

A COMPREHENSIVE BLENDED TRAINING COURSE DESIGN for

The Tea House



PREPARED BY:

Abbie Sharpe, et al.
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INTRODUCTION

The Tea House stands at a pivotal moment as it transitions under new ownership. Our training design aims to align with the new direction by integrating core tenets of andragogy and social learning theory. Our tailored approach ensures a smooth cultural shift to meet the new vision and empower employees to embody the values of the new Tea House experience.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Tea House is a specialty food franchise, once celebrated for its excellent service in a refined atmosphere, but its reputation has recently declined. New owners want to redefine the vibe to be more casual and quirky and to revive customer service. We have crafted an all-hands program to introduce the new approach, emphasizing restaurant cleanliness, neighborly and personalized service, and effective customer service management.

We have proposed a blended [course design](#) rooted in andragogy and social learning theory, which we developed specifically for the Tea House using these approaches. Our program will provide current employees with the skills, techniques, and tactics needed to provide a welcoming, neighborly, and personal customer experience in a vibrant and pristine environment through a rich assortment of active learning modules. Our curriculum is curated to get knowledge flowing and ideas brewing.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After the program, participants will be able to:

- *Describe the Tea House's desired engagements with customers*
- *List recommended conversation-starters*
- *Identify mannerisms that make customers feel like valued friends*
- *Articulate the Tea House's commitment to cleanliness and describe opportunities to ensure that in daily shift work*
- *Articulate the Tea House philosophy for customer service and describe how it might be demonstrated in on-the-job situations*
- *Describe de-escalation techniques and problem-solving process*

LEARNER GROUP

Our [course design](#) focuses on current employees as the primary group of learners. The Tea House has a team of 24 individuals, including the owners, Catherine and Ken. Positions include General Manager, Executive Chef, Chef, Wait Staff, Host, Busser, Office Staff and Training Manager. Aside from the owners and the office staff members, our demographic age group ranges from 18 to 34. Our assumption surrounding our learner group is that employees are motivated to learn and inspired to perform to the best of their abilities to support the vision that Catherine and Ken have cast.

Beginning with a facilitated survey before the training, participants can express their current state of initiative ([Appendix A](#)). The pre-training survey helps the training manager clarify what content may require added detail. We conducted interviews with them over several days, gathering a substantial amount of information. Our team interviewed employees individually, and overall, they reported that they enjoyed their co-workers and, that everyone's personalities meshed well and worked well together. A common theme throughout the interviews was that the restaurant has frequently had high turnover. The

office assistant has worked for the Tea House for several years, while the rest of the restaurant employees have been there for less than two years. Read more about our learner group description in [Appendix B](#).

Course Design

MODULE	FACILITATOR STEPS	DURATION
Opening	Opening remarks and a warm welcome to cultivate an open and safe environment. - Disseminate training materials (digital copy here), introduce agenda - Participants scan QR code linking to pre-training survey (Appendix B)	<i>BEGIN: 8:30 am</i> 15m
Welcome	Presentation. - Welcome video from new owners explaining the new leadership - Explain the purpose of the training - Definition of social learning theory (leave on whiteboard) - Definition of andragogy (leave on whiteboard) Interactive e-learning segment - Icebreaker via Kahoot - “What is your favorite flavor of tea?” Overview of the typical shift: - Orders are taken in one place, sent down the counter, delivered by the team to the customer, and payments at the counter - Customer names written on cups/orders - Frequent walkarounds to offer refills, chat, and clear tables - Hourly signed cleaning of restrooms, nightly full cleaning routines, stocking protocol - Keep spaces decluttered and clean as quickly as possible - Attention to front-of-house areas (walkways, doors for clutter, spills, fingerprints) - Illustrations of dim overhead lights, lamps, beanbags, couches	45m
Brewing Excellent Service	Introduce treating customers as valued friends. The presentation is designed as an engagement trigger to capture and maintain learner attention. Presentation: - Animated slides that describe desired customer interactions (friendly, personal, empathetic, eye contact, small talk that feels personal, recommended conversation starters. - Introduce the “Familiar Faces” game on the Luminosity app as a practice for remembering regular customers'	

