

Waiter or Waitress

FF18 Hospitality, retail and guest services · ISCO-08 5131 · CBS 1113 Food and Beverage Service Staff and Bar Staff · seniority junior · Also known as: Waiter, Waitress, Server

Takes orders, serves food and drink and handles the bill, with attention to pace and the guest experience.

The waiter or waitress is the direct point of contact for guests at the table and largely determines their experience of the visit. Unlike a host or hostess, they handle the entire table service, from order to bill, rather than just the welcome. Selection in practice fails on candidates who come across as friendly in an interview but do not sustain the order and pace of service under peak pressure.

Key figures for this profile

25 skills · 10 competencies to measure · 3 knockout skills · centre of gravity: Professional knowledge domains 26%, Communication and influence 20%, Self-management, drive and resilience 17%

1 Competencies to measure

These are the behavioural and ability constructs in this profile. Each one shows which hrmforce questionnaire measures it.

Competencies to measure	Target level	hrmforce instrument	Assessment method	Behavioural anchor at target level
Client focus Competency (50-framework): Customer Focus Knockout	 N2	Big Fifty, Competency Check, 360 Feedback	360-degree feedback	Responds to client questions within the agreed term and refers on when the answer falls outside own task.

Competencies to measure	Target level	hrmforce instrument	Assessment method	Behavioural anchor at target level
Sustaining pace in repetitive work Competency (50-framework): Discipline	 N4	Big Fifty, Work sample test	Work sample test	Sustains the pace for a full shift, builds in own rhythm and short recovery moments and stays within the quality standard.
Managing workload pressure Competency (50-framework): Stress resilience	 N2	Big Fifty, Competency Check, Pulse Survey	Structured interview	Tells the supervisor that the work does not fit the available time and follows the choice that is made.
Professional demeanour and representation Competency (50-framework): Organizational Sensitivity	 N2	360 Feedback, Competency Check	On-the-job observation	Follows house rules on conduct, language and dress and asks the supervisor for guidance when in doubt.
Discipline and keeping commitments Competency (50-framework): Discipline	 N2	Big Fifty, 15PF, 360 Feedback	Personality questionnaire	Arrives at the agreed time with the agreed work and reports any delay to the supervisor.
Improvising within boundaries Competency (50-framework): Creativity	 N2	Competency Check, 360 Feedback	Situational Judgement Test	Reports an unexpected situation immediately and carries out the solution the supervisor provides.
Physical strength and endurance Competency (50-framework): Energy	 N2	Work sample test	Work sample test	Lifts and carries light loads over a short distance with the prescribed technique within own task.
Safety awareness Competency (50-framework): Discipline	 N2	Big Fifty, Competency Check	Situational Judgement Test	Follows the safety rules of the workplace and checks back when in doubt about an operation.

Competencies to measure	Target level	hrmforce instrument	Assessment method	Behavioural anchor at target level
Accuracy and attention to detail Competency (50-framework): Accuracy	 N1	Big Fifty, 360 Feedback	Personality questionnaire	Goes through the own work with a checklist and repairs errors found before the work is passed on.
Commercial capability Competency (50-framework): Commercial acumen	 N1	Big Fifty, Competency Check, 360 Feedback	Assessment centre	Reports to the account manager which customer wish could lead to an additional assignment.

2 Full skill profile

Every skill in this profile, sorted by weight. The behavioural anchor under each skill belongs to the target level.

T	Skill	Target level	Weight	Knockout	Assessment method	hrmforce instrument
G	Client focus Responds to client questions within the agreed term and refers on when the answer falls outside own task.	 N2	5	yes	360-degree feedback	Big Fifty, Competency Check, 360 Feedback
V	Hospitality service Welcomes guests in line with the house style, takes the order and refers questions about the offer to a colleague.	 N2	5	yes	On-the-job observation	Work sample test, Competency Check
K	Applying food safety and hygiene codes Records temperatures according to the hygiene code and reports deviations immediately to the person responsible.	 N2	5	yes	Knowledge test	Knowledge test (client-specific), Work sample test
V	Point of sale and payment handling Independently closes the till, explains cash differences and handles returns and discounts within own authority.	 N4	4	no	Work sample test	Work sample test, Knowledge test (client-specific)

