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IMPROVING RESTAURANT CUSTOMER SERVICE

Improving Restaurant Customer Service through Job Aids

Madisyn W Slater

Western Michigan University

Abstract

A key concern for restaurants is good customer service as it directly relates to repeated customers and revenue generation. Customer service plays a large role in keeping a business up and running, without appropriate customer-employee interactions, a business may cease to exist. The field of Organizational Behavior Management (OBM) has several empirically-based interventions that may help. One of these interventions, job aids, gives a brief description of what is expected and can be consulted by an employee at any point in time. However, most research uses a package intervention and has not examined the effects of job aids alone. The purpose of this study was to evaluate if a job aid could improve customer service behaviors by restaurant hosts. The study included four hosts ranging from 15 to 25 years old and took place at a locally owned restaurant. The job aid was introduced in a single-case multiple-baseline design across individuals (hosts) to experimentally evaluate the efficacy of this intervention. Results were somewhat inconsistent with a slight improvement in customer service behaviors for some participants. However, further research needs to be conducted on the most effective way to implement job aids and if additional interventions are necessary to improve customer service in a restaurant setting.

Literature Review

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Multiple studies have documented the overall importance of customer service and service employee behavior on organizational goals (Loewy & Bailey, 2007). Customers are becoming more sophisticated, demanding more efficient and high-quality service. It has been shown through multiple industries that a reliable positive relationship between customers and service quality is linked to the length of time a customer spends with a particular company (Reetz et al., 2016). Repeated business is especially important and this heavily relies on the performance of the staff in providing service to the customers (LaFleur et al., 1995). Although the importance of providing quality customer service is typically assumed, relatively few studies have documented how to facilitate appropriate customer-employee interactions in retail establishments like restaurants (Komaki et al., 2008). It is important that front-of-house staff have the tools they need to deliver quality customer service. Their knowledge and expertise will pave the way for a memorable experience.

Organizational Behavior Management has several empirically-based interventions that may help. These interventions include training, task clarification, goal setting, feedback, and several others. In one example, a package intervention was put into place in a restaurant setting to increase customer greeting and upselling (Squires et al., 2007). The intervention included task clarification, visual prompts, and graphic feedback. Participants in the study were 11 employees who ranged from 18 to 40 years old and were both male and female. A combination of multiple baseline and reversal designs was used. All interventions improved performance over baseline with graphic feedback and visual prompts having the greatest impact. This provides just one example of how OBM interventions can be used to improve customer service behaviors.

Other package interventions have also been shown to be beneficial in restaurant settings. A study was done using task clarification, manager feedback, and graphic feedback to decrease employee bussing times at a pizza restaurant. The study was conducted using an ABC design

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replicated across participants. Participants consisted of four female servers, ages 18-24 (Amigo et al., 2008). Results of the study indicated that task clarification decreased the average busing time from 315 seconds in baseline to 284 seconds in the intervention phase. It was also found that feedback led to a further reduction in busing times to an average of 152 seconds. This study further supports the efficacy of these types of interventions. However, package interventions like these can include a great deal of effort and cost.

While all the different interventions in OBM provide something to a company, it is also important to look into interventions that are both low-cost and low-effort for a company to implement. Job aids, for example, are inexpensive interventions that can easily be added to the environment. Job aids provide constant support that performers can consult at any point in time. They are readily available descriptions of what is expected of the performer. Unlike other intervention avenues such as goal setting and feedback, job aids provide ongoing support that can be referenced by the performer during the actual performance. Job aids act as a prompt that evokes a desired behavior, and they have been shown as successful in organizational research (Choi & Johnson, 2021).

Unfortunately, this intervention is rarely tested alone and instead is frequently combined with feedback or other strategies as a package intervention (Durgin et al., 2014). In a study conducted by Durgin et al., (2014), a multifunction job aid and feedback training was implemented to improve the performance of supervisors and animal trainers in a nongovernmental organization. Three animal trainers and three supervisors participated in the study. All participants were between 18 and 40 years old and all had 5-11 years of experience with the company. A multiple baseline design across subjects experimental design was used. The results of this study suggested that the intervention improved the performance of both the supervisor and the animal trainers they supervised. Supervisors A, B, and C, had baseline scores

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of 68.6%, 53.7%, and 49.7%. These scores increased to 98.4%, 98.5%, and 95.9% during the intervention phase. Animal trainers A, B, and C had mean scores of 68.8%, 70.8%, and 62.5% in baseline. These scores increased to 93.8%, 100.0%, and 93.8% in intervention. These results suggest that the incorporation of a job aid as well as feedback training led to improvements in performance for supervisors of this organization as well as animal trainers. Although the package intervention has shown to be successful, it is much more costly and time-consuming than implementing a job aid without additional interventions.

