

**Component One: Student Journal
(learning log) 750 words +/- 10%**

**Contribution to Overall Module
Assessment: 25%**

Student No:	(2217500)
Module Title:	Hotel Administration & Front Office Operations
Module Code:	BMIH4004
Lecturer:	Dan Payne

The hotel front office is the first point of contact for guests, making it a crucial aspect of the establishment's image and reputation. As a hospitality student, I understand the significance of mastering the skills necessary to thrive in this role. In this journal, I will utilize the Gibbs Reflective Cycle to analyze my experiences and skills, and connect them with theoretical principles and essential abilities crucial for success in the hotel front office. Additionally, I will draw from a range of scholarly references to support my insights and reflections.

In my previous role as a front desk student during a placement at Courtyard by Marriott Exeter, I was responsible for a variety of tasks, including guest check-ins and check-outs, managing reservations, addressing guest inquiries and concerns, and collaborating with other departments to ensure a seamless guest experience.

I initially felt overwhelmed by the fast-paced and dynamic nature of front office operations. There were moments of stress and pressure, particularly when dealing with challenging guests or when managing multiple tasks simultaneously. However, I also experienced a sense of accomplishment when successfully resolving guest issues and ensuring their satisfaction. These feelings and experiences reflect the reality of working in the hotel front office, where the environment can be both demanding and rewarding. Over time, as I gained experience and honed my skills, the overwhelming moments became opportunities for growth and the sense of accomplishment drove my commitment to providing exceptional service.

These early challenges and experiences have been instrumental in shaping my understanding of the hospitality industry and the importance of equipping oneself with the right skills to navigate this dynamic and guest-centric field.

Upon reflection, I recognise that my prior experiences have equipped me with several skills that are essential in the hotel front office. One of these skills is effective communication. The ability to communicate clearly and empathetically with guests is paramount in understanding their needs and addressing their concerns (Brotherton & Wood, 2008). I improved my communication skills during my internship by actively listening to guest feedback and responding in a courteous and timely manner.

Another key skill is time management. Front office tasks often involve managing multiple activities simultaneously, from processing reservations to handling guest check-ins and check-outs. Efficient time management is crucial to ensure that all tasks are completed promptly (Hayes & Ninemeier, 2008). During my placement, I learned to prioritize tasks and delegate when necessary to maintain a smooth flow of operations.

To further assess my skills and experiences, I turned to theoretical principles in the hospitality field. The concept of "guest-centricity" is central to hotel front office operations. The hotel front office serves as the primary point of contact for guests, and understanding and meeting their needs are essential to providing exceptional service (Brotherton & Wood, 2008). My placement experiences reinforced the importance of anticipating and fulfilling guest expectations.

Additionally, the principle of "service recovery" is crucial in handling challenging situations. In the hotel industry, guest complaints and issues are inevitable, and how these are resolved can significantly impact guest satisfaction and loyalty (Sigala, 2019). Reflecting on my experiences, I recognise that I improved my problem-solving and conflict resolution skills by effectively addressing guest concerns and ensuring they left the hotel with a positive impression.

In conclusion, my placement experience in the hotel front office has allowed me to develop and strengthen key skills essential for success in this dynamic environment. Effective communication, time management, and a guest-centric approach are among the skills I have identified and improved upon. Reflecting on my experiences and linking them to theoretical principles has enhanced my understanding of the critical role the front office plays in the guest experience.

The Gibbs Reflective Cycle has provided a structured framework to assess my skills, emotions, and experiences, allowing me to gain deeper insights and improve my future performance in the hotel front office. As I continue to pursue my career in the hospitality industry, I will strive to further refine these skills and stay attuned to the evolving needs and expectations of guests.