T	Skill	Target level	Weight	Knockout	Assessment method	hrmforce instrument
G	Sustaining pace in repetitive work Sustains the pace for a full shift, builds in own rhythm and short recovery moments and stays within the quality standard.	 N4	4	no	Work sample test	Big Fifty, Work sample test
V	working in teams Carries out an own task within the team as agreed and reports to the team lead when something does not work.	 N2	4	no	360-degree feedback	Big Fifty, 360 Feedback, Competency Check
G	Managing workload pressure Tells the supervisor that the work does not fit the available time and follows the choice that is made.	 N2	4	no	Structured interview	Big Fifty, Competency Check, Pulse Survey
G	Professional demeanour and representation Follows house rules on conduct, language and dress and asks the supervisor for guidance when in doubt.	 N2	4	no	On-the-job observation	360 Feedback, Competency Check
V	Working with shift work and irregular hours Works according to the roster, arrives on time and hands over outstanding matters at the end of the shift.	 N2	4	no	Structured interview	Big Fifty, Structured interview
V	Clear oral expression Restates in own words what has been agreed and repeats the core of the instruction as a check.	 N2	3	no	Assessment centre	Communication Styles, Competency Check

T	Skill	Target level	Weight	Knockout	Assessment method	hrmforce instrument
V	Complaint handling Records a complaint fully in the system, offers an apology and hands the file over according to procedure.	 N2	3	no	Situational Judgement Test	Conflict Styles, Work sample test
V	Expectation management States the delivery time and conditions as recorded and reports any delay immediately to own manager.	 N2	3	no	Structured interview	Competency Check, Structured interview
V	de-escalating and setting limits Stays calm when facing an angry reaction, lets the other person speak and calls in a colleague or manager.	 N2	3	no	Situational Judgement Test	Conflict Styles, Big Fifty, Mental Resilience (4C)
G	Discipline and keeping commitments Arrives at the agreed time with the agreed work and reports any delay to the supervisor.	 N2	3	no	Personality questionnaire	Big Fifty, 15PF, 360 Feedback
G	Improvising within boundaries Reports an unexpected situation immediately and carries out the solution the supervisor provides.	 N2	3	no	Situational Judgement Test	Competency Check, 360 Feedback

T	Skill	Target level	Weight	Knockout	Assessment method	hrmforce instrument
V	Managing shop floor and presentation Replenishes shelves according to the planogram and keeps the floor clean and accessible for customers.	 N2	3	no	On-the-job observation	Work sample test, Competency Check
A	Physical strength and endurance Lifts and carries light loads over a short distance with the prescribed technique within own task.	 N2	3	no	Work sample test	Work sample test
G	Safety awareness Follows the safety rules of the workplace and checks back when in doubt about an operation.	 N2	3	no	Situational Judgement Test	Big Fifty, Competency Check
G	Accuracy and attention to detail Goes through the own work with a checklist and repairs errors found before the work is passed on.	 N1	3	no	Personality questionnaire	Big Fifty, 360 Feedback
G	Commercial capability Reports to the account manager which customer wish could lead to an additional assignment.	 N1	3	no	Assessment centre	Big Fifty, Competency Check, 360 Feedback
V	Controlling stock and shrinkage Records written off products according to procedure and reports notable losses to the supervisor.	 N1	3	no	Work sample test	Work sample test, Knowledge test (client-specific)

T	Skill	Target level	Weight	Knockout	Assessment method	hrmforce instrument
K	English language proficiency at professional level Exchanges short messages and follows simple English conversations at level A2 to B1 with help from a dictionary.	 N1	2	no	Knowledge test	Knowledge test (client-specific)
V	Guiding on the job Works alongside a new colleague, points out deviations in the operation and reports progress to the practice trainer.	 N1	2	no	On-the-job observation	360 Feedback, Competency Check
V	Working with digital devices and applications Opens and uses the prescribed applications for own tasks and asks for help whenever an unfamiliar message appears.	 N1	2	no	Work sample test	Knowledge test (client-specific), Work sample test
V	Delivering events and banqueting Sets up the room according to the running order and reports deviations in numbers or wishes to the host.	 N1	1	no	Work sample test	Work sample test, Competency Check

3 Levels per seniority

The same profile with the job family seniority adjustment applied. Target levels are clamped to 1 to 5.