In another study, LaFleur and Hyten (1995) implemented a package intervention consisting of task checklists, feedback, goal setting, monetary bonuses for quality performance, training, and job aids to enhance the accuracy and timeliness of function steps by a hotel banquet staff. Participants included 26 banquet employees, 12 of whom were females and 14 were males. A reversal (ABAB) design was used. All 26 employees showed increases in setup completion percentages. Results showed that performance by hotel banquet staff increased from an average of 68.8% in baseline to 99.7% during the treatment phase. Although this study was successful in increasing performance it is unclear exactly which tool had the greatest impact on increasing performance.

In particular, it is important to know how a job aid functions outside of a collection of interventions. Parnell et al. (2017) used a job aid followed by performance-based feedback to minimize staff errors during discrete trial instruction for children with autism. Participants consisted of three behavioral therapists who were on average 32 years old. A changing criterion within a multiple baseline design was used to evaluate the effectiveness of job aids followed by performance feedback on participants' implementation of DTI. While there was variation across the three participants, one participant did exhibit an increase in DTI fidelity within one feedback session. They had a 42% increase in DTI fidelity when the job aid was implemented, and this

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increased another 43% after the implementation of performance-based feedback. The other two participants required five sessions of feedback to obtain the mastery level. This study provides further information on the relative effectiveness of job aids and feedback. Despite the varying degrees of success across the participants within the study, job aids appear to be a simple and cost-effective method for increasing fidelity to some degree. It is important to know how a job aid functions on its own because it is a cost-effective intervention compared to the other OBM tools used.

Customer service is a critical aspect of many organizations, particularly in restaurant settings (Reetz et al., 2016). OBM interventions have been shown to be effective, but some elements, such as job aids, have primarily been evaluated in a package intervention (Bacon et al., 1983). An analysis of the components individually is needed to determine which intervention is the most efficient and effective across targets and settings (Squires et al., 2007). Job aids are a low-cost intervention that has the potential to increase desired behaviors without the addition of other high-effort, high-cost interventions. As such, the purpose of the current study is to determine if a job aid on its own is sufficient to improve customer service behaviors.

Methods

Participants and Setting

Initially, five hosts who were employed at 600 Kitchen and Bar were recruited for the study, though only four hosts completed all phases. Participants' age ranged from 15-25 years old. All participants were read a recruitment script (Appendix A) and presented with a consent form (Appendix B) prior to starting data collection. Those who were minors were given a

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different version of the consent form (Appendix C) that required both their signature and a parent or guardian's signature to participate in the study.

The study took place over two months at 600 Kitchen and Bar. Data were collected on Monday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. Hosts were typically observed 1-2 times per week. Hosts were not expected to come in outside of their scheduled shifts. Sessions usually ran from 5:30 pm to 7:00 pm, though data were occasionally collected between 5:00 pm and 7:00 pm depending on the flow of business. 10 trials were required per participant for any given session. The number of trials across all participants ranged from 10-19 trials per session apart from two sessions which had only 6 and 8 trials, respectively, due to unforeseen circumstances.

Before the study was conducted, the restaurant manager was consulted to decide where improvements needed to be made and in the restaurant. Consistent with best practice, a modified version of the Performance Diagnostic Checklist (PDC) (Echeverria & Wilder, 2023) was used during the interview. The PDC helps to identify the environmental variables that may be responsible for the performance issue and directs the selection of effective treatment. Based on the results of this interview, and considering feasibility and manager preference, the performance issue and intervention for the current study were identified.

Materials

The materials required for this study included Microsoft Forms and a cellular device. Data were collected on the cellular device using Microsoft Forms to appear inconspicuous to restaurant guests. The data collector's cellular device was also used to place a phone call with another phone that was placed on the host stand. This was done to help amplify the conversations between the hosts and the guests. Data collectors wore headphones to better hear the conversations that were coming from the phone call. A scrap piece of paper and writing utensil was used to help data collectors keep track of what trial number they were on.

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Independent Variable

The independent variable was the addition of the job aid to improve performance by restaurant hosts. The job aid included the desired performance broken down into its required steps and suggestions for appropriate responses at the various steps.

Research Design

The current study utilized a single-case multiple-baseline across individuals (hosts) design to experimentally evaluate the efficacy of this intervention. Participants in this study were exposed to pre-baseline, baseline, and intervention phases.

Experimental Procedures

Pre-baseline

All participants in the study were subject to pre-baseline data collection. The pre-baseline phase lasted five days. Pre-baseline was done to test out the job aids, finalize participants, and determine what behavior was being performed at the lowest frequency across the highest number of hosts. Data were collected on guest greetings, answering the phone, and server seating equity or table flipping. Guest greetings included behaviors such as vocally greeting guests, confirming reservations, and offering different seating options as appropriate. For answering the phone behaviors, data collectors looked at whether or not hosts were giving appropriate answers in response to guests' questions. Seating behavior looked at the host's placement of magnetic markers on the seating board and how this corresponded with the actual seating and activity in the dining room. The magnetic markers were color-coordinated to indicate open, dirty, and occupied tables. Data were collected based on the correspondence to the different job aid criteria. A job aid was built for greeting behavior (Appendix D), seating behavior (Appendix E), and answering the phone (Appendix F). It was found that across all hosts there was the lowest performance in guest greetings. The guest greeting was also found to be the most feasible

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behavior to observe given the project timeframe. During this time, one host dropped out of the study for personal reasons. The remaining four participants had low enough performance to qualify for the study.