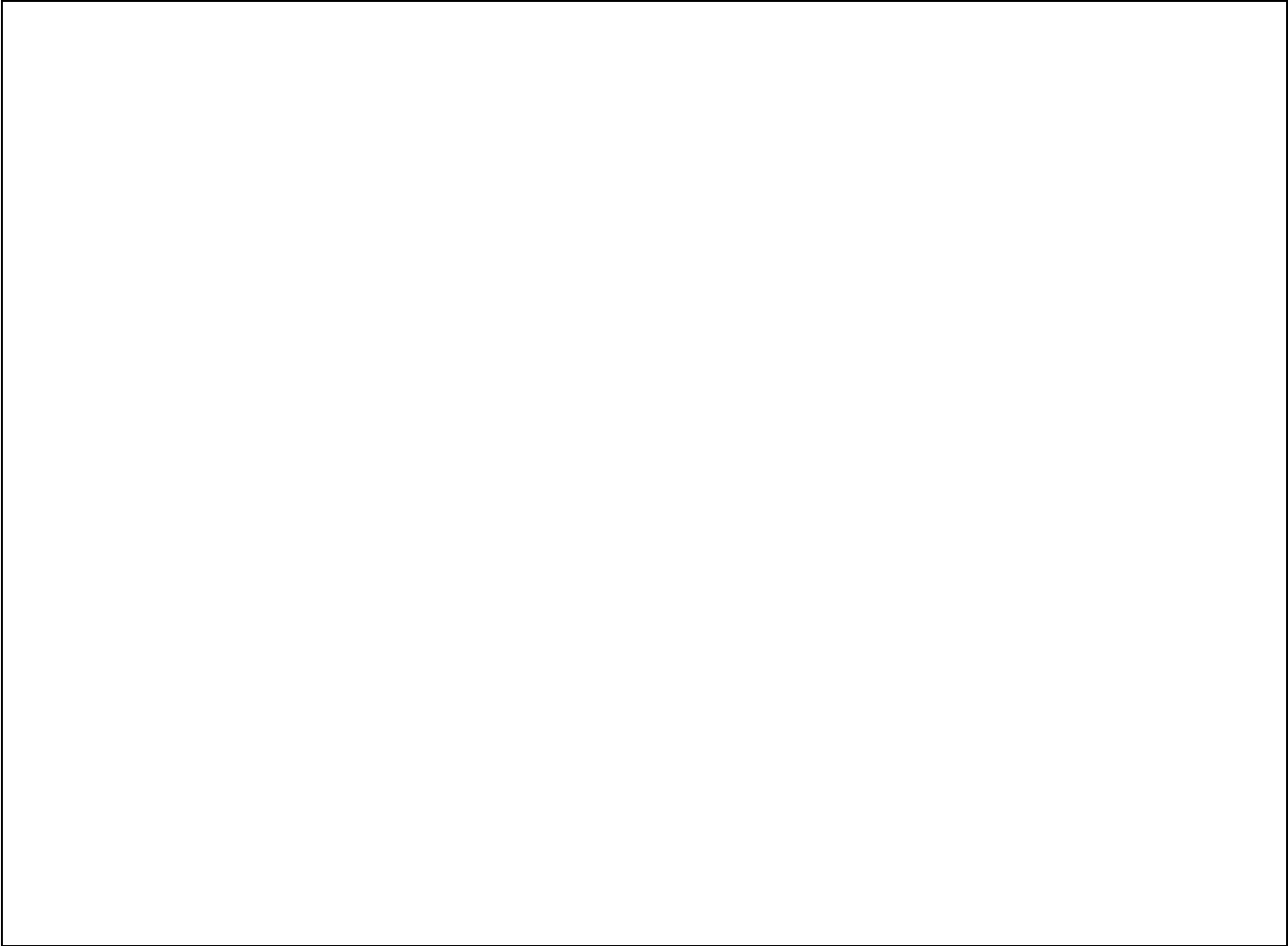
By implementing this action plan, I aim to be better prepared and more proficient in addressing challenges and providing exceptional service in the hotel front office. My

commitment to continuous improvement aligns with the principles of reflective practice and the desire to excel in the hospitality field.

Reflecting on my experiences and creating this action plan has provided me with a roadmap for future growth and development in my career.

