



Module 2 : Products and Services Offered in the Hospitality Industry

- The various products and services you should offer.
- Additional products and services customers often seek.
- How to handle customers when you do not have the products.
- The future of services within the hospitality industry.

There appears to be an ever-increasing number of products and services that are offered through the hospitality industry as guests actively seek more of them during their stay.

The purpose of this module is to discuss:

- The various products and services you should offer.
- Additional products and services customers often seek.
- How to handle customers when you do not have the products.
- The future of services within the hospitality industry.

2.1 The Products and Services Offered

✘ To begin with, we need to look at the range of products and services that are typically offered in the hospitality industry.

Now, from this list there is no guarantee that your hotel will offer everything, as that is one area that allows hotels to set themselves apart from one another, but there are certainly some basic products and services that are regarded as being absolutely essential. It is also important to point out that you

are quite right to expect a longer list of services offered at hotels that have a superior rating.

2.2 Basic Products and Services

✘ There are a number of basic products and services that every hotel has to be able to provide in order to qualify as this type of business.

The standard to which they provide these products and carry out these services will have a direct impact on what they are able to charge and the type of guest that they receive. As a hotel manager, it is your responsibility to make sure that every single thing is done to the best of your ability.

Accommodation

The most important part and product is the ability to provide guests with accommodation. The standard of accommodation is linked to the overall standard of the hotel with 5-star considered as the superior to what will be offered from a 3-star establishment. The bed must be clean, with fresh sheets, and capable of providing the guests with a good night's sleep.

Guests expect to get what they are paying for when it comes to the accommodation, so it is up to you to provide it.

Adequate Plumbing

Initially, this may seem like a strange thing to include in this list of products and services, but it is surprising how often it is included when guests are asked about something that is very important to them.

By adequate plumbing, we mean the ability to have a nice bath or shower whenever you want and to avoid just being on the receiving end of a trickle of water. The water should be clear, it should flow continuously, and the hot water should work whenever it is required.

Good Lighting

We have included this in the list of products and services as it is an area that guests will complain about on a regular basis. A number of guests have an issue with the limited lighting options that appear in hotel rooms and bathrooms, with complaints about them being rather dark and dingy. Providing good lighting will not only enhance the overall experience that the guest has, but it will also improve their feelings of being secure in and around the hotel.

Food

The same goes for the food that is offered at a hotel, as that too is linked to the quality of the overall product. It is no surprise that restaurants attached to 5-star luxury hotels will have a superior reputation to those of a 3-star hotel due to the quality of the staff and overall product that is offered. Guests are looking for a clean hotel with attentive waiting staff and food that they can enjoy.

The food must include various options for breakfast that are suitable for all preferences, whether it

be a cooked breakfast or the continental option. Failure to provide an adequate breakfast will only ever reflect poorly on a hotel due to it being one of the absolute key services that people expect. Most guests will also look for the hotel kitchen to be able to provide them with room service as and when required, although this does depend on the type of hotel and its ability to have the appropriate staff on call 24/7.

Cleanliness

While this is not a product, it is still a service in that guests expect their hotel room, and the hotel in general, to be spotless at all times. The public spaces must be clean, the toilets and bathrooms must be hygienic, and generally speaking, they should feel that the people running the hotel take real pride in their work. They expect the public areas to be spotless, as well as even just the entrance to the hotel, as it sets the tone for what they then expect the rest of their stay to be like.

If there is an issue with cleanliness in a room, then guests are correct to expect that the issue will be handled promptly and without question. This shows professionalism and that any issue is dealt with immediately, which reflects well on the hotel, even though the initial problem should never have occurred in the first place.

Good housekeeping, in general, is one of the areas that you need to focus on as the hotel manager, or you may find that your feedback will not be favorable.

Security

Security is another major product and service that a hotel must offer, because guests are leaving their belongings in a room that is unfamiliar to them and surrounded by people who are also strangers. People expect their belongings to be safe, and the same goes for their own personal security as well, so clearly defined security measures are important. Personal safes inside the rooms for various valuables is now seen as being an essential part of any room, no matter the standard of the hotel.

Being Attentive on the Phone

Most hotels will claim that they operate a policy where the telephone is answered within three rings, but that is not always the case. However, it should be made clear to guests that your hotel provides a service where their telephone calls are answered promptly by attentive members of staff. The individual that answers must also then be able to help the guest with whatever the issue may be and do so in a prompt and professional manner.

Not being capable of dealing with this issue professionally reflects poorly on the entire hotel.

Friendly Staff

Your staff can still be considered as being a product available through the hotel, and it is important that they are friendly and professional at all times, no matter what their role is within the establishment. Staff should be able to handle any issue and do so with a smile on their face. Anything else is simply not acceptable, and you as the manager are then given the task of trying to resolve any issues that have been caused by the staff member. It is in your best interest to hire the best staff and provide them with adequate training to prevent this from becoming a problem.

Concierge Service

It is also accepted that hotels will also provide a concierge service, although the extent to which this applies does vary depending on the individual hotel. Larger hotels in cities will be expected to provide a more substantial concierge service, and indeed there will often be a team of staff dedicated to this service.