Baseline

The baseline phase for participants B, C, D, and E ran for 2, 4, or 5 shifts. During this phase, hosts were asked to go through their shifts as they had before the study. Everything in this phase was kept normal to function as a control condition.

Intervention

At the beginning of this phase, participants were trained in the job aid. This consisted of talking through the job aid training protocol (Appendix G) for approximately 15 minutes. This protocol included two different role plays, one with the host acting as a guest, and another with the researcher acting as the guest. Feedback was given on these roleplays and more roleplays followed if additional practice with the job aid was necessary. Hosts were told to use the job aid during each guest greeting interaction and to refer to it as many times as they needed outside of these interactions. Each host was given their own copy of the job aid that was small enough to carry on their person (e.g., in a pocket). They were advised to refrain from sharing the job aid with other hosts. This was done to prevent participants not yet in the intervention phase from seeing the job aid. Extra copies of the job aid were provided to the hosts if requested and the experimenter checked with the hosts regularly to ensure they still had their copy. The intervention phase for participants lasted between 1-7 shifts.

Dependent Variable

Data were collected on greeting guest behaviors by hosts. Trained research assistants were discreetly placed near the host stand where they could hear the interactions that hosts had with guests. Data were collected that specifically evaluated how well the behavior of the hosts

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corresponded to the job aid. A data collection sheet was provided to all data collectors that would include each step of the job aid along with options of if they engaged in the job aid step, the quality of their performance, and/or if they made the correct decision. Data were collected based on the number of opportunities the host had to engage in each response. Specifically, how many groups of guests entered the restaurant. As such, the correct performance was calculated as a percentage of opportunity.

Interobserver Agreement

A second research assistant was present for an average of 24% of sessions (range 18.1% to 31.6% per participant) to ensure data were collected correctly. Interobserver agreement (IOA) was then calculated on a trial-by-trial basis by taking the agreements and dividing them by the agreements plus disagreements and multiplying them by 100%. IOA was collected for participant B on 23.6% of sessions with an average accuracy of 91.27% (range: 86% to 95.83%). IOA was collected for participant C on 31.6% of sessions with an average agreement of 89.54% (range: 82.5% to 99%). IOA was collected for participant D on 18.1% of sessions with an agreement of 97%. There was no range for participant D, since due to scheduling conflicts, we were only able to collect IOA for a single session. IOA was collected for participant E on 22.7% of sessions with an average accuracy of 93.96% (range: 91.1% to 98.3%).

Social Validity

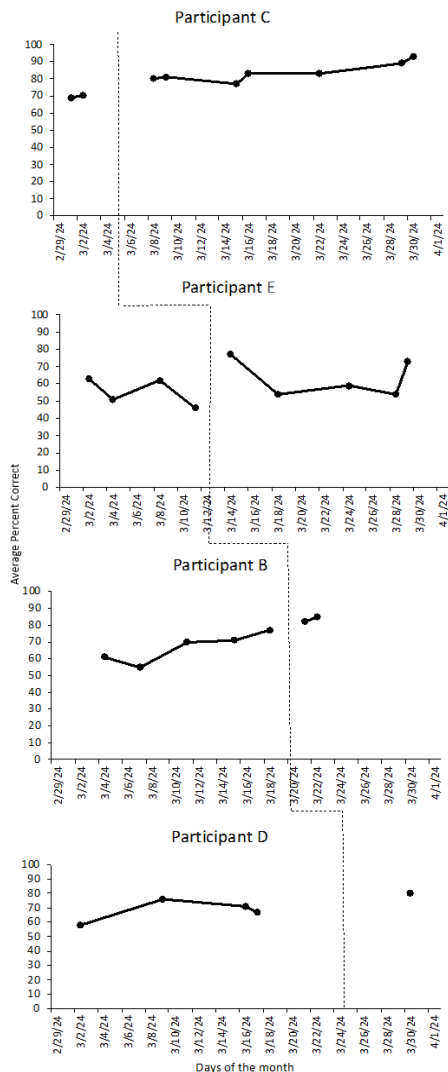
A social validity survey (Appendix H) was given to participants at the end of the study. Examples of questions included in the survey were 1) how they would rate the stress of their job before the study, 2) how the job aid affected their stress at the job, and 3) how the job aid affected how comfortable and confident they were with the duties expected of them as a host. All of the participants in the study completed this survey.

Results

The lines on the multiple baseline graph (Figure 1) display the average percentage of correct guest greeting responses. Participant C had a slight increase after the implementation of the job aid. Participant C started with 69% in baseline, which increased following the

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Figure 1. Average percent correct for all participants



Note. The x-axis depicts the dates in which participants worked, and the y-axis depicts the average percent of correct target behaviors.

intervention, and ended the study with 93%.

