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Reflection on Cultural Misunderstandings

Scenario

I serve as the front of house at the "Diversity Hotel and Spa" in London, a hotel recognized for valuing diversity and multiculturalism. A while back, a visitor from Nigeria checked in. Since I am intrigued by other cultures, I possess a specific cultural awareness, having a working knowledge of the fundamental greetings and customs of Nigeria.

Cultural Misunderstanding

I extend a friendly "Sannu" welcome, which is a standard salutation according to the Hausa language practised in Nigeria, as the foreign visitor reaches the front desk. The assumption being made is that by utilising this welcome, the visitor will feel at ease and at home. The visitor responds with a courteous grin but a dumbfounded expression, and I observe the troubling expression on their face. Later, I found out through a fellow worker that the visitor is of the Yoruba ethnicity in Nigeria and communicates in both Yoruba and English most of the time. Such cultural misunderstanding had unintentionally resulted from my legitimate attempt to understand another culture.

Reflection & Development

Avoid Assumptions

The initial lesson I must acquire is the value of not assuming anything about a visitor's cultural background depending only on their appearance or country of origin. The assumption that the visitor's cultural identification could be inferred from a single introduction was incorrect because Nigeria represents a highly distinct country with many different languages and ethnic groups (Zanabria, 2019).

Universal Greetings

I ought to incorporate conventional salutations either "Welcome" or "Hello" when introducing myself to visitors to generate a more inclusive and friendly atmosphere. These introductions are respectful and impartial, making no presumptions about the visitor's cultural background or preferred language (Amelia, 2022).

Knowledge of Regional Differences

I need to improve my knowledge of regional diversity among nations to avoid cultural misunderstandings in the future. For instance, there are approximately 500 distinct ethnic

communities in Nigeria, each of which has its own traditions, dialects, and customs. My encounters will be more successful if I am conscious of these disparities.

Adaptation and Active Listening

It's imperative to pay attention to guests' feedback and adjust my approach accordingly (Pijuck, 2021). To guarantee clear and efficient communication, I must switch to the visitor's preferred language immediately as they respond with my initial salutation in another language or state that they prefer English.

Training and Sensitivity

The personnel at the Diversity Hotel and Spa must undergo cultural awareness training. The ability to negotiate cross-cultural relationships more skilfully and avoid clear or inadvertent cultural misconceptions can be provided to employees through such training.

Visitors Profile Record

When booking or checking in, maintaining thorough profiles of guests with details about ethnic backgrounds and language preferences can be quite beneficial in avoiding cultural misunderstandings. Front-of-house personnel may now customise their interactions to meet the preferences and needs of each guest because of this data.

References

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