

BENEFITS OF MULTILINGUALISM AND THE IMPORTANCE OF LANGUAGE AWARENESS SKILLS

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INTRODUCTION



Effective communication plays a crucial role in the highly competitive hospitality business, since it directly impacts visitor pleasure and overall organisational success. The possession of language awareness and multilingualism skills by hotel staff is necessary in order to effectively cater to the varied requirements of visitors.

This talk aims to examine the advantages of multilingualism, with a specific focus on the contemporary European language Spanish as a representative case study. The purpose of this working document is to provide hotel managers at Diversity Hotel & Spa London with a tool to educate and empower their workforce.

Benefits of Multilingualism in the Hospitality Industry



The provision of multilingual workers in customer service has been found to contribute to an improved level of personalised and attentive service for visitors who possess diverse language skills. This, in turn, has been associated with increased levels of satisfaction and loyalty among customers (Gudykunst & Kim, 2003).



Enhanced Guest Relations: Proficiency in language can effectively mitigate cultural barriers, establish a sense of connection, and cultivate favourable interpersonal connections, all of which hold significant importance within the hotel sector (Spencer-Oatey, 2005).



The market competitiveness of hotels can be enhanced by their ability to accommodate a multilingual clientele. This advantage allows them to attract a broader range of customers from different cultural backgrounds, hence leading to increased income (Beauman, 2004).

Spanish: A European Language with Global Relevance



- The geographical distribution of the Spanish language encompasses a vast expanse, with a significant presence in both Spain and many Latin American nations. This linguistic phenomenon is characterised by a substantial number of native speakers, estimated to be around 460 million individuals. English is widely spoken in the United States, which underscores its significance as a language of worldwide importance for establishments such as Diversity Hotel & Spa London (Chua, 2018).
- Is Spanish Difficult to Learn?: Spanish is commonly regarded as one of the more accessible languages for individuals who speak English, mostly due to shared vocabulary and grammar features, particularly in the context of fundamental communication (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006).

Politeness a Business Context

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Examples of Polite Behaviour:

In the context of formal social interactions, it is customary to address guests with appropriate and respectful titles such as "Señor" and "Señora."

Employing formal language when engaging with guests as a means of demonstrating reverence.

Extending a cordial salutation in the Spanish language, such as "¡Buenos días!" (literally translated as "Good morning").

Instances of Impolite Behaviour:

Employing excessively informal language with visitors who anticipate a formal atmosphere.

The failure to employ appropriate titles and greetings when communicating with guests.

Integrating Language Awareness at Diversity Hotel & Spa London

1. **Staff Training:** The implementation of language training programmes is recommended to provide staff members with fundamental language abilities, specifically on greetings, common requests, and polite expressions in the Spanish language.
2. The subject of study pertains to language materials. To enhance communication and comprehension of vital information, it is recommended to offer bilingual materials, including signage and menus, to both staff members and guests.
3. The concept of cultural sensitivity refers to the ability to recognise, respect, and appreciate the diverse beliefs, values, customs, and practises The implementation of a training programme aimed at enhancing staff members' ability to discern and appreciate cultural subtleties is vital. This training should equip employees with the necessary skills to adapt their conduct and communication approach in order to accommodate the diverse preferences of visitors.
4. **Language Preferences of Guests:** The process of recording and monitoring visitor language preferences is implemented in order to customise and enhance future interactions.
5. **Establishing Effective Feedback Channels:** Developing Communication Channels for Staff to Gather Guest Feedback on Language and Communication Experiences



Conclusion

The hospitality sector necessitates the essential presence of multilingualism and language awareness skills. To optimise the experience of guests hailing from Spanish-speaking regions, it is recommended that Diverse Hotel & Spa London allocate resources towards staff training, provision of language materials, and fostering a culture of cultural awareness. These activities have the potential to differentiate the hotel in a competitive market, hence improving client happiness and overall performance.

References

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