

MANAGEMENT TACTICS FOR EFFECTIVE SERVICE DELIVERY IN HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY

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Abstract

Effective service delivery is cardinal to the survival of hospitality industry. Many hotels in Nigeria have gone extinct while some others are facing dwindling performance partly due to lack of managerial capability to effectively serve their customers. Therefore, the objective of this study was to investigate the management strategy for effective service delivery in hotels in Enugu state. Stratified random sampling technique was adopted in selecting a sample of 45 staff from 15 hotels in Enugu metropolis. The instrument used in the study was the Management Tactics and Guest Service Delivery Questionnaire (MTGSDQ). The formulated hypotheses were tested with Simple Linear Regression and, the findings show that Management Tactics, through effective staff training, prompt response to guest feedbacks, and room management have direct significant relationships with effective guest service delivery in hotels in Enugu state, Nigeria. It was concluded that effective management tactics is a panacea for boosting effective guest-service delivery in hotels.

Keywords: Hotel Management, Effectiveness, Guest Service Delivery, Hospitality Industry

INTRODUCTION

Hotel business forms a crucial part of the tourism industry and it contributes a substantial amount of revenue generated by the industry. The hospitality industry creates employment and boosts the nation's GDP. Half of all tourism trips include a hotel stay (Stutts, 2001), and the revenues account for between one-fifth of total visitor expenditures (Mill & Morrison, 2002). Clients seek hotel services in lodging/accommodations and conferences. Baker, Huyton & Bradley (2001) posit that for many people, it is the facade design or even location that creates the lasting impression. It is the effectiveness, efficiency and warmth of hoteliers that really create that lasting impression and it is these same hoteliers who, by their attitudes and friendliness, subconsciously attract guests back to the hotel. For these reasons, it has become imperative for hoteliers and indeed the employees to device management tactics that will enable them effectively deploy all the resources at their disposal towards effective guest service delivery in order to satisfy the umpteen and variegated needs of their customers.

Many scholars have given profound views of what a typical hotel is. According to Hayes & Ninemeier (2006), a hotel is an establishment that provides sleeping rooms as well as various services to the travelling public. The United States Hotel Proprietors Act of 1956 opines that a hotel is an establishment held out by the proprietor as offering food, drink and, if so required, sleeping accommodation, without specific contract, to any traveler presenting himself who appears able and willing to pay a reasonable amount of money for the services and facilities provided and who is in a fit state to be received (Baker et.al, 2001).

Hotel is an organization that provides paid accommodation on a short-term basis (whether days, weeks or months). Facilities provided by a hotel may range from a modest quality bed in a small room to large suites with bigger, larger quality beds; a wardrobe, a fridge and kitchen facilities; upholstered chairs, flat screen television and en-suite bathrooms. Small, low-priced hotels are wont to offer only the most basic guest services and facilities such as lodging and feeding services. Large, high-priced hotels considerably offer other guest facilities like a pool, business center (with computers, printers and other office equipment); childcare, conference and event facilities, tennis, volleyball or basketball courts, gymnasium, restaurants and other social function services. Hotel rooms are usually numbered or labeled to allow guests to identify their room.

Unfortunately, Nigerian hotels have not lived up to their expectation. This in part is due to operational problems, lack of trust financing and inadequate marketing programmes. Some of these hotels are outmoded in structure, design and layout; and fail to possess the necessary basic amenities that attract guests. However, poor management skills carry long-lasting effects and may infect an entire organization. The results of toxic, misguided leadership reach far and

wide (Lavoie, 2017). Thus, some hotel managers and staff render piss-poor services incapable of eliciting customer satisfaction and delight because they are bereft of the necessary skills, knowledge and experience to run and pilot the affairs of a hotel in the bid to minimize operational costs and maximize profits, hotel owners in Nigeria are wont to employ managers and staff with little or no basic qualifications. Managers are unable to respond to the specific needs and proclivities of their customers because they fail to analyze and respond to customer feedbacks and serve customers better. Furthermore, hotel managers in Nigeria lack the technical acumen required to predict the demand and supply of guest rooms, halls, and other facilities provided by their hotels. Hence, they are unable to prepare and promptly respond to the demand of those facilities by their guests. Regrettably, these problems have made many hotels in the nation shadows of themselves. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to determine the appropriate management tactics for effective service delivery in hospitality industry in Nigeria.

