



PROJECT PROPOSAL ON EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

Jumeirah Carlton Hotel



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Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is investigating about employee's engagement considering it from different sides. The report has been made for the Jumeirah Carlton Tower, international hotel focused on unique guest service. Considering *Atkinson flexible firm theory*, the report focuses on flexibility, describing its importance, a selection of different ways to applied it such as work from home, annual contracts, part-time positions and share jobs. The report shows hotels cases such as Hilton and Marriott where flebility is evaluated and promote it. It is also shown effects of lack of flexibility as in the HotelCare and the not efficient way to use such as Marriot before starting new programs in 2012.

Considering *Mendelow's grid*, the report highlights the power and expectation that internal and external stakeholders have to the hotel, and how the hotel influenced them.

The report reflects the importance of primary research to analyse employee's satisfaction, focusing on three main different methodologies to undertake it.

The report concludes with recommendations from the *HR Adviser* to improve employee's engagement.

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1.0 Terms of Reference

The general manager of *Jumeirah Carlton Tower* requested the report below undertaken on the 5th of June.

The purpose of this report is to undertake an investigation into an issue of employee engagement through theory and real-life cases.

The report has been compiled by the HR Adviser Francesca Biscosi, who will discuss, in the report, advantages and disadvantages of employee engagement, specifically about flexible working.

Date of Submission: 5th of July

2.0 Procedures

Secondary research contains procedures adopted to prepare the report includes sources of information:

- Text Books
- Websites
- Journals

3.0 Findings

3.1 Jumeirah Carlton Tower

Jumeirah Carlton Tower is a 5 stars hotel situated in Knightsbridge district in Central London. It offers 216 guests room which of 58 are suites, all the rooms have been refurbished with modern and sophisticated furniture and state-of-the-art technology. Dining is offered by Rib Room Bar & Restaurants which serves British cuisine, 450 wines and champagnes and late-night bar.

Furthermore, three private dining rooms are available for private functions, intimate gatherings, or corporate events. Club Room at The Peak Health Club & Spa offers healthy meals and drinks, balanced lunch buffets, as well as alcoholic drinks. The Spa offers a gym, Pilates and aerobics studio, sauna, steam room, 20 metre indoor stainless-steel swimming pool, and personal trainings.

Chinoiserie is a sophisticated lounge room, known for a special afternoon tea made by the chef Eric Lanlard. Jumeirah Carlton hotel offers many rooms where holding business meeting or events up to 700 people. (Jumeirah Carlton Tower, 2014)

Jumeirah launches a campaign called “Stay Different” which aim to deliver unique service to guests. Lately the hotel company is working on improving technologies and, it individually customizes every hotel based on their location and demand. (Arabian Business, 2007)

3.2 Issue of the Proposal

Employee engagement is affected by commitment, which appears when employees show passion, enthusiasm, participation, and involvement. Engagement requires integration of employees in the decision-making process, indeed, according to Marchington and Cox (2007), line managers should create engagement by practicing good management style, making right and fair choices and, establish relationships. According to CIPD (2007), psychological contracts are key to gain high performance at work. (M. Foot, 2011) Employee engagement could be achieved by improving employees’ satisfaction through flexibility. Nowadays employees want to have a balance between private life and work, however, guests demand hotels to expand time and services availability. (M. Foot, 2011)

In the mid-1980s Atkinson formulate a flexible firm theory, dividing firm’s workforce in core and peripheral workers. Core workers are employees from primary labour market, with specific skills for the firm, who are affected by functional flexibility which are related to market changes. For example, with the improvement of technology, teleworking positions are increased. A hotel can hire a wider range of people and cut cost of office accommodation and furniture. It shows flexibility to employees who need to be at home such as for maternity, reducing costs of traveling and time or needing of flexible hours. Negative aspects could be employee’s isolation feelings and employees’ dissatisfaction and turnover. Numerical and temporal flexibility are applied to peripheral workers which appears in annual contracts (cutting working hours unnecessary, payments, over-time; and employees would have more time for private life) part-time jobs, job share (easier to fill vacancies); fixed term contracts (increase of employees’ insecurity). (M. Marchington, 2012) Other forms of workers are people self-employed, working for agencies or other employers. General negative affects of this model are: absenteeism, decrease of quality and commitment and decrease of skills. However, hotel shows caring of employees who wished flexible work. (D. Torrington, 2009)

3.3 Good Practice of Flexibility

Hilton Hotel Corporation launches a new flexibility program which meets people's need to work at work. The program is called *Hilton@Home* and is within Hilton Reservation & Customer Care (HRCC), which is now able to attract more talented candidates.