	names (Appendix C) Group discussion: • Participants use their own customer POV to discuss what makes them feel like a valued friend and how to work those mannerisms into the desired customer interactions • Participants group brainstorm what quirky and fun interactions look like in a cafe environment and relate to desired customer interactions presentation Role modeling: • Facilitator briefly explains social learning theory (attention, retention, reproduction, and motivation) and relates it to providing excellent customer service • Facilitator encourages participants to practice aloud the list of conversation starters in small groups and make additional starters as needed • Facilitator scaffolds the steps of role-modeling by explaining what to notice, techniques to remember what is noticed, having learners try such behavior with immediate feedback from facilitator and peers, and providing motivational consequences to encourage the continued honing of skills Cognitive apprenticeship: • Facilitator supports group brainstorming, coaches participants with feedback and advice, scaffolds to offer support for desired behaviors, prompts participants to reflect on their work and encourages participants to set goals for how they will deliver excellent customer service **Facilitator initiates a “quick write” moment**	90m +15m comfort break
Diffusing Simmering Situations	Reiterate the customer service philosophy and discuss how to apply it in heated interactions. Fully embrace problem-based learning. Video: • Case studies of challenging customer interactions are presented with reflection questions for participants to ponder Group discussion: • Participants discuss heated customer interactions they have experienced or witnessed. Participants use groupthink to chime in on each other’s experiences with how they would have diffused the situation and share insight from their reflection questions Introduce the practice of andragogy as a collaborative and problem-based approach to active learning. Scenario-based: • Facilitator will guide participants through mock scenarios around a host of different customer experiences that	90m +15m break

	require de-escalation and scenarios that do not need a solution. Participants will take notes in their training manual of what they observe and how they would manage the mock scenarios. Ignite presentation: - Facilitator presents an Ignite that describes various de-escalation techniques for heated customer interactions Role play: - Facilitator will divide participants into groups of 2-4 and role play as a disgruntled customer. Groups will have the chance to utilize techniques discussed, or techniques of their own, to diffuse the situation Crossword Puzzle - Facilitator will disburse a customer service crossword puzzle to be completed at their leisure but before the completion of the course	
On-the-Job Training	Emphasize the importance of peer collaboration and support and relate to andragogy and social learning theories. Overview of how real-time practice and observation are valuable opportunities to apply skills and immediately receive feedback in a live context PowerPoint presentation: - Techniques for delivering effective feedback in a peer setting - Techniques for building confidence in a supportive setting Observation & coaching: - Video snippets from various popular TV shows that demonstrate effective and ineffective means of giving feedback on the job (i.e., Office, Friends, and Office Space) - Facilitator will guide participants in a group discussion on what behavior modifications should occur to reach the desired outcomes - Facilitator will provide support for correct means of onsite peer feedback and gradually remove support (scaffold and fade) as participants gain confidence in their ability to give and receive immediate feedback	75m includes lunch during
Menu Awareness	Introduce a simplified Tea House menu and tea flavors (disseminate menus). Online e-learning: Self-paced module that familiarizes participants with the menu, local ingredient highlights, and how to make tea recommendations to customers	40m +15 break

	- Interactive quizzes to assess menu familiarity Gamification: - Quiz competition among participants with a leaderboard to test menu knowledge - Competition winner receives a flair badge to wear on their work apron (motivation to learn)	
When Someone Spills the Tea	Overview of cleanliness expectations and DHEC standards Informational presentation: - Discuss daily, weekly, and monthly cleaning procedures - Give each participant a sample DHEC inspection survey and review quantitative and qualitative data that an annual survey consists of Group discussion: - Have participants share their experience of dining where the store was unclean Ignite Presentation: - Facilitator presents an Ignite that walks participants through shift checks for sidewalk sweep, storefront debris, and removing glass fingerprints - along with weather awareness (snow debris, slippery surfaces). Gamification: - Via virtual reality headset, have participants walk through a simulation of hourly and daily tasks - Participants will be challenged to complete tasks while being called to the kitchen, taking customer orders, and chatting with the regulars. Points are awarded for each task completed within the allotted time. Tasks will include restrooms (cleaning mirrors, floors, toilets, and sinks), dining area (tidying on the spot, decluttering furniture and floor, immediate sanitation after customer departure) and overall monitoring duties (maintaining soap, paper, air freshener in restroom, sofa and cushion refresh, monitor for lost-and-found items, table condiments). - Participant with the most points receives a flair badge to wear on their work apron Conduct a quiz to highlight areas that need further discussion.	45m
Individual Pathways	Participants choose their pathway for a final self-paced training session before their first day of shift work. May choose from mentoring, peer coaching, shadowing, or practice opportunities. - Opportunity for seasoned staff to volunteer as mentors - Opportunity for peers to sign up in groups and lead peer coaching sessions - Opportunity for any participant to sign up for shadowing and 1:1 practice sessions with the training manager	15m