Skill	junior	medior
Client focus	N2	N3
Hospitality service	N2	N3
Applying food safety and hygiene codes	N2	N3
Point of sale and payment handling	N4	N4
Sustaining pace in repetitive work	N4	N4
working in teams	N2	N3
Managing workload pressure	N2	N3
Professional demeanour and representation	N2	N3
Working with shift work and irregular hours	N2	N3
Clear oral expression	N2	N3
Complaint handling	N2	N3
Expectation management	N2	N3
de-escalating and setting limits	N2	N3
Discipline and keeping commitments	N2	N3
Improvising within boundaries	N2	N3
Managing shop floor and presentation	N2	N3
Physical strength and endurance	N2	N3
Safety awareness	N2	N3
Accuracy and attention to detail	N1	N2
Commercial capability	N1	N2
Controlling stock and shrinkage	N1	N2
English language proficiency at professional level	N1	N2
Guiding on the job	N1	N2

Skill	junior	medior
Working with digital devices and applications	N1	N2
Delivering events and banqueting	N1	N2

4 The proficiency scale

Level	Label	Autonomy	Complexity	Scope	Depth of knowledge
N1	Guided	works under supervision and follows instruction	routine, one variable at a time	own task	basic understanding of terminology
N2	Applying	works independently within set frameworks	familiar situations with limited variation	own role	working knowledge, applies standard approach
N3	Proficient	sets own approach and seeks input proactively	several variables, some ambiguity	own team or process	thorough knowledge, weighs alternatives
N4	Advanced	directs others and decides on the approach	complex, with conflicting interests	several teams or a department	in-depth knowledge, advises others
N5	Leading	sets the standard and the policy	strategic, under high uncertainty	organisation, value chain or profession	authority, advances the profession

5 Behavioural anchors per skill

Anchors sit at N1, N3 and N5. N2 and N4 are deliberately not anchored: raters interpolate between them, following the O*NET convention.

Skill	N1	N3	N5
Client focus Acting from the question and interest of the client, keeping agreements and visibly directing own work towards usefulness for that client.	Responds to client questions within the agreed term and refers on when the answer falls outside own task.	Uncovers the real need behind a client question, makes a fitting proposal and checks after delivery whether it works.	Translates client signals into changes in services and policy and holds the organisation accountable for the promised client experience.
Hospitality service Welcomes and serves guests, recognises their wishes, advises on the offer and handles complaints appropriately on the spot.	Welcomes guests in line with the house style, takes the order and refers questions about the offer to a colleague.	Independently responds to guest wishes and complaints, advises on the offer and restores the experience after a mistake.	Sets the organisation's hospitality standard, measures guest experience and trains staff on the agreed service norms.

Skill	N1	N3	N5
Applying food safety and hygiene codes Applies the rules on hygiene, temperature control and shelf life when preparing and storing food and records the checks.	Records temperatures according to the hygiene code and reports deviations immediately to the person responsible.	Independently assesses risks in preparation and storage, intervenes on deviations and removes the cause in the process.	Draws up the organisation's hygiene plan, accounts for it during inspection and trains staff in the working method.
Point of sale and payment handling Processes payments at the till or card terminal, handles receipts and returns correctly and closes the till at the end of the shift.	Processes cash and card payments according to instruction and refers till discrepancies to the supervisor.	Independently closes the till, explains cash differences and handles returns and discounts within own authority.	Sets the till and payment procedures for all branches, limits cash risk and tests compliance through spot checks.
Sustaining pace in repetitive work Maintains a constant pace and constant quality in recurring operations throughout the shift and spreads the effort over the available time.	Completes the assigned series of operations at the pace indicated and reports when a backlog arises.	Sustains the pace for a full shift, builds in own rhythm and short recovery moments and stays within the quality standard.	Sets attainable pace standards for the team and organises the work so that quality is retained at high output.
working in teams Contributing to a team result by dividing tasks, sharing information, keeping agreements and involving colleagues in the work at hand.	Carries out an own task within the team as agreed and reports to the team lead when something does not work.	Divides work with colleagues, shares information others need without being asked, and adjusts own planning to fit team goals.	Designs collaboration agreements for several teams in the organisation, evaluates them against results and revises them on the basis of data.
Managing workload pressure Keeps an overview when the volume of work rises, chooses what goes ahead and what does not, and puts the consequences to stakeholders.	Tells the supervisor that the work does not fit the available time and follows the choice that is made.	Cuts or shifts tasks independently when busy on the basis of importance, records this and discusses consequences with clients.	Redistributes work and capacity across departments in cases of structural overload and sets norms for sustainable workload distribution.

