

Hotel Placement – Food and Beverage Operation

Name: Jusna Khanom
Student ID number: 2218814
Module title: Hotel Placement – Food and Beverage Operation
Module code: BMIH6002
Lecturer's name: Kathryn Roberts
Date: 7th March 2025
Word Count: 1371

I can confirm that ChatGPT was used for research purposes

Introduction

This reflective journal analyses my placement at the Delta by Marriott Newcastle Gateshead, using Gibbs' Reflective Cycle (1988) as a framework. During the placement, I spent time in the Food and Beverage Department, gaining valuable insight into its guest service operations and daily management.

The Food and Beverage (F&B) department plays a crucial role in the overall guest experience at Delta Hotels. It is responsible for delivering high-quality service across self-service hot and cold breakfasts, dining, room service, event catering, and the Cast Iron Bar and Grill (Marriott, 2025).

My Learning Objectives:

- Observe Restaurant and Bar Operations - Understand food service management, including table settings, order-taking, and kitchen coordination.
- Enhance Teamwork Skills - Collaborate with kitchen, front-of-house staff, and managers to ensure efficient service delivery.

Section 1: Reflection on Experience and Personal Development

Returning to the food and beverage (F&B) department for my work placement was an exciting opportunity, as it had been my favourite department during my first-year work placement. I was particularly hoping for a large-scale event similar to the Indian wedding I had experienced before, where the vibrant atmosphere created an unforgettable experience.

Returning to the hotel, I was pleased to see familiar faces among the staff. In an industry notorious for high turnover (Dogru et al., 2023), this reflects Marriott's exceptional retention rates suggesting a positive work environment and effective leadership, validating their well-known motto: "Take care of associates and they will take care of the customers" (Marriott, 2025). This aligns with Yukl's (2013) emphasis on leadership in driving staff motivation and service excellence.

I developed key work-based skills such as time management, teamwork, and problem-solving. Assisting with inventory checks and stock management provided me with a deeper understanding of operational logistics. However, I also encountered challenges, particularly in managing last-minute large bookings and addressing guests' dietary requirements.

The fast-paced nature of breakfast services reinforced the importance of multitasking and attention to detail. I learned to simultaneously manage guest orders, replenish the buffet, and clear tables, demonstrating a notable improvement in my ability to remain calm under pressure. Kandampully (2016) highlights effective communication and teamwork are fundamental in the hospitality industry, as they directly impact service efficiency.

While I proactively maintained service standards, such as rearranging the dining area to accommodate a large group, I recognised areas for further development. Such as balancing the right staff levels for peak periods is crucial to avoid overstaffing costs and understaffing issues that compromise service. Furthermore, understanding the importance of first aid and PPE awareness, particularly in relation to minor guest injuries during cleaning tasks – like burns from the toaster or cuts whilst clearing glassware – is essential in contributing to my growth as a competent and proactive hospitality professional.

Section 2: Critical Analysis of Work-Based Skills and Technical Knowledge

One of the most significant skills I strengthened was clear and professional communication. Mercier (2024) states clear and professional interaction was essential when managing guest requests and collaborating with colleagues. For example, I ensured safe preparation of meals for a guest with a severe nut allergy requiring precise communication with the kitchen team to prevent cross-contamination. Additionally, I engaged confidently with guests of diverse backgrounds, enhancing my adaptability and interpersonal skills.

Teamwork is equally vital in hospitality settings (Deshpande et al., 2024). Coordinating with the bar and kitchen teams required a shared responsibility approach to maintain efficiency. A memorable example of this was when a guest accidentally spilled a drink - my team's immediate response in ensuring the guest was unharmed, cleaning the area, and resetting the table minimised disruption and upheld service standards. This instance demonstrated the importance of rapid problem-solving and collective effort in delivering seamless customer service (Rane, Achari and Choudhary, 2023).

When a guest complained that his meal had gone cold upon delivery, I actively listened to his concerns and promptly resolved the issue by offering a freshly prepared dish along with a complimentary dessert. This proactive approach not only rectified the situation but also turned a potentially negative experience into a positive one (Hart et al., 1990). Remaining calm and professional helped maintain a welcoming atmosphere, reinforcing the importance of emotional intelligence in customer service, which is often considered more valuable than a high IQ (Mercier, 2024).

