



Problem Solving and Decision Making

Denis Dediu 2011014

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Lecturer : Suneth Fernando

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Introduction

I am working in a 5-star property, based in Central London, which hosts various types of individuals or groups. From families to corporate agents, couples, and national tourists, everyone has one identical goal, having a wonderful experience. This is achieved when more than one department are working in synchronization towards the same purpose, pleasing the guest and accommodating every request. Every hotel runs on the same concept, providing different facilities which the customer can use. A restaurant in which the food is served at specific times, a room that can accommodate privacy and comfort. These are the two standards that every hotel is able to provide, but others can accommodate extra leisure facilities gym, spa, etc...

My company provides various facilities, selling accommodation and food services to customers. It also sells other types of services, for example renting spaces for meetings and events, creating long-lasting relationships with companies by offering accommodation contracts with special rates for their employees. It also tries to deliver new ideas in the food industry with new additions and changes to the menu every 6 months, based on the guest's feedback and reviews. The company tries to evolve and develop based on the client's thoughts and always does its utmost to provide a better experience for everyone.

The departments which are needed for the business to operate are Front Office, Housekeeping, Restaurant Team, and Kitchen Team. Front Office takes care of the reservations of the customers, meeting, and greeting, taking care of internal procedures, being the help point for the customer when in need. The department of Housekeeping is taking care of the cleanliness of the property, the bedrooms, the public toilets, the entrance, and the main meeting points. The restaurant team is in charge of maintaining excellent service and accommodate each guest's request. The kitchen team are in charge of preparing the food and making sure it has been made following not only company guidance, but also health and safety guidelines. In order for the hotel to deliver an excellent service, all the departments need to be in synchronization during their work hours which can only be achieved through effective teamwork. (Choren, 2015)

Communication can be defined as the process of transmitting information and common understanding from one person to another (Keyton, 2011). When it comes to a communication problem, it is not only one department to blame. Every employee needs to understand how important is to have this skill in order to perform the tasks easier and assuring it is done to perfection. One bad example of poor communication is when a guest had complained in the early morning about some malfunctions in his room and asked if the maintenance department could visit the room to see if the problem can be fixed. The employee who had received the complaint had forgotten to mention it during the handover meeting, therefore no one else was aware of the situation. This later impacted not only the Front Office department, but all of them, as the guest felt left aside, unlisted, and unfairly treated, which only brought a poor image to the company.

The only people affected by the problem are the guests who are paying for a service, which they don't receive. This affects rating scores on the online platforms and also the property popularity and trust. With the amount of websites that allows the clients to express their thoughts through online reviews, the company can lose a major percentage of their sales if not delivering the service promised. If the departments aren't able to have good communication skills, it will create a negative factor in the future of the company. (Mallett-Hamer, 2005)

SWOT Analysis

The strength which I see in my colleagues of other departments is that everyone is experienced. They are confident and know how to do the job at hand, how to work around difficult situations, and how to manage through a busy time.

The weakness which I can easily spot is that the communication skill is almost inexistent when working in this company. As I see a lot of mistakes taking place, only due to the fact that a minor issue has not been communicated at the right time and created a bigger problem in the aftermath.

The opportunity which I have identified is the company. It is set in Central London, where all the tourists are coming to visit, either during the summer holidays or winter holidays; it makes it easy to travel and offers loads of possibilities; it is a safe and well-guarded area. Also that it is constantly growing with expansions through the United Kingdom and Europe, thus offering the opportunity to grow very easily.

As threats, there are many rival hotels still based in central London with much more accessibility to more facilities or the capacity to accommodate a larger quantity of individuals. But being a unique hotel improves the chances as clients are interested in different experiences.

PESTEL Analysis

Political factors are that the government maintains a big influence over the hotel industry. They can decide at any point that a travel ban will be placed, which will definitely put the company in bankruptcy. Another factor that also involves the government, is the elections of a new president for each nation, as the company's future could be decided by someone with a different vision.

One economic factor which can alter a business's growth is the importance of local climate. Hotel customers stay in hotels for a number of reasons, including visits to family and friends, business travel, and vacationing. Customers prefer to stay somewhere warm and comfortable while on vacation. The weather in the area influences whether or not someone chooses to stay at a particular hotel.

A social factor would be that today's biggest competitor to the hotel industry is Airbnb. Travelers, like the large number of rooms available on Airbnb. You can reserve a room through an app fast and easily, and it's generally less priced than hotels in the neighbourhood.

The technological factor is the amount of possibility which the customer has been given through the years. A review can be written by anyone and posted on a blog or shared on social media. People that stay in hotels will take pictures and provide an honest review of their stay. This has both positive and negative implications for the hotel industry. Hoteliers who are confident in their properties will pay social media influencers to promote them.

Legal factors are the laws of the country the company is based in. Innkeeper laws, which safeguard the welfare and safety of guests and their properties, are followed by hotel owners.

The innkeeper law is required to be placed inside the door of every hotel guest room in several states. In most circumstances, the innkeeper law will specify how much the innkeeper must compensate guests if their property is stolen or damaged.