THEORY AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

Management Tactics

Jones & Lockwood (1989) views the management's job in the hotel as responding to the needs of guests, employees and the organization (either the owner or the corporate office). Hotel management is the planning, directing, organizing and controlling of the activities of a hotel by utilizing its resources (both human and material) in the most efficient and effective manner to offer value to its customers by providing products and services in exchange for profit. Hotel management is the process of navigating the daily operations of a hotel in such a way that guests are satisfied and the hotel also makes profit. It refers to professional management techniques used in the running of a hotel in order to meet the specific and general needs of lodgers and travelers. The hotel manager (also known as hotelier) is the owner/manager of one or more hotels (Hayes & Ninemeier, 2006).

Employing effective management tactics for hotel businesses is not rocket science. In fact, there is a basic principle to follow. First, hotel managers and staff should be service minded and properly oriented and trained to effectively serve guests. Customer feedbacks should be properly analyzed in order to take corrective actions where necessary. Concerted efforts at continuous quality improvements should be heightened in the hotels. Also, demand and supply of facilities should be effectively managed in order to serve guests' specific needs in an effective manner. This is because guests and the lodging operations that serve them constantly change (Hayes & Ninemeier, 2006).

Managing a hotel comes with varying responsibilities (AGCAS, 2016). Apart from having a full grasp of their job expectations inside and out, hotel managers must embrace continuous learning in order to discover new ways that will enable them to continue to satisfy their ever dynamic customer needs and expectations. Hotel managers are generally exposed to long shifts that include late hours, weekends, and holidays due to the 24-hour operation of a hotel. The common workplace environment in hotels is fast-paced, with high levels of interaction with umpteen guests, employees, investors, and other managers. Operating successfully in such an industry demands a great deal of tact and skill which, if swept under the carpet, could spell doom for the hotel business.

To effectively manage a hotel especially in Nigeria, the hotelier will have to decide how practice effective time management. This goes beyond just being friendly and professional. It entails knowing which area of the hotel to focus on at each point in time in order to serve customers well and get the desired result. Overtime, as the manager begins to run the hotel, he/she will be faced with the dilemma of deciding how to allocate time to the three most important assets of the hotel: guests, employees and the organization (the owner or the corporate office) itself. Mill (2006) argues that the priority for hotel managers manager should be to take satisfy the employees, guests, and the owners. This 'priority list' indicates that whereas the guests are the primary concern of the employees, the employees are management's main concern.

Guest Service Delivery

Lamb (2004) perceives service as a result of both human and mechanical effort focused on people or objects. In the context of this study, guest service delivery implies helping guests get the information or service they need to make their stay in the hotel an enjoyable one. It entails listening to guests and helping accommodate their requests, whether it's extra towels, toothpaste, or a dinner recommendation; as promptly as possible. Matarirano (2005) elaborates by stating that services are deeds, performances or efforts that cannot physically be possessed. Palmer (1998) opines that services are described by their distinctive features. These are: intangibility, inseparability, variability (heterogeneity), perishability and the inability to own a service. Other characteristics are user participation (Claessens, 2015), imitability, flexibility and people-oriented (Blatz, 2012). These characteristics apply to all services irrespective of the type of service offered. Intangibility implies that the services cannot be seen, tasted or touched before they are bought and inseparability means that services cannot be separated from its providers (Claessens, 2015). Blatz (2012) also explains that the products/services in the tourism and travel industry are consumed as they are produced. Hotel rooms cannot be warehoused for

future sales. When a hotel room is not booked today, the manager cannot take 'today' and sell it tomorrow. Thus, perishability means that once the services have been rendered, they cannot be saved, returned or resold. Hollensen (2003) opines that variability means that services are rarely the same because they involve interactions with people. Inability to own a service means that the service cannot be owned and stored like a product.

Effective Customer Service is the life line of any hotel business and should not just constitute a department within the hotel. Every department in the hotel should deliver effective service in the discharge of their duties. Sridhar (2017) is of the opinion that "Great Service = Delighted Customer = Prosperous Business". The quality of services provided to guests in any type of hospitality operation is influenced most by the staff members providing the services and by the processes they use to provide the services (Hayes & Ninemeier, 2006). The efforts at eliciting customer loyalty and delight will ultimately lead to a prosperous hotel business. Hoteliers and their employees should know how to diffuse a tense situation if a guest is dissatisfied with their room or service in the hotel, and does everything within their power to make the guest happy.

