

Hotel Standards, Reputation Management and Service Culture

Module Title

Hospitality and Guest Services (BMIH4003)

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Word Count: 1,521 words

Executive summary

In today's highly competitive hospitality industry, success requires a strong service culture, knowledge of and adherence to changing hotel standards, and a good reputation among customers. This in-depth examination of brand consistency standards, hotel standards, effective reputation management strategies, guest reviews, and the impact of negative reviews will help one can learn more about the significance of service culture in hotels, how it differs from corporate culture, the value of guest reviews, and more. Using real-world examples and case studies from the hospitality industry, this paper provides advice to hotels on how to deal with shifting market circumstances and other issues.

Table of Contents

Executive summary	2
Introduction	4
Findings.....	4
Hotel Standards:	4
Reputation Management:	5
Service Culture:	6
Conclusion	7
Recommendations:	7
Challenges Facing Some Enterprises:.....	8
References.....	9

Introduction

The hospitality industry is fiercely competitive; therefore, hotels must constantly adapt to stay relevant (Wood, 2015). This study focuses on service culture, hotel standards, and reputation management as its three primary areas of inquiry. By concentrating on these three pillars, hotels may learn a great deal about brand development, reputation management, and providing superior service to guests. Maintaining a constant and memorable hotel brand image is mostly dependent on adhering to certain standards. While there are some consistent benchmarks across the globe's hospitality industry, there are also notable regional and local variances (Walker, 2013). The influence of online reviews from previous guests cannot be overstated, making it all the more important to maintain a positive online reputation in the modern era. Moreover, the hospitality sector relies on a strong service culture to provide memorable stays for their guests.

Findings

Hotel Standards:

Purpose of Brand Consistency Standards

Brand consistency standards guarantee that all of a hotel chain's establishments present a consistent and coherent brand (Jeong et al, 2023). The Marriott International family of hotels includes the upscale Ritz-Carlton, the more affordable Courtyard, and the venerable Marriott Hotels & Resorts. By maintaining uniformity across all of its properties, Marriott guarantees that its customers will always receive the same high standard of service and comfort. Because of this constant high standard, consumers have come to associate the brand with superior quality and dependability (Wood, 2015).

Variations in Hotel Standards

Some hotel standards are generally accepted worldwide, while others may vary by region, market, or even city. New York's The Plaza is a premium hotel that offers greater service, design, and amenities than its less expensive competitors (Niu and Fan, 2018). It is reasonable to anticipate more from hotels in more well-known places, such as the provision of services for visitors of a specific faith or the display of the work of local artists. There may be rules in place at some Hawaii hotels that mandate staff

participation in traditional Hawaiian celebrations. Hotels must be cognizant of and responsive to these variations if they are to give consistently high-quality service to their target clientele (Jeong et al, 2023).

Reputation Management:

Effective Reputation Management Strategies

In order to keep their stellar reputations, hotels will resort to a number of different tactics. The Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts are very well-organised, which is essential to preserving their stellar image among travellers. They keep an eye on review sites, respond swiftly and professionally to visitors' comments, and work to resolve problems when they arise. The Four Seasons shows it cares about its customers by keeping lines of communication open with them and soliciting their feedback on how to enhance their experience. This strategy aids in establishing them as an industry leader and promotes sharing between customers (Qoura and Khalifa, 2016).

Importance of Guest Reviews Management

Reputation management in the hotel sector now heavily relies on guest feedback in the form of online reviews. To improve their standing, the Shangri-La Hotels and Resorts make good use of feedback from guests (Barrows and Powers, 2018). Through post-stay personalised emails and in-house feedback forms, they actively solicit evaluations and feedback from guests. The reputation management team at Shangri-La constantly checks guest reviews and replies quickly to any questions or complaints. Shangri-La's passion to its guests and its pursuit of constant development are both on display in the way the hotel interacts with and responds to its visitors.

Impact of Negative Reviews

A hotel's reputation might take a serious hit if guests have a bad experience there (Schuckert, Liu and Law, 2015). The Ritz-Carlton Hotel Company is a model of how to deal with customer complaints. They take a proactive stance towards addressing and fixing problems brought up in bad feedback. Employees at The Ritz-Carlton are encouraged to take charge of solving problems for guests and receive extensive training in how to do so empathetically and competently. The Ritz-Carlton shows its dedication to providing great service and turning negative experiences into positive

ones by swiftly responding to unfavourable evaluations and offering personalised solutions to guests (Bailey, 2023). This method promotes customer loyalty and helps preserve a good name.

