

HOTEL HANDBOOK

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Hotel Handbook

The hospitality business environment is characterised by several dynamic elements that determine how things operate. Cultural intelligence and sensitivity are among the crucial aspects of this industry that determine its success. Given that hotels, especially international ones deal with a variety of clients from different cultural backgrounds, it is important to ensure cultural awareness from both the clients' and staff perspective (Makambe and Pellissier, 2014). Regardless of the hotel's location, the establishment must always incorporate the varying dynamics of culture in its dealings and this includes staff hiring. To that end, cultural awareness refers to the ability to sense and recognise the differences and similarities in different cultures and use that awareness to create an inclusive environment for both clients and staff.

Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions Theory

The Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory is an important model for understanding cultural sensitivity and awareness in the hotel industry. This model was developed by Geert Hofstede and is useful for understanding the cultural differences across borders. Businesses in the hospitality industry can apply this framework to discern the different ways in which similar businesses in the same industry operate across different cultures (Morden, 2017). The Hofstede's model of cultural dimension consists of six different categories namely: power distance index, collectivism vs. individualism, uncertainty avoidance index, femininity vs. masculinity, short-term vs. long-term orientation, and restraint vs. indulgence.

Power Distance Index

The power distance index is the difference in power between employees and their leaders. A high-power distance implies unequal power distribution that is acceptable by society. A low employee power distance, on the other hand, implies a system where power is shared and

dispersed among members. in countries where the power distance is low, there is a shared sense of power between employees and their leaders (Morden, 2017). The only aspects differentiating them are chances and opportunities among others. On the other hand, countries with high power distance are characterised by huge differences in remuneration, centralised organisations, and strong power hierarchies. The power distance in the United States of America is considered to be low. As such, guests from this country understand and accept the inequalities in power. They also understand that those in power and authority should be entitled to certain benefits.

Individualism

The individualism aspect of the Hofstede's model refers to the extent to which a society is focused on the relationships of the individuals in the group. The US has high individualism scores indicating their value for the achievements of individuals (Makambe and Pellissier, 2014). As such, there is great emphasis placed on recognising and rewarding achievements and this is evident in the tipping culture from this country. High individualism is associated with employees acting in their own interest, high commitment to the organisation, and improved employee-employer relationships.

Uncertainty Avoidance

The uncertainty avoidance element describes the degree of comfortability that members of a society are with taking risks or being in uncertain or unpredictable situations. High uncertainty avoidance societies such as the US tend to avoid unpredictable and uncertain circumstances (Makambe and Pellissier, 2014). As such, most of their people prefer to work in environments that guarantee stability and certainty throughout. This is achieved by having clear rules and instructions that employees must follow. This also applies to guests visiting from the

US. They would like to stay in a hotel environment with less uncertainties and more clear and predictable scenarios that are less ambiguous.

Masculinity

The masculinity dimension refers to the degree to which a society emphasizes the masculine roles and qualities of its members. High masculinity societies are characterised by high emphasis on the role of work, clear gender roles, and prioritising work over other aspects such as leisure or family. Earnings and achievements are also highly emphasised in these societies; thus, employees tend to work longer hours and hardly take vacations. The US being a high masculinity society is likely to have guests who prioritise work over personal time. Such guests might want to be in an environment that is conducive for work since they believe that they work in order to live.

Long-Term Orientation

The long-term orientation dimension focuses on the benefits that are likely to arise in the future and those that exist currently. High long-term orientation societies place high regard on family as the basis of society (Makambe and Pellissier, 2014). As such, parents and men are considered to have more authority over women and younger individuals without children.

The differences in cultural values and behaviours in the US and the UK are quite apparent. Understanding this critical aspect is key to proper management of clients in the hospitality industry. For instance, staff should understand that the tipping culture is quite popular in the United States, therefore, clients who insist on tipping should be allowed to do so. Likewise, taking the clients' credit card when making payments is a norm in the US but not UK. Some clients might be shocked why the payment is being made in their presence; in that case, the

staff should be able to explain how things are done and why it is different in the UK compared to the us.

Do's	Don'ts
Always be polite and courteous towards guests	Do not be rude to clients
Ensure the guests are safe at all times while at the premise	Assume that the client understands how the country's culture operates
Tailor the booking experience to meet the needs of the clients	Assume the client's nationality
Make the guests feel welcome	Be shocked when the client insists on tipping and buying his or her own drinks at the bar
Provide personalised communication to make clients feel more connected	Do not assume the client is rude if he or she appears to be direct and honest
Provide clients with faster services	Do not delay services
Ensure clients have privacy and personal space	Do not be infuriated if the client asks personal questions about where one is from.
Allow the client to request customized menu whenever necessary	

References

- Makambe, U. and Pellissier, R., 2014. The application of Hofstede's cultural dimensions at Botho University: A model for workplace harmony in a multi-cultural business environment. In *Information and Knowledge Management* (Vol. 3, No. 4, pp. 92-99).
- Morden, T., 2017. *Principles of management*. Routledge.