The perception of what an effective guest service should be in hotel business varies among customers. According to Mill (2006), customers develop expectations about the service they are to receive based on such things as their past experience, word of mouth from friends who have stayed in the hotel, the advertisements of the hotel itself, and their own needs and wants. During their stay or at the end, customers usually compare the quality of service they expected to what they actually got. If the guests perceive that the service gotten is piss-poor compared to what they expected, then the guest is dissatisfied. If the service gotten is equal to what he perceived, then he is satisfied. But if the service received exceeds his expectations, then he is delighted and would continue to patronize the hotel. One indirect measure of customer satisfaction is the percentage of repeat guests the hotel gets. Similarly, increasing sales are an indication of satisfied guests (Mill, 2006).

Langhorn (2004) in Sheila et.al (2008) opined that in hospitality, the service provider is "part of the product itself". For guests to be satisfied, they not only must believe that they have received a valuable service for their dollar, but also feel valued and respected by the workers providing the service (Kernbach & Schutte, 2005; Langhorn, 2004; Varca, 2004; Winsted, 2000; all in Sheila et al, 2008).

Staff Training and Orientation

For a company to be truly customer-focused, an employee must understand how important customer service is to the company, how service fits into the culture and how he or she plays a

role in it. That doesn't happen spontaneously; it requires training (Hyken, 2016). Staff training contributes to increased productivity of the organization, improved service quality and developed professional knowledge (Nestoroska & Petrovska, 2014). Staff members should be introduced to the property's mission statement, which should emphasize the critical importance of guest service (Hayes & Ninemeier, 2006). To implement customer service training with employees, the manager needs to identify customer's needs, assess employees' skills, design and implement a training vehicle, and constant reevaluation of customer service delivery (Richason, 2017). Staff training and orientation should focus on strengthening their customer service skills such as empathy, patience and consistency; adaptability; clear communication; work ethics and knowledge of the hotel business. Also, Customer service philosophy within the hotel should not be so restrictive that employees need to get manager approval whenever they want to do something extra for a customer.

Nestoroska & Petrovska (2014) examined staff training in hospitality sector as benefit for improved service quality. The purpose of the study was to present findings from conducted research related to the issue of the importance of staff training in hospitality sector as important management activity for improved service quality. The design of the research was created to present the advantages of staff training programs and the need for continuing training within hospitality sector in the Republic of Macedonia for providing services with higher quality and achieve competitive advantage. The methodology used quantitative and qualitative methods, by implementing theoretical and empirical approach through selected methodological procedures. The findings of the research confirmed the importance of appropriate employee structure within the process of providing services. Staff training in hospitality sector is very important for continuous training of currently employed staff, and for new employees, as well. Due to high competition, they need to upgrade their skills, according to the job positions. A scope of training courses includes different programs with wide range of issues that meet industry standards, and can lead to employee' professional development and improved service quality delivery. Hence, the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 1: Staff training does not significantly influence employee-guest relationships in hotels in Enugu.

Customer Feedbacks

To collate customer feedbacks, hotel managers can interact with guests as they check in or check out of the hotel-inquiring from them what they liked about their visit to the hotel and what the hotel management can do to make their next visit more enjoyable. A simple questionnaire/comment card can be given to the customers to fill and return to the hotel

management. Line-level employees are often abreast with the likes and dislikes of guests and thus are a veritable source of information to the hotel manager on how to satisfy guests. Call centers, being the focal point for customer interactions, holds a huge opportunity to gather customer feedback that can provide valuable insights to improve every aspect of a business (Aspili, 2014). The use of e-mails, social listening on social media, comment boxes around the hotel and online reviews can also help the hotel elicit customer feedbacks.

A centralized platform within the hotel should be created to collate and manage feedbacks. The advertising unit or customer service unit is charged with this responsibility. Proper analysis of information gotten from customers will help management identify problems and take prompt actions such as the formulation of a new policy, the employment and training of new staff, the purchase of new equipment, the upgrade of hotel facilities and/or changes in hotel procedures.