Service Culture:

Definition of Service Culture

The term "service culture" is used to describe an organisation's commitment to and prioritisation of providing outstanding customer service (Tesone, 2012). The Ritz-Carlton is renowned for its outstanding service culture. Their slogan, "We are Ladies and Gentlemen serving Ladies and Gentlemen," exemplifies their dedication to giving customers with attentive, individualised treatment. The Ritz-Carlton's service culture is deeply established in the company's training programmes and service delivery systems and pervades every level of the organisation, from upper management to front-line personnel (Cresswell, 2023).

Distinction between Service Culture and Corporate Culture

Service culture is more customer-centric than corporate culture, which refers to the generalized standards and practices of an organisation (Duarte Alonso and Krajsic, 2014). Zappos is a well-known online retailer with a service culture that other businesses should learn from. Among Zappos's most important principles are "Deliver WOW through service" and "Embrace and drive change." Their attitude on customer service, which is based on these values, emphasizes going the additional mile (Schuckert, Liu and Law, 2015). Zappos encourages its employees to make decisions that benefit the customer first, such as providing free upgrades and refunds. Zappos's service culture is what sets it different from competitors and is largely responsible for the company's stellar reputation in customer satisfaction.

Significance of Service Culture in the Hotel Industry

A culture of exceptional service is essential in the hotel industry. When it comes to the importance of fostering a service-oriented company culture, look no further than The Ritz-Carlton Hotel Company. Employees at The Ritz-Carlton go through extensive training that focuses on helping them think like customers and giving them the tools, they need to treat each client as a person. Employees are urged to put themselves in the shoes of the visitors in order to anticipate their needs (O'Fallon and Rutherford,

2010). The moniker "The Ritz-Carlton" has become synonymous with five-star luxury because of the impeccable service it provides. Hotels that value their service culture will see an uptick in guest satisfaction, repeat business, and positive word of mouth.

Conclusion

To succeed in the highly competitive hospitality market, hotels must place a strong emphasis on service culture, hotel standards, and reputation management. Excellent service is what sets one hotel apart from another and what keeps guests coming back. Brand consistency requirements guarantee that all hotels in a chain or brand provide the same high-quality service to their guests. Effective reputation management requires constant, vigilant attention to guest reviews and interactions. Hotels can anticipate market changes and match guest expectations by implementing efficient tactics in these areas.

Recommendations:

- In order to adapt and remain competitive, hotels should consistently track industry developments including new technologies, environmental programmes, and guest preferences (Walker, 2013).
- Guest feedback platforms, online reputation management tools, and customer relationship management systems are all examples of how businesses may save time and money by adopting a more tech-savvy approach (Mmutle and Shonhe, 2017).
- Hotels should provide extensive training programmes to help staff members grow in their customer service abilities. A customer-focused service culture can develop when employees are given responsibility for and access to guests' experiences (Barrows and Powers, 2018).
- Hoteliers should set up reliable methods of tracking guest comments and responding to them as soon as possible. Timely responses to visitor complaints and difficulties show a dedication to their satisfaction and can reduce the negative effect of reviews (Heppell, 2015).
- Hotels may improve their online reputation, gain more bookings, and handle negative feedback more professionally by working closely with online travel agencies (OTAs) (Cook et al., 2018).

Challenges Facing Some Enterprises:

There are many ways to succeed in the hotel sector, but there are also challenges. Among these challenges are:

- New businesses are continuously joining the hospitality market, increasing the intensity of the already fierce rivalry. Existing hotels need to be flexible and responsive to the needs of their guests and the fluctuations in the hotel industry (Heppell, 2015).
- Customer expectations change frequently as a result of technological developments, shifts in consumer travel habits, and new fashions. Hotels must foresee and fulfil these needs, which may include the provision of seamless digital experiences, environmentally friendly procedures, and individualised care (Tesone, 2012).
- Problems with the Workforce High turnover, skill gaps, and a lack of available workers are just some of the issues that plague the hospitality sector. In order to attract and keep the best staff, hotels need to make investments in things like salary, benefits, and training (Heppell, 2015).
- The development of online review sites and social media has created a new difficulty for the hospitality industry: controlling its online reputation. Hotels need to regularly monitor and respond to reviews to protect their brand name from the damaging effects of negative evaluations (Gebbers, Pantelidis and Goss-Turner, 2019).
- Disruptions in the hotel industry have resulted from technological developments such as online travel agents, sharing economy platforms, and artificial intelligence. In order to maintain competitiveness and adapt to changing client needs, hotels must embrace technology and use it to their advantage (Wood, 2015).

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