

# **PORTFOLIO SIX ELEMENTS**

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OFFICE**

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## Introduction

At the time of my recent placement in the Hotel Administration and Front Office (HAFO) department I was required to work closely with guests and expose myself to a variety of administrative and guest-facing responsibilities. This experience has been useful for getting exposure to front office (customer service) operations such as guest check in and check out, handling reservations, and answering customers inquiries (Abdel-Wahed *et al.* 2024). This is a reflective exercise intended for the critical evaluation of how my development and learning during the placement has occurred. To consider the struggle through six stage structured steps of description, feelings, evaluation, analysis, conclusion, and action plan using Gibbs' Reflective Cycle (1988), I will better understand the change in my personal and professional growth.

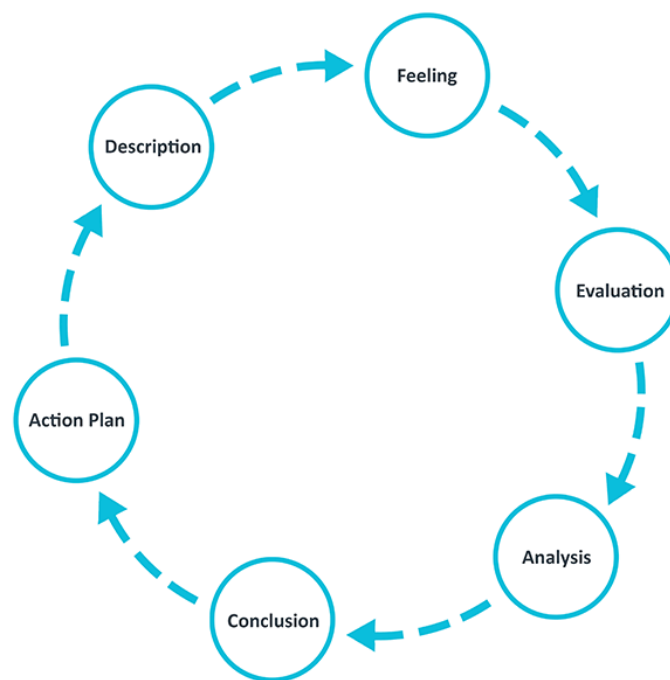


**Figure 1: Gibbs' Reflective Cycle**

(Source: Gibbs, 1988)

### 2.1 Description

In the time period when I was on placement, I was largely responsible for duties like reception, welcoming guests, processing it cheque in and cheque out, managing room bookings, as well as an answering question (via phone or email) (Ahmadpour, Shariati and Moghadam, 2025). In addition to taking care of the administration team, I also took care of

guest records, printing reports, filing documents, managing internal communications, etc. Amongst the best was a guest who wasn't happy with the cleanliness of the room. My only response was apologising on behalf of the hotel, accepting its concerns, and providing a complimentary room upgrade (Dutta, He and Tsang, 2023). It not only diffused the situation, but it also turned the guest's experience into something positive as is evidenced in its later feedback.

I Used a Property Management System (PMS) to take reservations and prepare a room. I worked in hotel specific communication systems and did financial transactions at the front desk. At times, the lobby was packed, but through team effort and multitasking, it was able to provide efficiency in service (Kabondo *et al.* 2024). Being that I was more of a professional, attentive and quick on my decisions needed for guest satisfaction and flow too.

## **2.2 Feelings**

When I arrived at my placement, I was nervous and mixed with anticipation. I was excited to learn about and interact with real guests, but I was concerned about making errors when doing financial transactions or complaints. It started from the initial days when I was lost in an environment which felt more paced than any job I had ever had before and the requirement of managing several other tasks simultaneously was a lot (Moloi, 2029). But the front desk supervisor gave me strong guidance which helped build my confidence.

I realised I needed to be more confident in guest communication and thought more about building those systems and procedures as I was more familiar with them. It was a turning point to handle the guest complaint mentioned above successfully (Mussarat *et al.* 2022). I feel that it helped me to feel capable and apparently, it reassured me of my problem solving and interpersonal skills. With this, I started to enjoy the dynamic nature of the role, and positively used it to shape my attitude and motivation, by trying to ensure that guests have a pleasant experience.

