vitamins,</td>
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mineral, fibre and calcium the child will develop good eating habits and develop into strong and healthy adult (the European Food Information Council, 2006). A Survey was conducted on 100 people to ask parents with children what was most important when dining out. The top four features were that service should be enthusiastic, polite and helpful, meals that were value for money, that they had efficient service and that there were nutritional foods included on the menu (Appendix 2).

Local restaurants are already adapting to meet these requirements, factoring them into their businesses, which will ultimately help their bottom line. Six food establishments took part in a survey which asked how they catered to children (see appendix 2, question 6 results). Apart from one establishment locating their kids area close to the gaming machines, an unsafe environment where children can be exposed to coarse language, these facilities have also reduced the size of meals intended for children, offering a variety of foods ranging from a ham and pineapple pizza to vegetarian. Main meals included pizza, steak, popcorn chicken and fish and chips are popular menu items, appearing in more than half of the restaurant menus. While some offered a healthy side dish, most restaurants opted for chips reasoning that nine times out of ten, that was what children were most likely to choose from the menu. Staff members said that they treat children with smiles, enthusiasm, plenty of eye contact and in some circumstances, offer craft activities or provide extra staff designated to run such activities in order to make them feel special as they are an important factor in the hospitality industry and improve business (Appendix 1).

Utilising some of these approaches local hospitality outlets have met most of the needs of families, and according to the survey conducted, have been effective in attracting these consumers into their establishments. Customers are happier that they are able to dine with their children and occupy them with activities that the facility offers (Appendix 2.1). With these developments, more consumers, such as mothers with young children, are choosing to dine out with their friends as they no longer have to worry about a baby sitter or occupying their children whereas before this was not possible (Appendix 2.2). Respondents agree that children deserved to be able to dine with their parents stating that it has to be, “equal rights for everyone” (Appendix 2.8). This attitude taken on by the hospitality industry, is improving sales and the return of patronage. If the customer is happy with the service being provided and what is on offer to them, it is more probable that they will tell others of their experience, bringing the facility more business.

However, there is always room for improvement when it comes to really appealing to this specific customer group. Some eateries provide highchairs but these are generally unavailable. When a survey by observation was taken on the local area, 80% of restaurants and bistros visited did not have any highchairs at all (Appendix 3). This can be a problem for those with toddlers who need highchairs to comfortably feed their children as parents find it more convenient to have one located at a venue. Although kids may prefer chips to salad or vegetables, the menu must include a few nutritional options for a healthy balanced diet so the body can receive its essential nutrients (Catch Fitness, 2011). Parents surveyed suggested that a brochure or passage on the menu could provide customers with nutritional information. Menu portioning for children could also include a method of providing larger sizes based on age. For example, children aged 5-9 could have a smaller plate than the children aged 10-14. For children who become hyperactive, alternatives could be added to the menu that provide sugar free or reduced sugar beverages and meals, for example when designing desserts. Another improvement is to ensure that all children are not exposed to violence, drunkenness, profanity or exposing children to gambling (in the case of pubs and clubs) by having designated areas for families and children.
Most restaurants already do this, however in some hospitality establishments there should be a more noticeable distance between these selected areas to guarantee a safe environment for both families and children. Another important feature for outlets to remember is to ensure that children receive the same respect that their adult counterparts receive from service staff. Ultimately, this is what will further the establishments image.

Through data collated it can be seen that the local hospitality industry is trending towards the consumer group of families and children. Attracting and catering for this group can been seen in changes of menus to accommodate for children, to establishments providing suitable resources such as play grounds and seating including high chairs. It can be noted that the local industry has embraced the customer group in order to grow their clientele base and accommodate this new trend.
### Comments

**‘CHILD FRIENDLY CAFES AEW CASHING IN’**  
Senior Hospitality Studies

Child friendly cafes are cashing in with business coming from families and parents with children. In this essay, an investigation will be taken to show what families and parents expect or require from the hospitality industry at which they are dining in. Surveys will be taken from parents and families who dine out frequently with their kids. Questions are asked about how they have been treated by staff and whether the café or restaurant is child friendly in their opinions.

A recent investigation undertaken by the Essential Baby website (20/03/2011) found that before taking your children out to dine, a series of questions need to be taken into consideration, included in appendix one. An example is whether it is pram friendly? And does the staff have a baby/child friendly attitude? These examples of a few reflections can make all the difference. ‘Does the café have easy access with free or cheap nearby parking?’ Quoted by a female mum questions on whether the café has easy access and free or cheap parking. By asking this the mum has provided the hospitality industry an indication or requirement which will be pleasing to parents. Having free or cheap parking allows families to have assurance of not paying a fortune when dining out with their children.

Special deals and children’s menus will draw in families into the door for the first time, if they are treated well and cared for by the staff they will return. (20/03/2011) To ensure repeated business from families, staff should provide an enjoyable experience for children and parents without stereotyping that all children are annoying. When staff have the right attitude towards children and make families feel welcome at their restaurant or café, they will be sure to expect repeated customers. (Sean Anderson & Stephen Ashley, 1996)

Referring to appendix one, the study shows that parents prefer a healthy choice of meals for their children rather than pizza or chicken nuggets. Regarding menu designs to suit children, the study proves that parents want a healthy choice on their children’s menu. The café should provide a healthy option for children, for example replacing the oily, fatty pizza for a vegetarian alternative, providing a range of salad’s suitable for kids, and replacing sugar filled drinks for fresh juice or a fruit filled smoothie.

After a recent visit to the local Leagues Club, a survey by observation was taken. (Appendix 2) At the X Club the company offered a social atmosphere for families and friends to catch up. The menu offered a variety of meals for parents and adults whereas the children’s menu did not offer a variety of healthy choices for the kids. (Appendix 3) Another survey by observation was taken after visit to a local restaurant. (Appendix 4) The family restaurant is a perfect place to take children when it comes to a variety of meals for children as well as a great socialising venue for parents. The restaurant does not have a bar or an alcohol atmosphere that the parents have to worry about.
| Synthesis of information from sources that support arguments with conclusions drawn |
| Use of genre and language conventions to communicate ideas throughout the essay |

Both these establishments do offer a children’s menu however, referring to the results of what parents prefer for their children both establishments need improvement in providing a variety of healthy meals suitable for children. Café Z and the X club offer free parking and easy access for parents which are convenient for families and parents with prams. Also, both restaurants offer a buffet meal to go with the main meals which are priced at a reasonable price for families with young children. At the Xclub a change in the establishment’s child friendly menu and atmosphere will need to be changed to attract families who are willing to take their children out to dine. The restaurant should provide a separate dining room for families with kids which are not surrounded by alcohol. Also, high chairs must be accessible for parents with young infants. At the other restaurant, the atmosphere is perfect for children although providing the kids with books, colouring pencils or entertainment will gain the attraction of families and the children. By doing this the company’s success will increase as families will rather dine out regularly with their children at a place which will entertain their kids.

Possible changes for the local hospitality industry regarding children is to provide a child friendly menu which offers a variety of choices. The menu planning must be taken in to consideration when designing for young children. S. Anderson & S. Ashley (1996) state that when designing a menu the customer’s expectations must match the product. As parents prefer a healthier option, the menu must provide a variety of salads, fruits and juices, by doing this the industry will have met the requirements for children and parents.

Acknowledgments

The QSA acknowledges the contribution of Dakabin State High School in the preparation of this document.