

Student Learning Log

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Operations BMIH6002**

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Food & beverage overview

Marriott Kensington offers a dynamic and diverse food and beverage operation, showcasing excellence in both culinary offerings and guest service. The hotel features the Cast Iron Bar & Grill a welcoming restaurant & bar and a luxurious executive lounge that offers beverages, snacks, and offers a happy hour for relaxation time. The restaurant is committed to delivering fresh ingredients and bold flavours, the Cast Iron Bar & Grill partners with local suppliers to ensure the highest quality produce in every dish, enhancing the overall guest experience (Kandampully, Zhang and Jaakkola, 2017).

The culinary team at Marriott Kensington emphasizes quality, creativity, and innovation in food preparation (EHL Insights, 2023). The chefs craft dishes delight guests with exceptional flavours and presentation (Hotel, Restaurant & Catering 2024, n.d.). To further elevate guests' experiences, Marriott Kensington offers specialty dining options themed dinners, or chef's table experiences, providing unique and memorable culinary adventures (Hospitality Net, n.d.).

Overall, Marriott Kensington's food and beverage operation play a vital role in enhancing guest satisfaction and overall enjoyment during their stay (Consultants, 2023).

Reflecting on my experience shadowing a supervisory position in the food and beverage department, I am struck by the multifaceted nature of the role and the myriad skills and technical knowledge required to ensure exemplary guest service standards (Revfine.com, 2022).

One of the primary skills I observed during the shadowing experience was effective communication. The supervisor seamlessly interacted with staff members, delegating tasks, providing instructions, and offering feedback (Atfield, Hunt and Luchinskaya, 2021). Clear communication was vital in ensuring that everyone understood their roles and responsibilities, contributing to smooth operations and enhancing guest satisfaction (Sarver, Seabold and Kline, 2020).

While the Gibbs Reflective Cycle is commonly used in various fields, it can also be applied effectively in the context of food and beverage management. (Sekarwinahyu et al., 2019)

Gibbs model can be utilized in food and beverage operations:

- Description

The evening began with a surge of guests arriving for dinner, creating a bustling atmosphere in the restaurant. As a part of the front-of-house team, I was responsible for greeting guests, managing table assignments, and ensuring smooth service flow, and to make sure guests were seated as they desire and are happy with their seating and are ready to enjoy their stay.

- Feelings

Initially, I felt a mix of excitement and nervousness as the restaurant quickly filled up. I was eager to provide exceptional service to our guests but also felt a bit overwhelmed by the high volume of customers and the pace of operations. But soon enough I got eased out and was serving the guests smoothly with a big smile of joy as I see guest enjoying their stay.

- Evaluation

The dinner service had both positive and negative aspects. While we managed to handle the influx of guests efficiently, there were instances of delayed orders and longer wait times for some tables. The food quality was exceptionally great, but a few dishes received mixed feedback from guests.

- Analysis

Several factors contributed to the outcomes observed throughout my experience during dinner service. Staffing levels were adequate but could have been optimized during peak hours. Communication among team members was generally effective, although there were some instances of miscommunication between front-of-house and kitchen staff. The menu offerings were diverse and received a lot of complements (Johnston and Clark, 2005).

- Conclusion

Reflecting on my experience, I realized that clearer communication and better coordination between departments could have improved overall efficiency. I could

have taken a more proactive approach in addressing customer concerns and ensuring prompt resolution of issues during the service.

- Action Plan

Based on my reflections and analysis, I developed an action plan for future similar situations:

- Implement regular staff training sessions focused on communication and teamwork.
- Establish clear protocols for handling peak hours to optimize staffing levels.
- Conduct menu reviews to identify and address any potential issues with dish preparation or presentation.
- Encourage a culture of continuous improvement by soliciting feedback from guests and team members.

By applying the Gibbs Reflective Cycle, I gained valuable insights into food and beverage operations at Marriott Kensington and identified actionable steps to enhance performance and guest satisfaction. This experience has equipped me with the skills and knowledge needed to excel in the hospitality industry (Otting, 2013).

