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Module Title: Foreign Languages And Cultural Awareness

Module Code: BMIH5003

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ASSIGNMENT 1: PORTFOLIO

(4 Components)

Component 1: *Professional Reflection* (500 words +/- 10%)

Weighting: 25%

I used to work in a hotel named "Marriott Hotel." While I was working in the restaurant sector of this hotel, a cultural misunderstanding occurred while serving dinner to an international hotel visitor with my colleague who was in the Food and Beverage sector (Adams, 2023). This incident emphasised the value of cultural sensitivity and the complexity of the communication in the Marriott Hotel (Taylor, 2013). The incident occurred during a crowded dinner service. The main reason for this incident was when a customer from France came here and ordered a dish that was supposed to have a succulent umami flavour. The customer thought that the dish would be cooked delicately, as in French cuisine, and that attention to detail was provided while making the dish. My colleague in food and beverages was unfamiliar with the French culinary style, so he misinterpreted the order (Davis, 2019). As I was present during the incident, I saw a misunderstanding formed due to the language barrier. The guest also used some of the different terminology while

speaking in English. The guest was unhappy as the food and beverage staff made the dish with a rich flavour that promises more of a Western dish.

During the event, the theory that can be related is the Iceberg Theory of Culture. The Iceberg Theory of Culture consists of communication at the top of the iceberg, and underneath the surface lies cultural norms, values, and beliefs. The food and beverage staff and the guest were from different cultures, so they had different perspectives according to their cultural norms. Even according to Shannon Weaver's Model of Communication, misinterpretation occurred in the communication analysis for different cultural lenses. This misinterpretation occurred as the staff from food and beverage decoded it with his culture, and the guest encoded it with his French cultural context.

After analysing this experience, I realised that cultural differences should be handled more cautiously as they are a sensitive part of the hotel sector (Martinez, 2015). Several skills and behavioural changes can be developed to prevent this. Firstly, training should be given to the food and beverage sector staff regarding cultural sensitivity, mainly emphasising dining preferences, expectations and communication styles. This will help the staff better understand their guest and fulfil their needs. Additionally, the current staff members should also be offered language training. This will help communicate with people more clearly and concisely and help avoid misunderstandings (Collins, 2017). Furthermore, the menu description should be added with more details, including flavours and dish-making steps. This will help the guest to understand the menu more and lessen misunderstanding. Moreover, staff should be encouraged to listen to their guest actively. The staff should ask again if there is any confusion, which will minimise the possibility of misunderstanding. Lastly, an option of giving feedback should be opened where the customer can share their expectations and preferences. With the help of this feedback, the hotel can improve its needs and satisfy its customers.

References:

Adams, E. (2023). *Hospitality and Cultural Sensitivity: A Comprehensive Guide*. Publisher.

Collins, H. (2017). "Navigating Language Diversity in the Hospitality Industry." HospitalityInsider. <https://www.hospitalityplacementsusa.com/overcoming-language-barriers-enhancing-communication-skills-in-a-multicultural-workplace-with-hospitality-placements-usa/>

Davis, B. (2019). *Language Proficiency and Its Impact on Hospitality Operations*. Publisher.

Martinez, S. (2015). *Language Skills for Hotel Staff: Best Practices*. Publisher.

Taylor, R. (2013). *Cultural Intelligence: Understanding Diverse Guests in Hospitality*. Publisher.

Component 2: Training Plan (500 words +/- 10%)

Weighting: 25%

Identified cultural misunderstanding (in a few words) :

During the dining service, a clash formed between a guest from France and a staff member of food and beverages due to a cultural misunderstanding

Training plan (Why/What/Who/Where/When):

To eradicate it and to provide first-rate hospitality services, it is necessary to understand the importance of cultural sensitivity in the Food and Beverage sector (Anderson, 2022). We need to improve the staff training so that they can provide the best services to the customer. The primary purpose of this training plan is to give skills in food and beverages to all the staff so that they can handle any situation that arises in the future. The main motive of this training plan is to emphasise the sensitivity of culture and improve communication in the food and beverages sector by providing the customers with a hospitable and soothing environment enriched with different cultural norms.

