

Hotel Placement

Managing Hotel Administration

BMIH6004

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Introduction

My present placement is the Novotel Leicester Hotel, a four-star hotel in the city centre that is modern and takes both business and leisure travellers. Placement commenced on 22 September and will entail working in 3 main departments, namely Reception, Food and Beverage, as well as Housekeeping. This rotation has also allowed me to realise how various parts of the hotel collaborate to allow a guest to have a seamless experience.

I decided to make the reception department my primary area of interest, and I worked directly with Pratik, who is among the senior receptionists in that department. Pratik was also a significant part of my education, as he took me through the process of the guest check-in and check-out, complaints management, and the Opera property management system usage.

I am employing the Reflective Cycle developed by Gibbs that promotes thinking in six steps known as description, feelings, evaluation, analysis, conclusion, and action plan (Praveena et al., 2025). This reflection is aimed at demonstrating my personal and professional growth since my Level 4 placement to this experience by showing how I have applied what I learnt in my university modules to what I have practised at the workplace.

Main Body

1. Description and Feelings

In my year 4 level placement within the Marriott Hotel, I was involved with Housekeeping to clean guest rooms and organize guest amenities to create a warm welcome for incoming guests. At the moment, I am sitting within the Novotel Leicester Hotel, focusing on Reception to serve incoming guests checking in/out directly. At first, I was a bit apprehensive since the reception area represents the 'front' face of the hotel where everything that a guest does makes a difference.

At Novotel too, other than working in housekeeping or room division, there was an opportunity to get involved in either the front office or the reception team. It was a bit tough for me to adapt to because I was going through an phase where I was feeling very apprehensive. But after getting to know the entire team there who treated me amazingly well, everything was fine.

During my observations with the team in the front office, I observed that the team members are very well-organized in their work despite not having a well-equipped office. It was satisfactory to see that there was a high level of communication between departments, which greatly helped to ensure that everything was in its right place in terms of hotel functions (Zaripour, 2024). In fact, given that there were only two staff members manning the reception desk, check-in and check-out was relatively fast. One case which caught my interest was when a guest checked into the hotel but came back to the reception desk two to three times before finally announcing his reason for not wanting to stay in a specific room. In fact, when he finally announced that he wanted to stay in a room which was not noisy because it was facing the main street, the staff behaved professionally. They managed to get him another room though they did not have so many guest rooms. One thing which caught my interest was how calm they responded to the situation. They did not show signs of being perturbed because there weren't so many rooms to fit other visitors. From this case, I was able to learn more concerning what really goes into a specific kind of job which entails skills used for front office management.

2. Evaluation

Upon comparison of both positions, I can clearly see how I have developed my profession. Through my position in housekeeping at the Marriott, I learned the importance of attention to detail, collaboration, and quality of service with consistency. I developed a foundational understanding and appreciation of operational standards and guest comfort. Still, it was an operational role that did not engage with guests much.

The difference was marked. The Novotel, on the other hand, have developed clear standard operating policies (SOPs), a larger team, and technology-based systems that provide significantly higher efficiency in the operation (Dung and Thang, 2022). The expectation is much larger, and even a small error can affect guest satisfaction.

I took away from the complaint to stay calm under pressure and think quickly. Later, Pratik was able to give me feedback about how I handled it, but that I could have anticipated those problems ahead of time, for example, by calling into the kitchen at busier times, so I didn't have to worry about the delay.

In the Food & Beverage Department, I also had a significant opportunity at a corporate breakfast for around 40 guests. There was a breakdown in communication with the dietary requirements, delaying the service, and there were possibly two dissatisfied guests. I connected with the kitchen and assisted with the service, which improved the situation. I realised that the teamwork and coordination I learned in my Level 4 "Hospitality Operations Management" module applied here, too.

3. Analysis

Looking back over my experiences, I found that Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory aligns well with my learning for this placement. Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory states that people learn best by experiencing, reflecting, conceptualising, and applying what they learned (Morris, 2020). This describes my growth throughout this placement extremely well. For example, I experienced guests with real complaints, I reflected on what worked and what didn't work, I applied theory I learned from school, and then the next time I pushed myself to apply what I knew, etc. Each interaction continued to assist me in my communication and emotional intelligence.

I also noted the relationship related to Herzberg's Motivation-Hygiene Theory to my experiences (Chiat and Panatik, 2019). Sometimes I felt the most motivated to go above and

beyond for guests in situations where either my supervisor recognised my effort or if the guests thanked me for the support. Those situations fit with Herzberg's explanation of motivators, and influenced me to have motivation. I felt like my motivation was lowered when shifts lasted too long, or closely related to this issue, if departments were not well coordinated; in this second situation, my motivation was influenced by hygiene factors.

The SERVQUAL model is a useful framework identifying five key dimensions of service quality: reliability, assurance, tangibles, empathy and responsiveness (Sugiarto and Octaviana, 2021). When I addressed the guest's complaint, I was conscious that showing empathy and being responsive was more important to the guest than the wait time. It was also a learning opportunity that enabled me to learn from the experience and use those lessons to inform my service at each future encounter.

4. Conclusion

Looking back at my development, it is clear that I have progressed since my Level 4 Placement. I have progressed from being a learner and following instructions to a learner who is responsible for guests and has confidence to address complicated situations.

Working with Pratik gave me better insight not only into the technical aspects of the Reception position, but also a bit more of the emotional skillset needed to be patient, caring and calm, when sometimes the guests' behaviour can be demanding. Coupling that emotional skillset with the academic theories I obtained in my modules made me a more mindful and competent hospitality professional.

I still have areas in which I would like to continue to progress: time management with busy check-in processes and becoming more adept at Opera processes (Wen and Chen, 2024). I also want to improve my ability to anticipate guest needs before they become requests. There are twenty-what, and then we can talk about what is going to be learning and education development.

5. Action Plan

After considering this, I have devised the following as my next steps in my personal development plan;

Short-term goal: To build my confidence using the Opera property management system and my multi-tasking ability during busy periods.

Medium-term goal: I primarily want to develop my leadership capability by trying a small team project, for example, setting a check-in schedule or supervising new interns to develop my leadership styles.

Long-term goal: I want to continue developing my career path with the Accor group and move into a Front Office Supervisor or Manager position after graduation.

Conclusion and Development Plan

Through my reflection, I have been able to assess my growth both as a student and specifically as a professional who works in the hospitality industry. I found that I was able to bring some structure to my reflections through the Gibbs Reflective Cycle in order to reflect upon my experiences, and what I learnt from these experiences.

Throughout my time at Novotel Leicester, I developed a variety of transferable skills in communication, collaboration, empathising with others and flexibility. I also observed some of the applications from the theory we studied in academic settings, such as Kolb's Learning Cycle, Herzberg's Motivation Theory and SERVQUAL. More specifically, I appreciated working with Pratik, who was my mentor and provided me with honest feedback that was honest and refreshing, which helped to grow my confidence.

In the future, I aspire to further develop my skills both technically and in leadership, specifically in the area of managing teams and hospitality software. I have learned that professional development is a function of moving along a continuum of continuous learning, reflection, and development. Overall, this placement has provided me with confidence going forward, particularly with regard to a career in hotel management and guest service excellence.

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