

**Module Name: Hospitality & Guest Services
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**Title: “Hotel Standards, Reputation Management and
Service Culture”**

Executive Summary

The report is revolved around the hospitality industry or sector with a primary focus on exploring services, standards, reputation and its various other elements. The report sheds light on the key purpose of standards associated with brand consistency such as giving direction to effective branding and maintaining the overall reputation of the brand. It also explores how the key standards regarding to brand consistency vary from one hotel to another depending upon their unique value proposition and class of hotel. The report also outlines how various hotels manage their reputation through consistent branding as well as introducing various reputation management action plans with a primary focus on monitoring of reviews published online and issues identified by various customers. The report also highlights the significance of “guest review management” and the heavy influence that reviews which are highly negative have on hotels such as its brand reputation, bookings as well as its reliability among customers to provide excellent services for their expenses. The report also outlines the concept of service culture and how it aims to provide premium services that go beyond the common responsibility in order to make the customers happy and satisfied with the services being offered. Lastly, the report provides a recommendation of how hotels can capitalise on the current market trends by introducing services such as virtual reality tours, contactless payments, AI-based software to increase efficiency, voice searches and many more. It also highlights the various issues being faced by the businesses such as the difficulties in retaining employees, various operational issues, improper maintenance of cleanliness, hygiene and many more.

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Introduction

The report will be developed in regard to the hospitality sector with a primary focus on exploring its various elements such as the standards, values, culture and many more. Firstly, the report will cover the standards of the hotels, with specific reference to the purpose of brand consistency. It also includes the various ways through which hotels manage their own brand and reputation within the industry. Furthermore, the importance of various reviews from the guest and the influence it has on the hotel will also be thoroughly explored. The concept of service culture, the difference that exists between service culture and corporate culture, and its significance in regard to the hotel industry will be discussed. Lastly, it will also include a recommendation regarding the ongoing trends in the market and the issues being faced by businesses within the sector.

Hotel standards

Purpose of brand consistency standards

In general, brand consistency determines the presentation of brand messages that align with the brand's identity (Chung and Byrom, 2021). Since, brand consistency is all about being recognisable, communicating personalities and establishing trust. Thus, the main **purpose** of maintaining brand consistency standards is to aid the company in building more recognition along with providing guidance and direction to ensure consistent influential branding across the board (Piha *et al.*, 2021). IHG Hotels and Resorts provides more than 6000+ destinations with a wider range of selections, the company also provides a membership card named **One Rewards** which carries points that can be redeemed as discounts and bonus facilities (IHG, 2023). In the case of IHG, the company collaborated with Sabre Hospitality Solution in order to deliver better services and a high brand experience, leading the company to a 40% growth in booking rates (Sabre Hospitality Solutions, 2019).

“Do all hotels have the same standards”

The standards of brand consistency change accordingly varying upon the different classes of hotels (de Grosbois and Fennell, 2022). Thus it also depends upon the various initiatives and values delivered by the hotels as well as their unique value proposition. For instance, the brand consistency standards of **Premier Inn** continuously focus on refining their services which would help them to achieve their brand commitments. The “**Force for Good**” aims to provide a positive influence to their stakeholders through surplus donations as well as reaching for net zero emission of carbon and many more (Anon, 2020). Whereas **Marriott** in regard to their standards of brand consistency focuses primarily on maintaining their Quality Standards and providing a high level of quality services and diversified locations for their customers (Jeong *et al.*, 2023). Therefore, the company annually initiates inspections for its quality service under the “**Quality Assurance Policy**” which is reported by the “**Brand Standard Audit (BSA)**”.

Reputation Management

“How can hotels manage their reputation effectively?”

Initially, the hotel's reputation management is all about influencing and monitoring the overall reputation of the brand (Perez-Aranda *et al.*, 2019). It generally, involves engaging with a wider section of people on a positive note by tracking the review on sites, posting exclusive content on social media, and optimising the brand's site for search. Companies should focus more on **consistent branding** in order to develop their strong identity and engage with targeted audiences through attractive content, initially reflecting more upon their unique value proportion (Roggeveen *et al.*, 2021). Thus, brands can also focus on building **reputation management action plans** which prominently focus on monitoring online reviews and maintaining their online presence through social media platforms. For example, “Premier Inn” initiated its first “**post-pandemic campaign**” in April 2021 to reassure them with a message of reliability and the adoption of proper health and safety guidelines and protocols (Innes, 2022).

