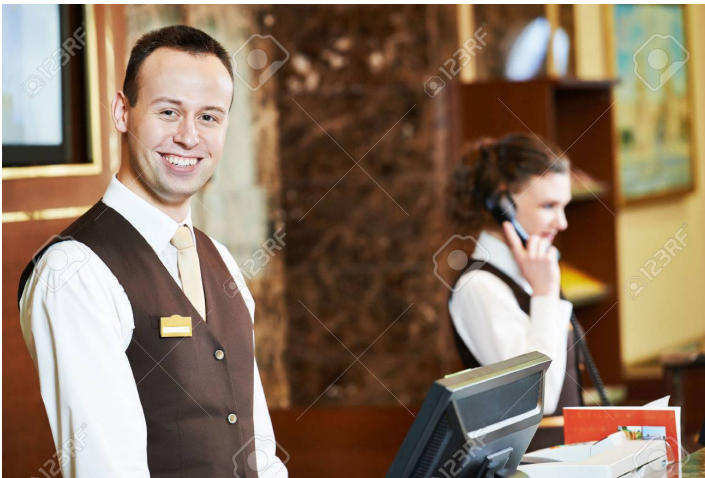


# Being a Professional Host

*Exercises and tasks*



**HENRIK VEJLGAARD**



# INTRODUCTION

Welcome! This simple remark has great significance when you are a host, irrespective of whether it is in a private capacity or in a commercial setting at a restaurant or hotel. However, being a host is much more than just providing a warm welcome to your guests. By the time you have worked your way through the exercises in this booklet, you should know much more about what being a professional host involves.

It is important to note that there is no *right way* about how to be a host, in other words, how you perform the role of host. It can be done in many ways which all depend on the restaurant's or the accommodation provider's concept, (e.g. café, take-away, buffet restaurant, cafeteria, gourmet restaurant, hostel or hotel with a multiple star rating).

The approach to being a host in this booklet is not about using manuals and check lists. Of course, you can make manuals, but if you use this approach, you run the risk that the interaction with the guest becomes artificial, precisely because you are trying to follow an instruction.

Manuals also tend to be lengthy as they need to cover every eventually that might crop up in the host/guest interaction; and as we know, thick manuals are rarely read and difficult to remember.

Instead of manuals, this booklet focuses on developing a clear understanding of what exercising the role of host is all about. With this knowledge, you can exercise the role of host naturally without having to think what a manual might say.

This booklet consists of ten exercises that will develop your knowledge and insight about what it means to be a host. As you work your way through the tasks, you will be introduced to various concepts and tools that will assist you in becoming a good professional host.

Good luck with your learning!



# What kind of host are you?



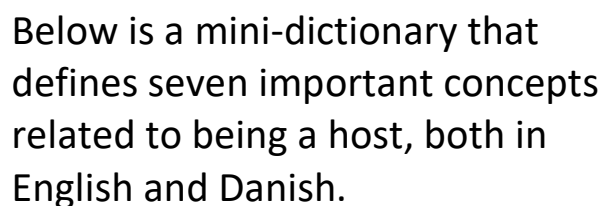
## Exercise 1

*Group task; can also be done individually*

- A. Describe your behaviour and style of communication when you entertain guests privately at home. Your answer should be approximately 1,200 keystrokes in length.
- B. Share your description with other members in your group. After reading each other's work, sit together and compare your findings.
- C. Make a written summary of the similarities you have identified. This should be approximately 1,200 keystrokes.
- D. Now answer the following question: Are there certain values that are emphasised in your summary? Would these influence the way in which a host would exercise their role as a host?
- E. From your summary, discuss and note what you think characterizes how you should act as a host in a restaurant and/or hotel. Now answer the following question: Are there certain personality traits which it would be an advantage to have, if you are going to be a host in a commercial context?

## Dictionary

<b>Values</b>	A person's thoughts, feelings and knowledge based on morals, religion and political conviction. Values can be positive or negative depending on a person's morals, religion and /or political convictions. Values are typically adjectives. Examples of values are: generous, tolerant, conservative, open-minded, moral, individualistic, collectivist, informal. Values influence groups, organisations, and society.
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This may be helpful for both English and Danish speakers.