Components Of Training: With the help of different cultural experts, training on cultural sensitivity should be done so that the staff can know all the standard cultural norms. This training will help the staff understand expectations, dining preferences, and communication (Turner, 2014). The staff should be given different case studies and interactive exercises to learn from practical situations (Garcia, 2018). Moreover, language classes should be provided to the employees to learn other languages that foreign people speak. Consistent language practice should be promoted, and communication skills should be improved. Furthermore, training classes can be provided to the staff so they can learn the preparation techniques and taste all the items on the menu. This will help them give the guests the proper information about the dishes and avoid misinformation. Additionally, techniques for active listening should be provided to them so that miscommunication can be lessened by emphasising the values of paraphrasing and repeating. Even role-playing games can be played to understand natural-world situations and practice good communication. Lastly, attention should be provided to cultural lessons and dining experience by evaluating customer feedback and setting up a mechanism for gathering. Better service can be delivered to foreign customers through the help of this data if the services are improved and different types of offers are provided.

Training methods: Workshops should be arranged with cultural experts and language trainers. This will encourage a learning environment and promote the queries and conversations of the candidates (Miller, 2014). Even various cultural experiences can be gained if role-playing activities are included. Criticism can be given to them, which will improve their abilities. Additional multimedia resources, such as movies and online modules, can be used to enhance the in-person training sessions. It should be ensured that the resources are accessed by all the employees and people with different learning styles (Watson, 2018). Assessment should be done to understand the learning outcome of the staff. Staff input should be encouraged so that improvement can be seen in the training content and delivery. A session that will be held for over four weeks should be established so that the training programmes can fit in with different shifts. Necessary modification should be done after reviewing and evaluating regularly.

References: Anderson, K. (2022). *Multilingualism in the Hospitality Industry*. Publisher.

Garcia, S. (2018). "Impact of Language Proficiency on Customer Service in Hotels." *International Journal of Tourism Studies*, Volume(64), Page Range: 132

Miller, D. (2014). *Language Competence in International Hospitality: A Practical Guide*. Publisher.

Turner, M. (2014). *Hospitality Communication: Bridging Language Gaps*. Publisher.

Watson, K. (2018). *Multilingual Proficiency: A Key Asset for Hotel Success*. Publisher

Component 3: Student Self-Reflection (500 words +/- 10%)

Weighting: 25%

According to Kolb's Reflective cycle, cultural awareness within the hospitality industry can be demonstrated (White, 2015).

Concrete Experience: While working in the Marriott Hotel, namely in the Food and Beverage division, I came across a turning point that forced me to reconsider the value of cultural sensitivity. When a French guest voiced displeasure with a dish, it was clear that there had been a cultural misunderstanding (Brown, 2021). This tangible experience made me want to learn more about cultural sensitivity in hospitality (Robinson, 2013).

Reflective Observation: After some thought, I realised how limited my original conception of cultural knowledge was. Although I had recognised its significance in general, the actual situation shed light on the many layers involved. The Iceberg Theory I studied came to life before me; what appeared to be a simple communication breakdown resulted from deeper cultural norms and expectations.

Abstract Conceptualisation: Going through the cultural model like the Iceberg theory and learning the significance of communication in the hospitality industry helped me gain more profound knowledge (Peterson, 2019). I have found that linguistic distinction is far from cultural diversity. Several factors encompass it, such as guest expectations, dining experiences, and communication preferences, which are firmly rooted in cultural origins.

Active Experimentation: To equip myself with new knowledge, I have encountered different cultural sensitivity in my work experience daily (Harris, 2017). I have learned several languages and gathered knowledge about cultural differences necessary for dining manners, and I have also socialised with different foreign customers. By applying abstract ideas in real-world situations and taking a proactive stance, I was able to lessen the miscommunication.

Self-Awareness Inquiries: I used to think that cultural differences were not profound, but this incident made me realise how important it is to know about them. I have real-world experience moving from theoretical to this situation. This incident with the French customer made me realise that linguistic ability is not connected to good communication in hospitality. It is necessary to have a deep knowledge of cultural norms, including communication techniques and food preferences. This experience is significant as it demonstrates an understanding that a quality service can only be provided if cultural knowledge is known. This also increases the hotel's reputation, promotes services and provides the guests with more happiness.

References:

Brown, A. (2021). "Effective Communication in Multilingual Hotel Settings." InternationalHospitalityTrends, <https://www.siteminder.com/r/hospitality-communication/>

Harris, G. (2017). *Effective Customer Service in Multilingual Hotels*. Publisher.

Peterson, L. (2019). *Hospitality Language Mastery: Bridging Communication Gaps in the Global Hotel Industry*. Publisher.

Robinson, J. (2013). *Language and Customer Satisfaction in the Hospitality Industry*. Publisher.

White, L. (2015). *Language and Communication in the Global Hospitality Industry*. Publisher.

