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**Dissertation Title: Developing an Effective Employee  
Engagement strategy In Hospitality Industry, Hilton  
Hotels & Resorts**

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## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

### **1.1 Background and Context**

In today's dynamic business environment employee engagement has emerged as a significant factor influencing the success of organisations across industries (Chathoth et al., 2021). For guests, the hospitality industry follows this pattern with its focus on providing memorable stays. On offering exceptional service to its guests, Hilton Hotels & Resorts is a world-renowned hospitality giant that has built its reputation (Sanor, 2023). Conversely, such achievements necessitate a committed and enthusiastic workforce.

In the hospitality sector, in order to stay ahead of the competition and provide memorable experiences for guests, staff involvement is essential. Hilton Hotels & Resorts, as an industry pioneer, has created an all-encompassing employee engagement approach that takes into account the following:

**Enthusiasm and Passion:** A workforce with a genuine interest in the local food, for instance, could recommend undiscovered gems to customers, leading to more meaningful interactions.

The "Heart of Hilton" programme at Hilton Hotels is designed to develop motivation and interest (issuu.com, 2019). Through this programme, staff members are inspired to talk about the things they are most enthusiastic about with guests.

**Proactivity and Initiative:** Hilton implements regular "Innovation Weeks" in order to encourage employees' levels of innovation and proactivity (Hilton Inc 2023). During these specific weeks, staff are given the task of coming up with creative solutions to improve both the quality of services provided to customers and the effectiveness of business operations. Outstandingly, the "Idea Box" programme at Hilton encourages employees to submit ideas at any time of the year, giving them the ability to take personal responsibility for bringing about constructive change (Anon, 2023).

**Commitment:** Hilton Hotels encourages loyalty in its employees by providing several opportunities for professional growth and development (Hassanein and Özgüt, 2022). Employees who are dedicated to the success of the company will find opportunities for advancement due to the "Elevate" programme (Chang, Ku and Chen, 2020). Investing in staff growth pays off in the form of increased devotion and loyalty.

**Positive Attitude:** Having a positive mindset is encouraged by Hilton Hotels through the use of recognition together with rewards. Through the "Hilton Spirit" programme, the company recognises and rewards staff members who constantly exhibit a good attitude and show responsibility (Stories From Hilton - EMEA 2022). Employees that are recognised for their positive behaviour earn additional incentives along with are acknowledged as role models, which motivates other employees to behave in a similar manner.

**Sense of Ownership:** By including employee input in the company's decision-making processes, Hilton fosters a culture of ownership among its workforce. Regular meetings called "Ownership Circles" bring together staff from different departments to discuss difficulties and brainstorm potential solutions (Leibman, 2019). This involvement not only adds to a culture of greater collaboration but also gives employees the power to take personal responsibility for the success of the organisation.

**Continuous Learning and Growth:** Employees have access to a wide variety of educational and professional growth opportunities through the "Hilton University" platform (Hasan, 2019). This guarantees that there is continual learning and advancement, giving employees the opportunity to gain new skills and remain current with the trends in their field. Individualised conversations on employees' professional development are held by managers, fostering an organisational culture that places value on people's progress as individuals.

**Team Player:** The "Team Member Appreciation Week" that Hilton hosts every year helps to cultivate a culture of great teamwork (Hilton 2022). Throughout the course of this event, there will be a variety of activities designed to foster teamwork and highlight the significance of working together. Cross-departmental collaboration and improved cooperation are two goals that can be accomplished through the implementation of cross-functional initiatives, which are actively supported.

**Customer Focus:** Hilton's "Guest Assistance Team" exemplifies its customer-focused approach (Grantthornttonni.com 2020). This team is empowered to handle and resolve guest concerns swiftly, showcasing Hilton's commitment to guest satisfaction. Furthermore, regular guest

feedback sessions help employees understand the impact of their actions on guest experiences, reinforcing the customer-centric mindset.

**9. Adaptability:** Hilton is aware of the importance of adaptability in the hospitality sector, which is a dynamic industry. "Change Champions" are employees who have been designated to facilitate effortless transitions throughout changes such as upgrades to technology (Kotter, 1995). Their employment requires them to mentor coworkers and offer help to other employees, demonstrating Hilton's commitment to flexibility.

Hilton Hotels & Resorts' strategy for employee engagement is strengthened by the incorporation of these elements. Hilton develops employees who have an emotional connection to the company's mission through rewarding and recognising traits like passion, dedication, and innovation. Because of their dedication, guests of Hilton Hotels always have a memorable stay, and employees are delighted to work for the company.

## **1.2 Research Rationale**

The term "employee engagement" refers to a deeper concept: the employees' genuine investment in the success of the company (Chathoth et al., 2021). Employees that are invested in their work are not only more effective and creative but also help create a pleasant workplace and provide superior service to customers. When it comes to the hotel business, where service quality is a key differentiator, employee engagement is more important than ever. The need to address the difficulties and possibilities specific to the hospitality industry, with Hilton Hotels & Resorts as a case study, motivates this study.

## **1.3 Research Objectives**

The major purpose of this dissertation is to design a strategy for employee engagement that is consistent with Hilton Hotels & Resorts core values and strategic priorities. The objectives of this research are to:

- To examine the elements that affect employee engagement in the hospitality sector
- To determine the positive and negative aspects of employee engagement at Hilton Hotels & Resorts.
- To create an all-encompassing employee engagement plan that fits Hilton Hotels & Resorts' culture while accounting for the hospitality industry's specifics.

- To provide suggestions for the employee engagement plan that might be implemented and managed going forward.

#### **1.4 Research Questions**

How can Hilton Hotels & Resorts' strengths and the challenges of the hospitality sector be best utilised in the creation of an employee engagement strategy?

#### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

The significance of this study's findings extends beyond Hilton Hotels & Resorts to the hospitality sector as a whole. This research aims to contribute to the literature on employee engagement and organisational management by developing a strategy that takes into account the specific difficulties and potential gains present in the hospitality industry.