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BARISTA'S HANDBOOK

*THE BARISTA'S CUSTOMER SERVICE EMOTIONAL
INTELLIGENCE & CODE OF ETHICS GUIDE*



THE BARISTA'S EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE & CODE OF ETHICS HANDBOOK

A Practical Guide to Service Excellence

WELCOME TO SERVICE EXCELLENCE

This handbook is your practical guide to mastering the most important skill in service: **connecting with people.**

Based on international standards from the Specialty Coffee Association, UN Global Compact principles, and emotional intelligence research, this guide will help you:

✓ Understand and manage emotions (yours and customers') ✓ Create memorable experiences ✓ Handle difficult situations with confidence ✓ Build authentic connections ✓ Protect your own wellbeing

Remember: Technical skills make you competent. Emotional intelligence makes you exceptional.

PART 1: UNDERSTANDING EMOTIONS IN SERVICE

What is Emotional Intelligence?

Emotional Intelligence (EQ) is your ability to:

1. **Recognize** emotions in yourself and others
2. **Understand** what emotions mean
3. **Manage** emotions effectively
4. **Use** emotions to create positive outcomes

Why it matters:

- 85% of job success comes from EQ, only 15% from technical skills
- Customers remember how you made them feel more than what you said
- High-EQ baristas handle complaints 3× more effectively

The Four Skills of EQ

SELF-AWARENESS

- Know when you're stressed
- Recognize your emotional triggers
- Understand your reactions

SELF-MANAGEMENT

- Stay calm under pressure
- Control your reactions
- Maintain professionalism

SOCIAL AWARENESS

- Read customer emotions
- Understand body language
- Sense mood and needs

RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT

- Create positive experiences
- De-escalate conflicts
- Build customer loyalty

PART 2: YOUR ETHICAL FOUNDATION

Core Ethical Principles

These principles guide everything you do:

1. RESPECT FOR HUMAN DIGNITY Every person deserves respect, regardless of their behavior or appearance.

- Treat every customer as a valued individual
- Never mock repeat or speak disrespectfully about anyone
- Maintain courtesy even when it's not returned

2. HONESTY AND INTEGRITY Be truthful in all communications.

- Provide accurate information
- Admit when you don't know something
- Keep your promises
- Acknowledge mistakes

3. FAIRNESS AND EQUALITY Treat everyone the same high quality of service.

- No discrimination based on appearance, race, gender, age, or any other factor
- Same warmth and attention for everyone
- Equal patience with all customers

4. CONFIDENTIALITY:

- Protect customer privacy.
- Don't gossip about customers
- Keep customer information private
- Respect their dignity

5. PROFESSIONALISM Maintain appropriate boundaries and conduct.

- Friendly, not friends
- Warm, not intimate
- Helpful, not personal

Anti-Discrimination Commitment

You must NEVER discriminate based on:

- Race or ethnicity
- Gender or gender identity
- Sexual orientation
- Religion
- Age
- Disability
- Appearance
- Language or accent
- Socioeconomic status

If you witness discrimination: Report it immediately to your supervisor or through proper channels.

Preventing Harassment

Harassment includes:

- Unwanted comments about appearance or body
- Sexual advances or comments
- Racist, sexist, or discriminatory jokes
- Creating uncomfortable environment

Your responsibility:

- Maintain professional boundaries
- Never make customers or colleagues uncomfortable
- Report harassment if you witness or experience it (Try to be less reactive and be in the professional boundaries)
- Support those who report harassment

Remember: It's harassment if the recipient finds it unwelcome, regardless of your intent.

PART 3: READING CUSTOMERS

The 3-Second First Impression

You have 3 seconds to make a customer feel:

- Welcome
- Safe
- Valued

Your 3-Second Checklist:

1. **STOP** what you're doing
2. **MAKE EYE CONTACT**
3. **SMILE GENUINELY**
4. **GREET WARMLY:** "Good morning! Welcome!"

The Genuine Smile:

- Not just your mouth—your whole face
- Eyes crinkle slightly (crow's feet)
- Think of something happy before each customer
- It's contagious—they'll smile back

Reading Body Language

Common signals:

Customer Body Language	What It Means	Your Response
Crossed arms	Defensive, uncomfortable, or cold	Be extra warm, give space
Leaning forward	Engaged, interested, or in a hurry	Focus attention, be efficient
Avoiding eye contact	Shy, nervous, or cultural difference	Don't force it, be patient
Fidgeting	Nervous, anxious, or impatient	Be reassuring and efficient
Smiling, open posture	Happy, relaxed	Match their positive energy
Checking phone/watch	Rushed, impatient	Be quick and efficient

Remember: Context matters. Crossed arms might just mean they're cold!

