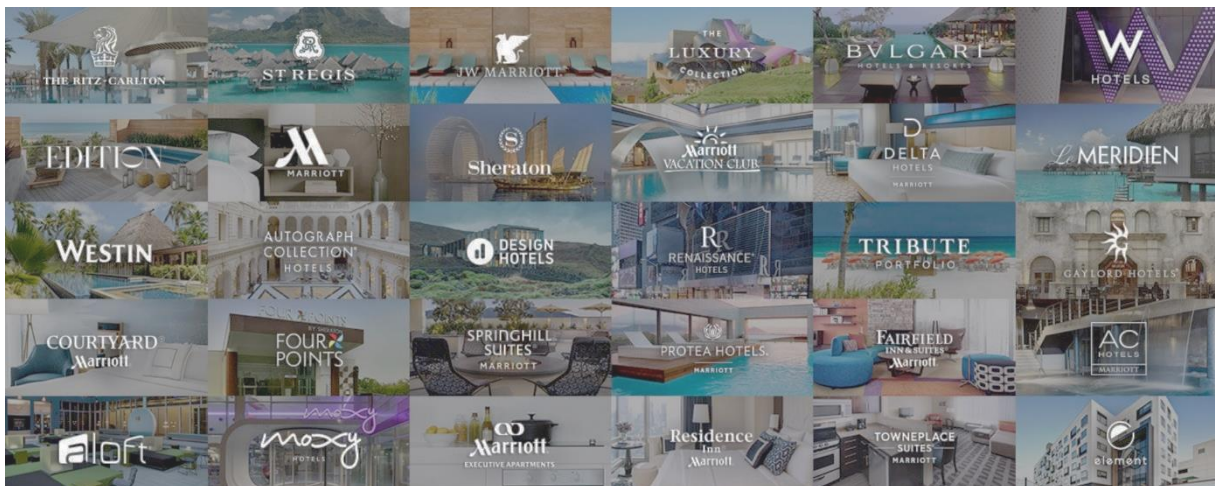




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Hospitality and Guest Service Management

Culture and vision regarding the Guest Service Management of Marriott



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Introduction

The aim of this report is to outline the importance of guest services and its components to a relevant organization. Furthermore, the continuous improvements and the adaptability of hospitality organizations to the dynamic environment of the chosen company would put emphasize on the importance of the flexibility regarding the hospitality industry. The chosen organization is represented by Marriott International and the report would narrow down the company overview, a management system referring to the manner that Marriott forecasts and actually adapts to the customers' demands and preferences. The customers needs are reflected by an analysis regarding the hospitality industry continued by a perspective of the service management quality in terms of delivering the service and the gap perceived by the expected service and the one delivered by the organization. The discussion would focus on the service provision, quality management in a continuous improvement context and how changing consumer preferences are in terms of adaptability of the hotel and impact of the guest service management.

Literature review

The hotel industry in UK accounts for 21bn GBP revenue with an occupancy rate of nearly 80% (Statista, 2018). With an increasing number of hotels worldwide, Marriott strives to achieve a higher market share alongside its competitors Hilton, Premier Inn, Travelodge etc. "Strategic management is a field of study that involves the process through which firms define their mission, visions, goals, and objectives, as well as craft and execute strategies at various levels of which firms' hierarchies to create and sustain competitive advantage." (Okumus, et al., 2010) Strategic management focuses on achieving the guest services goals through the resources available. The five dimensions of the service quality are identified within the attributes of:

- Responsiveness – it refers to the ability of the employees to adjust their response according to the guests' willing
- Tangibles – it relates to the appearance of the hotel and how appealing it is to guests
- Assurance – the ability of employees to ensure guests that they are capable of fulfilling their requirements
- Empathy – the ability of employees to resonate with the guests' needs
- Reliability – meeting guests' expectations and even exceeding them