Skill	N1	N3	N5
Professional demeanour and representation Behaves in contact with clients, colleagues and external parties according to the organisation's conduct and dress standards, including outside the own workplace.	Follows house rules on conduct, language and dress and asks the supervisor for guidance when in doubt.	Represents the team with clients and external parties, chooses appropriate language and addresses colleagues on inappropriate conduct.	Represents the organisation in the public domain and sets the standards of conduct that apply when doing so.
Working with shift work and irregular hours Organises own work around changing shifts and irregular hours, keeps handover complete and coordinates planning and availability with the team.	Works according to the roster, arrives on time and hands over outstanding matters at the end of the shift.	Plans own work across changing shifts, allocates tasks to the part of day that suits them best and swaps carefully.	Designs roster models for the organisation, weighs continuity against workability and makes agreements with team and representation.
Clear oral expression Phrasing messages in spoken language so that the core point, the structure and the requested action are immediately clear to the listener.	Restates in own words what has been agreed and repeats the core of the instruction as a check.	Builds an unprepared spoken explanation into core point, background and next step, and adapts pace to the listener.	Sets the organisation wide standard for spoken clarity, explains complex strategic choices understandably and coaches others on their word choice.
Complaint handling Receiving a complaint, tracing its cause and reaching a solution that the client accepts and that prevents the error from recurring.	Records a complaint fully in the system, offers an apology and hands the file over according to procedure.	Calms an angry client, separates emotion from facts and offers a solution with a deadline within own mandate.	Handles escalated cases with legal or publicity risk and uses complaint analysis to change processes structurally.
Expectation management Making clear in advance what the client will and will not get and when, and reporting in time as soon as that promise becomes unrealistic.	States the delivery time and conditions as recorded and reports any delay immediately to own manager.	Records at the start what falls outside the assignment and discusses deviations with the client before they become visible.	Sets service level agreements for the organisation, weighs feasibility against commercial interest and accounts for deviations to major clients.

Skill	N1	N3	N5
de-escalating and setting limits Reducing rising tension or unwanted behaviour by staying calm, stating the limit clearly and steering or ending the conversation.	Stays calm when facing an angry reaction, lets the other person speak and calls in a colleague or manager.	States which limit is being crossed when behaviour is unwanted, what the consequence is, and ends the conversation when needed.	Establishes organisation-wide agreements on transgressive behaviour, arranges support and follow-up, and holds managers to that line.
Discipline and keeping commitments Sticks to agreements, procedures and commitments even without supervision, and reports in good time when a commitment turns out to be unachievable.	Arrives at the agreed time with the agreed work and reports any delay to the supervisor.	Commits only to what is feasible, tracks own commitments and informs those involved as soon as a deadline comes under pressure.	Anchors the standard for reliable follow through in working agreements and addresses anyone at any level who lets that standard slip.
Improvising within boundaries Devises a workable solution on the spot in an unexpected situation, staying within applicable rules, safety requirements and agreements.	Reports an unexpected situation immediately and carries out the solution the supervisor provides.	Chooses an interim solution within the rules when something fails or an unexpected request arrives, and records afterwards what deviated.	Determines how much room for improvisation the organisation allows and records which boundaries are never crossed.
Managing shop floor and presentation Arranges the shop floor according to presentation guidelines, keeps shelves filled and tidy and adapts the display to promotions and season.	Replenishes shelves according to the planogram and keeps the floor clean and accessible for customers.	Independently adapts the display to promotions and sales figures and divides the floor work across the shift.	Sets the presentation formula for the stores, tests execution per branch and improves it on the basis of sales data.
Physical strength and endurance Provides the strength and endurance the work requires to lift, carry and move loads over the course of a working day.	Lifts and carries light loads over a short distance with the prescribed technique within own task.	Moves heavy loads independently with aids, spreads the effort across the shift and maintains the agreed pace.	Determines for the entire process how heavy work is distributed and which aids are standard, and substantiates that choice.

Skill	N1	N3	N5
Safety awareness Continuously watches for unsafe situations and actions at work, addresses others about them and chooses the safe working method even under time pressure.	Follows the safety rules of the workplace and checks back when in doubt about an operation.	Recognises unsafe situations in own process, intervenes and addresses colleagues without bringing the work to a halt.	Sets the safety standard for the organisation, makes safety discussable at every level and steers behaviour and culture.
Accuracy and attention to detail Works carefully, checks own work for errors and keeps to agreements about completeness and correctness of data.	Goes through the own work with a checklist and repairs errors found before the work is passed on.	Builds check moments into the own process, keeps track of errors and prevents repetition by adjusting the method.	Sets the standards for completeness and correctness, has samples checked and addresses teams on structural sloppiness.
Commercial capability Recognises opportunities for revenue and margin in contacts with customers and the market, and acts on them with offers and agreements.	Reports to the account manager which customer wish could lead to an additional assignment.	Discusses additional services with existing customers on own initiative and records the revenue opportunity in the customer file.	Sets the commercial course for the organisation, chooses which markets are served and accounts for those choices to the board.
Controlling stock and shrinkage Orders and records stock in a shop or kitchen, limits spoilage and breakage and explains differences between expected and actual stock.	Records written off products according to procedure and reports notable losses to the supervisor.	Independently analyses shrinkage figures per product group, adjusts order quantities and addresses colleagues on waste.	Sets shrinkage norms and ordering guidelines for all branches and steers towards a measurable reduction of waste.
English language proficiency at professional level Using English in speech and writing in work situations at a level of the Common European Framework of Reference required by the role.	Exchanges short messages and follows simple English conversations at level A2 to B1 with help from a dictionary.	Leads English meetings with clients, writes clear messages and reports at level B2 and checks back when in doubt.	Negotiates and publishes in English at level C1 to C2 and checks translations by others for tone and meaning.