Understanding Customer Emotions

Happy Customer:

- Smiling, chatty, relaxed
- **Your approach:** Match their energy, be friendly, engage
- **Opportunity:** Build relationship, ask for feedback

Stressed Customer:

- Tense face, short responses, checking time
- **Your approach:** Be efficient, acknowledge: "I can see you're in a hurry"
- **Opportunity:** Make it fast, suggest speed options

Sad Customer:

- Quiet, downcast eyes, low energy
- **Your approach:** Be gentle and kind, extra warmth
- **Opportunity:** Brighten their day with some encouraging words—they'll remember your kindness

Angry Customer:

- Frowning, raised voice, tense posture
- **Your approach:** Stay calm, listen, don't take it personally
- **Opportunity:** Turn them into loyal customer by handling well

Confused Customer:

- Staring at menu, asking questions, uncertain
 - **Your approach:** Be patient, offer suggestions, simplify
 - **Opportunity:** Guide them, build trust
-

PART 4: CREATING CONNECTION

Active Listening

True listening means:

- Give FULL attention (put down phone, stop other tasks, stop operating any device)
- Make eye contact
- Don't interrupt
- Show you're listening (nod, "mm-hmm," "I understand", Sure)
- Repeat back: "So you'd like..."

When taking orders:

1. Listen completely before responding
2. Repeat back for accuracy (It's essential thing to prevent the error)
3. Confirm: "Is that correct?"

This prevents errors and makes customers feel heard.

The Power of Empathy

Empathy = Understanding their feelings

Empathy phrases: ✓ "I can see why you'd feel that way" ✓ "I understand how frustrating that is" ✓ "That makes sense" ✓ "I'd feel the same way" ✓ "I'm sorry you're having a difficult time"

Empathy is NOT:

- Agreeing with everything they say

- Letting them treat you poorly
- Taking on their emotions personally

Empathy IS:

- Understanding their perspective
- Responding with compassion
- Validating their feelings

Using Names

Names are powerful.

How to get names:

- Ask: "Name for the order?"
- From loyalty punch card (and Digital Loyalty Program which will be implemented in future)
- They introduce themselves

How to use names:

- At greeting: "Good morning, Ahmad!"
- When calling order: "Large latte for Ahmed!"
- At farewell: "Thank you, Fahad! See you soon!"

Important:

- Pronounce correctly (ask if unsure)
- Don't overuse (feels manipulative)
- Use respectfully

Creating "Wow" Moments

"Wow" moments = Exceeding expectations in memorable ways

Examples:

- Remember a regular's order and name
- Acknowledge something special (birthday, achievement)
- Extra care when someone's having a hard day
- Surprise upgrade according to the SOP's of Brand
- Hand-written kind note on cup (Best wishes, If you see some misery on customer's face)
- Going out of your way to help

Small gestures create big impact:

- Carrying order near to elderly customers by going out
- Offering water while they wait
- Extra attention to dietary restrictions
- Treating children gently and with care

One "Wow" moment per shift goal: Creates loyalty, word-of-mouth, and makes your work meaningful.

PART 5: COMMUNICATION EXCELLENCE

Positive Language

Focus on what you CAN do, not what you CAN'T:

Instead of...	Say...
"We don't have that"	"We have [alternatives] available"
"You can't..."	"What you can do is..."
"Okay" (on Suggestion)	We'll take care it next time, Thanks (with warm smile)
"I don't know"	"Great question! Let me find out"
"You'll have to wait"	"It'll be ready in 5 minutes"
"That's impossible"	"Here's what I can do..."
"That's wrong"	"Let me help clarify that"

Power words:

- "Absolutely"
- "Certainly"
- "My pleasure"
- "Right away"
- "Happy to help"

Clear Communication

Be:

- **Clear:** Simple words, short sentences
- **Specific:** "5 minutes" not "soon"
- **Positive:** Focus on solutions
- **Respectful:** "Please," "Thank you," "Would you mind..."

When giving information:

1. Be accurate
2. Set realistic expectations
3. Confirm understanding: "Does that make sense?"

When you don't know: "Great question—let me check and give you accurate information."

Your Voice Matters

How you speak is as important as what you say:

Volume:

- Loud enough to hear clearly
- Not shouting

Pace:

- Match the customer (fast for rushed, patient for uncertain)
- Slow down when explaining

Tone:

- Warm and friendly
- Calm when they're upset
- Enthusiastic when they're excited

Practice: Record yourself. Would you want to be served by someone who sounds like you?