# DICTIONARY – English – Danish

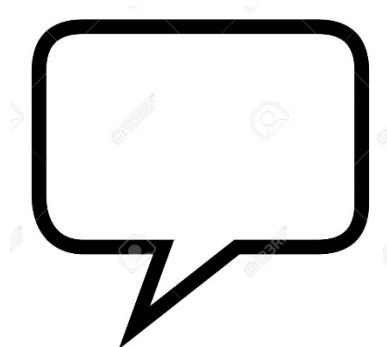
Words	Definition	Danish translation	Danish translation
<b>Host</b> (noun)	Someone who serves food and drink to guests and/or provides a bed to sleep in for guests.	Person som serverer mad og drikke for gæster og/eller stiller en seng at sove i til rådighed for gæster.	<b>Vært</b> (noun)
<b>Hospitality</b> (noun)	Reception of guests	Modtagelse af gæster	<b>Gæstfrihed</b> (noun), when understood as behavior.
<b>Hospitality management</b>	Having a core, which addresses the management of food and/or drink and/or accommodation in a service context.	Ledelse af og i virksomheder og afdelinger, der beskæftiger sig med mad og drikke og/eller overnatning.	Ledelse af og i virksomheder, der har fokus på gæster (i modsætning til fokus på kunder).
<b>Hospitable</b> (adjective)	Disposed to treat guests with warmth and generosity.	Tilbøjelig til at behandle gæster med varme og generøsitet.	<b>Gæstfri</b> (adjective)
<b>Hospitableness</b> (noun)	A disposition to treat guests with warmth and generosity.	En tilbøjelighed til at behandle gæster med varme og generøsitet.	<b>Gæstfrihed</b> (noun), when understood as a value.
<b>Hosting</b> (gerund)	Exercising the role of host.	Udøvelse af rollen som vært.	<b>Værtskab</b> (noun)
<b>Guest</b> (noun)	Someone for whom a host serves food and drink and/or provides a bed to sleep in.	Person for hvem en vært serverer mad og drikke og/eller stiller en seng at sove i til rådighed.	<b>Gæst</b> (noun)

Kilde: Vejlgaard (2020a).

## The difference between providing service and being a host

A research project investigating the role of being a professional host asked a number of people employed in hotels and restaurants what the difference was between providing service and being a good host. Below are some of the answers that turned up.

(Source:: Nissen, Simonsen og Vejlgaard, 2020).



Being a host requires you to take on the role of a host. You have to do more for your guests. You need to be more personal. A good host is more personal. Service is all the stuff you have been instructed to do.

- **Team leader in Reception** (Hotel in Odense)

Being a host is about listening to guests and being there for them. It's not just checking them in, like a conveyor belt process which the guest has to get through, followed by: 'next please'! Being a host involves paying attention to guests and listening to them.

- **Receptionist** (Hotel in Copenhagen)

Service is what the guest expects. Being a host is about showing concern and asking how you can assist the guest.

- **Receptionist** (Hotel in North Jutland)

Service is about content, what you provide or offer. Good service is about thinking how you best can provide for the guest, for example, it's good service to be able to show the guest to the nearest restaurant. Being a host is all about the interaction between the guest and host.

- **Lobby and Bar Manager** (Hotel in Copenhagen)

You can get service, but often bad service. Sure, I can give the guest the room keys and say 'Hi and have a nice day'. However, being a host in my world is more than that. You smile. You are interested in the person in front of you. Being a host means being a bit more interested in your guests.

- **Receptionist** (Hotel in North Zealand)

There is a difference between service and being a host. Service is about delivering a product that you have promised. So it's about doing something extra that the guest hadn't expected. However, even this isn't what I would call being a host. When you are a host, there's more personal contact. If you don't involve your feelings, it's not possible to be a host

- **Conference Centre Manager** (Conference Hotel in Copenhagen)

Service is the basic stuff that must be there so that you can provide good service. Being a host is almost a philosophy about being welcoming and open. It's a little bit more than just service.

- **Reception Manager** (Conference Hotel in Fyn)

Service is about what we must do. It's about procedures. Being a host is about personalising things so that you don't just go through a check list. Maybe ask the guest: 'Why are you here? Are you going to celebrate something this evening?' Maybe something like: 'I can see you have come from Odense. Is that well-known restaurant in Odense still there?' It's about trying to get a dialogue going. Asking questions.

- **Receptionist** (Hotel in Copenhagen)

Service and being a host are two concepts that are difficult to separate. Service can be about being able to lay a table and remove plates. However, being a host involves a personal touch. If you can 'read a guest' and anticipate their needs, then you have a personal touch. A personal touch is about being alert, engaged and curious.

- **Waiter** (Hotel Restaurant on Fyn)

## Exercise 2

*Group task; but can also be done individually*

- A. Make a brief summary of what being a host involves according to the quotes above.
- B. Describe at least five aspects of being a host from the quotes.

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The following pages contain two interviews with a restaurateur and a waiter. When you have read them go on to Exercise 3.

## INTERVIEW 1

# Being a host at the Phi Mo Restaurant in Odense

Interviewer: Dorte Simonsen, (D) Lecturer at UCL

Interviewee: Yasar Nazir (Y) Owner of the Thai Restaurant Phi Mo in Odense

*Extracts from interview conducted Autumn 2019*



D: Would you tell me a bit about the Phi Mo Restaurant and your role in it and also a bit about your background in the restaurant business.

