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Student Learning Log

Within the Student Learning Log, this report aims to provide a concise and comprehensive overview of the ongoing placement at Premier Inn Croydon Hotel, encompassing vocational development, self-development, and academic growth. This reflective account will delve into various aspects of the student journey, including task management, effective communication, proactive problem-solving in the workplace, and the practical application of acquired knowledge.

Premier Inn Hotels, initially established by the Whitbread Company in 1987 to compete with Travelodge, underwent expansion in 2004 when Whitbread acquired "Premier Lodge." This strategic acquisition facilitated the growth of their existing business, resulting in the establishment of "Premier Travel Inn." Three years later, in 2007, the brand was renamed as Premier Inn (Marketing, 2004, <https://www.whitbreadcareers.com/our-brands/premier-inn/>)

In terms of vocational development, this section will present fundamental concepts pertaining to the placement experience. Premier Inn East Croydon, boasting 168 rooms, serves as a hotel catering to the travel, accommodation, and dining needs of its esteemed clientele. (www.premierinnhotels.ro) The hotel's dynamic team comprises individuals from diverse nationalities, including Romanians, Indians, British, Poles, Hungarians, and Africans (Whitbread Careers, n.d.). This inclusive and multicultural environment has fostered a sense of comfort and belonging within the organization, ensuring that all interested individuals are welcomed and embraced as valued members of the team.

During the past six weeks, I had the invaluable opportunity to immerse myself in various departments of the Premier Inn Croydon Hotel, with particular emphasis on the restaurant division. While I harboured an inherent curiosity to explore each department, I gravitated towards the restaurant area due to its significance as a space where guests spend considerable time and willingly engage in conversations, sharing their perspectives on the hotel experience. It is within this dynamic setting that I can glean insights from both positive and negative encounters, thus enriching my learning process.

Engagement in the activities within the hotel has been an immensely rewarding experience for me. I have been actively involved in various tasks and have garnered commendations from both the Manager and fellow team members. This positive feedback not only elicits a sense of personal satisfaction but also reinforces my conviction that I am making a meaningful contribution. From the very outset, I have felt an inherent sense of belonging and camaraderie among the team members, further solidifying my integration into the collective unit.

Self-reflection:

The Premier Inn East Croydon Hotel has demonstrated a commendable level of quality in my assessment. From my perspective, the paramount factors that contribute to a satisfactory hotel experience encompass the cleanliness of the premises, the culinary offerings, and the standard of customer service. I am pleased to report that within the context of Premier Inn East Croydon, these crucial aspects have been consistently met and surpassed my expectations. The hotel has maintained a commendable level of cleanliness throughout its entirety, ensuring a pleasant and hygienic environment for guests. Furthermore, the culinary offerings have been of high quality, and the customer service provided has been exemplary, creating a positive and satisfying experience for guests.

The restaurant area holds significant importance within a hotel setting, given its multifaceted nature. Acting as the starting point for guests' day with breakfast and concluding with dinner, it assumes a pivotal role in shaping their overall experience. In my view, it should be considered the epitome of cleanliness within the hotel, second only to the kitchen area. During my time at Premier Inn Croydon Hotel, I discovered that these expectations were met and exceeded. Both the kitchen and the restaurant were meticulously maintained, ensuring a clean and hygienic environment. The restaurant offered a generous breakfast buffet and an extensive menu for other meals, showcasing the hotel's commitment to providing ample dining options for guests. The level of service provided was satisfactory, and from my perspective, the conversations with customers played a central role within the restaurant experience. By emphasizing the importance of the restaurant area, its cleanliness, and the significance of customer interactions.

During my placement, I observed several operational issues arising during service time, which unfortunately affected not only the restaurant but also other departments within the hotel. A recurring problem was the understaffing of personnel, leading to difficulties in maintaining adequate coverage. In response to this issue, the Manager made the decision to redistribute team members across departments, such as housekeeping staff assisting in the restaurant and receptionists also working in the restaurant and housekeeping. In some instances, when the restaurant had sufficient staff for service, employees were required to perform housekeeping tasks, including removing soiled linen from beds and collecting room garbage. This arrangement raises concerns regarding the integrity of the hotel's operational system.

One significant consequence of this redistribution is the potential contamination of food from the buffet by bacteria present on team members' clothing as they switch between departments. Customers easily notice that the individuals serving them and handling food from the kitchen are also involved in cleaning rooms. Additionally, the staff members are required to move from one department to another, including interruptions to the breakfast service for reception-related tasks such as checking guests in and out. These multifaceted responsibilities can lead to confusion among employees, potentially causing dissatisfaction and turnover. Some employees may prefer to work

exclusively in one department, such as the reception, rather than being involved in both reception and food and beverage operations. These issues pose significant challenges both for the company and from the customers' perspective.

In my assessment, a viable solution to address the issues would involve the hiring of additional staff members. Specifically, it would be beneficial to hire a dedicated receptionist for the day shift, at least until 12 am, when breakfast service is typically concluded. Additionally, the recruitment of two more restaurant team members who can rotate shifts would prove advantageous. By implementing these measures, there would no longer be a need to assign housekeeping members to restaurant service or require waitstaff to cover reception duties. The working schedule for the breakfast period currently spans from 7 am to 2 pm. However, by concluding the shift at 12 am, once breakfast service is complete, waitstaff would no longer be required to remain on duty. By adjusting their working hours, the company would have the opportunity to hire an additional part-time employee who could provide valuable support to the restaurant team.

These proposed solutions will be brought to the attention of the Hotel Manager during upcoming discussions in the following weeks. By presenting these suggestions, it is hoped that the hotel management can recognize the benefits of increasing staffing levels and explore potential avenues for improvement.

Academic Development:

As part of my academic development, I have identified several key skills that I aim to cultivate during my placement. These skills encompass self-management and personal growth, effective task management, the ability to proactively address workplace challenges, strong communication skills, and the practical application of acquired knowledge.

Self-management and development are essential skills that enable individuals to take ownership of their responsibilities, set goals, and continuously strive for personal growth (Peter Honey, 2008). By honing these skills, I aim to enhance my ability to prioritize tasks, manage my time effectively, and maintain a high level of productivity throughout my placement.

Task management is a critical competency that entails organizing and prioritizing tasks to ensure efficient completion. By developing this skill, I aim to enhance my ability to handle multiple responsibilities, meet deadlines, and maintain a systematic approach to my work.

Applying initiative in workplace problems involves the ability to identify and address challenges proactively. By cultivating this skill, I aim to become a proactive problem-solver, contributing to the smooth operation of the hotel and enhancing overall productivity.

Effective communication is indispensable in any work environment (Video Education Australasia, 2010). By improving my communication skills, both written and verbal, I aspire to become an adept communicator, capable of conveying ideas clearly, collaborating effectively with colleagues, and ensuring excellent customer service.

Lastly, the application of knowledge is a fundamental aspect of academic development. By actively applying the knowledge and concepts learned in my academic studies to real-world situations within the hotel setting, I aim to deepen my understanding and enhance my practical skills.

Through focused attention on these chosen skills, I am committed to continuous academic development and professional growth during my placement.

References:

Effective Communication in Business, (2010), Video Education Australasia.

Makematic, (2019), 4Cs. [3.4], Communication: How having good listening skills helps you communicate.

Peter Honey, (2008) , 'Strengthen your strengths: a guide to enhancing your self-management skills'.

<https://www.whitbreadcareers.com/our-brands/premier-inn/>

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