	Provide resources for staff interested in furthering their education and careers.	
Conclusion	Summarize alignment of the needs analysis and learning objectives. Discuss supports and barriers to implementation. Issue certificates of completion, name badges, t-shirts, aprons, and flair buttons. Provide a handout with information on the next steps for further individual development opportunities.	30m

OVERVIEW OF EVALUATION PLAN

Formative Evaluation

We will conduct regular check-ins with the team throughout the course to monitor progress and ensure learning is on track. This approach allows us to implement revisions or revisit the subject matter quickly. We will incorporate various activities into our formative evaluations to keep the learner group engaged, providing a realistic measure of learning progress and retention.

To begin, we will use a pre-training survey via QR code to gather insights about our learner group. This survey will help us understand the Tea House team's current knowledge, perceptions, and primary areas of need. During the training, we will incorporate role-playing scenarios at several points to assess how well participants have retained the information. These interactive sessions will provide feedback based on their responses and behaviors during the role-plays. We will include multiple role-playing scenarios throughout the training to evaluate how well the learner group has retained the information presented. We will use their responses from these exercises to measure their understanding. To further enhance learning, we will facilitate several discussion groups to establish collaborative thinking and a deeper explanation of the presented material. Additionally, we will give a customer service-themed crossword puzzle for the team to complete at their leisure. We will use multiple quizzes to assess learning objectives in real time. We also have designed several quizzes for individual learners to complete privately, allowing them to self-assess their understanding. Others will feature a leaderboard to introduce a competitive element, fostering engagement and motivation in the learner group.

These formative evaluations will help our team identify the learners' baseline knowledge and track their progress throughout the training. The insights gained will enable us to make timely adjustments throughout the course to achieve the desired outcomes. These evaluations are essential to ensuring that the learners comprehend the material and that the training is clear, concise, and effective.

Summative Evaluation

The Kirkpatrick Evaluation Theory provides a framework for evaluating course effectiveness by focusing on four key levels of evaluation after course completion. Kirkpatrick's four tenets are reaction (which measures participants' initial impressions), learning (which assesses knowledge or skills gained), behavior (examines how learners apply what they have learned), and results (which evaluates the overall impact on organizational goals or performance) (Hogle, 2017). This method will identify opportunities to improve the course for future training while highlighting areas where immediate retraining is needed to ensure employees meet the new expectations.

Our evaluation begins with the first step: **reaction**. We will have a brief survey to capture the learner group's initial impressions of the course. This survey will allow everyone to share their thoughts, ensuring every voice is heard. The feedback we collect will guide our next steps by highlighting areas for improvement and offering insight into how the team perceives the training's alignment with the new goals of the Tea House.

To evaluate the second step, **learning**, we have designed an interactive game called *Tea House Jeopardy*. This game will assess knowledge retention within the group, featuring categories such as **Customer Service**, **Which Chemical?**, **Name That Dish**, and **Which Tea Was It?** Through this activity, we aim to observe participants' use of customer service language, understanding of proper chemical applications, and familiarity with the menu. While not everyone may know every answer, the game allows participants to learn from the correct responses, enhancing their knowledge in a fun and engaging way.