Y: Phi Mo is a Thai restaurant, which we started in 2016. We took over premises in Odense that were difficult to run as it is situated at the extremity of the pedestrian street. However, we thought that if we could develop a serious concept where quality and service were top, then there would be a good chance for us to be successful. The food should be made from scratch and our guests should be guided through the whole process. Our idea was that it wasn't enough to design a menu and then let the guests choose.... You actually have to explain to the guests, after you have welcomed them, that we make food from scratch here. Some dishes are salty, others spicy and some slightly sweet. If two people eat here, then the price range will be between 600 and 1000 kroner.

D: You must have had to invest time in this. But, is this explanation and guidance anything different from just giving out a menu and saying 'bon appetite'?

Y: The guidance and explanation is the crux of the whole thing. It's here that the guest notices that there's more to this, that there's a concept and that the people running it are 'hands on.' It means everything when the guest can say: 'I am in good hands here. I don't know much about this stuff, but I've come to eat Thai food and I'm in good hands. The guy serving me, my host, knows what this is all about.' And I tell you we do know about it. We make a really big deal out of training our staff in our values and our concept. With us, you learn we are not robots. We are not like McDonalds where you have six steps; where you come in and they look you in the eye and then say this, and then they do that .... With us, it's all about being a good host. Try and imagine. It's a Friday evening at home and you have invited your family or guests over. Sure, you've got a cold Asti in the fridge and you've also made sure that the place is clean and lit a few candles. You welcome them at the door, kiss them on the cheek or give them a hug and when they come in you make sure that they have a good time in your company. ...

In actual fact we earn money for doing just this at Phi Mo Restaurant. Right from the start we tell staff: 'It's really all about being yourself. Forget all that about playing a role. No way. You are in here, you are the host, and you make sure that the guests enjoy themselves. Then they get it. 'You can come in your own clothes, but imagine that it's like what I said about Friday evening. You want to be a good host. It's quite OK to wear jewelry and stuff if you want.' With us, it's all about the guests who come here and enjoy themselves and get the right guidance. This is the approach that is really important for me at Phi Mo.

D: Are your staff receptive to your training?

K. Before we hire them, we give them a trial shift for half an hour to an hour. Here we can ask all the questions and they can see how we work. In this way, we find out if it is someone we want to go further with....

D: What are you especially on the lookout for with staff or potential staff?

K: I look out for two things, which are really important for me and Phi Mo. One of them is: can they small talk. Small talk is absolutely essential in a restaurant where you have a well-informed clientele. If you've got what's called Fingerspitzengefühl, i.e. great situational awareness, and the ability to respond appropriately and tactfully, that's what it takes. With us, we have a lot of dating couples coming to eat. It's not anything you really think about, but you can see it, you can sense it, if you have this situational awareness. Then you also know that they are not interested in you. They want to be left to themselves to talk. So you are not going to get anywhere if you start telling them a lot of stuff and interrupt them and keep coming back to ask if the food's OK.

But, it's something else with a married couple who are used to getting up and spending the whole day together and now they are out and they want to hear about the food and stuff; maybe because they are going to Thailand or have been there, and want to tell you a story or something. So, you listen and you smile and join in. So, it's all about small talk and situational awareness and that covers a whole lot of stuff. Are you a natural? Can you actually stand up on a beer crate and talk about something or other? If I say to you: 'do you want to get up and stand on a beer crate and talk about anything you want, can you do it?' And then, when you are talking about something, it could be cars, and you can you do it for a couple of minutes. If you can do that, then I know that I can safely let you loose on the guests and that you'll manage all situations.

It's also about employing people who are bright. You can teach people a lot, but there are those who have a flair for it. It's already in their baggage. Then there are those who have taken a course or qualification etc., but they maybe will never be able to achieve it. So you see, it has something to do with your personality and in Phi Mo you have to focus a bit on personality, because I am a type who is very up front and out there and I actually expect that of my staff too.

D: Do I get you right when you say you have to choose between personality and qualifications; you definitely go for personality?

K: Yes, 100% personality.

D: Do you have a particular guest profile at Phi Mo? How to you see your guests?

Y: Our clientele are well-informed. They want to enjoy the food and ambiance but they also want to talk. That's actually in short supply these days in this county. We hardly ever see our guests on their mobiles.

D: Can you explain what atmosphere you want to create for your guests.

K: They should enjoy themselves and there should be a good atmosphere. It is really enjoyable, good vibes, good atmosphere. It's really important for me that the guests have a good time. At Phi Mo, it's very much about the importance of sitting and talking to each other and being together. Besides that, I would say that of course the food is tops, the service level high and the personal service and the emotions that go with that is something we try to stimulate.

D: In the beginning, you said that you try to encourage your staff to be hosts, like they were in their own homes. How would you explain the difference between service and being a host?

K: I think there's a huge difference. You pay for a thing and you get a service. Being a host is about being there for your guests where they can feel that this is genuine. By that, I mean that the person in front of them is somebody who knows what this is all about so that they can relax. They are in safe hands. Service, on the other hand, you know, you order a burger and it lands on the table with a quick 'enjoy'.