Hilton hotel offers sales, reservation, and customer support position; the target of people applying for these positions are staying home parents, professional with two jobs, retirees, and students. Employees are now able to create their own schedule based on their needs, have online trainings and updates, though the use of chats they can communicate with the peers and maintain a team communication, in addition these positions are eco-friendly. (Walker, 2008)

In 2012 Marriott Hotel assessed a work-life program which focus on taking care of employees in different categories, such as flexibility. After listening to its managers, Marriott cut 50% of work that was considered "low-value" from them and it reduced schedules by 5 hours per week. (Sealey, 2018) Furthermore, now the program offers to all employees: flexible schedules, compressed work weeks, telecommute options and jobs share. (Great Place to Work, 2018)

3.4 Bad Practice of Flexibility

Employees, specifically housekeepers, of *Hotelcare* described the lack of flexibility and the strong abuse that every day they were living. Supervisors were giving them work overload, reducing the time to finish all the rooms. These women were experiencing constantly the pressure of micromanagement. Some of them requested lunch breaks paid, but the day after they were sent home, without being paid for that day. Finally, other housekeepers, if they could not finish the rooms on time because the guests were delaying their departure, they had to work extra hours and all unpaid. (Roberts, 2015)

Marriott Hotel, before introducing in 2012 the work-life program, was experiencing negative flexibility among its managers. They were having too many hours, around 50-60 per week, all compressed together, raising the amount of stress and tiredness. Because of technology inefficiency they were accumulating work to do, extending the workday until late. (Sealey, 2018)

3.5 Stakeholders

According to Stanford Research Institute (1963) stakeholders are “those groups without whose support the organization would cease to exist”. So, all the people or organizations who can be affected or influence hotel’s decisions. To analyse the success of a hotel’s performance, the hotel should analyse stakeholders impact and significance in the hotel process. In 1991, Mendelow created a grid to analyse the power and interests that different stakeholders have in hotel’s projects (Miano, 2017). In addition, individuals and organizations can be identified in external and internal stakeholders.

Internal stakeholders are shareholders, employees, managers, and Board of Directors. These groups are also defined as primary stakeholders and they have multiple interests in the hotel’s activities. Shareholders’ interest, as investors, is maximising the profit to have a return on investments. Employees influence hotel’s development by offering work and energy. In return, they expect flexible working, professional and personal development programs, high wages, and promotions. These expectations increase the labour costs, therefore are opposite to shareholders’ interests. Managers and Board of Directors are powerful because through their decisions can decide hotel’s activities, therefore, meanwhile managers aim to expand the hotel, they are working against shareholders interest of increasing their dividends paid through higher profit. Thus, managers would take decisions based on long-term goals which could determine a lower hotel value in the short term.

External stakeholders are customers, suppliers, business partners, community, and society. These groups are also defined as primary stakeholders and they can influence or be affected by hotel’s decision and activities. Customers influence the hotel’s development and grow as their demand is high quality of products and services, high customer service, and excellent value. To achieve customer’s satisfaction, the hotel need to invest in human and financial efforts which could also affect the hotel’s profitability and so shareholders’ interest. Suppliers and business partners are important for the hotel because they provide products and service, so with a strong partnership, the hotel can achieve more benefits and quickly. Mutually, suppliers and business partners’ interests are also having a long-lasting relation with promotions and advantages. However, these entities are affected by the hotel’s internal standards, laws, respect of environmental conditions. Community and society expect the hotel to improve their ethical, moral, and environmental values. They are affected by hotels activities as they bring people in the local area, therefore it improves local business. But all these activities imply financial and human resources and extra costs. (R. Florea, 2013)

3.6 Primary Research

Primary research is fundamental to analyse job satisfaction of employees in a hotel. This can be measured by using attitude surveys, different methods can be undertaken.