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Component Two

Contribution to Overall Module Assessment: 25%

Trip Advisor Review Response 150 words +/-10%

The review I found on Trip Advisor-

"Uniquely placed next to Exeter Chiefs, Courtyard by Marriott Exeter Sandy Park hotel combines style and innovative design in a distinctive location. Whether you're in Exeter for business, pleasure or to watch a match, we provide all you need for a worthwhile visit." -TripAdvisor [\[https://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/Hotel_Review-g186254-d23673552-Reviews-Courtyard_by_Marriott_Exeter_Sandy_Park-Exeter_Devon_England.html\]](https://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/Hotel_Review-g186254-d23673552-Reviews-Courtyard_by_Marriott_Exeter_Sandy_Park-Exeter_Devon_England.html) (2023)

We genuinely appreciate your kind review of Courtyard by Marriott Exeter Sandy Park on Trip Advisor. At Marriott, our commitment to exceptional service and innovative design is unwavering, and your positive feedback validates our dedication.

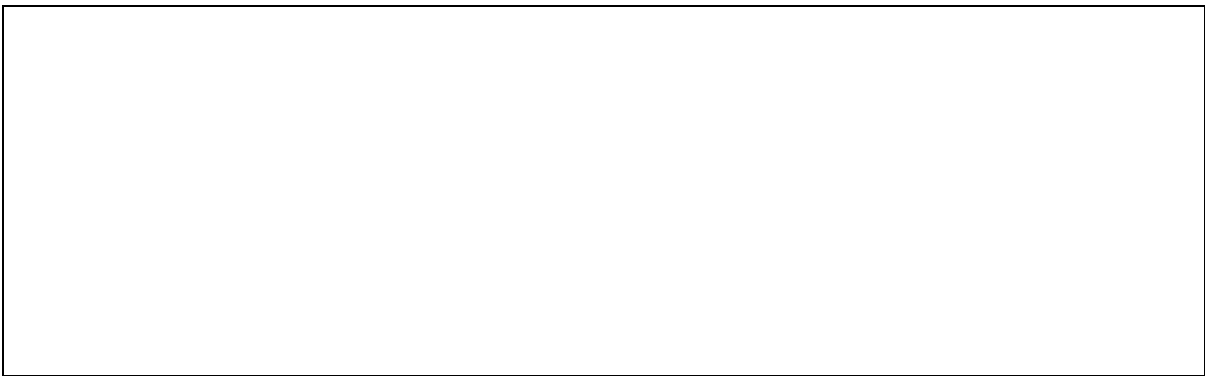
We've adhered to well-established principles of guest satisfaction and feedback acknowledgment (Smith, 2010). We believe that taking the time to express our gratitude demonstrates our genuine interest in our guests' experiences. Your feedback inspires our team and reinforces our excellence in the hospitality industry.

The core principle of "service quality" in hospitality, as defined by Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1985), is deeply ingrained in our operations. It is this very principle that guides us in ensuring that every guest's interaction with us is not just memorable but also truly worthwhile.

We eagerly anticipate the opportunity to host you once more, with the aim of not only meeting but surpassing your expectations on your next visit.

References:

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Screen shot of referenced Trip Advis

 Travellers' Choice

Uniquely placed next to Exeter Chiefs, Courtyard by Marriott Exeter Sandy Park hotel combines style and innovative design in a distinctive location. Whether you're in Exeter for business, pleasure or to watch a match, we provide all you need for a worthwhile visit.

Suggest edits to improve what we show.
[Improve this listing](#)

✓ Taxi service

Business Centre with Internet Access

Show more

Room features

Blackout curtains

Desk

Coffee / tea maker

Sofa bed

Show more

Air conditioning

Housekeeping

Cable / satellite TV

Walk-in shower

Letter of complaint response 500 words +/- 10-%

Mihai Alexandru Crisan
Front office department
Courtyard by Merriott Exeter
Sandy Park Way,
Exeter EX2 7NN England
01392 890999
12/11/23

Mr. Ronald Federick
17 Trinity Court
Swansea, SA12AR
12/11/23

Subject: Response to Your Recent Complaint

Dear Mr. Federick,

Wishing you good health as you read this message. We would like to extend our gratitude for sharing your concerns about your stay at our hotel on Saturday, August 26, 2023. We sincerely apologize for the disappointments and dissatisfaction you experienced, and we appreciate the opportunity to address these issues. Your feedback is invaluable, and we are committed to resolving these matters in a way that demonstrates our dedication to guest satisfaction.

