

THE IMPORTANCE OF EFFECTIVELY MONITORING GUEST SERVICE STRATEGIES



Student Name : Flor Yasmin Perez Paula (2226712)

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Module Lead: Charlotte Joyner

Executive summary

This report examines effective monitoring of guest service strategies as a key priority for hospitality firms seeking to deliver exceptional customer experiences. Proactive monitoring of online reputation and internal service culture allows hotels to identify issues quickly and take corrective action. Regular online listening provides insight into customer sentiment and feedback. Leading hotels use tools to monitor review sites and social media, enabling rapid response to negative reviews. Meanwhile, gauging guest satisfaction through surveys and mystery shops helps assess service standards. Monitoring employee engagement is also crucial, as staff drive service culture. The report recommends hotels invest in reputation software, gather multichannel guest feedback, empower staff, and link rewards to service KPIs. With vigilant monitoring and agile response, hotels can refine service processes to exceed expectations, boost loyalty and outperform competitors. But they must take an integrated approach across reputation, culture, technology and employees to continually improve service quality.

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Introduction

In today's highly competitive hospitality sector, delivering excellent service is imperative for attracting and retaining guests in a crowded marketplace. With countless accommodation options, travelers can easily go elsewhere if a hotel provides a poor experience. This makes effective monitoring of guest service strategies a crucial priority. By keeping a pulse on key service indicators, hotels can identify potential issues in real time and take swift action to continually refine and improve the customer experience.

This report examines two core areas hotels must monitor to uphold impeccable service standards: online reputation management and internal service culture. Careful tracking of these factors allows hotels to safeguard their brand, meet guest expectations, and build loyalty. The analysis will highlight approaches for actively listening to customer feedback, measuring satisfaction across touchpoints, and addressing pain points or failures. Examples from industry leaders will showcase how proactive monitoring enables quick response when problems arise.

Effective monitoring requires channels to capture guest feedback, metrics to gauge satisfaction, and tools to analyze and act on insights. This enables a culture of continual service improvement, driven by data and dialogue with customers. With vigilant oversight of reputation and service delivery, hotels can rapidly resolve issues to provide positive guest experiences that exceed expectations. This builds brand affinity and repeat business critical to success.

Main Findings

Reputation Management

Managing online reputation has become critical in hospitality with the rise of review sites like Tripadvisor. With reviews and feedback shared in real-time, a hotel's reputation can be impacted significantly by the online opinions of past guests. Monitoring online sentiment and responding swiftly allows hotels to protect their brand image.

Monitoring Online Reputation

The priority is regularly monitoring online review sites, social media, and other platforms for mentions of the brand and property. Software tools like Revinate and ReviewPro allow automated monitoring so hotels get real-time alerts when reviews are posted. Dashboards track overall sentiment and scores, enabling hotels to quickly see changes and negative feedback requiring a response.

While high star ratings are ideal, even positive reviews should be analyzed for clues on improving service. Marriott pays attention to constructive feedback in 5-star reviews indicating areas that exceeded expectations, to replicate those wins.

Response Strategies and Case Studies

To safeguard reputation, hotels must respond to online reviews, especially negative commentary. The best practice is to respond within 24 hours, before damaging views spread. The response should apologize, show empathy, thank the guest for feedback, and detail how the issue will be resolved.

Accor Hotels actively monitors brand image and reputation through online listening. It uncovered a serious service problem at a Pullman hotel based on negative sentiment. In response, it took targeted action to retrain staff at that property to turn service around (Qualtrics, 2022).

Hilton Honors proactively engages guests for direct feedback after their stays. This allows issues to be resolved before they ever appear publicly online. Members also get points just for providing feedback.

Service Culture

A hotel's service culture encompasses staff, processes, and systems shaping the guest experience. Regular measurement of guest satisfaction and engagement of employees provides insights to refine service delivery.

Gauging Guest Satisfaction

Hotels should measure guest satisfaction across multiple touchpoints to gain holistic insights during booking, arrival, stay, departure, and post-stay. Different metrics can be captured at each stage.

Guest surveys are a prime tool. Properties under Rosewood Hotels conduct daily Guest Experience Index surveys to gauge satisfaction and identify problems like cleaning or amenities (Barsky & Nash, 2022). The RitzCarlton sends an automated survey after each stay asking if the hotel met or exceeded expectations.

