



THE SERVICE PLAYBOOK



Chapter 7: Training

Abstract

This seventh chapter of The Service Playbook positions Training as the final building block in the Service planning cycle, following Scope, Headcount, Equipment, the Operations Plan, and Operational Documentation. Where previous chapters establish what Services are delivered, by whom, with what resources, and under what plans, Training converts those elements into human capability on event day. The chapter presents a structured progression from job descriptions to competency assessment, training objectives, and programme delivery, ensuring that training addresses confirmed gaps rather than compensating for shortcomings elsewhere. Scenario-based, behaviour-driven methods are highlighted as the most effective approach for developing decision-making, communication, and coordination under operational conditions. In addition to introducing supporting templates, Chapter 7 sets the foundation for Chapter 8, which will address Event Day Preparation.

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Chapters 1 to 6 set out how to build Service Operations in a deliberate sequence, starting with **Scope** and culminating in the **Operations Documents** that translate plans into repeatable procedures and traceable evidence.

Chapter 7 converts the Service delivery model into human capability on event day.

Training is where roles and responsibilities are translated into consistent actions, where critical points are rehearsed, and where Service Team Members learn how to apply procedures and tools under real operating conditions.

Context plays a significant role in determining the depth and breadth of the training approach: one-off events versus month-long tournaments; volunteer-heavy versus professional workforces; and the budget and time available.

What remains stable, however, is the role of training in ensuring that Team Member performance is driven by standards, rather than being dependent on individual experience or improvisation.

From Knowledge to Operational Capability

Ideally, training should be treated as a planned and continuous effort to develop the job-specific competencies required to deliver Service operations safely, consistently, and at scale.

Its purpose is to ensure that Team Members understand what is expected of them, know how to perform their role, and can apply procedures and tools under real-world operating pressure. Effective training bridges the gap between documented plans and live decision-making.

When designed and delivered consistently, training improves Team Member retention, reduces performance variability, and increases operational resilience.

Training is the point at which planning intent becomes consistent behaviour, ensuring that scope, procedures, and tools are applied reliably under event-day pressure.



Identifying Needs & Defining Objectives

Effective training design starts with well-defined job descriptions that clearly set out the purpose of each role, the tasks it performs, and the competencies required to perform them safely and consistently.

GCMA Members can download the Service Roles Job Description Template [HERE](#).

From these definitions, expected actions from Service Team Members can be identified and assessed in live operations, turning performance measurement into a diagnostic tool through which underperformance indicates where targeted training may be required.

It is worth highlighting that training will not compensate for performance issues that are caused by inadequate staffing levels, poor equipment, or unclear procedures.

Once knowledge or skills gaps have been confirmed, they can be prioritised and translated into training objectives that clearly define what will improve. These objectives provide a reference point for content design, instructional methods, and assessment. They form the backbone of a structured training programme that is measurable, repeatable, and aligned with operational outcomes.

Content Design: Learning by Doing

Effective Service training emphasises scenario-driven learning, with activities being built around real tasks, real decisions, and real consequences that Team Members will encounter in live operations.

While slide-based instruction and information recall have their place, Service Team Members benefit more from scenarios that expose them to realistic pressures: time constraints, competing priorities, and crowd dynamics that demand active decision-making.

Well-designed scenarios deliberately include plausible but imperfect options, reflecting the shortcuts and assumptions commonly made in practice, and present the consequences of each choice transparently.



By using dialogue and realistic language, scenarios bring situations to life and allow Service Team Members to recognise both effective and ineffective behaviours. This is particularly valid when applied to crowd interactions, conflict de-escalation, and team coordination.

Finally, to cater for different learning styles, training should blend scenario-based learning with complementary methods such as role-play, group discussions, and videos or demonstrations.

This blended approach allows Team Members to observe expected behaviours in action, practise applying them, and reflect on how they produce more consistent service delivery.

GCMA Members can download a Service Scenario Repository and Pocket Guide Template, designed to support scenario-based training and on-the-ground decision-making, [HERE](#).

If you aren't a member yet, [join](#) GCMA to gain access to this and other practitioner-built resources.

Delivery & Formats

Because interaction, movement, and group dynamics are central to Service roles, face-to-face training remains critical.

During in-person training sessions, room layout and seating configuration materially influence engagement. Flexible or roundtable arrangements support discussion, role-play, and rapid reconfiguration during exercises. In practice, trainers must be prepared to adapt layouts mid-session to suit the learning activity, group size, and energy in the room.

For some events, it could be best to consider training as a journey rather than a single intervention:

- e-learning
- Role-Specific Training
- Venue-Specific Training

Its exact depth will vary depending on event scale, workforce profile, and available time.

E-learning formats play a complementary role and are particularly effective for relatively lower-cost, scalable onboarding. Delivered in bite-sized modules, they allow Team Members to absorb core information at their own pace ahead of face-to-face sessions.



Role-Specific Training strengthens operational resilience by ensuring Team Members understand not only their own responsibilities but how roles interact across the wider Service operation.

Team Leaders typically require additional, dedicated training focused on leadership behaviours, staff welfare, escalation thresholds, and the use of tools such as two-way radios.

Venue-Specific Training anchors all prior learning to the physical reality of the site. It familiarises Team Members with decision points, equipment use, routes, and key locations, and allows them to rehearse event time sequences in the order they will occur.

By simulating real deployment conditions, this training reduces learning curves, builds confidence, and improves morale.

Conclusion

Training translates scope, structure, and procedures into human capability on event day.

Well-designed and well-delivered training is the mechanism through which organisational intent becomes consistent behaviour, enabling Service teams to apply plans, use equipment, and communicate effectively under operational pressure.

When thought of as a system, training underpins operational resilience, preserves organisational knowledge, and reduces reliance on individual experience or improvisation.

The next Chapter of the Service Playbook series will focus on Event Day preparations, addressing how Service operations can be effectively prepared in the final lead-up to delivery.

Until then, we encourage you to assess your event's current training approach against the principles outlined in this chapter, identifying the strong points and where reinforcement may be required.

The physical training environment directly shapes engagement, interaction, and the quality of learning in Service roles.



References

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