We are sorry to hear that your breakfast experience on Sunday did not meet your expectations. A warm and appetizing meal is indeed a reasonable expectation for any guest, and we failed to deliver on that front. Our culinary team is dedicated to ensuring a delightful dining experience for our guests. We have immediately addressed the issue of cold and tasteless food with our kitchen staff, and corrective measures are being put in place to prevent any recurrence.

We are genuinely sorry to hear about the considerable noise disturbance you encountered during your stay, caused by a crying baby in a neighboring room. We understand that a peaceful and comfortable environment is a paramount guest expectation. Our policies are in place to manage such situations and ensure a tranquil experience for all our guests. We will review and reinforce these policies to prevent any future disturbances.

The cleanliness of your room, specifically the bath and toilet, was far from the standard we set for our guests. We deeply regret the unclean condition you found, and we understand the importance of maintaining high levels of hygiene for our guests. You can rest easy knowing that we're taking care of the issue with our housekeeping team. We're notifying them and conducting additional training and inspections to ensure that our rooms meet the highest standards of cleanliness. As a member of the front office department, I want to take full responsibility for the concerns you've brought to our attention. Providing a delightful and seamless experience for each and every guest is our top priority, and I'm sorry that we failed to meet your expectations. Your feedback is valuable to us, and we will use it to drive improvements in our service. Your feedback is a valuable resource that will enable us to grow and better serve our guests. In appreciation of your feedback and in the hope of restoring your faith in our services, we would like to offer you a complimentary two-night stay with us. We are confident that this time you will experience the high level of service and comfort that we strive to provide to all our guests. Please contact our reservations team to arrange your stay.

In case you have any additional inquiries or require further assistance, please don't hesitate to contact me through 01392 890999. Thank you for allowing us to address

your concerns, and we look forward to welcoming you back for an exceptional stay in the future.

Warm regards,

Component Three:

Contribution to Overall Module Assessment: 50% (1000 words +/- 10%)

Writing in essay format

Element 1 – Pre-Arrival

In the hotel industry, providing exceptional service revolves around a guest-centric approach. To achieve this, it's essential to understand the guest cycle, which includes four vital stages: pre-arrival, arrival, duration of stay, and departure. Managing each stage effectively is essential for guest satisfaction and the overall success of a hotel. This essay will engage with relevant and current literature to describe and evaluate the key elements required in managing these stages, supported by real industry examples. The discussion will emphasize the significance of personalized experiences, technology integration, and the role of staff in each stage.

The pre-arrival stage is the first opportunity to create a positive impression. It begins when a guest considers booking a stay and continues until their arrival at the hotel. Key elements in managing this stage include personalized communication, guest preferences collection, and anticipation of needs.

Personalized Communication: Engaging with current literature, Smith (2011) highlights the importance of personalized communication during the pre-arrival stage. Personalized emails or messages offering a warm welcome and information about the guest's stay can enhance the guest's experience. For instance, a personalized email may inform a guest that their favorite amenities have been arranged in their room, showing attention to detail.

Guest Preferences Collection: Gathering and utilizing guest preferences is crucial in this stage. The use of customer relationship management (CRM) systems, as discussed by Xiang, Du, Ma, and Law (2017), allows hotels to record and access guest preferences efficiently. For instance, if a guest prefers a particular pillow type, having it ready upon their arrival demonstrates the hotel's commitment to guest satisfaction.

Anticipation of Needs: Anticipating guest needs can lead to a memorable experience. The Ritz-Carlton is an industry example that excels in this aspect. They empower their employees to use their judgment to meet guests' needs. For instance, if a guest has a reservation at a restaurant, the staff may offer an umbrella if they see it's raining, enhancing the guest's experience.

Element 2 – Arrival

The arrival stage is the guest's first physical interaction with the hotel. It is essential to ensure a smooth check-in process, provide a warm welcome, and address any special requests promptly.