Beyond soft skills, I developed technical expertise in health and safety compliance and operational procedures (Johnston, Clark & Shulver, 2012). For instance, I ensured that perishable items were stored at the correct temperatures and followed the 'first in, first out' (FIFO) stock rotation system to maintain freshness and reduce waste. These practices align with HACCP (Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point) guidelines, which are essential in preventing foodborne illnesses and ensuring food safety (Gov.uk., 2025).

In addition, familiarising myself with fire safety protocols and chemical handling procedures further increased my technical skills. I participated in a fire drill, where I learned how to quickly locate emergency exits and operate fire extinguishers in case of an incident. Furthermore, I gained hands-on experience in the proper use of cleaning chemicals, ensuring they were diluted appropriately and stored safely to prevent hazards. Understanding these procedures not only ensured compliance with industry standards but also contributed to a safer and more efficient workplace.

Section 3: Reflection on Organisational Issues

During my placement, I encountered a situation that emphasised empathy and adherence to organisational policies. Emirates corporate employees receive a 40% discount on food and beverages as part of the airline's staff benefits. Despite this, a young flight attendant asked if I could reheat his own food. Having a strong connection to the Middle East myself, I immediately felt a sense of empathy. I understood the cultural significance of home-cooked meals and the importance of family connections (Joshi and Mungantiwar, 2024; Hofstede, 2001). I imagined the food he had brought was likely prepared by his mother, and served as a comforting reminder of home.

However, I was informed that I could not reheat the food due to regulations. The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) standards and the Food Safety Act 1990 outline the importance of preventing contamination and maintaining high hygiene standards in food service environments (Jones and Lockwood, 2020). Reheating external food carries risks, including potential cross-contamination and liability issues, making it a clear violation of these regulations.

Initially, I felt uncomfortable declining the request, as my instinct was to accommodate the guest. However, during my earlier placement in the Leisure Club, I had learned the importance of considering the alternative when faced with such situations.

This situation made me reflect on the organisational challenges of balancing customer service with compliance (Kotler, Bowen, & Makens, 2017). In this instance, my ability to manage the guest's expectations professionally while explaining the policy ensured the interaction remained respectful and aligned with health and safety requirements. It also highlighted my need for training in handling uncomfortable situations, especially when cultural understanding and guest satisfaction are involved (Joshi and Mungantiwar, 2024).

Conclusion: Key Insights and Future Professional Practice

My placement in the Food and Beverage department has been an invaluable learning experience, providing key insights into the essential work-based skills, technical knowledge, and guest service standards in the hospitality industry. Shadowing experienced professionals allowed me to develop crucial skills such as clear communication, teamwork, multitasking, and problem-solving. I gained practical understanding of operational logistics, including inventory management, and the importance of maintaining high service standards during busy periods. Furthermore, I learned the significance of effective communication and coordination between departments to ensure smooth operations and guest satisfaction.

This experience also highlighted the importance of personal and vocational development. The mentorship I received not only contributed to my professional growth but also helped me realise areas for improvement, such as my technical knowledge in stock management systems and the need for greater awareness of health and safety procedures. These insights have shaped my aspirations within the food and beverage industry, motivating me to further develop my skills to progress in this field.

Action Plan

To further develop my skills and career prospects within the hotel industry, I will implement the following strategies:

1. Seek additional training in stock management systems and inventory control to optimise operations.
2. Undertake first aid courses and develop a stronger understanding of PPE requirements in food and beverage settings to ensure a safe work environment.

Reference List:

Deshpande, A.M., Shinde, A.G., Londhe, R.C. and Parasnis, P.K. (2024) 'The Importance of Teamwork in Hospitality Industry for Interdepartmental Co-Ordination'. Researchgate. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/378906572> (Accessed: 7 March 2025).

