



BMIH6003

Managing Guest Service Operations

Hotel Placement

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Introduction

I completed my placement at Novotel Leicester, a four-star hotel located in the city centre, in the Housekeeping Department which is an essential contributor to the upkeep, comfort and appearance of the guest rooms and public areas, which contribute to overall guest satisfaction. The department collaborates with Reception and Maintenance to facilitate the smooth operations of the department daily, as well as giving a quick response to the needs of the guests. The Housekeeping Department at Novotel Leicester is composed of room attendants, supervisors and a head housekeeper who report to a well-formulated structure of management. Although the hotel has up-to-date facilities and well-developed procedures, I realised that the difference in the management styles had a direct impact on the motivation of the staff, cooperation, and service, in particular. As a result, the reflection examines the impact of leadership styles on employee motivation and the effectiveness of operations using theories on the Management and Organisational Behaviour course.

Main Body

Gibbs Stage 1: Description

In my posting to Novotel Leicester, there was an opportunity that was presented to me to learn something new pertaining to housekeeping. In fact, what caught my interest was that Ma-mpei was keen to make sure that she was maintaining a high standard in her line. Her concern with details to make sure that everything was in its correct place in the room was an indicator that she was applying efficient managerial techniques.

In my observations, what was evident was that there was a sense of coordinated function amongst members in the housekeeping staff. They had team briefs that were tackled by the manager concerning general jobs that had to be accomplished in a day. As a result, there was a sense of coordination which was made possible. In fact, there was smooth functioning amongst members. During my stay at Novotel apart from involving oneself in room preparation procedures, there was the chance to shadow Ma-mpei concerning housekeeping as a manager to learn more concerning room inspection procedures after room cleaning jobs. In these procedures, not only was there an opportunity to learn more concerning room cleanliness expected by the hotel's management but to learn more concerning details concerning room preparation for hotel guests. In some procedures, for example, those who acted well concerning bed-making or cleanliness tended to ignore details concerning coffee refills or replacement regarding some items like teaspoons. One case which was quite evident was

when Ma-mpei received a note from one of his staff members stating that she wanted to leave because she did not feel comfortable in that position. Ma-mpei's reaction was to hold a meeting with his staff to show them that it was crucial to treat new staff members positively in terms of integration into the field. He told his staff members to show a 'positive attitude' to 'capture' new staff members' attention. He was to 'make them' smile 'all the way to get them' to demonstrate 'COMPLETE' cordiality' to 'give them' a helping hand 'when possible.' Ma-mpei's qualities make her an efficient leader. In fact, her method concerning handling her staff members makes her quite efficient. She was quite knowing concerning positively supporting or encouraging staff members or constructively criticizing them. Apart from that fact, Ma-mpei was quite cordial to his staff members yet not to be underestimated. She was professional.

Gibbs Stage 2: Feelings

Initially, I was apprehensive and hesitant to share my contributions, as I was new and intended to make a good first impression. Over time, I began to feel more comfortable identifying the realities of the role of room attendants, the physical challenge of the work and the mental challenges of their work. I started to recognise how much management style influenced the culture of the workplace. When supervisors turned up the volume on their work in a collaborative and upbeat manner, the dynamic of the room changed completely (Cheon, Schneiders and Skov, 2022). Similarly, when management adopted a more prescriptive and target-driven style of management, the atmosphere of the room felt tense. At the end of the day, I felt that I was stuck between an appreciation of the value of the control of patience and an appreciation of management's ability to wield power, yet I also recognised the value of empathy and recognition of one another.

Gibbs Stage 3: Evaluation

The experience had its stated positives and drawbacks. On the upside, the management style employed was transactional, and it was effective in ensuring that performance remained on par with brand standards. Unlike when there was transactional leadership observed before, there was not only transformational leadership, but also supportive behavior observed in Ma-mpei's leadership. Ma-mpei was not only showing efforts to learn more about the individual but was eager to provide constructively critical feedback sessions and team-building sessions. These qualities made way for Ma-mpei to create a sense of belonging

not only to visitors but to staff members as well. In fact, there was one staff member who was willing to stay to receive additional assistance.

