

Module Name: Developing and
Managing Individuals Teams

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Student's Name: Goua E D Ogodon

Student's ID: 2310612

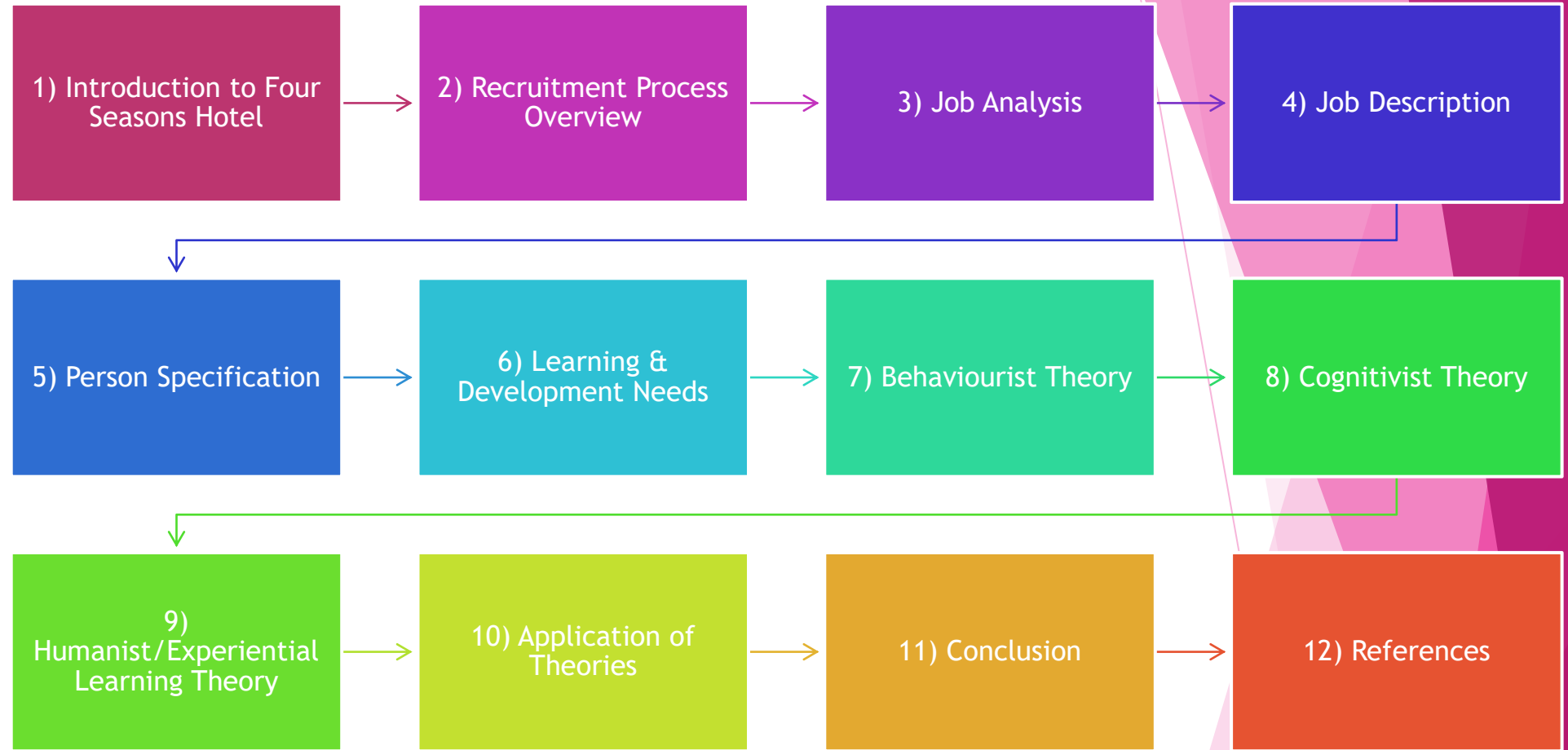
Lecturer's Name: Amir

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Introduction to Four Seasons Hotel

Four Seasons Hotel London at Park Lane is part of the globally recognised Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts, a brand renowned for luxury hospitality and exceptional guest service. Established in 1961, Four Seasons has built a reputation for delivering personalised, high-quality experiences across its international portfolio. The London property exemplifies this standard through its premium accommodation, award-winning dining, spa facilities, and highly trained staff. Operating in a competitive luxury market, the hotel places strong emphasis on recruiting skilled employees and investing in continuous learning and development to maintain service excellence. This commitment to people-centred management is central to sustaining the brand's global reputation and ensuring consistently high levels of guest satisfaction.