Participant E had varied levels of responding throughout baseline and the intervention phase. There was a slight increase right after the implementation of the job aid, but this immediately decreased and overall, it is unclear if the intervention had any effect.

Participant B did see a slight increase after the implementation of the job aid. Looking at baseline though, responding was on an upward trend prior to the implementation of the job aid. Given time constraints, it was necessary to intervene with participant B despite this increasing trend in baseline. Participant D also saw an increase in the intervention phase. However, again given the time constraints, we were only able to collect one session with participant D in the intervention phase. Overall, most of the participants exhibited some improvement, with the average across all participants increasing from 64% to 76%.

The results from the post-experimental social validity survey showed that participant D and E did not find their job stressful before the study. After the job aid was implemented participant D reported that it decreased their stress a lot, participant B and E said it decreased it some, and participant C said it had no effect. Participants B and E reported that the job aid made them feel slightly more comfortable and confident in their duties at work, participant D said it made them more comfortable and confident, and participant C said it had no effect.

Discussion

The current study evaluated the effects of a job aid on guest greeting behaviors in a local restaurant. Overall, the intervention produced varying results. The job aid did successfully increase the average percentage of correct responses for participants B, C, and D but with some limitations for B and D. For participant B, there was an increase in the intervention phase, but due to the increasing trend that was present in baseline, there is no guarantee that the increase in the intervention phase was due to the job aid. Participant D also saw an increase in the intervention phase, but there would need to be more data points in the intervention phase to conclude this finding. For participant E, there is no guarantee that the job aid was effective given the varied responses throughout the baseline and the intervention phases.

Limitations

There were several procedural limitations that may have impacted the results of the study. First, participants were only trained on the job aid once throughout the entire study. This training was only about 15 minutes long. Additional training sessions may have increased the use and understanding of the job aid. This would also increase the number of roleplays between the participants and experimenter, allowing for more feedback on how they are performing with the job aid.

A second limitation was that there were typically two hosts scheduled to work on any given shift. A host who was not yet in the intervention phase could be paired to work with a host who was actively in the intervention phase. This could have led to potential exposure to the job aid before the actual implementation of the job aid. Although the hosts were asked not to share or converse about the job aid with each other, we cannot guarantee that this happened. This could be prevented in future research by building a schedule that only pairs hosts with each other for a

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shift based on their place in the study. The job aid could also be more concealed from host to host by having the hosts keep their job aids in a foldable server book.

Another limitation was a lack of naïve data collectors. Data collectors were aware of the nature of the study, which participants were in baseline, and which were in the intervention phase. This knowledge may have created a bias in the data collection process. This could be avoided in future research by not allowing data collectors to know what the study is about and which phase of the intervention participants are in.

There were also issues with data collection for customer service. Specifically, one of the items (i.e., question 12) asked if available seating was not an immediate option, and did the host offer to place the guest on the waitlist. Across most trials, the hosts had no opportunities to perform this behavior. On the trials where they did, it typically was in very low numbers which percentages on these trials (due to a low n size) may skew the session average. This could be avoided in future research by testing out the datasheet over multiple weeks before collecting data in baseline.

Another limitation was the timeline of the study. Given the short timeframe of the study, some participants' behaviors were intervened on sooner than planned. Specifically, participant B received the job aid even though they were on an upward trend in baseline. The lack of time also led to minimal data points in the intervention phase for participant D. This could be avoided in future research by allowing enough time for a sufficient amount of data points to be taken in baseline and intervention phases.

Potential reactivity to the data collectors being present was also a limitation. Hosts were made aware of the presence of the data collectors and the use of the phone for sound amplification. Data collectors did try to appear as inconspicuous as possible, but they were still visible to the hosts. This may have led to an increase in behaviors during observation sessions

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only since hosts knew they were being observed. In future research, data collectors could be placed where hosts cannot see them or video/audio recording could be utilized.

Scheduling posed another limitation to the study. There was no guarantee of what the host's work schedule would look like from week to week. This affected how often data were collected and the number of data points for each phase. This could have been avoided by putting a repeating schedule in place during the study. However, there was still no guarantee hosts would always show up for their shifts and that they would not need time off for events like doctors' appointments or vacations.

Future Research and Conclusions

The inconsistent results of the current study contradict the literature that shows the success of job aids in increasing a wide range of behaviors within other settings (e.g., Durgin et al., 2014; Parnell et al., 2017). However, previous research on job aids combined the job aid with some additional form of performance feedback. The addition of another intervention may have increased the use of the job aid, specifically encouraging individuals to reference the job aid when completing tasks. The fact that the current study looked to see the effects of the job aid alone without any additional feedback may have affected the study's results.

Future research should consider how the job aid may function with additional job aid training and/or regular feedback on the participant's performance with the job aid. Adding in these additional interventions may increase the correct usage of the job aid. For example, as opposed to delivering a one-time brief training session on the job aid, experimenters could enhance this training to thoroughly cover all the content within the job aid. This was done in a study conducted by Parnell et al., (2017) in an autism treatment setting. While the intervention was effective, it did take additional effort to implement and could potentially add cost as well.

