



Title: Front of House Training

Grade Levels: 9-12

Author: Kathleen Woods

Date: July 17, 2021

Description:

Through a facility tour, hands-on activities, and problem-solving role play, students will be introduced to Front of House roles and facility-based and program-based protocols. The lesson is an opportunity for students with experience working Front of House to share their knowledge, and for students new to Front of House to begin to evaluate how they might best contribute.

Learning Outcomes:

Students will learn how to assist in providing a superior level of Customer Service and facilitate a smooth, safe and enjoyable experience for the attending public from the time they enter the facility until they exit.

Students will learn site specific safety protocols, ticketing and seating procedures, and Front of House expectations for events such as plays, music concerts, film festivals, and guest artist appearances.

SEL Competencies Taught:

Social awareness, which is the ability to take the perspective of others, demonstrate empathy, acknowledge and appreciate similarities and differences, and understand how one's actions influence and are influenced by others

Responsible decision-making, which refers to the ability to use multiple pieces of information to make ethical and responsible decisions.

2014 National Core Theatre Standards:

Th:Cr2.1.1.b Investigate the collaborative nature of the actor, director, playwright, and designers and explore their interdependent roles in a drama/theatre work.

Time to Teach: 90 Minute class

Materials Required for Instruction:

Digital devices, white board with markers, large flip chart and markers, sticky notes, 3" X 5" cards, or paper and pens for taking notes and problem solving work.

Venue Ticketing information

Performance space seating information

Venue Safety Protocol Procedure summary

Access to theatre equipment such as ELDs, flashlights, lobby audio systems, etc.

Opening:

Think of a time when you had a really positive or negative experience as an audience member entering a performance space.

What do you remember? How did it impact your experience of the performance?

An audience member's Front of House experience can set the tone for their overall experience of the performance. Today you will learn how you can contribute positively to audience members' experiences. You will have an opportunity to assess your own strengths and interests, as well as learn skills for increasing your awareness of how to best interact with those around you and solve problems that may arise.

Instructional Procedures:

1. Performance Space Tour
 - a. This can be lead by an adult(s), or by experienced students with adult support
 - b. The order of the tour and information such as ticket checking, seating, etc. will depend on the school's performance space and protocols.

2. Front of House Roles

Front-of-House Guidelines (attached)

- a. Ask students what Social and Personal skills are needed for each role
 - i. The brainstorming process can be done as a group, in small groups, or in pairs
 - ii. As part of the wrap-up of the discussion, ask students to indicate which of the skills they feel they are strong in, and which they might need to work on

SEL Social Awareness --

- Taking others' perspectives
- Identifying diverse social norms
- Recognizing situational demands and opportunities
- Understanding the influences of organizations/systems on behavior
 - b. Which role(s) are they most interested in/most qualified for?

SEL Responsible Decision making

- Making reasoned judgements based on information
 - Anticipating the results of actions and choices
 - Evaluating personal impact of actions and choices
- c. It will be beneficial for the teacher to keep track of students' responses if the option to have students participate in Front of House work is a next-step

3. Customer Service Role Plays

- a. The focus of the activity is for the students learning Front of House to practice meet and greet and assist customer service skills.
- b. Students should be encouraged to rehearse the roles with the same focus and realism they would a role in a play
- c. Divide students into two groups: Customers and Front of House Staff (Ushers, Ticket Takers, Concessions Workers)
 - i. Students serving as Front of House Staff will be given specific stations by the Teacher or Student Head Usher
 - ii. Materials such as ticket scanning equipment, concessions, etc. can be real or imaginary, depending on how realistic the instructor would like for the training to be
- d. Customers will enter the theatre and move through the various stations while Front of House greet them, check tickets, help them find their seats, ask about restrooms, purchase concessions,
- e. Students portraying Customers should work as agreeable audience members for this particular activity. (Problem solving comes in the second part of the lesson).

4. Problem-Solving Role Play

- a. Think of possible questions or concerns that may arise as part of Front of House Work.
 - i. Be prepared to prompt with several examples
 1. During the performance, you notice that a patron is filming even though recording is not permitted.
 - a. What do you do?
 - b. Is there another Front of House team member you would ask for support?
 - c. Explain the choice.
 2. A patron begins to enter the House with food and drink which is not allowed.
 - a. What do you do?
 - b. Is there another Front of House team member you would ask for support?
 - c. Explain the choice.