## INTERVIEW 2

### Being a host at the Formel B Restaurant in Copenhagen

Interviewer: Rasmus Nissen (R), Lecturer, Copenhagen Business Academy

Interviewee: Kristine Slott Olsen (K), Waiter, at the Formel B Restaurant

*Extracts from the interview conducted Autumn 2019*



R: I would like to ask you about your approach to being a host.

K: Here at the Restaurant you are both a waiter and a host. We don't have somebody employed specifically to be a host, but it is more or less written into our job descriptions.

Being a host involves a psychological aspect as we really do assess guests. When they come in the door, and depending on what they request and expect, it's my job to provide for them and prioritise my time so that all tables get what they expect. However, at the same time, I have to complete my tasks as I am a host, a waiter and a sommelier all at once.

R: How do you provide what guests want? Could you give me some examples?

K: It's very different. You are definitely there for the guests and they can be very explicate about what they want. But on the other hand, you often experience that guests don't really know what they want. It's no secret that if you go to a Michelin restaurant, then you want the staff to lead you thorough the experience, because it's part of what you are paying for. It's all about what I or my colleges can do for you.

In reality, it's a bit like that wherever you are. Apart from that, something that is really important is what you, the guest, does first. In other words first impressions. What clothes are you wearing? What jewellery and shoes?

R: So you simply check out the guests?

K: Yes, right there when they come in you can assess a lot. How do they talk to you? How do they react, are they a bit nervous. Do they keep looking down at the table? How do they look at the wine list? Right there you can tell a lot. OK, so where are we with the wine and what price bracket are we in. All this is really important, because absolutely the worst thing you can do is to embarrass the guest.

R: You said that it's about guiding the guest through the evening. Could you try and flesh that out a bit more? What does it mean? Of course there are some tasks that are given which are part of going to a Michelin Restaurant. That there is someone at the door to welcome you, someone to hang your coats and someone to escort you to the table and say welcome and all that stuff. But, what does it really mean to guide the guest through the evening?

K: The first point is that the first 30 seconds and last 30 seconds will be what you as a guest will remember best from the whole evening. That's where you win your points. There must be someone at the door and it must feel warm and welcoming when the guest comes in. This means so much. That's the first point and already here you, the guest, should feel pampered. It's here that the guests will drop their guard and think, 'Ok, it's nice here.' Next, someone should take care of the guest. You are escorted to the table, so you, the guest, don't have to decide anything. The only moment when the guest has to decide is when they sit down and it's best if these decisions can be done as quickly as possible, because after that, the guests don't have to make any more decisions for the rest of the evening. Just sit there, relax and enjoy.

R: When guests have decided what they want to eat and which wine they will drink, what's your role for the rest of the evening? I mean above and beyond the obvious that you will serve the food and explain about the wine and all that stuff. In other words what small *tricks* have you got up your sleeve which will help guests relax and enjoy themselves?

K: It mustn't go too quickly, but on the other hand not too slowly either. How quickly do they drink? How much do they drink? Likewise how quickly do they eat? If it's a group that talks all the time and doesn't eat, then it's my job to make sure that things do move along. There are a lot of small things that you normally wouldn't notice. OK, let's say we have a group of 10 people and there's a guy who is talking all the time and the others have finished 10 minutes ago. Should I wait with clearing the table until he has finished? Is one of the group at the other end of the table beginning to be irritated because he can't quite understand why the guy at the end of the table isn't eating when he should be hungry. It's not very polite to begin clearing away while people are still eating. But, there will be a point when I do it. And then I'll just say 'eat up now' to the guy who probably hasn't even realised that he's fallen behind.

K: Waiters like me are a dying race. Nobody is trained anymore, not enough at any rate. However, I do try to train my interns. I try to pass on my skills. Above all, remember that it is the guest who is central. Remember they are the ones paying your salary, but also you are there for them. You are not there for the kitchen staff or even the owner of the restaurant. You are there for the guests.

R: So it's your approach that should apply?

K: Yes.

R: I'm thinking that this isn't necessarily something that everybody would agree with.

K: No, it's not.

R: Does it perhaps have something to do with personality?

K: Yes, it really does.

R: Could you try and say a bit more about trainees. What kind of qualities do they need if they are going to be good waiters or hosts?

K: Attentiveness. You have to be attentive to detail. For me it's perfect if you are a detail type. Also, if you can't look me in the eye, then you won't be able to do it with guests.

R: How does your interaction with guests actually unfold? Do you have procedures for how to talk to guests? Are there things you always do and likewise things you never do?