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Another idea for future research could be to change the location of the job aid. As stated previously, the job aid was scaled down in size so that each host could hold a copy on their person at all times at work. It may have been beneficial to keep the job aid posted on the host stand as opposed to the participants carrying around the job aid. Having the job aid ready to reference right in front of them may have increased the number of times they reviewed the job aid during their shift. Despite, 3 out of the 4 participants reporting on the social validity survey that they referenced the job aid several times throughout each shift, they may have needed to review it more often, particularly in the beginning of the intervention phase. In addition, the fourth participant said they only referenced the job aid once or twice.

Another idea for future research would be to enhance the job aid in some way to make it more salient to the eye. The job aid used in the current study was a plain white piece of paper with black text. In the future, the job aid could include some images, different font sizes, or some different text colors. In doing this, it could increase how often the job aid is being referenced. This may also break up the text so none of the content on the job aid gets overlooked.

Lastly, future research could also examine who is training the hosts on the job aid. It may be beneficial to have a manager train the hosts on the job aid as opposed to a co-worker, as the primary experimenter in the current study was also a server at the restaurant. The change in trainer status may increase the usage of the job aid since the hosts may be more inclined to follow instructions from a manager instead of a co-worker.

Overall, the current study was conducted to improve customer service behaviors by hosts in a restaurant setting. The quality of customer service provided in this type of industry is very important. The customer-employee interaction is a large part of the entire experience. This study contributes to the literature on job aids and restaurant customer service in multiple ways. Despite the varying results, some participants did see a slight increase after the implementation of the job

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aid. This study adds to the literature on job aids by demonstrating the effects of utilizing a job aid without any additional interventions in place. These findings also contribute to the literature on low-cost, low-effort interventions for use by organizations. While some enhancements to the job aid may further improve customer service behaviors, current results do suggest that a simple job aid has the potential to improve behaviors critical to achieving a loyal customer base.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: RECRUITMENT SCRIPT

I am inviting you to be a part of my research project on improving restaurant customer service through job aids. This study is being conducted by Dr. Sharlet Rafacz and myself (Madisyn Slater) from Western Michigan University. The purpose of this research study is to see how job aids affect your performance as a host. The study will take place at 600 Kitchen and Bar over the course of about 1-2 months. Data will be collected during your normal shift hours so you will not be required to come in to work outside of your scheduled days. We will do some initial observations of your job to confirm that you'll be a good fit for the study. If you are, we will start the intervention phase, during which you will be introduced to a job aid which you will use on the job. Any information we collect will be kept confidential and results of the study will be shared only once any identifying information has been removed. You will not be exposed to any risks outside of what is already in place from the job. Any participation on your end is completely voluntary and you are free to decline or stop participating in the study at any point in time.

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If you express interest in learning more about participating, I'll provide you with an informed consent form to sign and answer any additional questions that you may have.

APPENDIX B: INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR 18+

Informed Consent for 18+ Participants

Western Michigan University
Department of Psychology

Principal Investigator: Dr. Sharlet Rafacz
Student Investigator: Madisyn Slater
Title of Study: Improving Restaurant Customer Service through Job Aids

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You are invited to participate in this research project titled *"Improving Restaurant Customer Service through Job Aids."*

STUDY SUMMARY: This consent form is part of an informed consent process for a research study and it will provide information that will help you decide whether you want to take part in this study. Participation in this study is completely voluntary. The purpose of the research is to examine if job aids improve customer service skills and will serve as Madisyn Slater's honors thesis for the requirements of her bachelor's degree. If you take part in the research, we will be looking at several of your job duties as a host, including but not limited to, answering phones, greeting guests, and seating guests. We will select one of these to work on and you'll be provided with a job aid (a list of instructions or steps to follow). We'll then look to see if that changes how you do your job. It is expected that participation in the study will last about one month. There are no anticipated risks or costs to you for taking part in the study outside of those you would typically expect when doing your job as a host. There are no direct benefits that we can guarantee for participating, but the job aid may help you improve your skills as a host. You can choose to participate or not in this study. Choosing to participate or not will not affect your employment.

The following information in this consent form will provide more detail about the research study. Please ask any questions if you need more clarification and to assist you in deciding if you wish to participate in the research study. You are not giving up any of your legal rights by agreeing to take part in this research or by signing this consent form. After all of your questions have been answered and the consent document reviewed, if you decide to participate in this study, you will be asked to sign this consent form.

What are we trying to find out in this study?

We are looking at different job aids to see if they help improve employee performance.

Who can participate in this study?

Any individuals who are currently employed as hosts at 600 Kitchen and Bar and are at least 15 years old.

Where will this study take place?

All portions of this study will take place at 600 Kitchen and Bar in Kalamazoo, MI.

What is the time commitment for participating in this study?

This study will take place over approximately a month. This will include some or all of your scheduled work times during that month.

What will you be asked to do if you choose to participate in this study?

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For this study, we will ask that you do your host duties as normal. Once we introduce the job aid, we'll ask that you use it to assist with those duties.