Then, as problems are researched, no matter how small they may appear to be, the property will have taken another step on its journey towards consistently meeting required quality standards (Hayes & Ninemeier, 2006), and making informed decisions that will give the guests a stellar experience. For this to happen; information collated and analyzed must be shared across all departments in the hotel to help employees learn how to better address guest concerns, and reward valuable guests for their loyalty. Analysis is done by examining the frequency of complaints/commendations by guests, recording them, determining which departments are responsible for them, and identifying ways to correct or improve the services as the case may be. Most importantly, customer feedback needs to be applied to the business in such a way that guests can see their feedback being addressed and implemented, to know they are valued by the hotel. MacDonald (2017) suggested 5 ways to respond to customer complaints: listen and understand; apologize; find a solution; follow up with the customer; and exceed expectations. Research by The Nottingham School of Economics found that unhappy guests are more willing to forgive a company that offers an apology as opposed to being compensated. Findings from the study reveal that 45% of customers withdrew their negative evaluation of a company in light of an apology, whereas only 23% of customers withdrew their negative evaluation in return for compensation (MacDonald, 2017).

Customer feedback is a marketing term that describes the process of obtaining a customer's opinion and perception about a business, product or service. Customer feedback is so important because it provides marketers and business owners with insight that they can use to improve their business, products and/or overall customer experience (Beard, 2014). Customer feedback also allows companies to better understand how customers evaluate and use their products when compared to competitive products. It is vital in determining where a

company's products and services excel or fall short compared to alternatives on the market (Suttle, 2017). It offers the best way to create customer satisfaction and provides actionable insights to better ways of creating unforgettable experiences for customers. What is more? Proper analysis and implementation of information garnered from Customer feedbacks engenders customer retention and loyalty. Thus, the second hypothesis is proposed as follows:

Hypothesis 2: Prompt response to customer feedbacks does not significantly impact service quality offered to guests in hotels in Enugu state.

Rooms Demand by Customers

Demand for hotel rooms for any given property is extremely variable (Mill, 2006). The demand could be weekly or seasonal. Under weekly demand, one common classification is to divide demand for hotel rooms into “four-day market” and “three-day market” (Jones, Peter, & Lockwood, 1989). Hotels that concentrate on business travelers who tend to frequent the hotel on Mondays through Thursdays and prefer to get home for the weekend may likely operate the four-day market. Whereas hotels that accommodate more of leisure travelers who stay in the hotel from Friday through Sunday would operate the three-day market. On the other hand, many hotels face seasonal variations in demand. On an annual basis, demand can be classified as off-season, high-season or on-season, and shoulder periods (Jones, et.al, 1989). Off-season entails weak demand and low occupancy. On-season means strong demand and high occupancy. The shoulder-season lie in-between the on-season and off-season.

Sometimes, the demand for hotel facilities far outweighs the supply for them. In some cases, the reverse is the case. A hotel guest room is a perishable product. Since the hotel inventory cannot be stored, if a room goes unsold on any one night, the room revenue is lost forever (Mill, 2006). When the supply for the rooms of a hotel exceeds the demand for them, rooms are left unoccupied and the revenue for that day is lost forever whereas cost is still incurred. Hotel experiences hundred percent room occupancy if the demand for the rooms outweighs supply. Guests are usually turned away when this happens. Hotel manager is faced with the task of predicting and forecasting future demand for their rooms and other facilities, and making adequate preparations for the satisfaction of their customers. Odoo (2012) assessed Logistics and supply chain management in the hotel industry: Impact on hotel performance in service delivery. The study concluded that hotel logistics and supply chain management, supplier partnerships and relationships are very important. The long-term partnership helps the organization and its suppliers achieve major benefits through their direct, long-term union, and encourage joint planning and continuous problem-solving efforts. These strategic relationships allow hotels to work well with a small number of vital suppliers who are prepared to share

accountability for the success of the products and work together to reduce inefficient time and effort. Quality relationships are used to improve customer satisfaction and prevent customers from going to the next hotel.