Step three focuses on the evaluation of **behaviors**. To assess this, we will send a team of secret shoppers twice a month for six months following the training. These secret shoppers will be briefed on the chronic behaviors before the training and the course objectives. During each visit, they will provide feedback on their experiences with customer service, the quirky, casual atmosphere, overall food and beverage satisfaction, and cleanliness. We expect significant improvement from the first to the twelfth secret shopper, with increasing consistency over time. This insight will help us identify key principles within the learner group.

In our final step, we will evaluate the **results**. Six months after training, we will randomly send a survey to 200 reward customers, asking the same questions as we did during the needs evaluation of the Tea House. The survey will cover their experiences with customer service, including interactions with the host stand, wait staff, and management, and also their overall perceptions of cleanliness in the dining room, restrooms, and parking lot. We will also solicit any feedback they can provide regarding the menu. These survey results will be compared to those from the initial survey. We anticipate significant improvements in all areas from the customer's perspective.

Each step in the process is essential for thoroughly evaluating the program's effectiveness. Each step builds upon the previous one, adding incremental value. Completing these steps within a specific time frame is crucial to gaining the most meaningful insight into the actual results of the program.

BRIEF RATIONALE

Albert Bandura's social learning theory (SLT) highlights that people learn by observing, imitating, and modeling behaviors, with attention, retention, reproduction, and motivation as key factors (Cherry, 2024). Our curriculum supports this through synthesizing methods like note-taking, reenacting behaviors, digital presentations, mock scenarios, TV clips, and role-playing activities. These strategies

help learners observe, practice, and refine desired behaviors with feedback and encouragement. Facilitators guide participants through scaffolding, while group discussions and cognitive apprenticeship activities promote collaborative problem-solving, goal-setting, and skill expansion. This approach integrates all four elements of SLT, fostering a comprehensive learning experience.

Andragogy, the study of how adults learn, emphasizes collaborative and problem-based approaches (Green & Sammons, 2014). It asserts that adults learn best when actively involved in designing, delivering, and assessing their learning, which improves retention (Storm, 2023). Malcolm Knowles outlined six guiding principles for andragogy: self-concept, adult learner experience, readiness to learn, orientation to learning, motivation to learn, and active learning. His theory highlights the importance of engaging adults with their surroundings and integrating their experiences into learning. Vanderbilt University published a guide to active learning, claiming approaches that promote active learning focus more on developing skills than information transmission and suggest using a variety of activities to promote such (Brame, 2016).

Our curriculum applies these principles by combining diverse content delivery methods, including interactive and e-learning tools, to boost confidence and motivation. A self-paced module allows learners to progress at their own speed, while synchronous presentations focus on specific topics. Group discussions foster engagement and provide a platform for sharing knowledge and experiences. We have incorporated technology like gamification and virtual reality to enhance active learning, providing hands-on experiences that produce measurable outcomes. Research shows learners retain 20% of what they hear but 90% of what they do, reinforcing the effectiveness of our methods (Green & Sammons, 2014).

Our course concludes with a segment that enables management to learn about the interests of their learners. By allowing participants to select a focus area for personal or professional growth, learners are empowered to take ownership of their development. This approach enhances motivation by cultivating engagement and individual ownership in career advancement opportunities and actively involving learners in learning.

CONCLUSION

Our design program empowers learners to actively engage, collaborate, and grow, equipping them with the skills and confidence to adopt and implement the Tea House's renewed philosophy successfully. By integrating innovative methods and aligning with proven learning theories, we create a dynamic and inclusive environment where individuals can connect their experiences with new knowledge, driving meaningful personal and professional development. We are confident this program will deliver excellent results and welcome your feedback and approval to proceed with implementation.