What information is being measured during the study?

We will be measuring how you complete your job duties, such as answering phones, greeting guests, and seating guests.

What are the risks of participating in this study and how will these risks be minimized?

We don't anticipate any risks beyond those you would typically experience at your job. We will keep your data confidential, which means that your data (information we collect) won't include any identifying information and will be stored in a secure location.

What are the benefits of participating in this study?

There are no guaranteed direct benefits, though the job aid may help you perform your host duties better.

Are there any costs associated with participating in this study?

There are no costs associated with participating in this study.

Is there any compensation for participating in this study?

There is no compensation for participating in this study.

Who will have access to the information collected during this study?

Dr. Rafacz, Madisyn, and 4-5 research assistants will have access to the information collected. This information will then be de-individualized (which means you'll be assigned a participant number and your name will not appear anywhere with your data). Results of the study may be presented at a conference or published, but with no identifying information. All data will be kept digitally or in a paper format in a secure location.

What will happen to my information or biospecimens collected for this research project after the study is over?

After information that could identify you has been removed, de-identified information collected for this research may be used by or distributed to investigators for other research without obtaining additional informed consent from you.

What if you want to stop participating in this study?

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You can choose to stop participating in the study at any time for any reason. You will not suffer any prejudice or penalty by your decision to stop your participation and it will not affect your employment with 600 Kitchen and Bar. The investigator can also decide to stop your participation in the study without your consent.

Should you have any questions prior to or during the study, you can contact Dr. Sharlet Rafacz at Western Michigan University at 269-387-4329 or sharlet.rafacz@wmich.edu. You can also contact Madisyn Slater at Western Michigan University at 269-650-0150 or madisyn.w.slater@wmich.edu. You may also contact the Chair, Institutional Review Board at 269-387-8293 or the Vice President for Research and Innovation at 269-387-8298 if questions arise during the course of the study.

This consent document has been approved for use for one year by the Western Michigan University Institutional Review Board (WMU IRB), as indicated by the IRB approval date stamped in the lower right corner. Do not participate in this study if the stamped date is older than one year.

I have read this informed consent document. The risks and benefits have been explained to me. I agree to take part in this study.

Please Print Your Name

Participant's signature

Date

APPENDIX C: INFORMED CONCENT FORM FOR 15-17 YEAR OLDS

Western Michigan University
Department of Psychology

Principal Investigator: Dr. Sharlet Rafacz
Student Investigator: Madisyn Slater
Title of Study: Improving Restaurant Customer Service through Job Aids

You are invited to participate in this research project titled *"Improving Restaurant Customer Service through Job Aids."*

STUDY SUMMARY: This consent form is part of an informed consent process for a research study and it will provide information that will help you decide whether you (or your child) want to take part in this study. Participation in this study is completely voluntary. The purpose of the research is to examine if job aids improve customer service skills and will serve as Madisyn Slater's honors thesis for the requirements of her bachelor's degree. If you (or your child) take part in the research, we will be looking at several of your (or your child's) job duties as a host, including but not limited to, answering phones, greeting guests, and seating guests. We will select one of these to work on and you (or your child) will be provided with a job aid (a list of instructions or steps to follow). We'll then look to see if that changes how you (or your child) do the job. It is expected that participation in the study will last about one month. There are no anticipated risks or costs to you (or your child) for taking part in the study outside of those you would typically expect when doing your (or your child's) job as a host. There are no direct benefits that we can

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guarantee for participating, but the job aid may help improve skills as a host. You can choose to participate (or have your child participate) or not in this study. Choosing to participate or not will not affect your/their employment.

The following information in this consent form will provide more detail about the research study. Please ask any questions if you need more clarification and to assist you in deciding if you wish to participate (or have your child participate) in the research study. You are not giving up any of your legal rights by agreeing to take part in this research or by signing this consent form. After all of your questions have been answered and the consent document reviewed, if you decide to participate (or have your child participate) in this study, you will be asked to sign this consent form.

What are we trying to find out in this study?

We are looking at different job aids to see if they help improve employee performance.

Who can participate in this study?

Any individuals who are currently employed as hosts at 600 Kitchen and Bar and are at least 15 years old.

Where will this study take place?

All portions of this study will take place at 600 Kitchen and Bar in Kalamazoo, MI.

What is the time commitment for participating in this study?

This study will take place over approximately a month. This will include some or all of your (or your child's) scheduled work times during that month.

What will you be asked to do if you choose to participate in this study?

For this study, we will ask that host duties are performed as normal. Once we introduce the job aid, we'll ask that you/your child use it to assist with those duties.

What information is being measured during the study?

We will be measuring how you/your child complete job duties, such as answering phones, greeting guests, and seating guests.

What are the risks of participating in this study and how will these risks be minimized?

We don't anticipate any risks beyond those you/your child would typically experience at the job. We will keep your/your child's data confidential, which means that the data (information we collect) won't include any identifying information and will be stored in a secure location.

What are the benefits of participating in this study?

There are no guaranteed direct benefits, though the job aid may help you/your child perform host duties better.