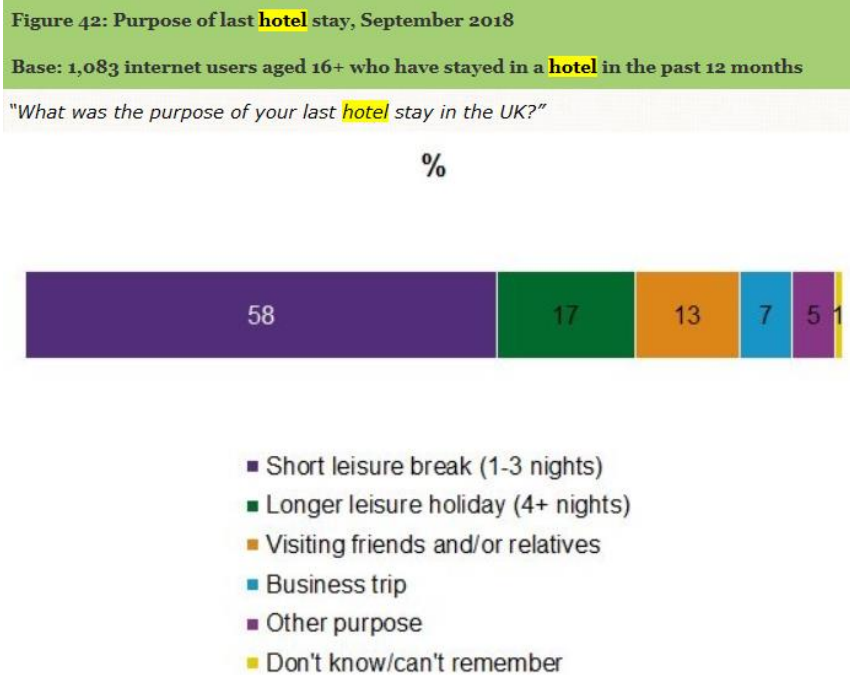
Moreover, the service management includes different key terms such as guestology, a term introduced by Bruce Laval. It refers to the study of guests – what they desire specifically by

also tailoring services to meet the future guests' expectations. Studying guests and designing the service from a guest point of view is what guestology is about. Moreover, Ford & Sturman (2018, p. 6) suggested that guestology also "implies that all the organization's employees must treat customers as if they were guests in their own homes." Instead of designing a project that would look perfectly organized from an outsider point of view regarding its structure, organizations should focus on the guest experience.

Marriott International has its headquarters in Washington D.C., America, and it was founded in 1957 as a business run by a family. The organization is divided into multiple brands as each and every brand represents a customer profile. The core idea relies in the diversity the hospitality chain represents. For instance, as each brand represents a customer profile, the organization is continuously seeking to satisfy each targeted profile. If J.W. Marriott would rely its services on a specific type of customer that would require certain services, the SpringHill Suites would offer apartments specific for a family holiday rather than a business trip. Marriott offers different types of services known as "service provision" which are related to lodging, food and beverage services, leisure centres and conference rooms for the business target market. The service provision is defined as "the act of performing a task for a business or person that wants or requires it in exchange for acceptable compensation. A business that specializes in some form of service provision usually needs to have qualified staff members on hand that are regularly available to perform the services that it offers to consumers." (Business Dictionary, n.d.)

Service management and guest's preferences

The market penetration of the hotel industry has been prominently active in terms of designing a brand for a specific type of customer. The behaviour of guests and how they perceive the hotel stays is represented in Figure 1 where the biggest percentage of guests were staying in hotels in UK for a short leisure break.



Source: Lightspeed/Mintel

Figure 1: Purpose of last hotel stay

While there are different types of costumers, there are also different generations that react differently according to their principles. For example, baby boomers would have different expectations rather than the generation X or Y. It is said that generation X has a bigger interest in the 'smart rooms' rather than the other generations. Hence, Marriott has created a partnership with Samsung and Legrand in order to design rooms to voice-control the devices and features of the new rooms. (Hertzfeld, 2017) The quality management system is represented by the continuous improvement in this area and, moreover, by the adaptation to the customers' needs reflected in the art of guestology.

