



Hotel Placement – Managing Hotel Administration

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Introduction

Front desk coffee shop I was working in was the operational centre for the delivery of guest services. This department is responsible for Check in/out, Reservation management through the PMS (IDeaS), GDPR compliant guest data management, and service related queries. Its products include guest check-in, room allocation, billing, and interaction with housekeeping to prepare room. I had three learning objectives: (1) develop my competence with PMS software and digital tools, (2) practice problem-solving and communication under pressure, in the moment, (3) Explore supervisory leadership in the service of managing guest relationships and team coordination.

Section 1: Reflection on Experience and Personal Development

My experience shadowing a supervisory role at Premier Inn Hotel, Hayes, a historic luxury hotel in London, highlighted the relationship between the skills gained at work and the technical know-how required to maintain a standard of service for guests.

Gibbs' Reflective Model: Building Bridges between Past Experience and Current Practice

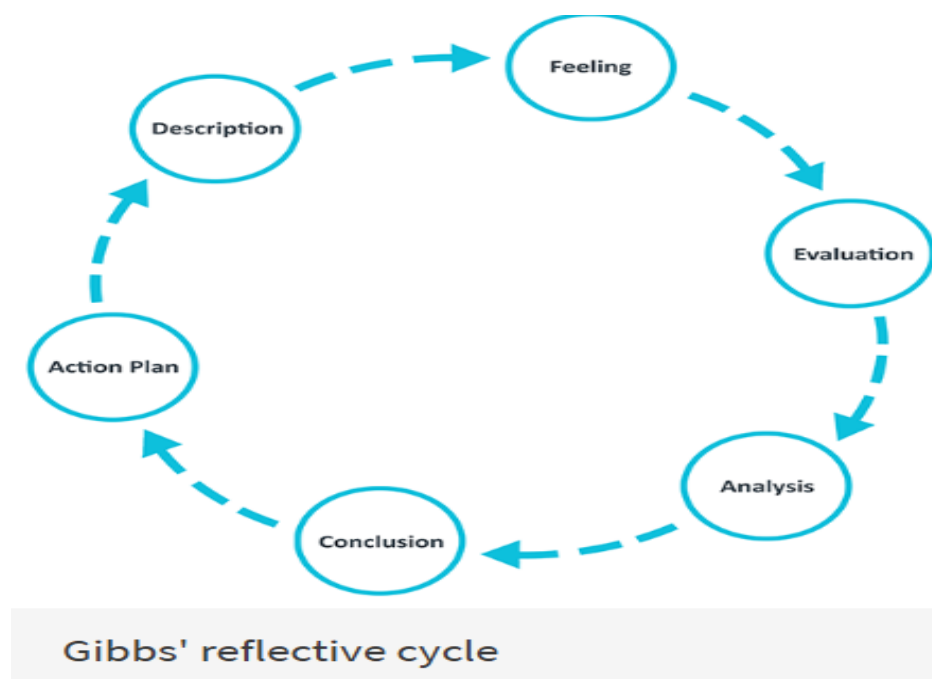


Figure :Gibbs' Reflective Model (Gibbs, 1988)

At the time of my placement at Premier Inn Hotel, Hayes, I worked with a front office supervisor carrying out administrative work; guest services and system driven responsibilities.

I was to observe the check in/ out process, guest issues and utilization of PMS software (IDeaS) to manage room availability, room-status, guest information, and staffing/cover. Leadership was enacted through staff briefings, delegation on the fly, emotionally intelligent management of complaints a mix of authority and empathy.

Upon contemplation, I realised that supervisory leadership had direct implications for operational effectiveness. For instance, when the self check-in kiosk at the counter broke down at the height of the rush, the manager's cool, crisis management of another kind -- a mix of technical knowledge and assertive communication -- ensured there was no back-log. This provided evidence for Sundstrom, De Meuse and Furell's (2022) assertion that performance of teamwork requires organized communication and leadership. However, I observed that the gaps in training left junior members too dependent on (ad-hoc) peer learning (In line with AlManei et al., 2021), who stress that lean systems need structured change management to perform.

The clincher was when a visitor from overseas couldn't cope with the poorly designed interface, because they couldn't read the screen. What the supervisor improvised – a personalised walk-through with the updates behind the scenes on IDeaS – was not simply technical agility, however, it was high emotional intelligence, and it speaks to Petkus' (2023) contributions that service quality is a matter of transformational leadership that is enthused, embedded in reflective action.

I was strong at digital skills and watching the game and analyzing the game but struggled with some of those aspects of being a little more assertive and in the moment and speaking under pressure. In the last, I was at a wedding and didn't want to make a fuss about a late room check out and then had to scramble to get everything set up in time. I have had the confidence to communicate with the Events team and utilise the BEO tool effectively through feedback which is an example of Kolb (McLeod, 2024).