REFERENCES

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: The Tea House Learner Group Description

NAME	POSITION	AGE	M/F	MONTHS EMPLOYED	COMMENTS
Brad	Chef	26	M	23	Enjoys the people and loves working for the owner. Agreed change is needed; customers are dwindling.
Carlos	Chef	28	M	9	New to the area and wants to go to culinary school. Has worked with Chef Scott one-on-one to gain additional culinary skills.
Catherine	Co-owner	54	F	5	Has successfully managed several corporate coffee shops. Has always dreamed of owning her own tea house and is excited to start this new adventure.
Claire	Hostess	18	F	2	Just graduated high school and plans to work at the Tea House while attending college. Suggested getting couches and can see the Tea House as a place for customers to meet new people and mingle.
George	Waiter	28	M	13	Recently threw a glass on the floor in frustration. Thanks to social media, a video was taken and went viral. Believes he is an essential part of what is still going right for the Tea House.
Hakeem	Waiter	20	M	12	A loyal employee who continually wants to help fellow employees with their tasks during idle time.
Hannah	Waitress	28	F	4	Enjoys her time at work and loves the customers. Has noticed customers dwindling the past 2 months. Keeping her job options open in fear of the Tea House not getting their business back.
Heather	Office Staff	32	F	3	New to the office staff. Eager to learn and do a good job.
Helen	Chef	33	F	7	Loves her job and the new owners. Believes the Tea House is headed in the right direction.

NAME	POSITION	AGE	M/F	MONTHS EMPLOYED	COMMENTS
Jamal	Waiter	31	M	8	Wants more hours but understands the recent decline in customers impacts this. Extremely reliable and always willing to pick up extra shifts when needed.
Jenna	Waitress	23	F	3	She used to work for Catherine and Ken at the Bistro they own. She said they were wonderful people to work for and turned the Bistro around. She can't wait to see what they do with The Tea House.
Julie	Waitress	21	F	11	Said customers have not been happy lately and have noticed people have stopped coming. She is unsure if Ken and Catherine will be able to make a difference as quickly as needed.
Ken	Co-owner	62	M	5	Owns two other businesses, a small bistro in another town and a Zaxby's franchise.
Kyle	Office Staff	46	M	72	Loves working for The Tea House and truly enjoys the clerical work in the office. Recently started working from home part-time.
Lala	Waitress/ (Recently Promoted) Training Manager	22	F	11	Laila has noticed how many customers have been unhappy lately. She emphasized she would love to be part of the solution to turning the reputation around. Very excited for the new role she will be taking on. Currently in school working on her Business Management degree.
Lucy	Hostess	18	F	7	She enjoys getting to know the customers. She loves to engage with them, and her photographic memory enables her to remember people when they return.
Luke	Waiter	27	M	18	Likes his job and the customer interaction. Takes pride in doing his work efficiently.
Olivia	Waitress	32	F	21	Loves her job. Would like to own a small coffee house one day.
Renee	Hostess	19	F	5	The first employee that was hired by Catherine and Ken. She is attending a local community

NAME	POSITION	AGE	M/F	MONTHS EMPLOYED	COMMENTS
					college and wants to eventually own her own tea/coffee shop.
Samantha	Waitress	22	F	3	Recently hired to be a waitress, but she wants to work in the office when the opportunity arises.
Savannah	General Manager	31	F	3	Highly respected Hospitality Professional with a degree in Restaurant Management and several culinary certifications. Hired on after Ken and Catherine took over. Has assisted with several new hires since joining the team. Hoping to create a great work culture and exceed customer expectations in all areas.
Scott	Executive Chef	34	M	17	Well respected by others for his culinary talent. Acts as the BOH manager in many ways.
Victoria	Waitress	30	F	23	Recently got her MBA and has an eye for business. Talked with Catherine about buying from local farmers.
Zach	Busser	19	M	10	Recent high school graduate who appreciates being hired at the Tea House, saving up to move out on his own, and looking for more hours when possible.

Appendix B: Pre-Training Survey

(Choose from: Not at all, sometimes, often)

1. I enjoy networking with others.
2. I go above and beyond what is asked of me.
3. I make good use of available time.
4. I am quick to seek out advice.
5. I treat others how I would like to be treated.
6. I am always prepared.
7. I am quick to offer to help others.
8. I am self-driven.

Open Ended Questions:

1. How would you rate the current communication style and relationship with your team?
2. How comfortable do you feel approaching your teammates with concerns?
3. How comfortable do you feel if you were approached by a teammate with concerns?

Appendix C: LUMINOSITY app

Preview the Luminosity app in the Apple Store [here](#).

Preview the Luminosity app in the Google Play Store [here](#).

Learn more about the “Familiar Faces” game [here](#).