As mentioned earlier, the difficulty in managing supply and demand is that (in the short run), the supply of hotel rooms in a property is fixed while the demand for them is variable (Mill, 2006). However, in the long run, the opposite is usually the case. Managers must devise a means of ensuring that at every point in time, the supply of services and facilities in the hotel meets the demand for them or even exceeds it especially in quality. Appropriate strategies should be adopted when demand exceeds supply or supply exceeds demand. The marketing department is usually charged with this task even though the hotel manager also promotes and markets the business. Jeffery & Barden (2000) analyzed daily occupancy performance to examine demand for different days of the week. Some hotels, especially those located in tourist markets, experienced higher demand on the weekends.

Hotels in business areas, or those with meeting facilities, had higher demand during the week. Time series analysis of daily room occupancy rates in 91 hotels in England from January 1992 to December 1994 is used to analyze within-week occupancy performance in the English hotel industry. Two major temporal patterns are identified: one features a midweek peak and Saturday sub-peak; the other features a broader weekend peak and midweek trough. Both are represented in the occupancy profiles of most hotels. They are used to define a two-dimensional daily occupancy performance space. The positioning of hotels within this space is explained in terms of location, market and other characteristics of the hotels, in a stepwise regression analysis. The implications of the findings are discussed in a marketing context. This study however failed to analyze the effect of proper management of demand and supply of rooms as guests demand for them on effective guest service delivery in hotels. It failed to answer questions such as: How has meeting guests demand for rooms in the hotels led to increased patronage by the customers? How has the satisfaction of guests improve vis-à-vis effective management their demand for rooms? In the light of this, the third hypothesis holds:

Hypothesis 3: Room demand management does not significantly affect prompt response to customer requests in hotels in Enugu State.

METHODOLOGY

The study used 45 respondents from 15 hotels in Enugu state. The primary data were obtained through the use of Management Tactics and Guest Service Delivery (MTGSDQ). To ensure that the research instrument measures consistently what it was designed to measure, a pilot study involving 20 subjects who were randomly selected outside the population under study. The data

generated was analyzed to establish its internal consistency using the Cronbach coefficient alpha reliability estimates shown below:

Table 1 Cronbach coefficient alpha reliability Test

Variables:	N	X	SD	Alpha
Effectively trained staff	15	15.78	2.74	.868*
Response to guest feedbacks:	15	14.63	2.14	.789*
Management of rooms	15	17.73	2.69	.698*

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis one: Staff training does not significantly influence employee-guest relationships in hotels in Enugu State.

Table 2 Simple linear regression analysis for hypothesis I

Source of variation:	Sums of Square	d.f	M.S	F.	Sig.
Regression:	98.738	1	98.738	68.412	0.000*
Residual:	62.062	43	1.433		
Total:	160.800	44			

Model	B	STD Error	BETA	t.	Sig.
(Constant)	2.234	.673	-	3.320	.000*
Effectively trained staff:	.719	.087	.784	8.271	.000*

R= 0.784

R²= 0.614

Adjusted R²= 0.605

S.E= 1.201

Significant at 0.05

Critical t = 2.014

Critical f = 4.03

Results of the analysis in table 2 show the predictive composite effect of effectively trained staff on employee-guest relationship. The results indicate that the calculated f-value of 68.412 is greater than the critical f-value of 4.03 at 0.05 (the level of significant). This is an indication that, effectively trained staff significantly predicts employee-guest relationship in hotels in Enugu state. By these results the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternate accepted. The coefficient

of .719 (71.9 percent) shows that, a percentage increase in effective staff training while other variables are held constant would lead to 71.9% increase in employee quest relationship.

The R^2 of the simple linear regression measures the degree of determination coefficient of predictor (effectively trained staff) on employee quest relationship. It predicts that 61.4% of the variation in employee quest relationship is explained by the variation of predictor (effectively trained staff), While 38.6% of the variations in the employee quest relationship is explained by other variables which are extraneous to the study. The t-statistics in the table show that, the calculated t-value for effectively trained staff (8.271) is greater than the critical t-value of 2.014 at 0.05 (level of significance). This means that, the predictor (effectively trained staff) has a significant relationship with employee-guest relationship in hotels in Enugu state. That is, the higher the level of effective staff training, the higher the level of employee-guest relationship and vice versa.

Hypothesis Two: Prompt response to customer feedbacks does not significantly impact service quality offered to guests in hotels in Enugu state.

