

DIPLOMA IN HOTEL MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME (DHM)

DIPLOMA IN CULINARY ARTS PROGRAMME (DCAN)

COM 2114: WORKPLACE COMMUNICATION

FINAL EXAM: JANUARY 2020 SESSION

**Section A: Case Study (40 marks)**

**Read the following case studies and answer the questions**

**Case Study 1**

Jack is a 28-year old who is a foodservice manager at a casual dining restaurant. Jack is responsible for supervising and managing all employees in the back of the house. Employees working in the back of the house range in age from 16 years old to 50 years old. In addition, the employees come from diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds. For many, English is not their primary language.

Jack is ServSafe® certified and tries his best to keep up with food safety issues in the kitchen but he admits it's not easy. Employees receive "on the job training" about food safety basics (for example, appropriate hygiene and handwashing, time/temperature, and cleaning and sanitizing). But with high turnover of employees, training is often rushed and some new employees are put right into the job without training if it is a busy day. Eventually, most employees get some kind of food safety training. The owners of the restaurant are supportive of Jack in his food safety efforts because they know if a food safety outbreak were ever linked to their restaurant; it would likely put them out of business. Still, the owners note there are additional costs for training and making sure food is handled safely.

One day Jack comes to work and is rather upset even before he steps into the restaurant. Things haven't been going well at home and he was lucky to rummage through some of the dirty laundry and find a relatively clean outfit to wear for work. He admits he needs a haircut and a good hand scrubbing, especially after working on his car last evening. When he walks into the kitchen, he notices several trays of uncooked meat sitting out in the kitchen area. It appears these have been sitting at room temperature for quite some time. Jack is frustrated and doesn't know what to do. He feels like he is beating his head against a brick wall when it comes to getting employees to practice food safety.

Jack has taken many efforts to get employees to be safe in how they handle food. He has huge signs posted all over the kitchen with these words: KEEP HOT FOOD HOT AND COLD FOOD COLD and WASH YOUR HANDS ALWAYS AND OFTEN. All employees are given a thermometer when they start so that they can temp food. Hand sinks, soap, and paper towels are available for employees so that they are encouraged to wash their hands frequently.

*Adapted from IOWA State University, Food Safety Project*

**Answer the following questions based on the scenario above.**

1. Identify and explain FOUR (4) communication challenges and barriers Jack faces.  
(8 marks)
2. What solutions might Barry consider in addressing each of these challenges and barriers?  
Provide at least FOUR (4) communication skills to justify your answer.  
(12 marks)

**Case Study 2**

Larry, a high school kid looking for a summer job, was hired as a cook at a nearby restaurant. Larry had no experience working in kitchens, but the supervisor who hired him, explained that it wasn't necessary, because they would train him.

On Larry's first day, he was paired with a Senior Line Cook by the name of Tyler. Tyler wasn't especially thrilled with the idea of having to train a new guy on the busiest night of the week, and expressed his concerns to the manager. "You're our most senior employee, so that makes you the most qualified person to do the training." A frustrated Tyler didn't say much after that – and aside from giving Larry a nod of acknowledgement, his only words to him were "watch, and stay out of my way."

By the time the main dinner rush hit, the entire kitchen line was bustling with activity and Tyler was doing his best to call orders, time out bills, and cook all at the same time. As more and more orders came in, the stress level in the kitchen had increased dramatically. It was at this point Tyler turned to Larry and barked, "I need you to run to the fridge and get me more hamburger meat!" Afraid to ask any questions, Larry quickly turned to look for the fridge, and as instructed, "ran" through the kitchen line to get more meat. A cook, unaware that Larry was coming through, turned to put up a dish, and collided with Larry. He never heard him coming.

*Adapted from HIS Summit Case Studies*

**Answer the following questions based on the scenario above.**

1. Identify FIVE (5) issues faced by Larry and explain briefly (10 marks)
2. Give FIVE (5) top character traits you would look for in a qualified trainer and justify your answer. (10 marks)

**SECTION B: Business Letter Writing (20 marks)**

*Refer to Case Study 1 from SECTION A.*

Based on the situation, what Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) would be helpful for Barry to implement and enforce? Write an email to the owners of the new SOPs.

**SECTION C: (40 marks)**

**Answer BOTH questions below by writing an essay of about 250 words each.**

1. Communication barriers are the main reason communication breakdowns and misunderstandings occur in the service industry. Discuss FIVE (5) communication barriers, how they happen, and provide appropriate solutions to the chosen barriers.
2. Using social media tools extensively to communicate in the service industry has its benefits and drawbacks. Discuss the pros and cons of using social media tools / apps for internal (within office, specific service team) and external (with management, clients, publicists) communication.