3. Intermission is due to end but there is a long line outside the Women's Restroom
 - a. What do you do?
 - b. Is there another Front of House team member you would ask for support?
 - c. Explain the choice.
- b. Discuss questions, problems, and possible solutions either in pairs (experienced and less experienced students) or as a whole group
- c. Ideally, each student is given an opportunity to be part of helping to solve a problem.

SEL Social Awareness --

- Taking others' perspectives
- Showing concern for the feelings of others
- Identifying diverse social norms
- Recognizing situational demands and opportunities
- Understanding the influences of organizations/systems on behavior

SEL Responsible Decision Making

- Identifying solutions for problems
- Anticipating and evaluating the consequences of one's actions
- Evaluating personal, interpersonal, community, and institutional impact

Assessment:

Post Instruction Front of House Assessment (attached) – This Rubric is designed to be used following the Front of House Instructional activities.

Front of House Assessment – The Assessment can be used following a student's work in Front of House for an actual production.

Closing:

See attachment – EdTA Front of House Closing Activity

Learning for all: Please use the space below for suggestions for any specific adaptations or accommodations needed for neuro-diverse or atypical learners.

Front of House work can be a highly inclusive activity for theatre students. Students can be assigned a role that best suits their skill level, interests, and experience. If support is needed, students can be paired with other students who can work with them. The tasks vary from very straightforward, such as handing out programs or directing patrons to the Restroom, to more complex jobs such as seating patrons correctly, or serving as head Usher. There truly is a place for all theatre students in Front of House if they are willing to follow the basic guidelines of customer service.

How does this lesson's content model inclusivity and honor diversity?

The lesson provides a wide range of opportunities for all students to learn front of house skills that will enable them to interact positively and responsibly with audience members, adult theatre staff, and/or their peers and peer leaders. Through the training process, students and supervisors will assess individual interests as well as the student's strengths and challenges in relation to front of house work. The variety of front of house positions allows for students to then be assigned to a job that best suits their interests and talents.

Additional Tools & Resources:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/29/theater/bruce-springsteen-broadway-usher.html>

Front-of-House Guidelines

Working Front of House provides students with opportunities to learn Social Awareness and Responsible Decision Making skills, and apply them in-process. The introductory lesson includes problem-Solving Role Play so that students can anticipate and practice possible Front of House questions and challenges.

The Guidelines below can be adapted for a school's specific situation.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

- Act in a friendly manner while working your position – smile, greet and offer to be of assistance.
- Be aware of the nearest outside exit and how you would direct the public to those exits in an emergency situation
- Be knowledgeable as to the location of the closest restrooms, drinking fountains, and concessions area

HOUSE RULES

- Call time for Head Usher will be 90 minutes before Curtain
- Call time for Ushers will be 60 minutes before Curtain
- Know the food and drink rules both in the Lobby area and inside the theatre
- No one is permitted back stage or allowed on stage from seating area
- Aisles must be kept clear at all times
- Unless otherwise specified, cameras and recording devices are not allowed during a performance
- No feet on seats
- No one allowed in seating area until “house is open”

DRESS CODE (This is an example list)

The over-all dress code for Front of House Staff is as follows:

- Green Vest
- Black Dress Slacks
- White dress shirts for men
- White tailored blouses for women (please no designer shirts or blouses)
- Black shoes (all black, closed-toe, polished) – No tennis shoes
- Solid black ties (men)
- Name tag

PERSONAL EQUIPMENT

- Small flashlight (perhaps 2" – 3")
- Watch, pen and paper (small notebook)

PERSONAL APPEARANCE

- It is expected that all front of house staff are properly groomed and wearing "appropriate" attire.
- Staff is expected to dress neatly.
- Personal hygiene is important in maintaining effective working relationships.
- Avoid grooming habits that distract or adversely impact others.
- The heavy use of cologne or perfume is discouraged due to patron/staff who are sensitive to strong odors.
- Hair is to be worn in a safe style
- Jewelry should be inconspicuous, safe and conservative

STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

No written list or guideline can completely or adequately cover what, for the most part, is common sense, common courtesy, honesty and trustworthiness. However the partial guidelines that follow may be helpful in avoiding difficulty for some individuals.