K: As I said, there is always someone at the door who welcomes guests and helps them off with their coats. Then a new waiter approaches and escorts them to the table and makes sure that they are all seated comfortably. If there are elderly people in the group, then the waiter will assist and pull the chair out. When they are all seated, the waiter primarily responsible for the group will approach. If I am responsible, I will welcome the group and ask if they want to start with a glass of something bubbly or have a drink. Most people like this and it has the effect of relaxing people and putting them at ease. It also makes my job much easier. It's much easier to serve and explain the dishes to relaxed guests.

Otherwise, all my tasks are the typical ones about serving and explaining food and wine and keeping an eye on the group and being attentive to their needs as the evening unfolds. This can cover requests made by the group, e.g. asking for the bill at the end of the evening, but it is also the more subtle hidden things. Are their glasses nearly empty? Do they need more bread, or whatever it might be?

R: So being a host means playing a role?

K: Yes, being a waiter is theatre. When I check in at work, I take on a role. This role is all about creating the best possible evening for our guests by applying my professionalism and personality. However, an important part of this role is that I am ready for anything and if problems occur, then I proactively tackle them so that hopefully the guests don't realise that something is amiss. The whole time, it's about putting guests' needs first.

R: I think we are more or less through my list of questions. Do you have anything to add?

K: No, I don't. I hope that this will be useful.

R: Yes, you can be sure. Thanks for participating.

## Exercise 3

*Group task; but can also be done individually*

Answer the following questions after having read the two interviews.

1. How do the two interviewees describe what being a host is about?
2. The two interviewees talk about their restaurants' core service, the serving of food. Where in the interviews do they talk about serving food and where do they talk about being a host?
3. Identify at least three aspects concerned with exercising the role of host that are emphasized by the interviewees.
4. Where in the interviews is personality mentioned as being important when playing the role of host?
5. Where in the interviews is the role of host regarded as being similar to how the role is exercised in a private home?
6. The two interviewees have different opinions about the role of the host. What are the key differences?
7. Can you identify any particular values that are expressed in the interviews? Do these values complement each other? If yes, describe what these complementary values are?

### ***Individual task***

8. After having read the interviews, what are your thoughts about playing the role of host? Does your personality fit with the role of the host as described by the two interviewees?

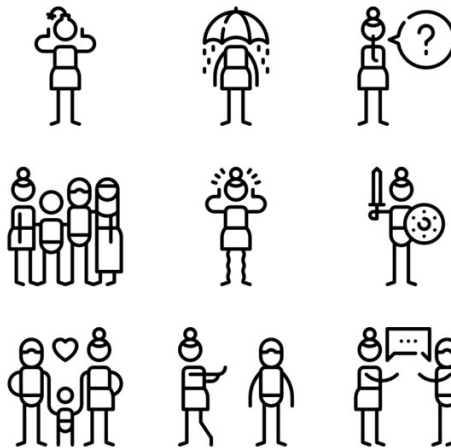
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#### **Emotional Intelligence**

Psychologists have identified different types of intelligence one of which is known as emotional intelligence. A key aspect of this is the ability to be empathetic and manage interpersonal relations. If you want to know more about your own emotional intelligence, you can take a test hosted by the American Magazine *Psychology Today* via this link:

<https://psychologytoday.tests.psychtests.com/bin/transfer>

# BEING EMOTIONALLY AFFECTED



## EXERCISE 4

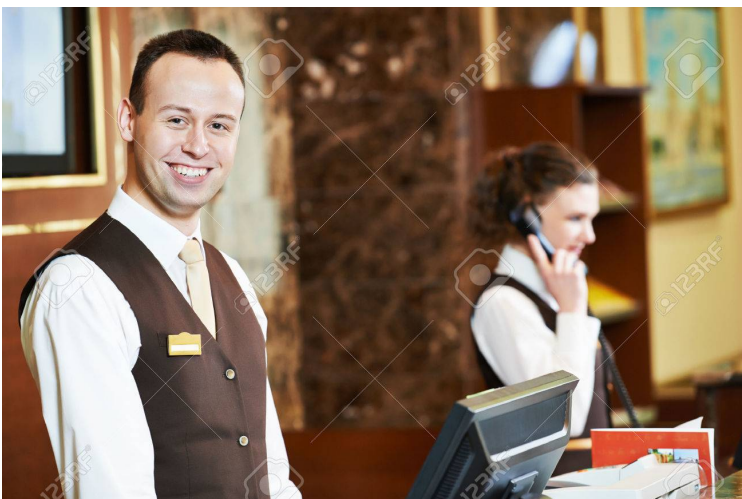
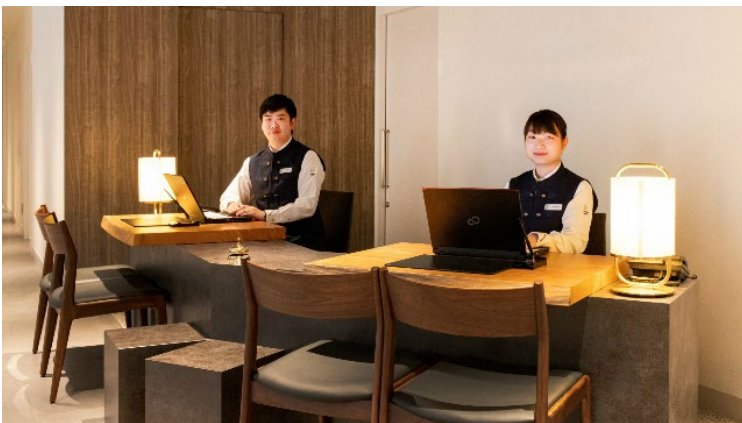
*Individual*

