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UWTSD

BMIH6004 - Managing Hotel Administration

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Student Learning Log

INTERNATIONAL HOTEL MANAGEMENT Level 6

I confirm that I have not used any AI tools in the research and creation of this assignment. I confirm that I have not presented any AI generated materials as my own work. I confirm I have copies of my drafts, notes, and other resources I used, which I may be asked to provide in evidence.

During my time at Marriot International, I was able to spend 3 weeks working alongside the front desk office team. This was where I immersed myself into different aspects of hotel administration, maintaining guest relations, operational efficiency, and multitasking in a high-pressure environment. I was able to gain practical exposure to both the administrative and interpersonal components which were required in managing the hotel. Reflecting on my experiences, I've decided to incorporate Kolb's Learning Cycle as a framework (McLeod, 2024). My primary objectives for the placement include developing my communication skills, build on my understanding of reservation management, and enhancing my ability to effectively handle guest inquiries and complaints effectively.

The majority of my placement involved shadowing different front desk staff during peak hours. I was able to focus on tasks including guest check-ins and check-outs, as well as managing reservations. It was during this time where I was required to work with efficiency, to balance a welcoming nature whilst handling multiple tasks under time constraints.

My daily tasks specifically included greeting the guests, processing the check-ins and check-outs, handling payments and verifying the reservations. I also had to ensure that the rooms were prepared, by speaking with the housekeeping team. Through these tasks I noticed the need to establish an initial positive impression, as it can completely change the whole experience for the guest (Guest, 2021).

At the beginning, I found the role more challenging than anticipated, because of the multitasking that was required, especially when needing to deal with a high volume of guests. Particularly when faced with complex requests or complaints, it made me feel overwhelmed. However, through the support of the manager, I adjusted to the demands of the role and had gained confidence whilst managing my tasks and knowing where to prioritise my time (Lasa, Pedroni and Komm, 2024).

Reflecting on the experience, I noticed that my communication skills had improved significantly. I was able to maintain a friendly tone, whilst being able to serve the guests professionally. Checking the financial information on reservations also helped me practise better attention to detail. Nonetheless, I encountered some challenges when it came to using the hotels booking system. Initially, this led to minor mistakes being made and had slowed down the productivity of the team temporarily. This made me realise that there is a gap in my proficiency in understanding these booking systems, and I am to implement further training on this.

Exploring the principles of customer satisfaction in the SERVQUAL mode, I noticed how my experience aligns with the emphasis on reliability, assurance and empathy in service quality (Jonkisz, Karniej and Krasowska, 2021). As I was able to focus on clear communication and attention to detail, it helped positively contribute to the guests' experiences, even when problems arose. Furthermore, looking at Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, I understood how my supportive and well-organised work environment had helped me reduce stress and increased job satisfaction (Nickerson, 2023). It made me realise the impact that workplace structure can have on performance, as I grew from my initial anxiety and hence growth in confidence.

Moving forward I realised the need to improve my technical ability on using the hotels booking system and using different reservation systems. I also intend on building my knowledge on customer relationship management (CRM) so that I can improve my ability to build rapport

with guests (Plaksij, 2024). Working on these will ultimately help better prepare for roles in hotel administration, where adaptability is key.

During my placement, I developed a range of skills that helped with front desk management, including communication, multitasking and problem solving. Each skill proved essential to maintaining the standards of the brand, 24/7 service and ultimately to ensure smooth guest interactions.

Effective communication was important when greeting guests, addressing any inquiries or even explaining the hotel policies. It is suggested that communication in front-line roles directly have influence in guest loyalty and satisfaction according to Cambra-Fierro, Melero-Polo and Vázquez-Carrasco (2014). From observing the way in which my supervisors approach guest engagement, I was able to improve my ability to clearly convey information whilst hold a positive tone. Such skills proved to be particularly beneficial when managing guest complaints, where active listening and empathy helped recover potentially negative situations.

Being able to manage multiple responsibilities, particularly during peak busy periods, required effective time management and prioritisation. This involved balancing tasks such as check-ins, guest inquiries, and coordination with other departments . Joyce (2023) suggests that operational efficiency in hospitality is dependent on how well the staff can perform multiple tasks with the least error. Focusing on one task at a time while remaining mindful of the guest needs, I improved my task management skills particularly valuable in high pressure environments.

A major issue that I had come across during placement included a time where there was a double-booking issue. Knowing that this had potential to lead to a negative guest experience, my manager and I had promptly reassigned rooms and provided complimentary amenities to compensate. This hence taught me the value of adaptability and quick decision-making, both essential in maintaining guest satisfaction in such unexpected situations. Research suggest that prompt action and compensation can help prevent guest dissatisfaction, potentially leading to increased loyalty (Campbell, 2024).

My experience echoes the importance of organisational behaviour theories, including Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, suggesting that recognition and achievement within one's job role, can help enhance satisfaction (Nickerson, 2023). The positive feedback that I received from my manager had motivated me to refine my approach continually. Furthermore, values such as empathy and assurance, as mentioned in the SERVQUAL model, provide a practical guide for interacting with guests in hospitality (Deshmukh, 2022).

During my time at Marriott, I encountered many different organisational problems including inter-departmental communication and guest complaint handling. Through these challenges, I was able to gain valuable lessons on the significance of cohesion and coordination within the hotel's operational structure.

A particular case involved guest dissatisfaction due to their room not being prepared in time. The housekeeping team was delayed in informing the front desk and hence the guest had to

wait longer than expected. This incident highlights the need for clear and timely communication between departments to ensure a seamless experience for the guest.

This delay had impacted the guest's perception of service quality and also reflected poorly on the efficiency of the hotel. As noted by Musheke and Phiri (2021), effective communication across departments is crucial for success in operational management. This reveals how breakdowns in communication can undermine service standards and potentially damage guest satisfaction.

To address the problems listed, I would put recommendation forward for incorporating a checklist system that front desk, and housekeeping staff can update in real-time. This would ensure better tracking of the readiness of the room and would reduce the likelihood of critical mistakes through miscommunication. Interdepartmental communication channels are found to improve the overall efficiency of the hotel, and can contribute to a cohesive guest experience, according to systems theory (Camilleri, 2015).

In conclusion, I was able to gain valuable insights into the operational and interpersonal skills required in hotel administration through my placement with the front desk team. Using the SERVQUAL model and Herzberg's theory, I gained a better theoretical understanding of the significance behind quality service and organisational support in maintaining guest satisfaction and employee morale.

I plan on working on my technical proficiency with reservation software and improving my knowledge of inter-departmental communication methods. By attending workshops in customer service and taking further training in hotel management software, it will allow me to build on the foundational skills I gained during placement. Continuing to improve myself will help prepare myself for a future career in hotel administration, where efficient, guest-focused service is the ultimate goal.

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