Table 3 Simple Linear regression Test for Hypothesis II

Source of variation:	Sums of Square	d.f	M.S	F.	Sig.
Regression:	94.534	1	94.534	38.253	0.000*
Residual:	106.26643	2.471			
Total:	200.800	44			
Model	B	STD Error	BETA	t.	Sig.
(Constant)	1.963	.889	-	2.208	.033*
Analysis of Feedback:	.700	.113	.686	6.1	.000*

R= 0.686

R^2 = 0.471

Adjusted R^2 = 0.458

S.E= 1.572

Significant at 0.05

Critical t = 2.014

Critical f = 4.03

Results of the analysis in table 3 show the predictive composite impact of prompt response of customer feedbacks on service quality in hotels in Enugu state. The results indicate that the calculated f-value of 38.253 is greater than the critical f-value of 4.03 at 0.05 (level of

significance). This means that, prompt response to customer feedbacks significantly impacts service quality in hotels in Enugu state. By these results the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternate upheld. The coefficient of .700 (70.0 percent) shows that, a percentage increase in prompt response to customer feedbacks while other variables are held constant would lead to 70.0% increase in service quality.

The R^2 of the simple linear regression measures the degree of determination coefficient of predictor (prompt response to customer feedbacks) on quality service. It predicts that 68.6% of the variation in quality of service is explained by the variation of predictor (prompt response to customer feedbacks), While 31.4% of the variations in the service quality is explained by other variables which are extraneous to the study. The t-statistics in the table show that, the calculated t-value for prompt response to customer feedbacks (6.185) is greater than the critical t-value of 2.014 at 0.05 (level of significance). This means that, the predictor (prompt response to customer feedbacks) has a significant relationship with service quality in hotels in Enugu state. That is, the higher the level of response to customer feedbacks, the higher the level of service quality.

Hypothesis Three: Room demand management does not significantly affect prompt response to customer requests in hotels in Enugu State.

Table 4 Simple linear regression analysis for Hypothesis III

Source of variation:	Sums of Square	d.f	M.S	F.	Sig.
Regression:	55.659	1	55.659	30.848	0.000*
Residual:	77.585	43	1.804		
Total:	133.244	44			
Model	B	STD Error	BETA	t.	Sig.
(Constant)	3.290	.747	-	4.402	.000*
Analysis of Feedback:	.544	.098	.646	5.554	.000*

R= 0.646

R^2 = 0.418

Adjusted R^2 = 0.404

S.E= 1.343

Significant at 0.05

Critical t = 2.014

Critical f = 4.03

Results in table 4 show the predictive composite effect of rooms demand management on prompt response to customer requests in hotels in Enugu State. The results indicate that the calculated f-value of 30.848 is greater than the critical f-value of 4.03 at 0.05 (level of significance). This means that, management of rooms demand affects prompt response to customer requests in hotels in Enugu State. By these results the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternate upheld.

The coefficient of .544 (54.4 percent) shows that, a percentage increase in Management of demand for rooms while other variables are held constant would lead to 70.0% increase in prompt response to customer requests. The R^2 of the simple linear regression measures the degree of determination coefficient of predictor (Management of demand for rooms) on prompt response to customer requests. It predicts that 41.8% of the variation in prompt response to customer requests is explained by the variation of predictor (Room demand management), While 58.2% of the variations in prompt response to customer requests is explained by other variables which are extraneous to the study. The t-statistics in the table show that, the calculated t-value for room demand management (5.554) is greater than the critical t-value of 2.014 at 0.05 (level of significance). This means that, the predictor (Room demand management) has a significant effect on prompt response to customer requests in hotels in Enugu state.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS AND THE IMPLICATIONS FOR MANAGERS

Results from hypothesis indicate that effectively trained staff significantly predicts employee-guest relationship in hotels in Enugu state. This result is in line with an earlier work by Hyken, (2016) who posits that for a company to be truly customer-focused, an employee must understand how important customer service is to the company. Staff training contributes to increased productivity of the organization, improved service quality and developed professional knowledge. To improve customer service, managers must identify customer's needs, assess employees' skills, design and implement a training vehicle, and constantly reevaluate customer service delivery (Richason, 2017). Staff training and orientation should focus on strengthening their customer service skills such as empathy, patience and consistency; adaptability; clear communication; work ethics and knowledge of the hotel business. Also, Customer service philosophy within the hotel should not be so restrictive such that employees will need to get manager approval for positive initiatives.

