

Academic Discipline of Hospitality & Tourism Management

BA International Hotel Management

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BMIH5003

Foreign Languages and Cultural Awareness

LEVEL 5

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Component 1 - Professional reflection

Title: Managing Intercultural Misunderstandings at a Hotel Restaurant

Scenario Outline

A cultural misunderstanding occurred during dinner service between a Japanese-speaking customer and an English-speaking F&B staff, as I saw during my Level 4 placement at a hotel restaurant. The client graciously denied more food by stating, "It's okay," which is a common way to express "no, thank you" in Japanese culture. The staff, however, took the guest's request for more food at its value because he or she was speaking literally English. The result was an awkward circumstance where the visitor got more food than they wanted.

Personal Reflection

Disparities in language and cultural mores are common causes of cultural miscommunication in the hospitality industry. Disagreement arose in this case because people took different meanings to the words "It's okay." When there are misconceptions, both the customer's satisfaction and the service quality as a whole may take a hit.

I need to work on a few things if I want to avoid future misunderstandings. Improving my language abilities is my first and foremost priority. If you want to be able to communicate with your visitors more effectively, it helps to know a few basic words in a variety of languages. Second, cultural awareness is critically important. To do this, one must be sensitive to cultural variations, watch for nonverbal clues, and keep communication context in mind.

Changes to one's behaviour are also required. To better serve my guests, I need to work on my active listening skills and pay close attention to what they say before responding. Furthermore, by working on my patience and maintaining an open mind, I will be better able to calmly and productively deal with misconceptions.

Cultural competency is a hot topic in the hospitality sector, according to academic sources. Acknowledging and adapting to cultural variations can greatly enhance guest satisfaction (Mattila, 2000). Additionally, in order to avoid misconceptions, Ting-Toomey and Chung (2012) stress the need for good intercultural communication. Baum (2006) discusses strategies

for managing cultural diversity, which include encouraging personnel to acquire multiple languages and providing ongoing cultural training. To further aid in comprehending and avoiding misconceptions, Hofstede (2011) offers insights into how cultural aspects affect communication and behaviour.

If I work on these abilities and modify my behaviour, I will be able to better handle cultural relationships and provide a better overall experience for guests in the future.

References

MATTILA, A. S. (2000). The role of narratives in the hospitality industry: A review. *Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly*, 41(3), 68-76.

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Component 2 - Training plan

Title: Enhancing Cultural Competence in Hotel F&B Services

Objective: Ensure that all food and beverage workers are well-versed on how to handle cultural misunderstandings and how to improve client satisfaction.

Training Plan Outline

1. Introduction and Establishing Goals

By focusing on typical triggers for cultural miscommunication, the training programme hopes to raise the level of cultural competency among food and beverage employees. Effective intercultural relationships may be achieved by the development of better communication skills, heightened cultural awareness, and the use of appropriate techniques.

2. Training Modules

Module 1: Recognising Cultural Differences

Content: Cultural characteristics and their impact on behaviour and communication in the hotel industry (Hofstede, 2011).

Activities: Workshops where participants actively engage in discussing real-life examples of cultural misconceptions.

Results: Workers will have a better grasp of cultural variety and how it affects their relationships with guests.

Module 2: Language abilities Enhancement

Content: Essential words and typical misconceptions in the languages that hotel visitors meet most often will be covered in this basic language training.

Activities: Exercises including role-playing to demonstrate proficiency in the target language in authentic contexts.

Result: Enhanced capacity to converse fluently with visitors hailing from a wide range of language origins.

Module 3: Strategies for Efficient Communication

Content: Techniques for clarifying ideas, non-verbal communication, and active listening are included in the content (Ting-Toomey & Chung, 2012).

Procedures: These methods may be practiced via simulation exercises and group feedback sessions.

Result: Improved communication abilities that lessen the possibility of miscommunication.

Module 4: Learning to Be Culturally Sensitive

Content: Cultural sensitivity and awareness training (Mattila, 2000), emphasising the recognition of unconscious biases and the appreciating of cultural differences.

Purpose: Engage in group conversations and self-reflection activities centred upon cultural diversity.

Result: Employees' capacity for empathy and cultural awareness has been enhanced.

3. Implementation Plan

The training will run for a month and consist of two-hour sessions per week. The evaluation will quantify the progress in cultural competency using pre- and post-training evaluations.

4. Continuous Improvement

Ongoing assistance in the form of cultural competency materials and periodic refresher training. In order to make the training programme better over time, we will leverage the feedback that visitors and employees provide.

References

- HOFSTEDE, G. (2011). Dimensionalizing cultures: The Hofstede model in context. Online Readings in Psychology and Culture, 2(1).
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Component 3 - Student self-reflection

Title: Evolving Hospitality Cultural Awareness Understanding

Introduction

I will critically evaluate my knowledge of cultural awareness's significance in the hospitality sector using Gibbs' Reflective Cycle (1988) as a framework for self-reflection. The six steps that make up this approach are as follows: introduction, description, emotions, assessment, analysis, conclusion, and plan of action.