Mystery shoppers also provide objective insights when paired with guest surveys. Large brands like Hilton have sophisticated secret shopper programs that cover all properties. Third-party services can also be leveraged.

Monitoring Staff

Frontline staff are critical to delivering service standards. Monitoring employee satisfaction through surveys and focus groups provides valuable insights into issues impacting service. Poor employee engagement often correlates with lower guest satisfaction.

For example, the SIXTY Hotels chain saw guest satisfaction fall as employee burnout rose. Surveying staff revealed the culprit work work-life balance. SIXTY enacted changes to restore work-life balance based on employee feedback, which subsequently drove guest satisfaction gains (CultureNext, 2022).

Ongoing Training

Regular ongoing training ensures staff have the skills to reliably deliver quality service. Training should evolve based on guest feedback and observed service gaps.

Rosewood Hotels has an award winning customer service training program that instills its unique service culture in new hires and through ongoing reinforcement. Staff document guest preferences which are digitally archived to personalize repeat visits (Powers, 2020).

Four Seasons Hotels trains all employees in its legendary service ethos from day one. However ongoing refreshers, lineup training, and daily debriefs continually reinforce skills. Its focus on grooming top talent leads to deep employee engagement (Shirazi, 2022).

Conclusion and Recommendations

In conclusion, vigilant monitoring of reputation and service culture enables hotels to rapidly identify and resolve service failures. Though expensive, investments in monitoring tools and processes pay dividends through higher guest satisfaction, positive reviews, and repeat business. Hotels must take an integrated approach across people, systems, and departments to ingrain a culture of continual service improvement.

Key recommendations include:

Invest in online listening software and set up alerts for brand name mentions. Routinely monitor platforms.

Send post-stay surveys to every guest and incentive response. Measure satisfaction across the whole journey.

Conduct mystery shops regularly to get unbiased insights into service gaps.

Enable staff to resolve complaints without manager signoff to speed response.

Train service culture in onboarding then reinforce continually with refreshers and celebrations.

Link employee rewards and advancement to guest satisfaction metrics.

With comprehensive monitoring and quick action on insights, hotels can identify and resolve service issues before reputation and loyalty are impacted. Proactively listening to guests and employees allows hotels to refine processes and continuously improve service standards. This builds brand affinity and repeat business over the long term.

Conclusion

This report has demonstrated that effectively monitoring key service indicators is imperative for hospitality firms aiming to deliver consistently exceptional guest

experiences. Careful tracking of online reputation and internal service culture provides the insights needed to rapidly identify and address any deficiencies before customer satisfaction is impacted.

By taking a proactive approach to monitoring through online listening, guest surveys, mystery shops, and employee feedback, hotels can spot negative trends in the making and take swift corrective action. Ongoing monitoring is essential because customer expectations are constantly changing. Regular analysis of service metrics allows hotels to continuously adapt and improve.

Leading global hotels invest substantially in monitoring programs because they understand happy guests drive revenue growth. Resources dedicated to monitoring reputation, reviewing feedback, and analyzing service metrics yield valuable data to enhance processes, training, and facilities. This breeds a culture focused on the guest.

In conclusion, robust monitoring combined with agile response to insights is crucial for upholding service standards over the long term. Hotels that consistently deliver above-expectation experiences reap the rewards of brand affinity, positive word of mouth, and repeat business. This drives market share gains over competitors. With vigorous oversight and continuous improvement, hotels can excel at service quality to succeed in today's ultra-competitive hospitality industry.

Recommendations:

To optimize monitoring for service excellence, hotels should:

Invest in automated reputation management systems to track online reviews and social media in real time. Designate staff to monitor dashboards and rapidly respond to emerging issues.

Conduct multi channel guest surveys at key touch points from booking to poststay. Offer incentives to boost response rates and gain comprehensive feedback.

Perform mystery shops once a month using trained internal staff or third-party services. Ensure all aspects of the guest journey are evaluated objectively.

Survey staff quarterly on engagement and satisfaction. Probe on areas impacting their ability to deliver good service.

Empower all staff to resolve guest complaints within defined limits without manager approval. This speeds recovery.

Link employee rewards and career advancement to guest satisfaction metrics. This enhances accountability.

Continuously refreshed service skills through onboarding, daily lineups, and ongoing training informed by guest feedback.

With integrated monitoring across technology, people, and processes, hotels gain complete visibility into the end-to-end service experience. This enables rapid identification and remediation of failures to continually exceed guest expectations.

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