Recruitment Process Overview

Four Seasons follows a structured recruitment process to ensure high-quality service standards:

- ▶ **identify staffing needs:** Managers assess operational requirements and determine where vacancies exist.
- ▶ **Job analysis:** The role is examined to identify key tasks, responsibilities, and required skills.
- ▶ **Job description & person specification:** Documents are created to outline duties and define the ideal candidate profile.
- ▶ **Advertise the vacancy:** The role is promoted through suitable channels to attract qualified applicants.
- ▶ **Shortlist candidates:** Applications are screened against the person specification to identify suitable candidates.
- ▶ **Interviews and assessments:** Shortlisted applicant complete interviews and practical tests to evaluate competence and service behaviour.
- ▶ **Selection decision:** Managers choose the most suitable candidate based on assessment results and reference checks.
- ▶ **Onboarding and orientation:** Successful candidates receive training and introduction to Four Seasons' culture and service standards.

Job Analysis

Tasks:

- ▶ Checking guests in/out
- ▶ Handling reservations
- ▶ Managing guest requests
- ▶ Coordinating with housekeeping and concierge
- ▶ Using hotel management systems
- ▶ **Methods used:**
- ▶ Observation of current staff
- ▶ Interviews with supervisors
- ▶ Reviewing guest feedback
- ▶ Analysing performance reports
- ▶ **Outcome:** Clear understanding of required skills, behaviours, and responsibilities.

Job Description

Job Title: Front Desk Receptionist

Department: Front Office

Key Responsibilities:

- ▶ Deliver exceptional guest service
- ▶ Manage check-in/check-out procedures
- ▶ Handle payments and reservations
- ▶ Provide information about hotel services
- ▶ Resolve guest issues professionally
- ▶ Maintain accurate records in the PMS (Property Management System)

Person Specification

Essential Skills:

- ▶ Excellent communication
- ▶ Customer service orientation
- ▶ Professional appearance
- ▶ Ability to multitask
- ▶ IT literacy (hotel systems)

Desirable Skills:

- ▶ Experience in luxury hospitality
- ▶ Multilingual abilities
- ▶ Problem-solving skills
- ▶ **Attributes:** Warm, empathetic, confident, detail-oriented.

Learning & Development Needs

Example employee: **New Front Desk Receptionist**

Identified Needs:

- ▶ Training on Opera PMS (hotel management software)
 - ▶ Customer service and guest relations skills
 - ▶ Cultural awareness training
 - ▶ Complaint handling
 - ▶ Knowledge of hotel facilities and local attractions
 - ▶ Professional communication and telephone etiquette
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- ▶ **How needs are identified:**
 - ▶ Induction assessments
 - ▶ Supervisor observations
 - ▶ Guest satisfaction surveys
 - ▶ Mystery guest reports
 - ▶ Performance appraisals

Behaviourist Theory

Key Idea:

Learning occurs through reinforcement, repetition, and observable behaviour.

Application at Four Seasons:

- ▶ Repeated practice of check-in procedures
- ▶ Positive reinforcement (praise, recognition) for excellent guest service
- ▶ Standard operating procedures (SOPs) used for consistency
- ▶ Role-play exercises for complaint handling
- ▶ **Why it works:** Hospitality tasks require consistency and routine excellence.

Cognitivist Theory

Key Idea: Learning involves understanding, memory, and problem-solving.

Application at Four Seasons:

- ▶ Training modules explaining *why* service standards matter
- ▶ Scenario-based learning for handling VIP guests
- ▶ Encouraging staff to reflect on guest interactions
- ▶ Teaching employees to analyse guest needs and anticipate expectations

Why it works: Luxury service requires thoughtful decision-making, not just routine actions.

Humanist/Experiential Learning Theory

Key Idea: Learning is personal, self-directed, and based on real experiences.

Application at Four Seasons:

- ▶ On-the-job learning during live guest interactions
- ▶ Shadowing experienced front desk staff
- ▶ Encouraging employees to set personal development goals
- ▶ Reflective practice after challenging guest situations
- ▶ **Why it works:** Hospitality is hands-on and thrives on real-world experience.

Application of Theories

Behaviourist: Repetition + reinforcement improves accuracy in check-in procedures.

Cognitivist: Understanding guest psychology improves personalised service.

humanist/Experiential: Shadowing senior staff builds confidence and emotional intelligence.

Outcome: A well-rounded development plan that enhances service quality and guest satisfaction.

Conclusion

The recruitment and development practices at Four Seasons Hotel demonstrate how structured HR processes support service excellence in a luxury hospitality environment. Effective recruitment—guided by job analysis, job descriptions, and person specifications—ensures that the organisation selects candidates who align with its high service standards. Identifying learning and development needs further enables employees to build the technical and interpersonal skills required for exceptional guest experiences. By applying Behaviourist, Cognitivist, and Humanist learning theories, Four Seasons creates a balanced training approach that strengthens competence, confidence, and professional growth. Overall, the integration of strategic recruitment and evidence-based learning supports both employee performance and the hotel's reputation for world-class service.

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