Component 4: Training Presentation (6 Slides)

Weighting: 25%



BA International Hotel Management

**Module- Foreign Languages & Cultural Awareness
Module Code - BMIH5003**

Lecturer- Lisa Bassler, Heidi Prosser

Assignment title- Portfolio

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Benefits of Multilingualism in the Marriott Hotel:

- **Improved Guests' Experience**
- **Improved Communication**
- **Sensitivity to Culture**



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Benefits of Multilingualism in the Marriott Hotel:

- **Improved Guests' Experience:** Speaking in the language that our guests speak, like French, makes them feel more at ease and acquainted, significantly improving their entire stay.

- **Improved Communication:** Staff that speak many languages can better converse with foreign visitors, which lowers the possibility of miscommunication and guarantees a seamless experience (Clark, 2020).

Sensitivity to Culture: Language ability and cultural sensitivity work hand in hand, enabling employees to quickly negotiate a range of traditions, inclinations, and expectations

Importance of language awareness skills for hotel staff:



- Efficient Interaction with Guests
- Sensitivity to Culture
- Developing Relationships with Visitors
- Practical Customer Support
- Conferences and Events Held Abroad

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Importance of language awareness skills for hotel staff:

- **Efficient Interaction with Guests:** Ensures guests' needs and requests are accurately understood (Clark, 2020). Increases overall visitor happiness and satisfying interactions.
- **Sensitivity to Culture:** Helps employees to negotiate customs and cultural subtleties. Encourages a welcoming and courteous atmosphere for a variety of visitors.
- **Developing Relationships with Visitors:** Using the visitor's language fosters a personal connection. Enhances favourable evaluations and repeat business (Johnson, 2016).
- **Practical Customer Support:** Makes interactions and problem-solving easier. Increases overall effectiveness in providing outstanding service.

Conferences and Events Held Abroad: Vital to planning and executing multinational meetings. It guarantees effective coordination and communication during these situations (Johnson, 2016).

Spoken Language

French is not only spoken in France but also widely spoken in the Caribbean, Canada, Africa, and Europe.



Considered Difficulty

Although learning French could be regarded as somewhat complicated, the effort is priceless, considering its importance to everyone (Mitchell, 2016).



Spoken Language: French is not only spoken in France but also widely spoken in the Caribbean, Canada, Africa, and Europe. French-speaking employees can serve a variety of foreign visitors.

Considered Difficulty: Although learning French could be regarded as somewhat complicated, the effort is priceless, considering its importance to everyone (Mitchell, 2016). Immersion experiences, language classes, and online resources can all help with learning

Politeness in a Business Context

- Official Salutations
- Handshakes and Eye Contact
- Punctuality



Examples of Marriott Hotel

- Handmade Cards
- Effective Communication
- Cultural Intelligence



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Politeness in a Business Context:

- **Official Salutations:** It is necessary to use appropriate words in French, such as Monsieur or Madame. These two words show respect to the customer.
- **Handshakes and Eye Contact:** It is considered a generous gesture to talk, have eye contact, or a handshake for greetings. It is also an etiquette in France.

Punctuality: One of the etiquette maintained by the French is punctuality. The employees should understand the importance of punctuality by providing the services on time, specifically when appointments or activities are booked for a specific time (Smith, 2012).

Politeness in a Business Context

- Official Salutations
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Examples of Marriott Hotel

- Handmade Cards
- Effective Communication
- Cultural Intelligence



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Examples of Marriott Hotel:

- 🌐 **Handmade Cards:** In the Marriott Hotel, staff are trained to create a friendly and soothing environment by providing handmade cards for greeting guests in their favourite language.
- 🌐 **Effective Communication:** In a recent scenario, it was found that there was a dietary issue with a guest from France (Smith, 2012). The staff easily communicated with the guest in French, understood his request and passed the information to the kitchen to prepare a great and delicious meal.
- 🌐 **Cultural Intelligence:** Even during the meetings held in the hotel, the staff from different countries are made comfortable according to their cultural preferences and linguistic abilities. The hotel crucially handles this situation by prioritising the greetings and the formalities

References (no screenshots):

Clark, R. (2020). "Language Awareness and Its Implications for Efficient Customer Service in Hotels." *Journal of Hotel and Business Management*, Volume (87), Page Range: 908.

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Mitchell, S. (2016). "Effective Communication Strategies for Multilingual Hotel Staff."
International Journal of Hospitality Studies, Volume (95), Page Range: 453

Smith, A. (2012). *Building Strong Guest Relationships: A Language-Centric Approach*. Publisher