Efficient Check-in: An efficient check-in process is vital in managing the arrival stage. According to Kandampully and Suhartanto (2000), long wait times at check-in can lead to guest dissatisfaction. The use of mobile check-in and keyless entry systems, such as those offered by Marriott and Hilton, can expedite the process, allowing guests to bypass the front desk, reducing waiting times.

Warm Welcome: A warm welcome sets the tone for the entire stay. Frontline staff training is critical in delivering this element. The Four Seasons is renowned for its personalized welcome. For instance, if a guest is a dog owner, they may find a special dog-friendly welcome package in their room.

Prompt Resolution of Requests: Timely resolution of guest requests is crucial. Studies by Upadhya, Rasheed, and Singh (2013) emphasize that guest satisfaction significantly increases when requests are addressed promptly. Hotel staff should be empowered to handle requests efficiently. For example, if a guest requires extra towels, housekeeping should deliver them within minutes.

Element 3 – Duration of stay

The duration of stay is the core of the guest cycle and offers several opportunities for engagement. Managing this stage requires personalized service, quality dining experiences, and activities that cater to the guest's interests.

Personalized Service: Personalization continues to be essential during the duration of stay. As described by Wang and Wang (2018), data-driven personalization allows hotels to customize guests' experiences. For instance, if a guest enjoys spa services, the hotel may offer a complimentary spa treatment.

Quality Dining Experiences: Dining experiences are a central component of a guest's stay. The Hyatt's "Food. Thoughtfully Sourced. Carefully Served" program is an excellent example. This initiative emphasizes sourcing local, sustainable, and healthy ingredients for their menus. Guests appreciate this commitment to quality and sustainability.

Engagement Activities: Offering activities that cater to guest interests enhances their stay. The JW Marriott's "Culinary Classes" program is an example of engaging activities. Guests can participate in cooking classes led by the hotel's chefs, providing a unique and interactive experience during their stay.

Element 4 – Departure

The departure stage is the guest's final impression of the hotel. Effective departure management includes streamlined check-out procedures, feedback collection, and personalized goodbyes.

Streamlined Check-out: A streamlined check-out process is critical to leave a positive last impression. Self-check-out kiosks or express check-out options can expedite the process. For example, Hilton's digital check-out allows guests to settle their bills quickly through the mobile app.

Feedback Collection: Collecting feedback is essential for continuous improvement. Guests' comments can be gathered through various channels, including

online surveys and in-person discussions. InterContinental Hotels Group (IHG) utilizes post-stay surveys to collect guest feedback and assess their experiences.

Personalized Goodbyes: A personalized farewell leaves a lasting impression. The Ritz-Carlton is known for its commitment to guest recognition. Upon departure, a simple gesture like addressing the guest by name and expressing gratitude for their stay can make a significant impact.

Real Industry Examples: The incorporation of real industry examples has illuminated how renowned hotel chains are successfully implementing the principles discussed in this essay. For instance, The Ritz-Carlton's commitment to guest recognition and The Four Seasons' personalized welcome demonstrate the practical application of these principles in leading hotel brands. These industry giants have set high standards for personalized service, efficient processes, and staff excellence.

Conclusion

In conclusion, effective management of the four stages of the hotel guest cycle is a multifaceted undertaking that requires attention to detail, continuous improvement, and a commitment to guest-centric service. By embracing the elements highlighted in this essay—personalized communication, streamlined processes, and staff excellence—hotels can create memorable and satisfying experiences that result in guest loyalty and a sterling reputation. The hotel industry is in a constant state of evolution, and those establishments that excel in these key areas will thrive and continue to delight guests in the future.

To ensure satisfied guests and a prosperous business, it's critical to effectively manage the four stages of the hotel guest cycle. By exploring current literature, this essay has identified the key components necessary for each stage. Notably, personalized communication, efficient processes, and the staff's role are essential. Real-world industry examples have been provided to illustrate the practical implementation of these principles. By effectively managing each stage, hotels can create memorable experiences that lead to loyal, satisfied guests.

References

References

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