PART 6: HANDLING DIFFICULT SITUATIONS

The LEAD Method for Complaints

Use this four-step process:

L - LISTEN

- Let them fully express their concern
- Don't interrupt
- Make eye contact
- Show you're listening (nod, "I understand")

E - EMPATHIZE

- "I can see why you're frustrated"
- "That sounds really disappointing"
- "I understand how inconvenient this is"

A - APOLOGIZE

- "I sincerely apologize"
- "I'm sorry this happened"
- "I'm sorry we didn't meet your expectations"
- Make it sincere—mean it

D - DO SOMETHING

- "Here's what I'm going to do..."
- Take immediate action
- Go beyond minimum if possible
- Check: "Does that work for you?"

Complete example:

Customer's order is wrong.

1. **LISTEN:** [They explain, you listen without interrupting] "Let me make sure I understand—you ordered X but received Y?"
2. **EMPATHIZE:** "I completely understand your frustration."

3. **APOLOGIZE:** "I sincerely apologize for the mistake."
4. **DO:** "Let me remake that correctly right away. It'll be ready in 3 minutes, and this one is on us. I'm also including [extra as SOP's of Repose Cafe] for your trouble."

Result: Customer feels heard, issue solved, loyalty built.

Staying Calm Under Pressure

When you feel stressed:

Quick Calm-Down Techniques:

1. **Breathe deeply:** 3 slow, deep breaths
2. **Pause:** Count to 3 before responding
3. **Relax your body:** Drop shoulders, unclench jaw
4. **Positive self-talk:** "I can handle this"
5. **Focus on what you control:** Your breathing, words, actions

With difficult customers:

✓ **Don't take it personally:** It's about the situation, not you ✓ **Lower your voice:** When they raise theirs ✓ **Listen without absorbing emotion:** Hear the words, not the anger ✓ **Use their name:** "Fahad, I understand. Let me help." ✓ **Remember:** This will pass. You've handled worse.

Mental script: "This isn't about me. They're having a hard time. I can help."

When to Get Help

Get your supervisor when:

- Customer demands something beyond your authority
- Situation is escalating despite your efforts
- Customer is threatening or abusive
- You need backup decision-making
- You're feeling overwhelmed

It's not failure—it's smart: Knowing when to escalate is a professional skill.

PART 7: CULTURAL AWARENESS

Respecting Diversity

You'll serve customers from many backgrounds.

Key principles:

1. **Everyone is an individual** Don't assume all people from one culture are the same.
2. **Follow their lead** If unsure about preferences, let them guide you.
3. **Ask respectfully** "What would make you most comfortable?"
4. **Learn continuously** Educate yourself about common cultural groups in your area.

Common Cultural Variations

Eye contact:

- Some cultures: Direct eye contact = respect
- Other cultures: Direct eye contact = disrespect (especially with elders/opposite gender in Arab Islamic Culture)
- **Your approach:** Don't force it, respect their comfort level

Personal space:

- Varies significantly, Don't go way out from the window (60-90cm generally safe)
- If they step back, you're too close
- Respect their boundary

Communication style:

- Some cultures: Direct and straightforward
- Other cultures: Indirect to avoid confrontation
- **Your approach:** Be clear but not aggressive

Religious Considerations

Dietary restrictions:

- Know your ingredients
- Provide accurate information
- Don't judge or question
- Treat as seriously as allergies

Prayer times:

- Be understanding if customer needs moment
- Offer space if appropriate

Modest dress:

- Never comment on religious dress
- Treat with same respect as any customer

Language Barriers

When customer has limited language proficiency:

✓ DO:

- Speak clearly at normal pace (don't shout)
- Use simple words
- Be patient
- Use gestures and visuals
- Confirm understanding
- Appreciate their effort

X DON'T:

- Mock accent
- Show frustration
- Give up trying to communicate
- Speak about them in front of them

Learn basics: "Hello," "Thank you," "Please", and sentences in common languages (Most Common Arabic, Hindi, and English) at your location.

PART 8: SELF-CARE AND WELLBEING

Managing Your Emotions

Service work is emotionally demanding.

