



Hospitality Assured  
Technical  
Brief

## Hospitality Assured

**Every service has the responsibility of meeting customer expectations in what and how they deliver that service. However truly understanding customer requirements and integrating them into practice is rarely a simple exercise: preconceptions can distance teams from the customers' actual needs and equally customer expectations need to be carefully managed**

Hospitality Assured (HA) is a programme that recognises excellence in the service environment, which means meeting the expectations of a range of customers on a consistent and regular basis. The Hospitality Assured framework will therefore help you with:

- Understanding customers expectations.
- Planning the service delivery
- Communicating the nature and rationale of the service
- Ensuring adequate skills and resources are available
- Instigating a process of improvement which becomes part of operations and is self-perpetuating

Hospitality Assured is an industry standard that promotes and rewards the highest levels of business and service excellence for organisations in the hospitality industry. *As a specification for Service and Business Excellence* in hospitality, Hospitality Assured is championed by the Institute of Hospitality (formerly the Hotel and Catering International Management Association (HCIMA)) and supported by the British Hospitality Association (BHA) and the Caribbean Tourism Organization.

Hospitality Assured is fully endorsed by the British Quality Foundation and the Quality Scotland Foundation as meeting the criteria in the EFQM Excellence Model which is owned by the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM). It is the only specification within the Hospitality Industry that focuses on the customer experience.

## Hospitality Assured Recognition of Service and Business Excellence

The process to achieve Hospitality Assured recognition is rigorous. It takes into account customer opinion and considers all aspects of service from the customers' point of view. It is an ongoing process that provides a series of performance indicators against which an organisation can continually judge and measure itself.

The Standard for Service and Business Excellence is made up of ten steps that form the customer circle of improvement. The 10 steps are:

|    | <b>Key Step</b>                                      | <b>Brief Description</b>   |
|----|--|--|
| 1. | <b>Customer Research</b>                             | The methods used to determine target customers and their on-going needs, competitor activity and market demands  |
| 2. | <b>The Customer Promise</b>                          | What the organisation wishes the customer to experience and be judged against and how effectively these are communicated   |
| 3. | <b>Business Planning</b>                             | Objectives for financial, marketing and operational achievement in meeting customer needs and business goals   |
| 4. | <b>Operational Planning</b>                          | The planning processes that ensure that all the critical stages in an operation have been identified and can be implemented  |
| 5. | <b>Standards of Performance</b>                      | The established procedures which underpin the service plan and ensure that the customer promise is met   |
| 6. | <b>Resources<br/>(people, equipment, facilities)</b> | All the resources that are required to deliver customer service standards are identified and provided  |
| 7. | <b>Training and Development</b>                      | Training and development activity that ensures people are capable of delivering the service standards that meet the customer promise                                       |
| 8. | <b>Service Delivery</b>                              | The way of checking that the service promised to the customer is consistently delivered and customers' views on their perception of the quality of the service ascertained |
| 9. | <b>Service Recovery</b>                              | How customer service problems are identified and corrected to prevent their recurrence   |
| 10 | <b>Customer<br/>Improvement</b> <b>Satisfaction</b>  | How the need for customer service improvement is recognised and met  |

These steps are made up of 49 key requirements or criteria. These are all measurable objectives. The standard does not lay down precisely how objectives will be met - they will vary from one business to another, according to the particular organisation's customer promise. For example a customer promise in a hotel, will be different to that of a small wine bar or a cruise ship or a tourist information centre.

## **Why become Hospitality Assured?**

Hospitality Assured was created for the industry by the industry and the development of the standard was undertaken by the University of Surrey, who reviewed a range of practices across businesses in the service sector and the specification was modeled on the EFQM's excellent concepts

Hospitality Assured 'accredited' organisations enjoy a number of significant advantages. These include:

- Improved processes and operational efficiencies, culminating in a range of outcomes that can include enhanced profitability, improved reputation, increased repeat business and the gaining of industry respected accolades
- being able to use powerful business tools and objective external assessment to stimulate and measure performance improvement in service delivery and business excellence
- being able to use the Hospitality Assured framework to create a sustainable service culture, that benefits the customer and all individuals concerned with the business, as well as local communities

Hospitality Assured recognised organisations have also enjoyed other outcomes such as enhanced staff motivation and team-building at all levels, improved customer and employee satisfaction and the sharing of new ideas and implementation of service improvements that positively benefit the business

## **Who can become Hospitality Assured?**

Any hospitality, leisure, tourism or service-orientated organisation is eligible for HA, be they large or small, single or multi-unit, as long as they hold a desire to improve service to customers and to achieve operational and business excellence

**Simple Steps to achieving Hospitality Assured include:**

- Find out more about Hospitality Assured by contacting the Caribbean Tourism Organization and request a presentation
- Purchase the specification criteria
- Carry out a 'Self-Assessment' – a business health check, which looks at your organisation's own strengths and weaknesses against the 10 steps of the standard. This process should involve a cross-section of the operation's managers, supervisors and front line staff. At this stage you may wish to make use of a Hospitality Assured Coach who can support and guide your business in achieving excellence. The cost of the self assessment pack is US\$100.00
- Prepare for 'External Assessment' – a period (typically 6 - 12 months) of building on strengths and addressing areas for improvement, highlighted by the self-assessment process. Help is available from experienced coaches during this period (include costs for using a coach)
- Book an 'External Assessment' – when confident of its readiness to meet the HA requirements, an organisation can request a visit from the scheme's assessment body. Assessment is mainly carried out by meeting and interviewing an organisation's management team and staff on-site, in order to gather evidence of processes in action. The assessment will be planned with you in advance by the assessment team. Assessments, on average, take between 2-4 days to complete, depending on the size of the company/organisation.
- Accreditation – this will be awarded if an organisation is judged to have scored at least 60% against the 'Standard for Service and Business Excellence', with a minimum score of 50% in each and every one of the standard's ten steps. Accreditation allows an organisation to state it has demonstrated Service and Business Excellence according to the EFQM criteria
- Regular 'Re-Assessment' – to maintain accreditation; organisations must agree to be re-assessed regularly and continue to meet the minimum

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requirement for accreditation. The focus within re-assessment is to measure positive change and continuous improvement.

- Certification Costs (including External Assessment costs)
- In this pilot phase of the programme, total cost of participation will typically range from US\$1000-US\$3000, depending on the size of the company, number of assessment days necessary, and other considerations.

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