In order to be able to successfully deliver the service expected by the guest, Marriott has ensured that the staff is trained properly by having each day a 15 minutes session of training with the purpose of excelling. Each and every organization has its culture, vision and mission. Marriott strives to "putting people first, pursuing excellence, embracing change, acting with integrity and serving the world." (Marriott, n.d.) To introduce a new employee in the Marriott's culture it needs time to accommodate with the culture and how to act and react to different problems. The conduit is taught in the base programmes designed by the HR managers. Moreover, before every opening, they are making sure that the employees are following a 30 days program to resonate with the brand visions. (HM, 2010)

The loyalty earned from the guests that are returning to the hotels of Marriott is rewarded through the Marriott Bonvoy where guests could be offered free nights, special member rates, free wi-fi and even a mobile check-in option to optimize the time spent at the front

desk. Marriott's program is the biggest rewarding program within the hotel industry as the organization is striving to reach the success by analyzing and understanding the guest perspective and preferences regarding an unforgettable experience.

Development of the hotel industry

As Wang & Wang (2009) stated, the globalization of the hotel industry is inevitable as people would like to have the same guest treatment in any country they are visiting. The spread of the American hotels worldwide and general management techniques are more and more demanded as the majority of the big organizations have now brands that identify themselves with a different customer profile. The complexity of the rapid changing environment has now emerged with exterior factors that have an impact on the experience of the guests. The development of technology and virtualisation in the concept of lodging is now trending and the competition for having a competitive advantage is arising. Factors such as technology, marketing, sustainable development and other external factors are influencing the adaptability of Marriott. If in the beginning it was a simple hotel where people could spend a night in away from the city, now this culture of studying the guests' behaviour, collecting data and analysing the decisions taken have stepped up into a next level situation. The centre piece that Marriott is focusing on, the guest, is the core component of sustainable system.

Conclusion

Delivering an excellent service would mean to emphasize the most with the guest by taking decisions on what the customer would like to have and see rather than thinking from a financial perspective as cost-cutting, a continuous improvement of the guest experience by monitoring the happiness of the guests from their check-in until check-out and leaving the property, hiring the right people that could represent the organization and would be able to deliver the service in the Marriott's culture etc. Hotels are stepping up and they are offering an enjoyable experience as innovations are being discovered. The process of delivering the services provided is done via the trained staff to create a bond between the company and guests whilst maintaining and strengthening it. For a branded hotel as Marriott, errors are not acceptable as they would revoke the authenticity and the pride they are claiming for an immaculate serving. For example, an unsatisfied customer who went to a Marriott hotel in Chicago would avoid going to a Marriott hotel elsewhere as she/he would consider that that was the culture imposed by Marriott and would recommend to others to avoid it as well. Another considerable example would be Bill Marriott who flew across the properties to remind the employees about the Marriott experience and about the Marriott message he was carrying. The visible process that Bill Marriott had been doing is a plus within the organization as he had been assuring himself about the smooth operations undergoing,

about the employees' happiness and to highlight his interest for the culture that he represented and still does. (Ford et al, 2001)

The continuous improvement of Marriott and other hospitality giants would further develop as the changing trends of behaviourism regarding the guest experience are changing constantly. As now the city breaks are the most preferred form of stay according to Figure 1, hotels need to adapt their services to this customer profile and to have a customer experience from a leisure traveller with a no longer stay than 4 days. Thus, special promotions and partnerships are being made between the organization and third-party businesses regarding the occupancy rate.

Marriott International is one of the leading organizations in the hospitality industry and one of the best companies in the hotel industry from a guest perspective point of view. Its focus relies on the preference of the customer rather than the financial concerns. Prioritizing the guest and his/her needs is what made up the recognition of Marriott. "While all services enterprises focus on service as the main product, the epitome of a service operation falls within the domain of the hospitality industry. The hospitality industry includes services in the areas of lodging, food service, travel, tourism, recreation, entertainment, personal health and fitness, attractions, social events, meetings and conventions." (Tesone, 2010)

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