Skill	N1	N3	N5
Guiding on the job Guides a colleague or trainee during real work, gives targeted feedback on what was observed and builds up independence step by step.	Works alongside a new colleague, points out deviations in the operation and reports progress to the practice trainer.	Agrees with the person guided which tasks go solo, observes purposefully and discusses two concrete learning points afterwards.	Sets up workplace guidance for the organisation, trains the guides and keeps the quality of their coaching in view.
Working with digital devices and applications Uses computers, mobile devices and standard applications to carry out work tasks, adjusts settings and resolves simple usage problems without help.	Opens and uses the prescribed applications for own tasks and asks for help whenever an unfamiliar message appears.	Selects the appropriate device and application for each task and fixes common disruptions without support from others.	Defines organisation wide which digital workplace facilities are used and guides their introduction across all teams.
Delivering events and banqueting Prepares room, menu and staffing for a group event, leads the delivery and adjusts the running order during the day.	Sets up the room according to the running order and reports deviations in numbers or wishes to the host.	Independently delivers an event according to the running order, divides the tasks and resolves programme changes on the spot.	Develops the banqueting concept and running order standards and steers margin and guest experience at large events.

6 Assessment methods and validity

The validities are the corrected meta-analytic estimates from Sackett, Zhang, Berry and Lievens (2022) in the Journal of Applied Psychology, which replace the older Schmidt and Hunter (1998) figures. The spread matters as much as the mean: with a high SD, validity varies strongly by context.

Assessment method	rho	SD	What it is
360-degree feedback	-	-	Multiple raters around the person rate behaviour against behavioural anchors.
On-the-job observation	-	-	Structured workplace observation with a form based on behavioural anchors.
Knowledge test	0.40	0.13	Test of declarative job knowledge, usually assembled per client.
Work sample test	0.33	0.09	The candidate performs a representative work sample under standardised conditions.
Structured interview	0.42	0.19	Behaviour-based interview with fixed questions and a rating scale per question.
Assessment centre	0.29	0.09	Multiple exercises, multiple assessors, dimension-wise scoring.
Situational Judgement Test	0.12	0.11	Scenario with response options, scored on knowledge or behavioural tendency.
Personality questionnaire	0.40	0.15	Self-report of behavioural preferences. At hrnforce the Big Fifty and the 15PF.

7 Assessment instruments for this job

hrnforce instrument	Skills	What it measures
Competency Check	13	Behavioral-Level Competency Assessment
Big Fifty	10	Personality questionnaire, 150 items, 25 factors
Work sample test	10	Representative work sample under standardized conditions
360 Feedback	8	Multiple assessments based on behavioral anchors
Knowledge test (client-specific)	5	Professional knowledge test, customized for each client
Structured interview	2	Behavioral interview with a fixed structure

hrmforce instrument	Skills	What it measures
Conflict Styles	2	Preferred style in conflict situations
Pulse Survey	1	Periodic measurement at the team and organizational levels
Communication Styles	1	Preferred communication style
Mental Resilience (4C)	1	Mental Resilience According to the 4C Model
15PF	1	Personality Profile, a shorter alternative to the Big Fifty

8 How to use this profile

1. Agree the profile with the hiring manager before the first candidate is measured. Weights shifted afterwards make the outcome indefensible.
2. Choose the assessment method per skill from the Assessment method column. Combine at most three methods per candidate.
3. Calibrate the assessors in a two-hour session using the anchors in chapter 5. Anchors without rater training deliver little.
4. Fill in the match calculator and discuss the gaps in the development conversation. Type A and type G are selection criteria, not one-quarter development goals.

Source: hrmforce Skills Framework 2.0, version 2.0.0, built 2026-09-08. Crosswalks to ESCO v1.2.1, O*NET 31.0, Lightcast Open Skills, SFIA 9, DigComp 3.0, EntreComp, LifeComp, GreenComp, Allit, WEF Future of Jobs 2025, ISCO-08 and the Dutch CBS occupational classification BRC 2014 edition 2025. This profile is a starting point, not a standard: align it with your own organisation before selecting on it.