



BMIH6002

Hotel Placement – Managing Food and Beverage Operations

Student Name: Cristina Hondor

Student ID: 2246595

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Introduction

During my placement at Novotel Leicester Hotel, which is located in the city center, I had the opportunity to work immensely in different operational departments, including Reception, Housekeeping Department and away from that my main focus was in the Food and Beverage (F&B) operations which allowed me to experience service, customer interaction, sustainability in today's hospitality industry, and learn more in-depth (Pandey, 2023).

Novotel Leicester is a four-star hotel located in the heart of Leicester, offering a modern gastronomic experience in its in-house restaurant and bar. The restaurant serves breakfast, lunch, and la carte dinner, which is made up of international and local cuisine aligned with Accor's sustainability values.

Under the guidance of my team leaders, Greg and Ross, I was able to observe and contribute to the day-to-day Food and Beverage practical operations and build up my practical skillset, whilst applying and connecting my learning experiences to theories from the Food and Beverage Operations module, Sustainability in the Hospitality Industry and Personal Resourcing and Development.

Main Body

Applying Theory to Practice: Sustainability in the F&B Department

Sustainability in the hospitality sector considers environmental, social, and economic sustainability (Legrand, Chen, and Laeis, 2022), and identifies types of considerations around waste reduction, sustainable sourcing and carbon footprint reduction. Based on my observations from my placement, I noticed the Novotel Leicester used sustainable approaches, which included waste management, reducing the consumption of plastic, and using local produce where possible.

With Greg as one of the F&B leads, the dept was implementing portion control and encouraging ordering off digital menus to manage paper waste. These amounts of action were aligned with the Triple Bottom Line (People, Planet, Profit) approach towards use with customers, while considering the business objective with an environmental focus.

The hotel under Accor could operationalise some of the Planet 21 Programme strategies regarding guest education (i.e. green signage), OR reward guests and offer recognition for engaging in eco-friendly practices and address a gap theory and practice gap.

Teamwork and Leadership in F&B Operations

Noticing another team leader named Ross made me realize there are differences in team-leading styles. In our scenario, team leader Ross was actually a democratic team leader who was eager to communicate with us to influence our service. In fact, there are three types of democratic team leaders that are classified according to Belbin's Team Role Theory. According to Belbin's Team Role Theory, teams are effective to respond to requests regarding undertaking 'roles' performed by members (Sethole, 2020).

In a theoretical situation, there was a connection between this task and Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory since both 'motivating methods' related to 'appreciation outlined' by Greg and Ross, and 'positive feedback' initiated by 'guests,' increased 'job satisfaction' since 'hygiene' methods like 'more working hours' related to 'durability' or 'tenacity' in the project (Nankin, 2022). In so far as I am concerned, good communication' and 'time management' are what really matter. Apart from skill development in Human Resources, another opportunity to learn was provided to dive into other departments, specifically in Food and Beverages (F&B). In this team specifically, I was fortunate to get to know great people who made me belong to them instantly. The amiable environment was really helpful to me in battling initial. In this particular team specifically, I was fortunate to get to know great people who made me belong to them instantly. The amiable environment was really helpful to me in battling initial over there, first was Ross. He was a manager in our team. Then there was Greg. He was a leader in our team. One day, when we started serving our breakfast to our guests, Ross asked me to stay back to receive those who arrived. At first, there was a little apprehension to stay back alone. But to note was how well-versed in qualities identified with a great leader emotional intelligence Ross was. It was impressive. He was supportive in terms of helping to boost confidence to communicate with our guests. He motivated me to stretch myself beyond what made me comfortable. Then came Greg. As far as training skills pertaining to serving our guests like carrying multiple glasses simultaneously using a tray his was really effective. At first, these small pieces seemed really insignificant. But these small pieces are actually what really make a huge difference to those who are actually receiving those services. With him there to train me, recognizing its significance to these basic services actually was not something to ignore. In a general sense itself, to actually immerse myself into the team pertaining to the Food & Beverage division not only improved my skill sets but actually helped to shape me both professionally and personally. As far as recognizing its

specific significance to its related industry, the skills to directly apply to workings within an industry related to hospitality actually made a huge difference.

Service Quality and Customer Experience

The Food and Beverage Operations module introduced concepts such as the SERVQUAL model (Parasuraman et al., 1988), which is used to gauge service quality according to the constructions of reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles. I observed that Novotel Leicester carefully maintained its standards with respect to cleanliness, presentation and care throughout my time in placement.

I liked working with Greg, who would always do a great job of ensuring that the pre-dinner service was being briefed and assigned roles and that Ross was always making sure he was circulating and keeping an eye on the guests' experiences tracking requests to ensure that orders were taken and the guests' needs were met promptly. There were times of peaks when the guests' expectations were set on anticipated service, which then would inevitably be times when there was a lapse between actions for turning the tables (even if for a split second), leaving delayed service in comparison to expectation.

It was extremely valuable to be engaged and connect with the guest directly - particularly breakfast and dinner service in terms of experiencing the moment of truth experience (Goernemann and Spiekermann, 2020), and together every little aspect of the guest experience contributes to overall experience satisfaction.

Comparing Academic Theory with Real-World Practice

Bringing back to our theory, we used with the International Meetings Management module, I also learned that the F&B department hosted events and small corporate meetings in meeting spaces throughout the hotel. Sustainability and service efficiencies seem to be a major focus of these events, with the intention to reduce waste and disposables at an event to a minimum, while providing an asset where the experience and coordination of the event is managed using a digital mobile platform.

However, there are theoretical models like Kotler's Service Marketing Mix (7Ps) that suggest there could be a higher level of marketing and service-related involvement (Tun, 2025). For example, we have local menu offerings, which I could market in so many different ways

using social media or on-site marketing tools, while also putting forth an enhanced brand image for the hotel. Especially if the guest departs with value in their sustainable or eco experience.

Leaving these experiences has shifted my transitions to be more in line with my perception of F&B, from when I started in Level 4. I had thought it was more operational; now I think of F&B as more of a strategy department that integrates service and sustainable service efficiencies, marketing, and customers.

Conclusion

Working at the Novotel Leicester Hotel presented me with a fantastic opportunity to explore the relationship between academic theory and real-world hospitality operations. I had the opportunity to make use of my studies on campus as I was working directly with Greg and Ross, and saw fantastic examples of teamwork, leadership and sustainability in action in the F&B department, as I began to observe compartmentalised refurbishments that took into consideration F&B operations. Theoretical concepts that I had started to engage with during my academic studies, such as the Triple Bottom Line, SERVQUAL and Herzberg's Two Factor motivation theory, etc., allowed me to start thinking about service quality, staff motivation and sustainability from a more strategic perspective, which relates to the operations of hospitality today. The Novotel Leicester facility has created a firm baseline of sustainability and service level standards, yet a way to develop more is through management of, guest awareness of, eco-initiatives, as overall their operations, every day peak service exposure is not efficient in every which way.

References

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Appendix

Learning Objective	Description
1. Develop practical knowledge of F&B operations	Gain hands-on experience in food service, customer care, and daily operations within the restaurant and bar.
2. Apply sustainability principles in hospitality	Observe and evaluate how sustainability strategies are implemented in the F&B department and identify areas for improvement.
3. Enhance teamwork and leadership skills	Collaborate effectively with team leaders Greg and Ross, and develop communication and problem-solving skills in a professional environment.