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2023529

Placement: Developing Customer Experience and Service Skills

BMGM5003

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Reflective Portfolio of Practical Tasks

Introduction

This reflective portfolio functions as a diary of observations and achievements produced during my placement. The portfolio is multi-faceted and reflects the idea of professional development from different sides of service and the wine market. The aim is to assess the experience by tracing what has been learnt and how the knowledge and skill gained is relevant to the career goals to be attained at the end such as determining client needs for the introductory meetings, or developing communication skills and viticultural knowledge (Busulwa, Pickering and Mao, 2022). Using anecdotal evidence and logical arguments, this portfolio would like to reveal the vast and tangible influence of experiential learning on individuals. It particularly shows that the exposure to the industry is instrumental in changing students' viewpoints, behaviours, and ambitions.

First Impressions

In the hospitality industry, there is a very famous phrase: "it takes 7 seconds to make a good first impression", and this is much more than a slogan; it is a guideline. The notion of maxim is a fundamental element of the primary customer relationship that shapes possibilities and the experience overall. By exploring this theme, I strive to dig down to the rich significance of first impressions. By combining both real life circumstances and facts from the industry, I will explore the initial stage of customers' interaction, which creates initial behaviours and attitudes. From my first-hand impression at the door, small things such as the tiniest interaction with a member of the team, can affect a guest, positively or negatively, for the entire duration of the dining or hospitality experience

(Cachero-Martínez and Vázquez-Casielles, 2021). Visual cues like a warm greeting, listening skills, and being professional are the things that really influenced the customer's path during my time at the restaurant. Further investigations displayed that customers possess very limited time, during which, they form quick and drastic impressions that will prove to be powerful enough to impact their ultimate satisfaction and repeat visits (AppDirect, 2020).

Consequently, a deep understanding of the nature of exchanges taking place during first contacts is crucial for golden delivery of service and satisfaction of the guest. My placement drove home the significance of the very first encounter with customers, underlining the fact that, in the end, it can lead to the establishment of an unforgettable experience and strengthen a customer's desire to make repeated visits (Academy, 2023). Nevertheless, by engaging in a deep thoughtful analysis and introspective, I aim to manipulate my approach to customer interactions and the quality of service delivered during my hospitality career.

Wine Knowledge

I have made good progress in improving my wine-knowledge and communication skills over the course of my placement. I can admit to not knowing a great deal about wines from the onset, but with a certain degree of diligence and exposure to the practical application of theories, my knowledge of wines has increased steadily (Hoyer and et. Al., 2020). With a reflection upon this situation, it has become clear to me that the relation helped to develop my own ability to interact with clients and coworkers effectively. Sharing of the same information was so scary in the first stage but it developed both my interpersonal skills and my ability to hold knowledge.

Through experience I have become more articulate than before and have learnt to present complicated notions in a way which makes them interesting and at the same time keeps the listeners engaged throughout speech based upon their levels of understanding of a particular issue. With this increase in skills and capabilities, not only are clients' experiences enhanced but also colleagues' confidence and credibility thus built (Inkling and Inkling, 2024). Besides this every detail of the wine list in its current totality help me with the growth opportunity. There are some methods to add variety and

keep pace with ever-evolving tastes and preferences while maintaining the loyal base that enjoys both time-tested favourites and the daring ones. With this aim in mind, I co-operated to improving the proposals by offering positive feedback. Having in mind an adequate articulation of convincing positions based on tendencies in the market and clients' feedback, the purpose of this was to direct the audience's attention to the top priority, which is the betterment of the wine brewed (Huang and et. Al., 2021). In essence, this meditation reveals that to better the wine education and knowledge, communication is the adaptation to ongoing education and flexibility. Identified through reflective appraisal and constructive participation as the key factors, I would like to contribute positively to ongoing improvement of the wine district and enable a better experience for patrons and force a good reputation for my future establishment.

Customer Communication Skills

Within the realm of my client communication work I have been quite the dynamo with the positive evolution of my skill set. In the first moments of my interactions with the consumers, I wasn't precisely certain how to start a conversation and the demands I would face. Unfortunately, most of time I had deficiency to communicate with the clients or colleagues. However, with the constant practice and feedback from clients and co-workers I improved, and I am now more confident and kinder. As I remember the development of my placement, several key changes in the way I approach to this process and in the ways of my actions pop up into my mind (Kuppelwieser and Klaus, 2021). I can highlight that I am now more responsive to collecting clues and features and use this knowledge to offer customers what they want. The heightened attentiveness is reflected in my increased awareness of demands and thus I can tailor recommendations to suit my customer needs, which ultimately increase the client and customer satisfaction levels. I have also become better at articulating ideas in a concise yet effective manner and shun away the unnecessary of using jargon to ensure audiences from different backgrounds accessibly comprehend the purpose.