Description

During my Level 4 placement at a hotel, I witnessed several incidents of cultural misunderstandings between staff and visitors. An incident between a Japanese visitor and a F&B staff member who spoke English stood out. When given extra food, the customer said, "It's okay," which is a common way to say "no, thank you" in Japanese, but the server took it literally and gave the customer more than they asked for.

Feelings

At first, cultural awareness seemed like a tertiary competency to me, after operational and technical competences. I felt compelled to learn more about cultural differences after seeing these errors. Both the happiness of guests and the hotel's reputation are important to me; therefore, I was worried about these kinds of problems.

Evaluation

After giving it more thought, I concluded that my first impressions were incorrect. A bad eating experience for the customer resulted from a misunderstanding between the customer and the staff. In order to avoid these kinds of problems and make sure guests had a good time, it became clear that cultural knowledge is key.

Analysis

Thanks to this encounter, I realized that being culturally aware is more than just knowing a language. Acquiring knowledge about cultural practices, customs, and expectations is part of it. Academic publications emphasise this aspect. Hofstede (2011) asserts that cultural aspects

have a substantial impact on how people communicate and act. In order to increase visitor satisfaction, it is important to recognise cultural variations (Mattila, 2000). Effective intercultural communication is crucial for avoiding misconceptions, according to Ting-Toomey and Chung (2012). In addition, the hotel sector is no exception to the rule that cultural competency is crucial to effective international business operations (Beamer and Varner 2008).

Conclusion

Over time, my perspective on cultural awareness has grown substantially. It's a must-have competency for any hospitality professional looking to wow their customers, according to what I've learned. This encounter highlighted the significance of constantly improving one's cultural competency.

Action Plan

My goal going forward is to make it a priority to learn about other cultures. This includes learning new languages, interacting with people from other cultural backgrounds, and participating in cultural training programs. The empathy and flexibility skills I have developed in my work life will be an extension of what I have learned in the classroom.

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Component 4 – Training presentation



***TITLE: THE IMPORTANCE OF
MULTILINGUALISM AND
LANGUAGE AWARENESS IN
HOTELS***

~ PREMIER INN ~

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Prifysgol Cymru
Y Drindod Dewi Sant
University of Wales
Trinity Saint David


Premier Inn

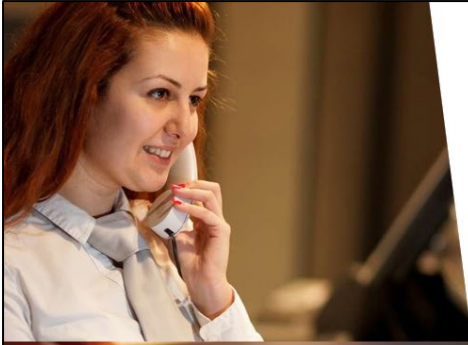


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INTRODUCTION

Objective: To emphasise the advantages of being fluent in many languages and the significance of having language awareness abilities for Premier Inn employees.

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BENEFITS OF MULTILINGUALISM



Communication Enhancement: Enables Superior Interactions and Service with Guests. Emphasises the importance of learning about and appreciating other cultures (Crystal, 2003).

An advantage over competitors: it draws in a wider range of customers, especially those from other countries (Grin, 2004).

Development of Employees: Promotes both individual and team development (Edwards, 2012).

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THE SIGNIFICANCE OF LANGUAGE AWARENESS

- **Avoids misunderstandings:** lessens the possibility of misunderstandings (Ting-Toomey & Chung, 2012).
- **Makes Guests More satisfied:** Makes guests have a better time overall (Mattila, 2000).
- **Professionalism:** Improves the hotel's reputation (Baum, 2006).



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FOCUS ON GERMAN LANGUAGE

In what location is it spoken?

- The region includes Switzerland, Austria, Germany, and portions of Luxembourg and Belgium.

Level of difficulty:

- The language is mildly challenging; it shares certain grammatical features with English but has its own distinct phonetics and lexicon (Goethe-Institute, 2020).

Polite/Impolite in Business Context:

- Being polite entails being on time, making direct eye contact, and using formal titles (Herr/Frau).
- Being impolite, interrupting other people, or using someone's first name without their consent are all examples of rude behaviour.



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EXAMPLES FROM THE HOTEL INDUSTRY

Check-In Process:

Polite German welcomes ("Guten Tag, Herr/Frau [Last Name]"). A good day, Herr Schmidt. Come on into Premier Inn.

Making yourself available in German makes your establishment more inviting to clients who speak that language.

Dining Services:

Being mindful of traditional German table manners, such as waiting to eat until one's turn comes ("Guten Appetit"). An example: "Wir wünschen Ihnen einen guten Appetit."

Guest Requests:

Guests will be more satisfied if you respond to their demands in German ("Könnten Sie mir bitte..."). For instance: "Könnten Sie mir bitte ein zusätzliches Kissen bringen?"

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CONCLUSION

A brief overview:

- Superior customer service requires fluency in more than one language and an understanding of other languages.
- Being able to communicate fluently in German may greatly enhance your encounters with people who speak that language.

Take initiative immediately:

- It is strongly recommended that employees participate in language training programmes.
- Promote an atmosphere that values cultural sensitivity and lifelong learning.



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THANK YOU! 