- A. Choose a sporting event, a film/TV series or a concert, a play, a musical, an opera, a ballet, or any live performance, which has influenced you emotionally in a positive way. What feelings did you experience? How strong were these feelings on a scale from 1 – 10, where 10 represents the strongest feelings? What was it that affected you?
- B. Choose a service, e.g. a restaurant, accommodation, charter holiday or any other trip or arrangement with a guide, which affected you emotionally in a positive way. What feelings did you experience? How strong were these feelings on a scale from 1 – 10, where 10 represents the strongest feelings? What was it that affected you?
- C. Are there similarities between these two examples? If yes, what? Be as precise as you can in describing what it was that affected you. Is it about behaviour, verbal interaction or both?
- D. Can you imagine yourself being emotionally affected by a person working in a restaurant or place providing accommodation? If you are at a restaurant, a hotel or taking part in a guided tour etc., what behaviour or type of communication would make you register feelings of 1 on the 1 – 10 scale? What behaviour or type of communication would make you register feelings of 3 on the 1 – 10 scale? What type of behaviour or communication at a restaurant, a hotel or a guided tour etc. would result in you giving a higher score on the 1 – 10 scale? Describe what behaviour or type of communication would lead you to give a higher score.
- E. If you were an employee working in a restaurant, a hotel, travel agent or any other company, could you behave or communicate in the way that you have answered question D? If no, why not?

# VERBAL AND NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION

Below and on the next page are five photos that show different aspects of being a host. Look at the pictures carefully and then go to Exercise 5.





## EXERCISE 5

### *Individual*

- A. What communication channel do the pictures illustrate?
- B. What non-verbal communication can you identify in the five photos?
- C. What would the people in each photo say to guests? Think of one or more speech acts or opening gambits that the people in the photos might use.
- D. How would you feel, if you were in the situation in each photo? Imagine that the people in the photos use the speech acts you developed in question C.

### DICTIONARY

<b>Communication channel</b>	The medium used to communicate. Typical personal communication channels are: face-to-face, telephone, letters and emails.
<b>Non-verbal communication</b>	Body language, gesticulation, facial expressions, eye movements, eye contact, touching and proximity (how close you get to other people).
<b>Para-verbal communication</b>	Tone of voice (high vs. low etc.), projection of voice (e.g. authoritative vs. submissive), speed of delivery.
<b>Speech action</b>	A statement that is combined with an action or request. E.g. when you say: 'Please would you go this way' and at the same time point in the direction you want people to go.
<b>Verbal communication</b>	The spoken word.

## TEST YOUR SELF: HOW HOSPITABLE ARE YOU?

Hospitableness is closely related to being a host. Hospitableness, or being hospitable, is about who we are as people, our personality and our values. A wide-ranging research project (Blain, 2012) investigated what it means to be hospitable. Below are three groups of statements about hospitableness, which emerged from the research.

You can get an impression of how hospitable you are by putting a tick against the statements in the table below that fit you. The more ticks you put, the more hospitable you are. To be hospitable you need to have at least one tick in each of the three main categories. Use the mini-dictionary with the hospitality glossary, if you are unsure of what hospitality, hosting and being a host mean.

Desire to put guests before yourself	I put guests' enjoyment before my own I do whatever is necessary to ensure that guests have a great time I always try to live up to my idea of what makes a good host The comfort of guests is most important to me
Desire to make guests happy	I get a natural high when I make my guests feel special I enjoy taking responsibility for the wellbeing of guests It means the world to me when guests show their approval of my hospitality It's important to do the things that people expect of a good host I seek out opportunities to help others
Desire to make guests feel special	When hosting I try to feel at one with the guests I try to get on the same wavelength as my guests Guests should feel that the evening revolves around them I find it motivating to take accountability for other people's welfare

Kilde: Blain & Lashley (2014).

### Exercise 6

#### *Individual*

- Make a very brief summary of what hospitableness is according to the statements in the text above. Are these the same as what you perceive as hospitableness?
- Describe, using adjectives, the underlying values in the statements.
- Describe how you would transform at least three of the statements into behaviours and communicative utterances.
- Assess what it would take for you to master the behaviours and communicative utterances that you described in question C.