Again, results from hypothesis two show that prompt response to customer feedbacks significantly impacts service quality in hotels. This finding is in consonance with the work of MacDonald, (2017) that found that 45 per cent of customers withdrew their negative evaluation

of a company in light of an apology whereas only 23% of customers withdrew their negative evaluation in return for compensation. Customer feedback is important because it provides marketers and business owners with insight that is used in improving their business, products and/or overall customer experience (Beard, 2014). Customer feedback also allows companies to better understand how customers evaluate and use their products when compared to competitive products. It is vital in determining where a company's products and services excel or fall short compared to alternatives on the market (Suttle, 2017). It offers the best way to create customer satisfaction and provides actionable insights to better ways of creating unforgettable experiences for customers.

To collate customer feedbacks, hotel managers can interact with guests as they check in or checkout of the hotel-inquiring from them what they liked about their visit to the hotel and what the hotel management can do to make their next visit more enjoyable. A simple questionnaire/comment card can be given to the customers to fill and return to the hotel management. Line-level employees are often abreast with the likes and dislikes of guests and thus are a veritable source of information to the hotel manager on how to satisfy guests. Call centers, being the focal point for customer interactions, holds a huge opportunity to gather customer feedback that can provide valuable insights to improve every aspect of a business (Aspili, 2014). The use of e-mails, social listening on social media, comment boxes around the hotel and online reviews can also help the hotel elicit customer feedbacks.

A centralized platform within the hotel should be created to collate and manage feedbacks. The advertising unit or customer service unit is charged with this responsibility. Proper analysis of information gotten from customers will help management identify problems and take prompt actions such as the formulation of a new policy, the employment and training of new staff, the purchase of new equipment, the upgrade of hotel facilities and/or changes in hotel procedures. Then, as problems are researched, no matter how small they may appear to be, the property will have taken another step on its journey towards consistently meeting required quality standards (Hayes & Ninemeier, 2006), and making informed decisions that will give the guests a stellar experience.

For this to happen; information collated and analyzed must be shared across all departments in the hotel to help employees learn how to better address guest concerns, and reward valuable guests for their loyalty. Analysis is done by examining the frequency of complaints/commendations by guests, recording them, determining which departments are responsible for them, and identifying ways to correct or improve the services as the case may be. Most importantly, customer feedback needs to be applied to the business in such a way that guests can see their feedback being addressed and implemented, to know they are valued by

the hotel. MacDonald (2017) suggested 5 ways to respond to customer complaints: listen and understand; apologize; find a solution; follow up with the customer; and exceed expectations.

Again, results from hypothesis three indicate room demand management significantly affects prompt response to customer requests in hotels. No wonder Mill (2006) averred that hotel inventory cannot be stored. Therefore, if a room goes unsold on any one night, the room revenue is lost forever. When the supply for the rooms of a hotel exceeds the demand for them, rooms are left unoccupied and the revenue for that day is lost forever whereas cost is still incurred. Hotel managers are always faced with the task of predicting and forecasting future demand for their rooms and other facilities, and making adequate preparations for the satisfaction of their customers. The difficulty in managing supply and demand is that (in the short run), the supply of hotel rooms in a property is fixed while the demand for them varies (Mill, 2006). However, in the long run, the opposite is usually the case. Managers must devise a means of ensuring that at every point in time, the supply of services and facilities in the hotel meets the demand for them or even exceeds it especially in quality. Appropriate strategies should be adopted when demand exceeds supply or supply exceeds demand. The marketing department is usually charged with this task even though the hotel manager also promotes and markets the business (Jeffery & Barden, 2000).

LIMITATIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH

This research has some limitations. First, the scope of the study was limited to Enugu metropolis. Again, there is a paucity of research materials that deals specifically on the subject of discourse especially with regard to the state under investigation. Furthermore, the sample size used is relatively small compared to the number of hotels required to draw such conclusions for the study.

Further research work should be aimed at soliciting the views of guests as to what really satisfies them during a hotel stay. Thus, complementary research works should also aim at investigating precisely from guests about what they look forward to expecting during a typical hotel stay. This will arm hotels with the required tools not just to satisfy the customers but also to delight them.

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