Protect yourself:

During your shift:

- Deep breath between customers (reset)
- Quick body scan (release tension)
- Positive self-talk
- Focus on what you can control

After difficult interactions:

- Let it go (don't replay it)
- Talk to colleague if needed
- Remember: It wasn't personal
- Learn from it, then move on

End of shift:

- Mental transition (work mode to personal mode)
- Physical ritual (change clothes, wash hands)
- Reflect on positives
- Leave work at work

Preventing Burnout

Warning signs:

- Constant exhaustion
- Cynicism about customers
- Dreading work
- Emotional numbness
- Physical symptoms (headaches, stomach issues)

Prevention:

At work:

- Use your mental breaks
- Ask for help when needed
- Celebrate small wins
- Connect with supportive colleagues
- Remember your impact

Outside work:

- Get enough sleep
- Eat well
- Exercise
- Have hobbies
- Maintain relationships
- Set boundaries

If you're burning out: Talk to your supervisor. It's not weakness—it's smart self-care.

Work-Life Balance

Boundaries are healthy:

- ✓ Don't feel guilty for resting
- ✓ Have life outside work
- ✓ Don't sacrifice health problems for job
- ✓ Say no when necessary

Remember: You can't pour from an empty cup. Taking care of yourself allows you to take care of customers.

PART 9: TEAMWORK

Supporting Your Colleagues

Great teams have each other's backs.

How to be a great teammate:

- ✓ **Help without being asked** See colleague struggling? Step in.
- ✓ **Communicate clearly** "I'm on espresso!" "We're low on milk!" (or to operations department)

- ✓ **Stay positive** Your energy affects everyone
- ✓ **Share knowledge** Help train newer staff
- ✓ **Give recognition** "Nice job handling that difficult customer"
- ✓ **Cover when needed** Be flexible, help during rushes

What hurts teams:

- Gossip
- Laziness
- Negativity
- Blaming others
- Not communicating

Professional Boundaries with Colleagues

Friendly, not inappropriate:

✓ Supportive relationships ✓ Professional communication ✓ Appropriate humor ✓ Respect for all

✗ Inappropriate comments ✗ Sharing intimate details ✗ Exclusive cliques that exclude others

If you experience or witness harassment: Report it. You're protected for reporting.

PART 10: QUICK REFERENCE GUIDES

The Perfect Customer Interaction

1. GREETING (3 seconds)

- Stop what you're doing
- Eye contact
- Genuine smile
- "Good morning! Welcome!" (+ their name if repeated customer)

2. TAKING ORDER

- Listen fully
- Ask clarifying questions
- Repeat back
- Confirm: "Is that correct?"

3. PREPARATION

- Visible care and attention
- Quality checks
- Engage if appropriate

4. DELIVERY

- Eye contact
- Smile
- Use name if known
- "Here you go, [Name]. Enjoy!"

5. FAREWELL

- Thank them
- Use name
- "Thank you, Salman! See you soon!", Will be happy to see you again, Hope you would come again

Emotional Intelligence Checklist

Daily self-check:

Am I greeting every customer warmly? Am I making eye contact and smiling genuinely? Am I giving full attention (not distracted)? Am I listening actively? Am I reading body language? Am I adapting my approach to different customers? Am I staying calm under pressure? Am I using positive language? Am I creating at least one "wow" moment? Am I treating everyone with equal respect? Am I taking care of myself?

When You're Unsure

If you're not sure if something is appropriate, ask yourself:

1. "Would I want someone to do/say this to my family member?"
2. "Would a reasonable person find this unwelcome?"
3. "Is this treating the person with dignity?"
4. "Am I focusing on work, or crossing into personal?"

If still unsure: Err on the side of professionalism and respect.

Questions about ethics/policies: Ask your supervisor.

Common Situations Quick Guide

Customer seems sad:

- Be extra gentle and kind
- **"I hope this brightens your day"**
(or some sentences that can encourage them
"Hope this makes your day better."
"Hoping this brings a smile to your day."
"Here's something warm to lift your mood today."
"Wishing you a brighter day."))
- Extra care with order

Customer is rushed:

- Be efficient
- "I can see you're in a hurry"
- Move quickly

Customer is confused:

- Be patient
- Offer suggestions
- Simplify options

Customer is angry:

- Stay calm
- Use LEAD method
- Don't take personally

Customer makes mistake:

- Don't make them feel stupid
- "No worries—happens all the time"
- Help without dwelling on it

You make mistake:

- Admit it immediately
- Apologize sincerely
- Fix it right away
- Learn from it

YOUR COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE

The Impact You Have

Every day, you:xxxxxxxxxx

- Brighten people's days
- Build customer loyalty
- Represent your brand Repose Cafe
- Make someone feel valued
- Sometimes make a difficult day better

Never underestimate the power of:

- A genuine smile
- A kind word
- Remembering someone's name
- Going the extra mile
- Treating someone with dignity

You're not "just" a barista. You're creating experiences that matter.