Action Plan:

Short-term: To gain IDEaS and CRM certifications to ease the learning curve with the system.

Medium Term: Take workshops around the topic of emotional intelligence and crisis communication.

Longer-term: Reflect in a journal (Gibbs, 1988) on how what you learn from future placements can be internalised and turned into adaptive leadership.

This post reminds us that good hotel management isn't just about being able to use the software but about bringing an empathetic, reflective, and well system-integrated approach to leadership.

Section 2: Discussion of Key Hotel Administration Issues – Training

A key management issue that I encountered during my work placement at the Premier Inn Hotel, Hayes was the informal and unstructured Ongoing Training process at the front office. Although the introduction was pretty well arranged, ongoing development was haphazard, especially when it comes to overcoming technical PMS issues and intercultural cooperation. New staff were commonly supported by ad hoc peer support, of varying quality, which rendered service delivery insecure at the peak of demand.

This mirrors Sundstrom, De Meuse and Futrell's (2022) finding that low-quality team development models distract from customer-facing jobs. [Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle (McLeod, 2024)] Experiential Learning Cycle highlights that reflection and conceptualisation are crucial to follow concrete experience. This iterative learning, however, was often missing for the most part, as staff learned by doing, but only rarely had time for structured debriefs or feedback. AlManei, Salonitis, & Tsinopoulos (2021) highlight that in order to achieve successful organizational transformation an integrated learning system is crucial. However, financial limitations restricted both the frequency and content of training. Petkus (2023) also observes that incorporating Kolb's model within service roles enhances both technical competence and reflective ability—which was not afforded in this instance.

This closely links to the Level 5 Personnel Resourcing & Development module that emphasises talent management as a strategic HR activity. Finlayson (2022) contends that proactive, reflective practice supports flexibility in high-pressure service contexts; however, training at Hayes was reactive, in response to grievances. A micro-learning approach to this is then facilitated by regular reflective sessions through Gibbs' Cycle (The University of Edinburgh,

2024). This would enable the personnel to analyse authentic guest cases and develop emotional intelligence, as underlined by Wikström (2021).

In conclusion, Premier Inn Hayes's disjointed training structure was not conducive to either productivity or guest contentment. The merging of experiential learning with structured reflection in to daily work practice may effectively increase levels of service and staff confidence.

Section 3: Future Trends in Hotel Administration – Artificial Intelligence

Whilst on my placement at Premier Inn Hotel, Hayes Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI): Low (but increasing demand) It was completely different from the way tools such as IDEaS Revenue Management Software were beginning to automate forecasting and inventory management, and there was very little AI-powered personalisation in guest services. That chasm is screaming for a coming wave where AI will reinvent how we think of administrative efficiency and guest engagement.

AI-based chatbots and virtual concierges are some of the up-and-coming trends. On a busy weekend, I observed guests lining up at the reception desk for trivial questions: when breakfast began, whether we could get a late checkout. Those requests could have been handled by an AI-powered concierge, leaving staff to address more nuanced guest requirements. As Petkus (2023) notes, emotional intelligence is still essential, but AI can help by handling repetitive interactions, freeing up human employees to provide higher-value, emotionally intelligent services.

But I also noted that there was a resistance to even half-automated systems, like self-check-in kiosks, and not just among the younger staff. As Finlayson (2022) admonishes, digital tools would be a liability without embedded reflective training frameworks. This is supported by Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle (Mcleod, 2024), who state that staff need to undertake reflection and experimentation to develop confidence with AI-based systems. And AI will also be able to predict what guests are going to want using that behavioural data. But I saw there wasn't while on my placement, you'd get people coming back time and again, but no one would automatically know it was a returning guest or what they liked. This runs counter to an industry trending towards super-personalised service and highlights a hole in the Premier Inn tech roadmap.

To ensure that AI increases the effectiveness of admin and guest learning experiences, such systems must be used alongside structured and inclusive staff development programmes and sustained reflective practices such as Gibbs' cycle (University of Edinburgh, 2024). However, absent this groundwork, AI could risk perpetuating and even worsening existing service inequalities rather than mitigating them.

Conclusion

Work Experience (48 hours) Premier Inn Hotel, Hayes (14th – 30th March 2013) During this placement, I gained a better understanding of how technical systems work with the human environment in a transactional situation. I learnt how to use the IdeaS PMS and saw what good supervisory skills entailed, and I became better able to interact and solve problems under pressure. I was initially a puss and got better through feedback and reflection. All 3 of my learning goals were addressed. I became skilled in administrative software, I increased my operational flexibility, and I learned about management in the fast-paced environment of the front desk. On the whole, the placement has greatly developed both my professional knowledge and reflective skills.

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