## **2.3 Evaluation**

The combination of lessons offered by the HAFO department led to invaluable lasting rewards. My resilience, adaptability, and communications skills have been strengthened because I found one of the most positive aspects to be quite dynamic and its guest facing environment. Also, I got positive feedback in terms of my polite manner, helping and

professional way of doing things from the workmates as well as the guests. Particularly helpful were regular shift handovers and daily briefings, the latter keeping me informed, organised and in a state of readiness about my task.

Yet, most of the experience wasn't trouble free. Sometimes it was quite difficult to communicate with our guests, international guests, to resolve the complaints. I also experienced certain delays in service during peak hour mainly due to the fact that I was first overwhelmed by multitasking during this period (Ridwan, Hamid and Suyuthi, 2025). Also, the Property Management System (PMS) costs a lot of stress due to technical issues like freezing up when checking in. Despite these challenges, I became comfortable working when stress was high and asking for assistance from those who were more experienced.

I gained knowledge of the value of teamwork, flexibility and patience to get a guest experience smoothly. As the difficulties presented themselves, I made myself more proactive and composed when facing challenges and this, in fact, improved my output and my understanding of the operation of the front office in a live environment.

## **2.4 Analysis**

Effective use of CRM principles and the application of strong communication strategies enabled me to achieve the positive outcomes from my placement. Grönroos' service quality model dictates that guests will perceive this quality through interaction, attention to detail and consistency. I found that digital customer empathy, enabling guests to respond to it needs and swiftly solving customers' problems, impacted the guest satisfaction.

As far as how I dealt with the guest complaint being handled, using the active listening and the quick solution that adhere to CRM best practices, which are supposed to create loyalty and happy word of mouth, to address the guest complaint (Gibbs, 1988). Front office training in the hotel also involved aspects of front office operations theory such as first impressions and service recovery and the synchronisation between departments of the hotel such as housekeeping and reception (Moloi, 2029).

But some things revealed I lacked when it comes to personal time management and prioritisation: moving around made things lengthy, and for instance, I find I struggle with multitasking. 'Responsiveness' and 'reliability' are key dimensions of service according to the SERVQUAL model. I realised that my responsiveness was hindered in pressure moments that might have an effect in the perception of the guests (Thiagraj, Karim and Veloo, 2021).

From this, it became evident that improvement in work performance while under pressure is needed. Bearing this in mind, I was able to confirm my knowledge about the relationship with theoretical frameworks and how it ensures that service delivery is effective in hospitality.

## **2.5 Conclusion**

My experience within the HAFO department has enriched and transformed me, both professionally and personally, which has been a great boon. In a high-pressure environment, I learnt how to act in clear communication, efficient organisation and calm interaction with guests. Working with the front office increased my confidence to remain calm while under stress and adjust to changes (Dutta, He and Tsang, 2023). Over time, I got more notice in my confidence to handle guest complaints and also maintain service quality.

From a professional insight, I found myself having a better understanding of the significance of the interdepartmental cooperation and its application in a digital tool for delivering seamless service, i.e., PMS and CRM. I grew my emotional intelligence on a more personal level, getting more empathic, more patient, more able to respond to the needs of guests from different cultures. I also took feedback positively and reflected on challenges as a chance to grow. In general, this experience has made me more technically capable and confirmed my interest in pursuing a career in hospitality.

## **2.6 Action Plan**

To make the most out of the skills and knowledge I learned during my placement, I will continue to work on my time management and multi-tasking skill using a short course in hospitality operations or productivity tool. Secondly, I am strengthening my language skills, which allows for great communication of international guests to promote unusuality in service delivery.

In the meanwhile, I also want to shadow some of these experienced front office managers and observe how it delegates work, delegate responsibilities for the team and remain productive in the face of pressure. By doing this, I will gain knowledge of advanced leadership and customer service practices. Similarly, I will use some of my spare time to learn more about PMS and CRM systems to enhance my technical skill and operational accuracy. It is going to be important for me to maintain my development continuously and for this I will have regular

feedback by supervisors and colleagues. These steps will help me to become a more confident, efficient and service minded hospitality professional, be able to contribute positively to the future hotel environment and respond to changes in the industry standards.