An economic factor is the tailored offers which the company provides. By listening to the guest's feedback, the hotel is able to grow and increase in quality, offering multiple choices to the customer by acquiring different brands.

Solutions

Solution 1

Implementing a spreadsheet which explicitly details the guest's request, the time, the person who received it. This will help the employee keep track of the tasks he's been asked to deal with by the customer, and also it will make it easier to follow up with the situation to learn if the task has been completed or not.

Solution 2

Motivate the employee by rewarding him with incentives for different tasks he excelled in, when mentioned in an online review by name or hear extraordinary feedback from colleagues, guests. This will make the employee feel in a more comfortable position which will improve his work performance and gain confidence.

Solution 3

Implement and respect a meeting plan which will take place every day for the heads of departments to discuss daily issues, future plans, numbers of the day, any events taking place. Every department will mention a subject that is taking place, thus making everyone aware and prepared.

Solution 4

Implement new ways from which the employee can interact with the customer. Create a new platform from which customers can chat prior to their arrival or even after their departure, with the team. They can leave reviews directed to each department and will also have a small letterbox in which they can tick if they would stay for a second time. With this it will be easier to get in touch with the customer which had a bad experience, giving them the chance to offer a discounted future stay and change their perspective.

Solution 01 – Implementing “Guests Requests” sheet – PMI Model (score scale is 5)

Plus Points	Minus Points	Interesting Points
1. Smaller Chance to forget – 5	Limited Space – (-3)	Less room for error (+5)
2. Easy to decipher – 4	Easy to lose – (-4)	Better communication (+4)
3. Easy to create – 5		
Total Plus Points = 14	Minus Points = (-7)	Interesting Points = (+9)

Final Value for solution 01 = 14 + 9 – 7 = 16

Solution 02 – Implementing incentives scheme – PMI Model (score scale is 5)

Plus Points	Minus Points	Interesting Points
1. Grows confidence – 5	Hard to maintain – (-5)	Opportunity to gain extra next to the salary (+5)
2. Increases satisfaction – 5	Rivalries between employees – (-5)	
3. Makes employees work harder – 3		
Total Plus Points = 13	Minus Points = (-10)	Interesting Points = (+5)

Final Value for solution 02 = 13 + 5 – 10 = 8

Solution 03 – Implementing daily meetings – PMI Model (score scale is 5)

Plus Points	Minus Points	Interesting Points
1. Grows knowledge – 5	Time management is harder to manage – (-5)	Opportunity to learn new ideas (+5)
2. Helps everyone understand their duties of the day - 4	Can't be controlled – (-3)	Understand better other departments (+3)
3. Maintains sustainability and efficiency – 5		
Total Plus Points = 14	Minus Points = (-8)	Interesting Points = (+8)

Final Value for solution 03 = 14 + 8 – 8 = 14

Solution 04 – Implementing new online platform – PMI Model (score scale is 5)

Plus Points	Minus Points	Interesting Points
1. Gives new ways to converse with the customer – 5	Internet regulations – (-5)	New technology introduced (+5)
2. Easier to receive feedback - 3	Expensive – (-5)	Private from others site (+5)
3. Tailored for the guest – 5		
Total Plus Points = 13	Minus Points = (-10)	Interesting Points = (+10)

Final Value for solution 04 = 13 + 10 – 10 = 13

Evaluation

After using the decision-making tools to find the best solution for the problem, I have come to the decision that Solution 1 would fit the best to resolve my company's existential problem, which is communication. By implementing a spreadsheet in which it will be detailed the requests of the day, providing an excellent service to the customer will become much easier. Following up with the issues after a certain time after the issues have been received, communicating to the right department the issue will all be improved after implementing this solution. Improving the communication skills will not only help the employee as individual, but also the company (Adu-Oppong, Agyin-Birikorang, 2014)

Plan

The problem which has been ongoing in my company is a lack of communication skills coming from all the departments involved. I am expecting full support from the higher management as it not only I who observed the critical situation the company is in, but also other employees which have decided. With their help, I will be able to raise the concerns and create a change. After a discussion with the General Manager, I have brought to his attention the issues that are ongoing at the moment and present various solutions which can be implemented to provide a better service.

Task	Duration	Resources required
Present your proposal to the management	1 days	Laptop, office room
Training required	2 days	Laptop, office room

Review of produced plan

A week later, after the implementation of the new solution, there will be a meeting taking place with all the departments, from which we can understand if the solution has worked. All departments will have to mention how they find the new implementation so far if they think there are any changes to be done or their idea of how they can make it work better. We will also review the recent comments posted by our customers, compare them with the ones posted before the implementation, to truly see if the solution created a difference from the time it was implemented.

Conclusion

The aim of this report was to use Problem Solving and Decision-Making tools to identify the ongoing issues I have encountered in my working place, understand the problem, and try to find and implement a solution using what I have learned throughout the semester and work experience. After identifying the problem of my workplace was a lack of communication skills between the departments, I have decided to create an easy way to learn this skill or to improve it.

Reference List

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