However, it will often tend to include services such as:

- Providing tourist advice to guests for the local area.
- Booking tickets for entertainment in the area.
- Providing guests with advice on restaurants in the area.
- Offering valet parking.
- Storing luggage.
- Dealing with general questions from guests regarding the hotel.

In other words, the concierge service should be able to deal with a variety of questions by guests and provide solutions that will further enhance their time in the hotel. This should be a service that adopts the opinion that nothing is difficult and that no request is too bizarre.

Ideally, the people that work in this department should love working with people and solving puzzles due to the sometimes strange nature of requests that come from guests.

Functions

One product and service, that can generate a substantial income for a hotel, is functions. It will often be the case that hotels will have more than one function room that can be hired out for a variety of causes and this service in itself provides the hotel manager with another area to be concerned about.

It is normal for the hotel to be able to cater for a varying number of guests, up to a maximum due to the size of the space, as well as to provide an individual from the hotel that is capable of coordinating the arranging of the function. The hotel can also provide catering and, of course, accommodation if it is required with special package deals being offered to the hosts of the function.

It is common for hotels to provide function suites for a range of reasons, including weddings, conferences, birthdays, training courses, and even fashion shows. The only limitations are linked to the marketing of the space and making people aware that it exists and how much it will cost.

A Warm Welcome

We have listed various basic products and services that are sought by guests, but perhaps the most important one of all is a warm welcome. Without this, there is almost no purpose in having any of the other products or services offered, as this is the one thing that will keep people coming back for other stays in the future. Your staff must be polite, professional, and able to deal with any situation that may arise and potentially have an impact on the quality of the stay of the guest. Providing a warm welcome is a necessity, and nothing else is as important.

2.3 Additional Products and Services Often Sought by Guests

✘ Thanks in part to the competition that is now out there, it is common for guests to actively seek some additional products and services to help them to ultimately decide that your hotel is perfect for their needs.

Wi-Fi

One of the main products and services is for the existence of Wi-Fi in all rooms. While a number of hotels do indeed provide this service, it can often be the case that some will charge whilst others will provide it for free, but with a limited amount of time. However, it is more often the speed of the connection and its reliability that is of concern to the guests.

24-Hour Desk

Guests also now expect reception to be open 24 hours, although admittedly that can be difficult for boutique and smaller hotels that simply do not have the staff to provide such a service. However, even in this instance, it is still advisable for there to be some kind of contact number should any issue arise during the evening.

Laundry Service

More guests are now actively looking for a hotel that also provides a laundry service as part of their products and services. This applies to all hotels, not just those where the majority of their guests are simply passing through and staying for just the one evening.

How to Handle Issues Regarding Services

One of the problems that you may have to face as a hotel manager is when guests expect certain services to be standard and yet they are not available at your hotel. This is something that can prove to be difficult to handle, but there are several things that can be done to prevent this from becoming as big a problem as it could be.

First, you must make sure your guests understand the service and products that they can expect

when they make their initial booking. This kind of information will appear on product listings as well as the website of the hotel, so there is less chance of their being confusion as to what to expect. However, even with you taking these steps, there will still be times where guests discover that all of their needs are not actually being met.

Dealing with the Issues

When a situation does arise, your ability to deal with people and your ability to diffuse a situation will be tested. It is important that you explain why certain services are not provided by informing the guest that it was a decision made by senior management and owners, and let the guest know that you will pass on their concerns.

The key is in the marketing of the hotel and the initial explanation as to what their room fee translates into regarding products and services at the hotel. You may want to implement a service where there is a discussion based on the guests' individual needs and requirements during booking in order to further reduce the chances of there being an issue further down the line.

What is clear is that communication is key when it comes to describing your various products and services, as it is all too easy for individuals to become confused as to what is offered. It is this confusion and misinterpretation of information that ultimately leads to an issue developing in the first place.

When dealing with an issue connected to a product or service, you must do the following:

- Find out exactly what the issue is.
- Determine if it is indeed a product or service that you offer.
- If not, explain the reasons why.
- Stay calm and professional, even in the face of provocation.
- Suggest an alternative solution if at all possible.

FACT



In 2014, the most expensive international city for room service cost was Helsinki in Finland, with a total average room service cost of \$88.94 USD.

Source:statista.com

2.4 The Future of Services Within the Hospitality Industry

✘ There is no doubt that the hotel industry has developed quite significantly in recent decades, and it will only continue in the future.

For example, it is anticipated that there will be a need for easier check-in and check-out procedures that allow guests to come and go as they please. However, it is important to point out that there will still be a desire for that human touch, and the idea of everything becoming linked to computers is certainly something that should not be incorporated by any hotel.

Another thing that is clear is that as technology advances, the need for the hospitality industry to take this into account becomes all too apparent. For example, express check-ins and concierge services via Wi-Fi are just two ways in which technology has managed to change the industry. A hotel manager must be able to keep up-to-date with these changes or they run the risk of their hotel being left behind their competition.

Module Summary

The purpose of this module has been to explain the different products and services that are typically offered from a hotel and that are expected by guests. The actual individual services will vary from hotel to hotel, but there are certain basics that are seen as standard in the industry. However, by increasing and improving the products and services that are offered, you can provide your guests with a better overall experience.

[Tweet "I just completed Module 2 of the Hotel Management Certification Course"]