Questionnaire is a way to save time and reduce costs, as nowadays technology gives the opportunity to make questionnaire online, the process is fast and large number of personnel is not necessary. Questionnaires reveals quantitative data thus, they are easy and cheap to administer and analyse. Using standardize questionnaire, which have been already used and tested in other hotels, human resources can compare results and benchmarks against competitors. Frequency and the number of candidates can skew the results.(Nordmeyer, 2017)

Another method is the interview, which can be utilised in different ways. Standardized questionnaires are questionnaires with a pre-arranged schedule, so with same wording and same order. They provide quantitative data as these data are comparable among different interviews and they can show trends.

Semi-unstructured interviews are based on question without an order where the questions are worded differently, however they contain the same variance of questions. This type of questionnaire helps to customize more the question and give employees the opportunity to express themselves without compromising qualitative data.

Non-standardized questions give the opportunity to make a real conversation without categorizing employees, and it gives the opportunity to discuss issues considered more important to employees. This discussion is more revealing, but they are harder to compare and analyse, furthermore, they cost money and time to the hotel. (M. Marchington, 2012)

Focus group are part of interviews, but it consists in interweaving a sample of employees, who could have different hierarchical levels, who represent mutual issues concerning the hotel. The key of this method is that a focus group is informed and constructive but at the same time it stays confidential and the reach a larger amount of people selecting representative employees. (Armstrong, 2006)

Another method is observation which supplies qualitative data as it gives the opportunity to be part of the community, however, employees could change their behaviour feeling monitored, therefore an unobtrusive way is suggested. Anyway, this process is time wasting and it increase costs. (Job Analysis , 2015)

The proposal suggests using a combination of questionnaires and focus groups. As first step, a mandatory questionnaire should be sent to all employees. Trough categorizing employees, it is possible gaining quantitative data to compare to other hotels and against hotel's benchmarks. Successively, a focus group can be created, selecting representative employees. A good practice is being able of having depth conversation and make employees feel listened. Human resource has the possibility to highlight main hotel's issues. Focus group enable measures data and contemporary customize the questions.

4.0 Conclusion

The report highlights the importance of improving employee engagement in large hotels such as Jumeirah Carlton Tower, from which, nowadays, customers and employees request always more flexibility. The report shows how the use of flexibility helps cut costs and improve satisfaction, however, it can lead to absenteeism, extra work for the other employees, feeling of isolation etc. Flexibility can be applied in different ways depending on employees' and on hotel's needs.

Stake holders can be internal or external to the hotel. They are a fundamental, because through their hotels' expectations they keep the hotel working and making profit, on the other hand, some stakeholder's expectations could be in contrasts with other stakeholders'.

To analyse employees' satisfaction and how to improve or correct it, human resources should use primary research which can be done through different types of research such as questionnaire, interviews, and observation.

5.0 Recommendations

As Jumeirah Carlton Tower is a luxury and international hotel, it faces constantly challenges to meet the demand of flexibility of customers and employees at the same time. To have a hotel working 24h and with talented and motivated staff is important improving Jumeirah's flexibility. The HR adviser suggests offering more positions involving work from home as the *Hilton@Home* program has been introduced in Hilton's strategy. Thus, Jumeirah can meet many people necessities and, cut any costs related to office work and office furniture. Creating online chat and proposing online or physical meeting the hotel will avoid the potential feeling of isolation of some employees working from home. Part-time jobs and share-jobs are suggested to maintain a flexible service without increasing employee's stress. Jumeirah Carlton Tower needs to maintain a balance to keep a high profitability, which is in the hotel's and shareholders' interests, and being able to invests in goods and service for customers and in appropriate salaries, services, and programs for employees.

To analyse employee's satisfaction and their engagement, it is important make them feel part of the hotel and not just at number, however, the hotel needs data to be able to compare them through the years. A combination of questionnaire (quantitative data) and focus group (qualitative data) is suggested to optimize the research.

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