Professionalism/Common Courtesy

- Be sincerely and openly friendly ... offer to assist the patron.
- Know where the patron will find the nearest drinking fountains, concession stands, restrooms, etc.
- Be prepared to answer any questions the patron might have. If you don't know an answer, try to direct the patron to someone who might be of assistance. When informing a patron of a house policy, be polite, clear and professional.
- Small things that you do while on duty will show that you are professional in your job; i.e. the way you look – uniform neat and clean; not chewing gum or eating, no cell phone use when on duty and standing without slouching or leaning against the wall.
- A staff member is on duty throughout the performance. It is important that you do not stop to talk at length or congregate with co-workers or patrons. Do not engage in personal conversations or gather in groups to visit while on duty or within earshot of attendees or staff
- ALL staff members are expected to stand while working unless a disability dictates otherwise. Remain alert and ready to assist patrons.
- If seated and a patron approaches, be sure to stand if you are able to converse.
- The House Staff is a team effort. Be a good team player and treat your fellow workers as you would like to be treated.

- Each position on each call **must** be covered so please accept your work assignment graciously and without complaint.
- Please advise us if you are afraid of heights or claustrophobic so that you are not assigned to the balcony or the elevator.
- Pay attention to instructions by the supervisory personnel.
- Cell phones are not permitted on the floor unless authorized by your Supervisor. If you have an emergency situation and must be “on-call,” please advise your supervisor. iPods, earbuds and/or other digital music players are never allowed on the floor.
- All breaks should be taken out of public view. Ushers are encouraged to use the break rooms provided. Ushers must not take breaks in the seating area or event area.
- Food and beverages are not permitted at your station. Check with the Supervisor regarding bottled water.
- Please advise your immediate supervisor if you need to leave your assigned post.

Job Descriptions

HEAD USHER / SUPERVISOR

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS

- Provide direction and guidance to Front of House staff. Assist staff with questions on their assigned tasks
- Assist staff in ensuring patrons safely and timely enter and depart theaters.
- Ensure staff is in place prior to opening doors and dismiss staff at end of performance
- Review the condition of the house and lobby to make sure that it is clean and free of any hazards.
- Ensure all fire exits are free of obstruction and that all doors which should be secured are locked.
- Facilitate breaks for the staff
- Organize programs for events
- Check with stage manager to review procedures for opening the house, starting the show, including late seating policy, end of intermission, and other special instructions.
- Conduct briefing meeting with the staff informing staff of assignments, performance times, client's needs and event policies.
- Check with box office to review anticipated ticket sales
- Train new staff on various policies and procedures
- Complete post-event report in conjunction with Director and Stage Manager, noting any occurrence out of the ordinary, lost and found items, etc.
- Must be familiar with all Emergency exits in the building
- Be prepared to assist in an Emergency Evacuation

TICKET TAKERS

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS

- Use scanner or visually read tickets to make sure they are for the proper event, date, and time
- Maintain control of assigned entrance
- Direct patrons through correct door to seat location or to the various areas of activities in trade or consumer shows.
- Watch for items that are barred such as food and bottles, cans, alcohol, or any beverage container, etc.
- Count tickets and provide an accurate count of the tickets taken.
- Move people through the lines in an efficient and timely manner
- Must be familiar with all Emergency exits in the building
- Be prepared to assist in an Emergency Evacuation

USHERS

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS

- Greet patrons as they enter the theater and hand out programs (if applicable) in an efficient and timely manner.
- Direct patrons with seating, providing light as needed when seating or exiting.
- Monitor seating area during performance to assist patrons exiting/re-entering and ensure safe environment.
- Assist patrons with questions about performance times and location of seating, concession stands, drinking fountains, restrooms, elevator(s), coat check, ALD devices, etc.
- Prepare programs for events.
- Check seating areas for lost items after events.
- Must be familiar with all Emergency exits in the building
- Be prepared to assist in an Emergency Evacuation

CONCESSIONS SALES

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS

- Set up, maintain, and clean-up the concessions area before, during and after the performance
- Assist with concessions sales in a friendly and efficient manner
- Manage the cashbox
- Must be familiar with all Emergency exits in the building
- Be prepared to assist in an Emergency Evacuation

GLOSSARY/ACRONYMS

ADA Americans with Disabilities Act

ALD Assisted Listening Device

AUDITORIUM The part of the theatre in which the audience sits. Also known as the “House”.

BACK OF HOUSE Stagehands, etc. – those that work out of the view of the audience.

BALCONY The upper seating section of a theater above the Orchester Level. Sometimes referred to as Grand Tier.

COMP TICKETS Complimentary (i.e. free) tickets.

CURTAIN TIME The time the performance will begin

DRESS CIRCLE A section of seats in a theater or opera house, usually the first tier above the orchestra. So called because it is a circular row of seats at an entertainment, the spectators of which are expected to be in dress clothes.