Housekeeping was efficient, and quality audits were often conducted successfully. On the downside, the management style was transactional, with a lack of participative communication or recognition of housekeeping performance (Uzundemir, Albattat and Ahamed, 2023). This lack of recognition undermined intrinsic motivation, which aligns with Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory (1959), determining that recognition contributes to intrinsic motivation, although salary or policies are motivated to prevent dissatisfaction. Following the Head Housekeeper's brief engagement in a transformational approach, like thanking staff for a job well done or discussing concerns openly, morale quickly improved. It was evident that flexibility in leadership style, i.e. finding the right balance between structure and support, was crucial to a prolonged feeling of motivation. This experience helped further solidify that the leadership style of a hotel leader heavily impacts how engaged an employee feels, and in turn, how satisfied the guest will be.

Gibbs Stage 4: Analysis

In the context of Management and Organisational Behaviour, the given situation illustrates that leadership style directly affects the motivation of employees, teamwork, and the overall performance of the services in the context of the hospitality operations. The Transactional Leadership Model focuses on structure, supervision, and performance-based rewards, which are applicable in routine jobs like cleaning rooms. Yet, used strictly, it makes the process of intrinsic motivation and creativity less prominent. Transformational Leadership, on the contrary, motivates the employees with vision, empowerment, and recognition attributes that are very critical in maintaining the morale of employees in a hard-working environment, such as housekeeping (Glover, 2024). The personal attitude of the Head Housekeeper towards transactional style reflected the Theory X of McGregor, which presupposes that the employees should be supervised to work effectively. In another case example, this was crucial in highlighting how the leadership in Ma-mpei uses not only Theory Y but Transformational Leading to instill trust amongst worker members. In addition to recognizing the efforts made by staff members and maintaining effective communication with staff members, Ma-mpei managed to instill intrinsic motivation amongst staff members. However, the favourable answer to instances of appreciation and freedom was in line with Theory Y, under which employees excel under trust and appreciation. Motivated employees were able to give a

higher quality output since rooms were done at a faster rate, and more consideration of the guest details was given, where as low morale caused a small lapse in service.

Gibbs Stage 5: Conclusion

This occurrence has highlighted the importance of my leadership style not only on employee morale and operational consistency but ultimately on guest experience. A transactional style is certainly no longer an efficient option, and we should incorporate transformational components to build trust and stimulate individuals to achieve performance outcomes. I started realising that, as a future hospitality manager, there should be instances where I allow my communication and leadership style to give precedence to organisational priorities over human needs (Kemrichard, 2023). To conclude, while I was considering this incident, I was able to connect theory to practice. This experience reinforced several themes from the course Management & Organisational Behaviour, particularly motivation theories regarding the fluidity of leadership types. I began to understand that my sincere expression of appreciation for colleagues, inclusion of the team in feedback and recognition, and empathy were not optional, but rather essential if we are to ensure service excellence is sustained in the hospitality operations.

Gibbs Stage 6: Action Plan

Leadership Training and Mentoring: Supervisors are to engage in short and practical training sessions based on transformational leadership styles, including active listening, coaching, empathy, and positive feedback (Susanto and Sawitri, 2022). CIPD states that leadership development will positively contribute to the level of staff engagement and retention due to better communication and trust. The skills would be provided to supervisors to make the working environment more supportive and motivating.

Recognition and Feedback System: Intrinsic motivation would be increased with the introduction of a monthly recognition programme, which would reward outstanding performance by way of peer nomination, guest compliments, and supervisor evaluation. In line with the Motivation-Hygiene Theory of Herzberg, recognition fulfils the senior needs of employees, which motivates pride and devotion to the provision of service excellence (Bailey, 2022).

Team contribution to the solution of problems: It would be necessary to introduce regular team meetings during which staff members can express their issues and suggest ways of

improving the workflow. This is a participative style that encourages inclusion, responsibility, and ownership (Belás Jr, et.al, 2024). All these measures would improve communication, morale, and productivity and boost the guest satisfaction scores and decrease staff turnover, which would in effect improve the well-being of the employees as well as the performance of the various departments at Novotel Leicester.

Conclusion and Development Plan

Overall, my experience at Novotel Leicester has equipped me with a useful insight into the connection between leadership styles, employee motivation, and service experience in the hotel industry. Then, by exploring the management relations in the Housekeeping Department, I started to comprehend that successful management is a trade-off between the transactional leadership needs of meeting and sustaining standards and the transformational leadership desire to promote engagement and recognition. After the end of my studies, I will operationalise my learning to improve my interpersonal and leadership levels in terms of training and direct experiences. I would hope to offer transformational leadership as my career path, which is characterised by open communication, empowerment, and benevolence as I plan my respective career journey. This is to ensure a working atmosphere where employees feel appreciated and motivated, which eventually will lead to employee health and well-being and the guest experience.

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