Enaction and Interaction with my clients are boosted by being able to capture hard concepts and translate them into simple terms that facilitate inquiring and learning. Besides, the experience provided by the co-workers and the customers was the driving

force that turned me into having more professional qualities (Kushwaha, Kumar and Kar, 2021). This class has been a trigger that has led to positive reinforcement of my self-confidence and the drive to achieve more. Meanwhile, I was able to identify my growth portals through constructive criticism and to adjust my approach accordingly. This oral outlook indicates that affinity of client communication skills can only make a huge transformation. By listening to people's comments, using them to identify my strengths and weaknesses, and entering the fray at the right time, I have been successful in pleasing customers and meeting the restaurant's objectives. Within the hospitality field, I acknowledge that good communication is a key factor that leads to customer satisfaction and job satisfaction (Petty, 2024). It's for this reason that I am still determined to continue learning more and to build myself going forward.

Reflections

The process of working in a workplace for the first time, for me, was both a tremendous trip through the business world and a deep dive into my self-discovery. At the end of this journey, which I have been through, I have formed a very different view of the business world and myself. The major purpose of putting the issue down on paper is to point out which lessons were the most valuable and which moments were the most unforgettable for me personally. It should be noted that the enlightenment has proved that the hospitality industry is a rather dynamic one; this applies as the most surprising revelation (EHL Insights, 2024).

Surpassing customers' expectations and bringing joyful and unforgettable moments always brings excitement and fulfilment though just as well for customers as for businesses, but such moments also contain challenges and pressurised situations that demand resilience and ability to change (Pekovic and Rolland, 2020). Throughout the placement when I have been facing ups and downs, I have come to value the impact of a positive outlook on life and the importance of openness to change as a process that contributes to the development as a person. Additionally, through working closely with my colleagues and clients, I am reminded of the importance of empathy and affectionate communication when it comes to building long term relationships. I am convinced now that the presence of real human connection, whether it be a time of

conflict or educational conversations, is a vital ingredient to improve the experience in this world. Due to this, I am now able to summon high levels of self-commitment and self-responsibility towards both customers and coworkers.

Now I have realised the undeniable fact that my every action either upgrades or downgrades other's experiences, I will never compromise my attitude or stoke my craving for growing. I will aim to be a role model for others. Admittedly, I can say that time and time again there have been unavoidable episodes of frustration and doubt. This, though, does not override the fact that my placement has been useful and beneficial (Xu, Stienmetz and Ashton, 2020). It has confirmed my willingness to pursue knowledge and build capacity sensibly while evoking my commitment to the subject. Consequently, I am thankful for this experience and look forward to applying what I have learnt towards my future endeavours since there is no doubt in my mind that I can contribute and be part of the creative ambience in this industry.

Leading to the Future

The lessons learnt and the things I have been through under the placement have really been of priceless importance to me with respect to my professional goals. I have realised how much the ideas and gained skills have become part of my core values. My ability for early diagnosis and outperformance of client expectations, has consequently created contentment and loyalty which in turn boost the business (Techanamurphy et al., 2020).

Moreover, I have now gained a degree of knowledge about wine and expertise, which play an essential role in providing superior service to clients, hence improving their overall experience (Butcher, 2018). On the other hand, my involvement in these activities has demonstrated just how profound incorporating cohesion and teamwork into the attainment of the group's goals is. Through my relationship with colleagues and cultivating a cordial environment, I have come to understand how each team member should be utilised in the group's favour and to hurdle obstacles in a better way. Now I understand that my journey won't end here, and I still need to develop and grow as an individual. I would like to escalate my skills in areas such as strategic planning, financial

literacy and leadership. I have all the faith in my capacity to encounter my dream career by diligently seeking any professional development options that come my way.

Conclusion

This reflective portfolio emphasises what I can see as my own growth and improvement during the time of my placement. Over time, I could break down essential parts of the road like first impressions, different kinds of wine knowledge, customer interaction, introspection, and vision of the future, as I developed them one by one. Through this reflection, I have identified the parts that need further development and parts which I have already developed and now I can work on accordingly. Impassioned with this, is a more reflective consciousness of my paradoxical goal. I am undoubtedly going to apply these reflections in building my future career. My plans for my professional future include a dedication to excellence, further development, and other attainments in the name of progress.

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