Dogru, T., McGinley, S., Sharma, A., Isik, C. and Hanks, L. (2023) 'Employee turnover dynamics in the hospitality industry vs. the overall economy', *Tourism Management*, 99, p. 104783. Available at: DOI:[10.1016/j.tourman.2023.104783](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2023.104783) (Accessed: 7 March 2025).

Fallon, M.A. and Rutherford, D. (2010) *Hotel Management and Operations*. London: Wiley.

Gibbs, G. (1988) *Learning by Doing: A Guide to Teaching and Learning Methods*. Oxford: Oxford Polytechnic.

Gov.uk. (2025) *Make an HACCP food plan*. Available at: [https://www.gov.uk/food-safety-hazard-analysis#:~:text=If%20you%20run%20a%20food,Control%20Point%20\(HACCP\)%20principles](https://www.gov.uk/food-safety-hazard-analysis#:~:text=If%20you%20run%20a%20food,Control%20Point%20(HACCP)%20principles). (Accessed: 7 March 2025).

H&C Teamwork (2024) 'The importance of soft skills in hospitality staffing: Training your team for success', *LinkedIn*. Available at: <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/importance-soft-skills-hospitality-staffing-training-your-ziu9f> (Accessed: 7 March 2025).

Hofstede, G. (2021) *Culture's Consequences: Comparing Values, Behaviors, Institutions, and Organizations Across Nations*. 3rd edn. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Herzberg, F. (1959) *The Motivation to Work*. 2nd edn. New York: Wiley.

Johnston, R., Clark, G. and Shulver, M. (2012) *Service Operations Management: Improving Service Delivery*. 5th edn. London: Pearson.

Jones, P. and Lockwood, A. (2020) *The Management of Hotel Operations*. 2nd edn. Cengage Learning.

Joshi Shefali, M.C. (2024) 'Cultural sensitivity in hospitality', *The International Journal of Interdisciplinary Organizational Studies*, 19(1).

Kandampully, J., Zhang, T. and Jaakkola, E. (2018) 'Customer experience management in hospitality: A literature synthesis, new understanding and research agenda', *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 30(1), pp. 21–56.

Kotler, P., Bowen, J.T., Makens, J.C. and Baloglu, S. (2017) *Marketing for Hospitality and Tourism*. 7th edn. Harlow: Pearson.

Lucas, R. (2019) *Employment Relations in the Hospitality and Tourism Industries*. 2nd edn. London: Routledge.

Marriott.com (2025a) 'Core Values & Heritage'. Available at: https://www.marriott.com/content/marriott-legal/na/en_us/culture-and-values/core-values/jcr:content (Accessed: 7 March 2025).

Marriott.com (2025b) 'Delta Hotels Newcastle Gateshead Photos'. Available at: <https://www.marriott.com/en-gb/hotels/nclmd-delta-hotels-newcastle-gateshead/photos/> (Accessed: 7 March 2025).

Mercier, V. (2024) 'MBA in hospitality: Developing the most valuable leadership skills'. Available at: <https://hospitalityinsights.ehl.edu/mba-in-hospitality-leadership-skills> (Accessed: 7 March 2025).

Narciso, E. (2020) *Catering Prices: A Guide to Saving Money and Keeping Catering Costs Down*.

Rane, N., Achari, A. and Choudhary, S.P. (2023) 'Enhancing Customer Loyalty Through Quality of Service: Effective Strategies to Improve Customer Satisfaction, Experience, Relationship, and Engagement'. *International Research Journal of Modernization in Engineering Technology and Science*, 5(5) pp. 427-452. Available at: DOI: [10.56726/IRJMET/538104](https://doi.org/10.56726/IRJMET/538104) (Accessed: 7 March 2025).

Vallen, G.K. and Vallen, J.J. (2014) *Check-In Check-Out: Managing Hotel Operations*. 9th edn. Harlow: Pearson Education Limited.

Wilson, A., Zeithaml, V., Bitner, M.J. and Gremler, D. (2020) *Services Marketing: Integrating Customer Service Across the Firm*. 4th edn. New York: McGraw Hill.

Yukl, G. (2013) *Leadership in Organizations*. 8th edn. Harlow: Pearson.