

Communication skills

Scenario and decision-making matrix

Content and alignment

Communicating effectively with diverse people is an important, and often challenging, part of working life. However, many younger learners lack the work and life experience to inform their communication choices in some situations. The resources below can be used to introduce learners to workplace scenarios and to new ways of thinking about potential actions. They support the [Managing difficult conversations](#) resource, and can be used to generate discussion between learners regarding effective conversations. They can also be adapted to any context and used to engage learners in thinking about the outcomes of actions.

Intent

The intent of this resource is to provide tutors with options for initiating and facilitating group discussions and problem solving. The resources presented can be used as they are, or as examples for tutors to develop their own resources.

Contents

1. Blank decision-making matrix (p. 2)
2. Hospitality scenario (p. 3)
3. Decision-making matrix for hospitality scenario (p. 4)
4. Hairdressing scenario (p. 5)
5. Decision-making matrix for hairdressing scenario (p. 6)

Use of the resources

The decision-making matrix can be used to engage learners in thinking about diverse outcomes of various actions. One way to do this is to provide a scenario to learners that provokes engagement and ends at a point where a decision needs to be made. The scenario provides the context and situation but lacks a resolution. This leaves the learners to discuss what the best course of action might be. Scenarios can be easily written, contextualised and re-used in multiple ways. An example of a hospitality and a hairdressing scenario can be found below.

The decision-making matrix is simply a grid that allows combinations of actions and outcomes to be compared. The full benefits of a decision-making matrix are realised when learners are able to generate their own actions and outcomes. In these cases an empty matrix can be used and completed by learners.

In many cases, it is beneficial to prepare either the outcomes and the actions, or only one of these, and allow the learners to generate their own ideas.

Blank Decision-making Matrix

Options	Consequences			

Hospitality Scenario

Tony runs a successful cafe in the CBD. Every lunchtime the cafe packs full of people due to the good coffee, good food and good service. Tony is dedicated to high levels of customer service and also has a strong interest in developing and supporting his staff members. Linda is the newest staff member. She has great customer service and manages to build rapport with almost all of her customers. Linda's first week goes without a hitch. She learns quickly, and Tony is instantly impressed with her.

One busy Tuesday four regular, corporate customers (three men and one woman) enter the cafe for lunch. Linda takes their orders and begins making a cappuccino for one of the customers. She delivers their meals to the table and sets the coffee down in front of the lady who ordered it and moves on to collect another lunch order.

When Linda returns the lady is hostile. "The coffee is disgusting," she says, "you've burnt the milk. I'm not drinking that and I'm certainly not paying for it. You need to make me another one."

Linda is embarrassed but apologises kindly, takes the cappuccino and says she will make another. Back in the kitchen Tony tastes the cappuccino. "It's perfect. Never mind, make her another one, Linda, and just be polite."

Linda returns with a new coffee. The lady tastes it, spits it back into the cup and tells Linda she should not be working as a barista or as a waitress. "This place has gone downhill lately." She demands to see the owner.

Decision-Making Matrix for Hospitality Scenario

Options	Consequences			
	Reputation of cafe	Profit/income	Staff morale	Future business
Ask the customer to leave				
Explain to the customer that the cappuccino is perfect				
Apologise to the customer and offer her a coffee prepared by a different barista				
Apologise and give all four of the customers their meals and coffee free of charge				

Hairdressing Scenario

Rachael runs a successful salon in the CBD. She took ownership of the salon three years ago and has since grown the salon's customer base significantly. She cares deeply about client satisfaction and makes an effort to ensure the reputation of the salon is enhanced. She also has a strong interest in supporting her staff members.

Sally is the newest stylist and this is her first full-time position since completing her training. She has an ability to create instant rapport with almost all customers and the feedback from clients shows that she does excellent work. Sally lacks confidence. However, her first week went well and Rachael is highly impressed with her.

One busy Tuesday a regular client arrives for a scheduled cut. However, her usual stylist (due to an unfortunate miscommunication) is unavailable. Sally asks the client, June, if she would be happy for her to do her hair as she is available. June is a little annoyed, but agrees and seems happy as she begins to describe how she would like to have her hair cut by Sally.

Forty-five minutes later Sally has finished June's hair. She asks June if she is happy and June says she is. As Rachael is behind the counter, Sally directs June to the counter and says goodbye. Sally then leaves the salon and heads out for lunch.

Rachael thinks June's hair looks great. When Rachael asks June what she thinks she says, fairly fiercely, "It's the worst cut I've ever had. I can't believe you put me with an inexperienced person when you know I always have Bernie. I am not happy about paying for this. It's completely different from what I asked for."

Decision-making Matrix for Hairdressing Scenario

Options	Consequences			
	Reputation of salon	Short-term profit/income	Staff morale and feeling of support	Long-term success of the salon
Tell June that her hair looks perfect and if she didn't like it she should have said something to Sally				
Explain that Sally is new and still learning				
Apologise to June and offer her a free cut by Bernie				
Apologise to June and don't charge June				