

Cobtree Manor Park Café Business Review July 2016

Problem Area	Detail	Solution	Action taken	Further action
1. Limited opening hours	Not enough staff to rota later closure, missing out on early evening trade.	Build pool of casual staff on contract and open later when weather is good.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simplified recruitment process agreed with HR. • Continuous recruitment process with adverts in window. • Opening hours increased from 4pm to 5pm since mid-June. • Weather dependent opening until 6pm during summer holidays 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular advert in local paper and Jobs in Kent. • Work with Mid Kent College to engage students from their Catering Courses as Casuals and apprentices.
2. Reliance on agency staff	High cost of agency staff as compared to contracted staff and inconsistency in quality affecting bottom line.	Recruit more directly employed staff.	As 1 above	As 1 above
3. Staff shortage at busy periods	Unable to cope with demand at very busy times and losing some customers.	As 1 and 2 See 8	As 1 and 2 See 8	As 1 and 2 See 8
4. Not able to take card payments	Customers can only pay by cash and as a result a lot of	Install merchant services machines.	Machines installed 19/07/16	Agreed minimum transaction i.e. £5 or card charge of 50p.

APPENDIX III

Problem Area	Detail	Solution	Action taken	Further action
	business has been turned away.			
5. Recruitment advertising not effective	Not getting a lot of applications to job adverts.	Review advertising methods and focus adverts in most appropriate place/s.	Advert for Casual Catering Staff displayed in the Visitor Centre with application forms available.	Local papers. Council social media.
6. Recruitment process too long	Even with a simplified recruitment process staff have not taken up appointments due to the length of time taken to issue contracts	Investigate with HR feasibility of 'subject to references' which is standard in the industry.	As 1 above.	References by email.
7. Weather	The daily take correlates to the weather and in 2016 to date this has been poor.	Investigate indoor family activities that could be offered in the Visitor Centre on poor weather days		
8. Ice cream points of sale	Customers who wish to make quick purchases of e.g ice cream and soft drinks are being deterred by length of queues at busy periods.	Requires additional staffing and is time consuming.	Additional point of sale is now operational at busy periods.	Ice cream bike to be introduced during the summer holidays
9. Inconsistent mark up on sales	Standard industry mark-up not being achieved on all lines.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review pricing structure and increase where 	Pricing review undertaken. This will be introduced when	New menu for school holidays.

APPENDIX III

Problem Area	Detail	Solution	Action taken	Further action
		appropriate especially on low value items such as water and confectionary. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review portion control. 	new EPOS management system is operational – target date 01/08/2016	
10.Menu too long and may not reflect average customer.	At busy times delivering the full menu can be challenging as everything is cooked to order.	Review menu and simplify/shorten to a standard menu with regular changing 'specials'.	Menu review undertaken. This will be introduced when new EPOS management system is operational – target date 01/08/2016	Carry out market research with CMP customers to refine offer.
11.Some customers unaware of takeaway service.	Takeaway service not promoted or visible as all food made to order.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Put up signs to advertise takeaway service internally and externally. • Produce fliers for local industrial area to increase telephone orders • Introduce pre-made sandwiches, salad boxes and children's packed lunches and an express till for takeaway. 		Consider vending machines from drinks and confectionary.

APPENDIX III

Problem Area	Detail	Solution	Action taken	Further action
12.Change float not sufficient	Currently operate with a £200 cash float imposed by Finance. Turning many customers away as don't have change exacerbated by inability to take card payments. Causing a high number of complaints. Staff wasting time going backwards and forwards to the bank for change.	Increase cash float to £1,000	£1,000 float agreed 12 July 17.	Monitor if sufficient once card payments enabled.
13.PR and Marketing	The café is not receiving enough exposure outside the park.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop dedicated page on Visit Maidstone website. • Step up social media activity around offers and seasons. 		

Other ideas to increase trade and monitor trade
A. Free WI-FI for customers
B. Add park footfall figures to daily takings record along with weather report
C. Introduce loyalty cards
D. Refund car park ticket on sales over £? – tear off portion required on parking ticket
E. Develop special offers and marketing campaigns i.e. OAP early dinner fish and chips; parent and toddler offers.
F. Develop retail sales such as children’s toys, dog food, sun screen, CMP merchandise.
G. Develop catering for parties