EGRESS Act of leaving the theater

FINAL CALL The signal given at curtain time. Everyone should be in their seats.

FRONT OF HOUSE Personnel that work with public during an event, usher, ticket taker, etc.

GENERAL ADMISSION No specific seat assignment

GRAND TIER Lower Section of Balcony

HALLS OPEN Guests can enter the venue from the outside but cannot enter the House.

HOUSE MANAGER In charge of everything which happens front of house box office, ushers, the bars, etc..

HOUSE RIGHT/HOUSE LEFT (HR/HL) Facing the stage from the audience – House Right is to your right; House Left is to your left.

HOUSE IS OPEN O.K. to seat people inside the auditorium.

INGRESS Act of entering the theater

MEZZANINE An intermediate floor, similar to a balcony, in a building whose center is open to the double-height ceilinged floor below.

ORCHESTRA LEVEL Always main level of the theatre

PAPER COMPLIMENTARY If someone says, "The house is all paper tonight", it means that most, if not all, of the audience have free tickets.

RESERVED SEATING Guests assigned a specific seat within a specific row.

RUNNING TIME The time a performance lasts: 60 – (20) – 60 means the first half is 60 minutes; intermission is 210 minutes, and second half is 60 minutes.

SPOT Spotlight

SRO Standing Room Only

STAGE DOOR Entrance for stagehands and performers

STAGE MANAGER In charge of everything that happens backstage: all backstage personnel report to him/her.

STAGE RIGHT/STAGE LEFT Facing audience from stage - Stage Right is to your right; Stage Left to your left

VOMITORY A walkway (passageway) which provides access to the stage. The term comes from the ancient Roman theater, when it referred to a large door in an amphitheater. In the modern theater it is sometimes abbreviated to **vom**.

Post-Instruction Front of House Pair Share and Assessment

Instructions:

1. Using the left hand column, please rate yourself on a scale from 1 (might be difficult to accomplish) to 10 (I can do that!) for each of the Front of House expectations. Base your responses on what you learned in Front of House Training, and your assessment of your personal strengths and challenges as they relate to Front of House work.
2. Fold the paper in half down the middle to hide your answers, then trade with a trusted peer review partner. As a Peer Reviewer, base your responses on what you observed during today's training and role play activities.
3. Complete the same exercise as a review of your partner's potential strengths and challenges as they relate to Front of House work.
4. You may also want to ask your teacher to complete the "Peer Review" side for another source of input.

SELF REVIEW	PEER REVIEW
<p>I learned specifics about how to relate in a positive and professional way with the general public. ___1___2___3___4___5___6___7___8___9___10</p>	<p>You displayed the ability to relate in a positive and professional way with the general public. ___1___2___3___4___5___6___7___8___9___10</p>
<p>I respectfully follow directions given by adult team leaders ___1___2___3___4___5___6___7___8___9___10</p>	<p>You respectfully follow directions given by adult team leaders ___1___2___3___4___5___6___7___8___9___10</p>
<p>I respectfully follow directions given by peer leaders ___1___2___3___4___5___6___7___8___9___10</p>	<p>You respectfully follow directions given by peer leaders ___1___2___3___4___5___6___7___8___9___10</p>
<p>I am able to work well with other team members. ___1___2___3___4___5___6___7___8___9___10</p>	<p>You are able to work well with other team members. ___1___2___3___4___5___6___7___8___9___10</p>
<p>I work enthusiastically to keep the team energy moving forward. ___1___2___3___4___5___6___7___8___9___10</p>	<p>You work enthusiastically to keep the team energy moving forward. ___1___2___3___4___5___6___7___8___9___10</p>
<p>I understand the chain of command for Front of House and will ask for help when appropriate. ___1___2___3___4___5___6___7___8___9___10</p>	<p>You understand the chain of command for Front of House and will ask for help when appropriate. ___1___2___3___4___5___6___7___8___9___10</p>
<p>I know how to present myself in a professional manner ___1___2___3___4___5___6___7___8___9___10</p>	<p>You present myself in a professional manner ___1___2___3___4___5___6___7___8___9___10</p>
<p>I feel confident that in a pressured situation I will identify and recognize my emotions and effectively monitor my behavior. ___1___2___3___4___5___6___7___8___9___10</p>	<p>You consistently identify and recognize your emotions and effectively monitor your behavior. ___1___2___3___4___5___6___7___8___9___10</p>
<p>I am familiar with site details such as ticketing, seating and safety protocols and know where to find needed information. ___1___2___3___4___5___6___7___8___9___10</p>	<p>You are familiar with site details such as ticketing, seating and safety protocols and know where to find needed information. ___1___2___3___4___5___6___7___8___9___10</p>
<p>I am open and flexible with my thoughts and actions while working with a group. ___1___2___3___4___5___6___7___8___9___10</p>	<p>You are open and flexible with your thoughts and actions while working with a group. ___1___2___3___4___5___6___7___8___9___10</p>

Name_____

Peer Reviewer_____

Front of House Rubric Closing Activity

To help determine which role might be the best fit for you, please respond to the questions below.