## DESIGNING HOSTING PRACTICE

There are some generic building blocks, or elements, that can be said to form the core of what hosting practice is all about in international or commercial hospitality settings. These elements are highlighted in the box below:

Behaviour
Desired emotional quality
Forms of address
Speech acts
Para-verbal language
Non-verbal language
Desired outcomes

### Developing Hosting Practice: An Example

Below is an example of how to develop hosting practice. It is based on the building blocks above and has been designed to be appropriate for a four star hotel in Denmark; a country with a relatively informal culture that scores low on Power Distance and Masculinity, and high on Individualism (Hofstede, 2020).

*Behaviour:* A pro-active role when the guest arrives; a re-active role when the guest departs.

*Forms of address:* The form of address, (i.e. use of name or title etc.), will depend on how well you know the guest and how formal you assess the guest to be (clothes, mannerisms, speech etc.). If you know the name of the guest, then you can use the name, but avoid over using it.

*Emotional quality:* Friendly and helpful.

*Specific speech acts:* When interacting, you should use phrases that make the guest feel welcome, expected, and at home. A “Welcome” must always be part of the greeting when you are face-to-face with the guest. The exact phrases used when greeting and saying goodbye can vary from formal or informal depending on the situation and on how well you have got to know the guest.

*Specific para-verbal language:* The tone of voice should be warm, the pitch natural, and the pacing of the host’s speech must be comprehensible and non-routine.

*Specific non-verbal language:* Eye contact and acknowledgement of the guest as soon as the guest is within three meters of you. When interacting with the guest, you should smile warmly and use gestures that signal, “Welcome”, for instance, nodding your head. In some instances, a handshake may be natural when welcoming the guest.

*Desired outcome:* That the guest feels welcome, expected, and at home.

**Source:** Vejlggaard (2020b).

## EXERCISE 7

### *Group task*

The task here is to describe a hosting practice for a specific restaurant. Choose a restaurant that you already know or one that you can visit, or failing that, one that has a website with enough descriptive information about the restaurant. As far as possible, try to start with the restaurant's values, if you can identify them. Otherwise, try to imagine what the values of the restaurant would be.

Before you start, re-read the introduction to this booklet and be careful not to make an instruction or manual. Discuss how you understand the third paragraph in the introduction to this booklet. You can include elements which are introduced with, for example, you 'shall/must do', 'ought to do' or 'can do' this or that. There might be elements that require a 'shall/must do', but if you do use 'shall/must', think carefully about it and use only a few.

You should also consider how you will communicate to the staff/group you have chosen. In general, you can choose between a sender oriented 'we' form or a receiver oriented 'you' form. If there is a strong organisational culture where values need to be built into hosting interactions, then it can be a good idea to use the 'we' form. However, if there is no clear organisational culture, or if you want to encourage an employee culture, then it might be better to use the 'you' form.

It may be relevant to use service concepts in your descriptions. However, as a point of departure, your descriptions should *not* focus on the service encounter, in other words, food and drink. Your focus should be on hosting and the role of being a good host. That is to say, the emotional connection that you want to create with the guest. Your description should be about behaviour and communication. It should *not* provide precise instructions for all situations, but can include examples of speech actions related to certain situations.

Your descriptions can include text, illustrations and photos. Lengthwise, it should be between 4,000 and 5,000 keystrokes.

## DICTIONARY

<b>Practice</b>	To do or perform (something) repeatedly in order to acquire or polish a skill. An acknowledged way of doing something.
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# HOSPITALITY IN DIFFERENT SECTORS

Hospitality is a concept that is historically bound up with the serving of food and drink and the provision of accommodation. However, the 'hospitality industry' covers sectors other than just restaurants and hotels, for example: 'travel, leisure, attractions and conventions' (Ottenbacher, Harrington, and Parsa, 2009). Table 1 below gives an overview of different sectors where it is meaningful to talk about hosting and the skills of being a host.

**Tabel 1.** Overview of branches where staff may need to exercise the role of host.

Sector	Sector focus	Danish translation	Comments
<b>Event Industry</b>		<b>Event branchen</b>	The Event sector consists of various sized companies, from small one-person firms to large companies with many employees. Both types of companies can arrange events, e.g. festivals, conferences, weddings, company parties, concerts and trade fares, etc.
<b>Hospitality industry</b>	Food and services, and sleeping accommodation	<b>Hotel- og restaurant-erhvervene</b>	This sector covers companies that provide accommodation and/or prepare meals, snacks and drinks for consumption on the spot. This would include cafes and bars etc. It also covers hostels and other places providing accommodation.
<b>Hospitality sector</b>	A conglomerate of industries that includes the hospitality industry plus all other industries that have an element of hospitality, such as, for instance, the travel industry, the leisure industry, and the event industry.		
<b>Leisure industry</b>	The arts, entertainment, and recreation sector.	<b>Kultur, underholdning og forlystelses-sektoren</b>	This sector often also involves the serving of food and drink, but the actual site where food and beverages are served belongs to the hotel and restaurant sector.
<b>Meeting, Convention, and Event Planners (MICE)</b>	Meetings, Incentives, Conventions, Exhibitions	<b>Møde- og congress-sektoren.</b>	This sector often also involves the serving of food and drink. (Company catering etc.).
<b>Tourism industry</b>		<b>Turismeerhvervet</b>	This sector often also involves the serving of food and drink. Tourism is a generic term that covers a number of sectors.