## **Final Conclusion**

This reflective exercise as guided by Gibbs Reflective Cycle has allowed me to critically review my placement experience in the Hotel Administration and Front Office department. I have further recognised my skills in communication, and engaging with guests, and have come to appreciate areas which need further development such as multitasking and time management. The experience has taught me how to relate practical learning with theoretical concepts like CRM and SERVQUAL and to understand service quality in hospitality.

What really stood out was that it has proven for me most definitely that in this hotel industry is something I love and want to carry on with. Now reflecting on all that had gone right, and as much as that had gone wrong, I had a better understanding of the circumstances that may arise in the future when working with a hospitality team. These insights will add to the knowledge of my development and will continue to grow in my personal and professional competences in the development of hotel management.

## **Part 2**

### **Hotel tutor feedback**

This successfully operated in the Rezlynx system needing very little supervision, demonstrating his capability to learn and apply technical skills effectively. Also, he gained experience with key systems such as Kabba (for key cards), Guestline/Rezlynx (for POS transactions) and Resdiary (for restaurant bookings). Even though fairly new to some of these platforms, Govinda did not take long to adapt; he proved himself open to learning, for his skills also developed.

As regards guest interaction, Govinda had an approach all through which was welcoming and empathetic. He was able to interact well with guests; answering questions with correct information and solving problems professionally. His ability to remain composed under attack from guest complaints was especially praiseworthy in as much as he had a positive attitude and cool mind while doing the work.

In round figures, Govinda was seen as a nice team member by the Reception Manager who was thankful for his positive attitude, adaptability and professionalism. His efforts to the team were welcomed, and he is one of those who with enthusiasm can do well in any avocation related to hospitality having such qualities as work and interpersonal skills. Moving on, an advice is high that Govinda should still perfect his technical skills and improve his ability to handle more than one system and thus increasing his efficiency and efficiency of service . By Kelly White , Operation Manager .

## **Part 3**

### **Academic Tutor Feedback**

Throughout his Park Hall Hotel and Spa placement, Govinda showed great regard for time at all times. He managed multiple accounts across different departments while maintaining the 16 hours per week – professionally and efficiently. He arrived in time for all meetings, and remained active in communication throughout because of timely and professional emails. The level of organisation noted by the hotel and tutor is proof of his ability to take on workplace requirements and deliver on time.

In terms of guest interaction, Govinda demonstrated great communication skills, keeping a warm and courteous approach to both guests and colleagues all the time. He was very filled

in when dealing with guests, he would respond with sensitivity and provide factual information as it was brought out in the hotel review. This skill of his to alter his communication styles to suit different contexts speaks volumes of confidence in the guest facing role, a core quality needed for hospitality professionals.

Throughout the placement Govinda's behaviour was characterised with enthusiasm, respect, and positive attitude. He took up work across all the areas that he had been assigned; from front office operations to food and beverage service display, and it was evident that he cared to learn and be part of the team. His tutor identified in imitative discussions the same degree of motivation and career interest as he himself when going through his experiences and recognising his areas for improvement.

Overall, Govinda has been very successful in transferring the knowledge to the real-world hospitality environment and he learns so much about guest services as well administrative roles. The tutor guides him to apply these experiences when he prepares his reflective portfolio, where he uses academic sources to back his learning and development within the module . By Lola villard-Coles , Academic Tutor .

## **Part 4**

### **Introduction**

Feedback itself is very important in professional development both offering critical performance feedback, also indicating strengths and opportunities for improvement. In this section, I will reflect on the feedback which had been given to me by my two mentors: my hotel mentor and academic tutor. I will reflect attentively on the feedback aimed at my performance at the Hotel Administration and Front Office (HAFO) department. This reflection will have a three-point structure: comprehending the feedback, assessing the effects of the feedback, and discussing measure steps to increase future growth. By drawing a deep insight from both the feedback, I seek to have an in-depth understanding of what I have done well in guest facing and administrative roles and pick specific actions which will improve my skills and competencies in future hospitality settings (Gibbs, 1988).