Experience

I have not had experience working Front of House or in other Customer Relation positions

I have other experience working in Customer Relations as follows:

I have experience working Front of House as follows:

Ticket-taker
Concessions Sales
Usher
Head Usher/Supervisor

Social Awareness (Check all that apply)

I am good at picking up social cues from those around me.
I work best on my own or in small groups
I enjoy interacting with the public
I have strong organizational skills
I am good with numbers
I am not easily distracted
I have strong leadership skills
I am adaptable
I enjoy problem-solving
I am willing to ask for help and support when needed

Front of House Assignment

Based on the class conversation and my experience and strengths, as a Team member, I think I could successfully do the following roles (check all that apply)

Ticket-taker
Concessions Sales
Usher
Head Usher/Supervisor

Front of House Pair Share and Assessment

Instructions:

1. Using the left hand column, please rate yourself on a scale from 1 (difficult to accomplish) to 10 (I can do that!) for each of the Front of House expectations. imagine to be
2. Fold the paper in half down the middle to hide your answers, then trade with a trusted peer review partner.
3. Complete the same exercise as a review of your partner's strengths and challenges as they relate to Front of House work.
4. You may also want to ask your teacher to complete the "Peer Review" side for another source of input.

SELF REVIEW	PEER REVIEW
<p>I relate in a positive and professional way with the general public. ___1___2___3___4___5___6___7___8___9___10</p>	<p>You relate in a positive and professional way with the general public. ___1___2___3___4___5___6___7___8___9___10</p>
<p>I respectfully follow directions given by adult team leaders ___1___2___3___4___5___6___7___8___9___10</p>	<p>You respectfully follow directions given by adult team leaders ___1___2___3___4___5___6___7___8___9___10</p>
<p>I respectfully follow directions given by peer leaders ___1___2___3___4___5___6___7___8___9___10</p>	<p>You respectfully follow directions given by peer leaders ___1___2___3___4___5___6___7___8___9___10</p>
<p>I am able to work well with other team members. ___1___2___3___4___5___6___7___8___9___10</p>	<p>You are able to work well with other team members. ___1___2___3___4___5___6___7___8___9___10</p>
<p>I work enthusiastically to keep the team energy moving forward. ___1___2___3___4___5___6___7___8___9___10</p>	<p>You work enthusiastically to keep the team energy moving forward. ___1___2___3___4___5___6___7___8___9___10</p>
<p>I understand the chain of command for Front of House and will ask for help when appropriate. ___1___2___3___4___5___6___7___8___9___10</p>	<p>You understand the chain of command for Front of House and will ask for help when appropriate. ___1___2___3___4___5___6___7___8___9___10</p>
<p>I present myself in a professional manner ___1___2___3___4___5___6___7___8___9___10</p>	<p>You present myself in a professional manner ___1___2___3___4___5___6___7___8___9___10</p>
<p>I consistently identify and recognize my emotions and effectively monitor my behavior. ___1___2___3___4___5___6___7___8___9___10</p>	<p>You consistently identify and recognize your emotions and effectively monitor your behavior. ___1___2___3___4___5___6___7___8___9___10</p>
<p>I am able to pay close attention to details that impact my Front of House work ___1___2___3___4___5___6___7___8___9___10</p>	<p>You are able to pay close attention to details that impact Front of House work ___1___2___3___4___5___6___7___8___9___10</p>
<p>I am familiar with site details such as ticketing, seating and safety protocols and know where to find needed information. ___1___2___3___4___5___6___7___8___9___10</p>	<p>You are familiar with site details such as ticketing, seating and safety protocols and know where to find needed information. ___1___2___3___4___5___6___7___8___9___10</p>
<p>I am open and flexible with my thoughts and actions while working with a group. ___1___2___3___4___5___6___7___8___9___10</p>	<p>You are open and flexible with your thoughts and actions while working with a group. ___1___2___3___4___5___6___7___8___9___10</p>

Name_____

Peer Reviewer_____