Disney theme parks in the United States have been calling their front stage employees “hosts”, and their customers “guests” at least since the 1970s. In 1979, one Disney World theme park host (“WDW Host”) explained his job as follows: “Our job, every minute, is to help the Guest enjoy the park” (Pope, 1979).

## EXERCISE 8

*Individual task; can also be done as a group exercise.*

- A. Choose a sector listed in Table 1. Choose a specific company in that sector; it can be a company you know well, or one that you can gather information about on-line or by other means.
- B. Make a job advert for a position as host in the company you have chosen. The advert should cover the following three elements: a. A job description, including designated areas of authority and responsibility. b. Desired personality traits. c. Company values.
- C. Now write a brief application for the position that you outlined in question B. Your application should have a maximum length of 2,000 keystrokes.

# HOSTING PRACTICE



## EXERCISE 9

Group task. Question A can also be done individually.

- A. This task will involve using the hosting practice example that you developed in Exercise 7. Alternatively, you can develop a new Hosting Practice for another company, e.g. the company you focused on in Exercise 8. Discuss how you think the hosting practice would play out in reality for a typical guest.
- B. The task here is to make a video film of a role-play. The video should capture how the hosting practice you have developed could be implemented at the company you have chosen (i.e. restaurant or hotel). Think about your own personalities before you decide who will be the host and who will be the guest. Before you start, think about who the guest(s) is/are, and what feelings you want the guest/s to experience at the end of the interaction. Video length, approx. 10 minutes.

### EXERCISE FROM A SERVICE PERSPECTIVE

You are probably familiar with theoretical service concepts such as: customer journey, service concept, quality standards, service packs, the service management system, service delivery, touch points, service interaction and service quality. If you wish, you can begin with an introductory analysis of the restaurant using these concepts. This analysis can be used as a point of departure for developing your hosting practice.

# FINAL REFLECTION



## EXERCISE 10

- A. What are the three most important things you have learnt about being a host?
  - B. How can you use what you have learnt in practice?
  - C. When was the last time you experienced a good host? What made it memorable?
-

## SOURCES

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## RECOMMENDED SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL

Katja Hessel, Gry Asnæs and Nille Presskorn (2020): *A Nordic service concept*. Copenhagen: Praxis.



## COLOPHON

### **BEING A PROFESSIONAL HOST** - Exercises and tasks

First edition

This is a trial edition, which will be tested on students in the spring 2020. It is expected that a new edition will be released in August 2020.

#### THIS EDITION

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Photos: Google Royalty Free, Shutterstock (and others)

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This booklet is based, in part, on a research project led by Henrik Vejlgård, Rasmus Nissen and Dorthe Simonsen with contributions from a number of lecturers at Copenhagen Business Academy and University College, Lillebælt.

Project Findings can be viewed at [www.eaviden.dk](http://www.eaviden.dk) and at the link below:

<https://www.eaviden.dk/project/professionelt-vaertskab-i-danske-servicevirksomheder/>

Contact information for the project team can also be found here.



### **Guidelines for teachers**

This booklet forms part of the teaching material for the course 'Professional Hosting' at Copenhagen Business Academy.

The booklet fulfils the learning goal requirements for hosting on the AP Degree in Service, Hospitality and Tourism Management and covers parts of the requirements for the Top-up Bachelor Degree in International Hospitality Management.

The material in this booklet does not require any initial theoretical preparation. The overall approach is inductive, in other words, students do not need to have a theoretical introduction to the concept of hosting. Where theory is necessary, it is introduced in the exercises. The exercises can of course be supplemented with theory, either before or after the exercises. The intended didactic approach is that the teacher should largely facilitate discussions and follow up on the exercises.

The exercises in the booklet are *not* about service. However, it would be an advantage if students have prior knowledge of theoretical service concepts such as: customer journey, service concept, quality standards, service packs, the service management system, service delivery, touch points, service interaction and service quality.

The exercises are intended to be answered in groups; however, some tasks can be, or should be, done individually. The approach is based on the premise that considerable time will be spent on feedback to students' answers to the exercises. Feedback can for example be given as follows: after exercise 1, after exercise 2, after exercises 3, 4, and 5, after exercises 6 and 7 and after exercise 8.

It is estimated that the total time required to answer all the exercises is approx. 15 hours. Of these, nine hours are intended for group work and six hours for discussion and feedback.

A good supplement to the material in the booklet is the book: *A Nordic service concept* (2020).