Are there any costs associated with participating in this study?

There are no costs associated with participating in this study.

Is there any compensation for participating in this study?

There is no compensation for participating in this study.

Who will have access to the information collected during this study?

Dr. Rafacz, Madisyn, and 4-5 research assistants will have access to the information collected. This information will then be de-individualized (which means you/your child will be assigned a participant number and your name will not appear anywhere with your data). Results of the study may be presented

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at a conference or published, but with no identifying information. All data will be kept digitally or in a paper format in a secure location.

What will happen to my information or biospecimens collected for this research project after the study is over?

After information that could identify you/your child has been removed, de-identified information collected for this research may be used by or distributed to investigators for other research without obtaining additional informed consent from you.

What if you want to stop participating in this study?

You or your child can choose to stop participating in the study at any time for any reason. You or your child will not suffer any prejudice or penalty by your decision to stop you/your child's participation and it will not affect you/your child's employment with 600 Kitchen and Bar. The investigator can also decide to stop you/your child's participation in the study without you/your child's consent.

Should you have any questions prior to or during the study, you can contact Dr. Sharlet Rafacz at Western Michigan University at 269-387-4329 or sharlet.rafacz@wmich.edu. You can also contact Madisyn Slater at Western Michigan University at 269-650-0150 or madisyn.w.slater@wmich.edu. You may also contact the Chair, Institutional Review Board at 269-387-8293 or the Vice President for Research and Innovation at 269-387-8298 if questions arise during the course of the study.

This consent document has been approved for use for one year by the Western Michigan University Institutional Review Board (WMU IRB), as indicated by the IRB approval date stamped in the lower right corner. Do not participate in this study if the stamped date is older than one year.

I have read this informed consent document. The risks and benefits have been explained to me. I agree to take part in this study.

Please Print Your Name

Participant's signature

Date

I have read this informed consent document. The risks and benefits have been explained to me. I agree to allow my child to take part in this study.

Please Print Your Name

Parent/Guardian signature

Date

APPENDIX D: GREETING GUEST JOB AID

Guest Greeting

- Who greets guests at the restaurant? Any worker on the floor
- Follow the 10 foot 5 foot rule- as guests are entering the second set of doors you should be smiling, as they approach the edge of the 600 rug, you should be providing a verbal greeting.

- Greeting Suggestions
 - Welcome to 600, how are you folks doing?
 - Good morning, welcome in, how can I help you?
 - Hello, how is everyone doing today?

- How to present yourself
 - Smile
 - Give your full attention
 - Upright body posture
 - Hands free of distractions

- Check for reservations and guest count conformation

- What to do if they do not have reservations
 - Seat guests at an available table

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- Offer bar seating if available
- Offer any tables you have that come with a time limit
 - Example: We have a table but there is a reservation scheduled in 2 hours if you folks think that is enough time for you to enjoy dinner
- Place guests on the waitlist

APPENDIX E: SEATING GUEST JOB AID

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Green= Table is Occupied
 Red= Upcoming Reservation
 Blue= Reservation in 2+ Hours
 White= Table is Dirty

- Look at today's date in the ipad to see where reservations need to be placed on the map
- Place colored magnets in the appropriate spots on the seating chart (use the color key provided)
- Make note of the tables with blue magnets below
 - Specify the table #, appropriate # of guests for that table, and the time of the reservation below
- Place servers initials below from first in to last in
 - You will use tally marks to keep track of server seating rotation and # of tables per server
- Adjust magnets as necessary throughout the shift

_____	@	_____	_____
(# of guests)		(Table Number)	(Reso Time)
_____	@	_____	_____
_____	@	_____	_____
_____	@	_____	_____
_____	@	_____	_____