Your Professional Growth

Emotional intelligence is a skill you develop:

Daily practice:

- One genuine connection per customer
- One "wow" moment per shift
- Learn from each difficult situation
- Reflect on what went well
- Identify one thing to improve

Continuous learning:

- Ask for feedback
- Learn from experienced colleagues
- Practice skills from this handbook
- Stay curious about people
- Read, learn, grow

Remember:

- You won't be perfect every day
- Mistakes are learning opportunities
- Self-compassion + high standards = growth
- Every interaction is practice
- You're constantly improving

Your Promise

As a service professional, I commit to:

- Treating every customer with dignity and respect
- Being honest and maintaining integrity
- Providing equal service to everyone
- Continuously developing my emotional intelligence
- Creating positive experiences
- Handling complaints with grace
- Supporting my colleagues
- Taking care of my own wellbeing
- Upholding ethical principles
- Representing my brand with pride

This is not just a job. This is a craft. You are a professional.

Ahadeeth of Prophet Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم on Manners & Treating People Well

• Smile at Customers

Prophet Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم said:
«تَبَسُّمُكَ فِي وَجْهِ أَخِيكَ صَدَقَةٌ»

Meaning:

Smiling at others is charity.

Reference:

Tirmidhi – Hasan Sahih

Service Practice:

Smile while greeting customers at kiosks and drive-thrus.

• Best People Have Best Manners

Prophet Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم said:

«إِنَّ مِنْ خَيْرِكُمْ أَحْسَنَكُمْ أَخْلَاقًا»

Meaning:

The best people are those with the best character.

Reference:

Sahih al-Bukhari (3559), Sahih Muslim (2321)

Service Practice:

Politeness, respect, and good behavior define professionalism.

• Be Gentle in All Dealings

Prophet Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم said:

«مَا كَانَ الرَّفْقُ فِي شَيْءٍ إِلَّا زَانَهُ»

Meaning:

Gentleness makes everything better.

Reference:

Sahih Muslim (2594)

Service Practice:

Use a calm tone, kind words, and patience with customers.

• Make Things Easy for People

Prophet Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم said:

«يَسِّرُوا وَلَا تُعَسِّرُوا، وَيَسِّرُوا وَلَا تُتَفَّرُوا»

Meaning:

Make things easy and do not push people away.

Reference:

Sahih al-Bukhari (69), Sahih Muslim (1734)

Service Practice:

Simplify orders, help quickly, and guide customers politely.

• Control Anger**Prophet Muhammad صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم said:**

«لَيْسَ الشَّدِيدُ بِالصُّرْعَةِ، إِنَّمَا الشَّدِيدُ الَّذِي يَمْلِكُ نَفْسَهُ عِنْدَ الْغَضَبِ»

Meaning:

True strength is controlling anger.

Reference:

Sahih al-Bukhari (6114), Sahih Muslim (2609)

Service Practice:

Stay calm during complaints and stressful situations.

Barista Reminder

- Smile first
- Speak politely
- Stay calm
- Help sincerely
- Serve with excellence

Good manners are Sunnah. Professional service is worship when done with sincerity.

FINAL WORDS

Service work is challenging. It requires:

- Physical stamina
- Mental focus
- Emotional intelligence
- Technical skill
- Constant adaptability

But it's also meaningful work:

- You create moments of joy
- You solve problems
- You build relationships
- You make people feel valued
- You make a difference

On difficult days, remember:

- Why you started
- The customers who made you smile
- The colleague who had your back
- The "thank you" that was genuinely meant
- The regular who trusts you

You matter. Your work matters. The connections you create matter.

Go make someone's day better.

EMERGENCY CONTACTS

For questions about:

- **Ethics/conduct:** Your Area Supervisor
- **Harassment:** Operation Manager
- **Safety concerns:** Operation Manager
- **Immediate danger:** Emergency services (police/ambulance)

Remember: You're never alone. Ask for help when you need it.

NOTES SECTION

Use some notes and mnemonics to write down:

- Names of regulars and their orders
- Things you learned from difficult situations
- Feedback you received
- Goals for improvement
- Moments that made you proud

This handbook is yours. Review it regularly. Practice these skills daily. Share it with colleagues. Most importantly: Use it to become the service professional you're capable of being.

Welcome to service excellence.

Based on international standards from the Specialty Coffee Association, UN Global Compact, International Labor Organization conventions, and evidence-based emotional intelligence research.

Version 1.0 | For training and professional development purposes

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