“Significance of effective guest reviews management”

Effective guest review management helps a hotel to increase its **traffic** and positively impacts its **booking rate** (Lou *et al.*, 2021). Therefore, it also assists to monitor the needs of the customers and focuses more on delivering a consistent **customer service experience**. Through effectively managing the guests companies can also focus more on cultivating higher **conversion rates** on their online website. For example, **Premier Inn**, in regard to its management of guest reviews has a policy to respond to feedback forms within 5 days of publishing. Similarly, **Marriott** has introduced “**GuestVoice**” which is a programme for guest feedback where customers complete a survey regarding their experience which it cross-checks with feedback in social media platforms giving the hotel deeper insight into the issues, thereby aiding in making necessary changes moving forward (Hotel Tech Report, 2020).

“Negative Reviews and their Influence”

In a wider context, negative reviews are equivalent to a put-down. It is a general way for customers to express the disappointments that they faced. The biggest impact of the negative review contributes to affect the **reputation of the brand**. Since it showcases the incapability of the company to fill the commitments of their services. Thus it also affects the **sense of reliability** among its customer to meet their expectation. Therefore, 86% of customers hesitate to buy products or hotel services due to negative reviews (Reputation X, 2019). For instance, according to a survey Britannia and Jurys Inn & Leonardo hotel group has been regarded as one of the UK's worst hotel chains due to poor customer satisfaction (Parveen, 2022).

Service culture

Service culture can be defined as the surrounding where the employees ensure that they go above and beyond to make customers satisfied with the services being offered to them (Xu *et al.*, 2020). For example, IHG's service culture includes unique service strategies such as “**Silver Elite**”, “**Gold Elite**”, “**Platinum Elite**” and “**Diamond Elite**”, in which the silver elite provides customers with 10-night service with no points required, the gold elite with 20 nights or 40,000 IHG reward points while the platinum provides 40 nights and 60,000 points (IHG, 2023). On the other

hand, Marriott with its rich cultural history has successfully been providing its customer with distinctive service for more than 90 years. With exceptional room service, Marriott provides its customers with offers such as 20% off for a 3-night stay, 50% off on a Second Room booking and the **“Marriott Double Elite Nights Promotion”**. It provides customers with a concession of price, 2X elite nights and 1000 bonus points per night (Marriott *et al.*, 2022).

“Difference between corporate and service culture”

The focus of the corporate culture is to enhance the work quality of the employee for generating better service that might satisfy customers, whereas, service culture has the main focus on the service that the hotels provide to the customers within the tenure of the service (Lin, 2021). The companies like **“HomeServe UK”** and **“Skyscanner”** that implement corporate culture puts their main focus on the growth of the company's development, growth in the mindset of the employee, brand reputation, target, results and customer satisfaction with the product that the companies sell. Whereas, hotels like **“InterContinental Hotels”** and **“Marriott”** implement a service culture which focuses on the deliberate service that the employee of the hotel provides to their customer, along with implementing the rules and policies of the company (Ahl and Marlow, 2021).

Why is this important in the hotel industry?

Service culture plays an essential role in aiding prominent customer services while also shaping the company culture in order to execute a successful business. Firstly, prominent service culture assists the company to deliver a high level of **customer satisfaction** moreover it focuses on meeting the expectation of customers and building better guest loyalty. Secondly, prominent service culture is closely related to **brand reputation** (Okzan *et al.*, 2020). Since a hotel with reputed service culture attracts more guests and contributes to providing a positive and memorable experience. Lastly, strong service culture helps to bring in **differentiation and advantage** over its competitors. Hotels with strong service cultures are set to deliver exceptional services which makes them apart from their rivals and assists them to engage with wider groups of guests.

Conclusion

Brand consistency helps hotels develop awareness and maintain branding standards, the survey concludes. The paper compares hotel standards by value proposition, class, ambitions, and goals. It also shows how hotels retain their reputation with swift response and consistent branding. The paper also discusses how bad reviews effect brand reputation and IHG and Marriott's service cultures. Thus, Home Serv UK and Skyscanner illustrate the distinction between corporate and services culture in the study. Finally, the paper emphasises the hotel sector and recommends adopting market trends like virtual reality tours and Ai-integrated software.

Recommendations

There are various types of market trends which are currently taking place within the hospitality sector among which one is the introduction of virtual reality. Therefore it can be recommended that hotels increase the use of **virtual reality tours** on their websites to give customers a tour of their rooms and other services to provide a deeper insight into the experiences and services they can avail of and in turn generate more bookings. It is also recommended that they use various advanced **digital technologies** like **hotel navigation software** and **voice searches** to aid in their growth of enhanced customer service. Hotels can also introduce **contactless payments** to provide seamless transactions and adoption of **AI-integrated software** in order to cultivate more transparency in their services. Among the various ongoing obstacles and issues currently faced by the hospitality industry, **retaining staff** has influentially become a common obstacle. Therefore, **operational issues** such as mismanagement of staff and **improper maintenance of hygiene** have been evident obstacles for hotels.

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