Food and beverage placement learning objectives:

- Understanding Operational Procedures:

My primary objective is to gain a comprehensive understanding of operational procedures within the food and beverage department. This includes learning about food preparation techniques, service standards, hygiene protocols, and safety regulations (Food Standards Agency, 2018).

- Customer Service Excellence:

I am dedicated to developing exceptional customer service skills by actively engaging with guests, empathizing with their needs and preferences, and delivering personalized and memorable dining experiences.

- Menu Knowledge and Development:

I aim to acquire in-depth knowledge about menu planning and development, encompassing menu design, pricing strategies, ingredient sourcing, and seasonal

variations. I am eager to contribute to menu development initiatives and learn how to create innovative and appealing offerings inspired by current trends (Ozdemir and Caliskan, 2014).

- Teamwork and Collaboration:

Collaboration is key to success in hospitality. I am committed to working effectively with team members across different roles and departments to ensure smooth operations and enhance the overall guest experience. This will enable me to develop strong interpersonal skills and the ability to work cohesively as part of a diverse team (Indeed, 2021).

- Time Management and Prioritization:

I aim to master efficient time management and task prioritization in a challenging and dynamic environment. By developing strategies to handle multiple responsibilities simultaneously while maintaining mindfulness and upholding quality standards.

Leadership and Management Skills:

By understanding the principles of effective leadership and management, I aim to develop skills in delegation, decision-making, conflict resolution, and performance management.

- Food Safety and Hygiene Practices:

I am dedicated to understanding and adhering to food safety and hygiene practices to ensure the health and safety of guests and staff. I aim to learn about relevant regulations and protocols and actively implementing best practices in food handling and storage (Food Standards Agency, 2018).

- Reflective Practice and Continuous Learning:

Engaging in reflective practice is crucial for personal growth. I am committed to evaluating my progress, identifying areas for improvement, and setting goals for ongoing development. Seeking feedback from supervisors and colleagues and actively pursuing opportunities for continuous learning and professional growth will contribute to my success.

By aligning my learning objectives with educational and career aspirations, I am confident that my placement experience at Marriott Kensington will be valuable, enriching, and impactful in shaping my future in the hospitality industry.

Future Action Plan

Reflecting on my invaluable experience in the food and beverage department at Marriott Kensington, I have developed a strategic action plan aimed at continuous improvement and professional growth within the hospitality industry:

- **Enhance Technical Skills:**

Enrol in specialized culinary courses to refine cooking techniques and expand knowledge of international cuisines. Participate in barista training to master coffee preparation and enhance beverage presentation skills (Okeiyi, Finley and Postel, 1994).

- **Improve Leadership Abilities:**

Seek opportunities to lead small teams or projects to gain hands-on leadership experience. Attend leadership workshops or seminars to strengthen decision-making and team management skills.

- **Deepen Understanding of Operations:**

Volunteer for cross-training in different areas such as inventory management, menu planning, and quality control. Collaborate closely with kitchen and service teams to understand operational workflows and improve efficiency (Chechi, 2023).

- **Focus on Exceptional Customer Experience:**

Implement personalized service strategies learned at Marriott Kensington to anticipate guest needs and exceed expectations. Actively seek and implement guest feedback to continuously enhance service quality and satisfaction levels.

Critical Reflection on Marriott Kensington Experience:

My time at Marriott Kensington has been instrumental in shaping my career aspirations and refining my skills in the food and beverage industry. I have learned the importance of teamwork, attention to detail, and exceptional customer service through practical experience and mentorship from industry professionals.

Moving forward, I am committed to implementing this action plan to build upon the foundation laid during my placement at Marriott Kensington. By leveraging my experiences and proactively pursuing opportunities for growth and development, I am confident in my ability to excel and contribute meaningfully to the dynamic world of food and beverage management. This action plan will guide me towards achieving my career goals and realizing my potential within the hospitality industry.

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