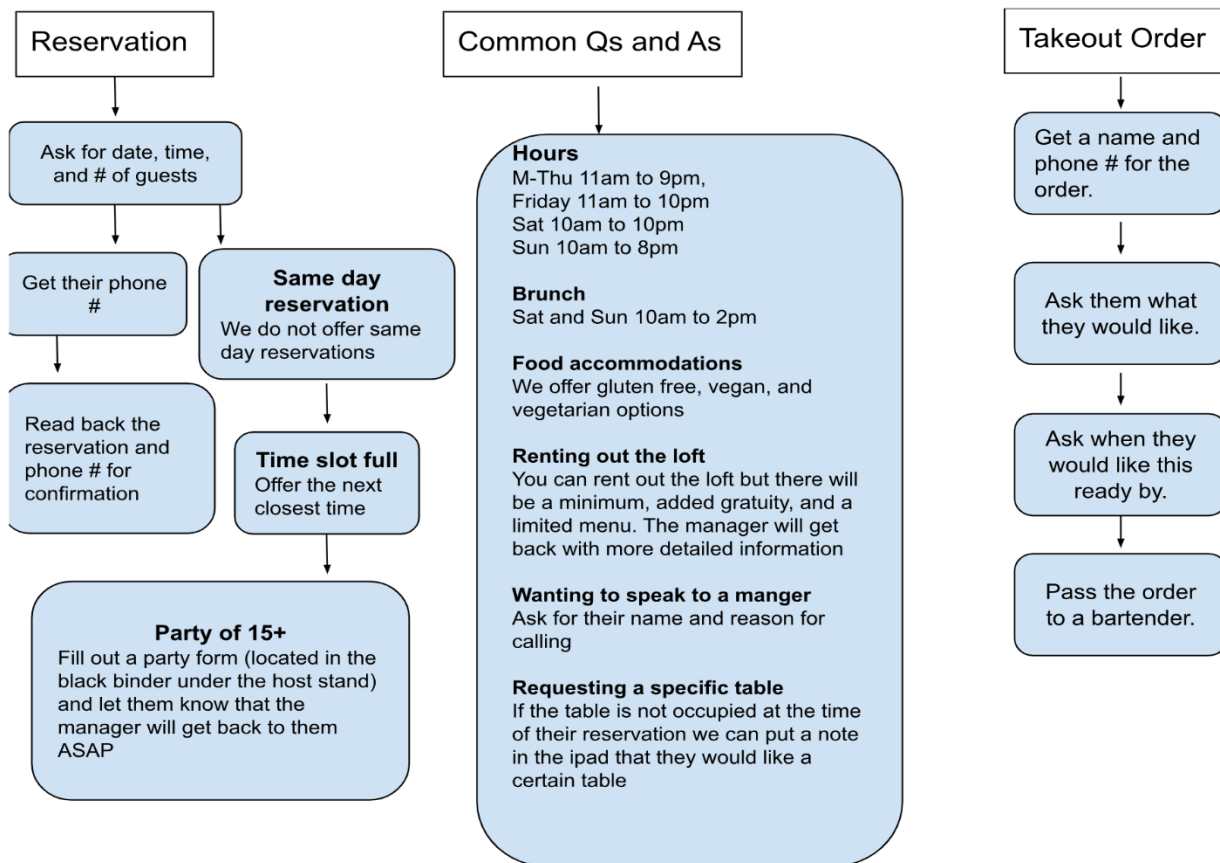
Servers:

_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
(First in)				

APPENDIX F: ANSWERING THE PHONE JOB AID

1. Thank you for calling 600 Kitchen and Bar, this is _____, how can I help you?
2. If you are unsure on how to help you can say “can you please hold for a moment.”

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APPENDIX G: JOB AID TRAINING PROTOCOL

1. Give hosts a printed out copy of the job aid for them to keep on their person
2. Spend 10 minutes going over the job aid with the designated host
3. Do one roleplay with the host acting as the guest
4. Talk through the roleplay, making sure to explain how the interaction should go based off the sections on the job aid
5. Verbalize and gesture to the designated spots where smiling and verbal greetings should occur
6. Offer up any version of a greeting and/or verbal pleasantries
7. Talk through and give examples of how the hosts should appropriately present themselves behind the host stand
8. Explain what should be done if a guest has a reservation, and what should be done if they do not (reference the job aid)
9. Switch roles, now you will act as the guest. Give feedback where it is appropriate during the roleplay to best help the host. Once feedback is given, repeat this process if needed.
10. End by explaining that the host will keep this job aid on their person and reference it before and during guest interactions at the host stand.
11. Explain that the hosts are expected to keep the job aid hidden from the other hosts until everyone has been exposed to it

APPENDIX H: POST-EXPERIMENTAL SOCIAL VALIDITY SURVEY

Post-Experimental Survey

Demographic Information (please complete only those questions you feel comfortable answering)

1. What is your age range?
 - a. 15-17
 - b. 18-25
 - c. 26-35
 - d. 36-45
 - e. 46+
2. How would you describe your gender? _____
3. What is your race/ethnicity? (please circle all that apply)
 - a. White
 - b. Black or African American
 - c. American Indian or Alaska Native
 - d. Asian
 - e. Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - f. Hispanic or Latino
 - g. Other

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Work-related Information

1. Before you started this study, how would you rate the overall stress of your job?
 - a. Not at all stressful
 - b. A little, but not too bad
 - c. Somewhat stressful
 - d. Stressful
 - e. Very stressful
2. Before you started this study, how comfortable or confident did you feel with the duties that are expected of you as a host?
 - a. Very comfortable
 - b. Somewhat comfortable
 - c. Okay
 - d. Somewhat uncomfortable
 - e. Very uncomfortable
3. How often did you use the job aid during your work shifts?
 - a. Never
 - b. Once or twice
 - c. Several times
 - d. Pretty often
 - e. All the time
4. How did having the job aid affect your stress at the job?
 - a. It decreased my stress a lot
 - b. It decreased it some
 - c. No affect
 - d. It increased my stress some
 - e. It increased my stress a lot
5. How did the job aid affect how comfortable or confident you are with the duties expected of you as a host?
 - a. It made me much more comfortable
 - b. It made me slightly more comfortable
 - c. It had no effect
 - d. It made me slightly less comfortable
 - e. It made me much less comfortable

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