### **Understanding the Feedback**

The feedback garnered from my hotel mentor was really helpful in terms of learning about performance in the front office. My mentor also congratulated my orientation to the major

front office systems like Rezlynx and Kabba because I managed the check-in and check-out processes with little oversight. Besides that, my mentor noted my increasing abilities in responding to guest inquiries, noting that I always used empathy and accuracy in cases of information provision. These impressions correlate with the input that I received from my tutor in academia and liked how aptly it indicated to me that I had great communication skills especially in situations of guests.

Areas for improvement were also pointed out in both sets of feedback. My hotel mentor found out that though I adjusted easily to use of equipment, additional training in the use of property management systems would increase my operational efficiency especially during peak periods when multitasking is necessary. Furthermore, my tutor noted that my inclination to apply initiative in solving problems was good, but that my time management needed improvement in order to multi-task more appropriately. The tutor added that more reflection should be done on how academic theories like CRM principles could be better utilised to guide practical experiences at the front office (Kabondo *et al.* 2024).

Both sets of feedback converge on communication and operational efficiency with my mentor emphasising practical application and my tutor emphasising theory.

### **Impact of the Feedback**

The feedback has played a huge role in helping me to understand what I did in the HAFO department, and areas for improvement. The favourable response on my communication skills has enhanced my faith in relations with guests, namely, in working with enquiries and complaints. My mentor for example drew a particular incident in which I handled a guest complaint on cleanliness of a room by giving a complimentary room upgrade. This experience did not only demonstrate to me how to handle pressure but also highlighted the necessity for empathy and excellent guest relations through communication.

In addition, the input concerning operational systems has pushed me to reconsider my management of administrative works. Although during my time I was able to manoeuvre through systems such as Rezlynx and Kabba, the pressures of multitasking during peak check-in period laid bare flaws in my time management skills. The focus on providing a balance between theoretical frameworks as the CRM principles or the SERVQUAL model has augmented my thinking on how to apply these concepts in a practical way to improve terms of guest experience and operational efficiency. This has opened up my mind to the

webbing relations between academic reality and working reality, and highlighted the importance of reflective practice in bridging the gap between theory and practice.

### **Action Steps for Growth**

After receiving the feedback, I have come up with several targeted actions to advance my skill in hotel administration and front office operations. To begin with, to respond to the feedback on time management, and multitasking, I intend to take a short course in the operations of hospitality which is devoted to productivity tools, and prioritisation techniques. This will allow me to better control several guest interactions while still delivering a superior service. Besides, I would like to get some advanced training in property management systems, in particular Rezlynx and Kabba. Mastering these systems better will not only simplify my work flow but also minimise stress while at peak of operation times (Thiagraj *et al.* 2021).

In addition, to further develop my communication skills I will actively pursue opportunities to shadow experienced front office managers to get an opportunity to see how it deals with guest troubles, work with other departments and handle high pressure situations.

Besides this, I also wish to review main theoretical constructs such as CRM principles and SERVQUAL model in relation to certain aspects of my placement. Through thinking about how these concepts were implemented during the guest interaction process, I will be able to develop more structured delivery of exceptional service and notably complaint resolution and service consistency.

Finally, this will be in close contact always with my hotel mentor as well as my academic tutor, enquiring for regular (on going) feedback and guidance.

### **Conclusion**

Thinking critically over the feedback offered both from the hotel mentor, and the academic tutor has been insightful, as both these areas – communication and guest interaction – are areas of strength, while others – time management, and the proficiency in PMS systems – need further development. This reflection has reinforced the necessity of combining academic learning with experience and how to utilise such frameworks like CRM and SERVQUAL in managing the service quality in guest facing jobs. As it goes forward, I commit myself to action steps such as additional training on the hospitality systems and working on cultivations on communication techniques in the high-stress situations. By being positive in the aspect of

personal and professional development, I try to utilise this worthwhile feedback in order to succeed in future hospitality jobs, promote guest satisfaction and hotel administration and front office functioning efficiently.

Part 5 ...

Part 6 ...

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