Sydney Hotel Service Experience

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Dear Diary,

I am Manish from Australia, and this is my first professional post as a service experience writer. I am from Mauritius and currently living here in Australia as a student at Monash University. Being an Indian from Mauritius residing in Australia, I have been to several places and experienced the thrill of encountering the unknown. In fact, I feel I was born to be a tourist.

Today, I am writing about my latest experience. This post is not about my tour as much as it is about my experience of the hotel where I stayed. You see, hotels are very close to my heart because of their policy of going the distance to make their customer feel at home.

August 31, 2017;

Reason For Going Out;

Well, going to a hotel and spending some time there with my girlfriend was important. You see, it was the 14th of February, Valentine's Day. I had to give my girl something for this particular day. She was recently selected for an overseas exchange program and, is to leave for Japan in a few days, and I may not see her for some time.

Planning A Vacation;

On Friday, I told her that I was planning a long weakened, just for the two of us. I told her that I planned to take her on a trip to Sydney. She seemed thrilled at the idea and immediately began making plans for the journey.

Selecting A Suitable Hotel;

Since this was an important issue, I wanted everything to be perfect. I wanted the room to be luxurious yet comfortable, with a splendid view. On asking for recommendations from my buddies, I learned about the Four Seasons Hotel ("Luxury Hotel Room | Sydney Harbour View | Four Seasons Hotel Sydney," n.d.); it is a luxurious five-star hotel with a view.

My friends told me that Four Seasons has a spectacular view of the Sydney Opera House, as well as the Sydney Harbour Bridge. The view could be seen from the 6th floor and above, though I preferred the 20.th floor. The 20th was the highest level available, and I was guaranteed a magnificent view.

Traveling To Sydney;

I felt butterflies in my stomach on the big day. Not that it was my first time, but I also feel butterflies in my stomach whenever I am about to do something big. Susan, my girlfriend, and I had taken a plane to Sydney. We did not want to waste the entire weekend on a silly road trip, so we booked a flight on Qantas.

The flight hadn't been how I expected. I hadn't had my breakfast and had planned to eat it on the flight. However, what I got was a bland meal. I complained to the stewardess, but even after she put salt in it, it was no good. Apparently, I traveled without any breakfast. I was hungry and angry.

I was relieved to learn that Four Seasons had sent a taxi to pick us up; the driver received us at the airport and took our bags, which he put in the trunk. He then opened the doors for us so that we could get in. I got in the back with Susan and lay down on the seat while the driver sped towards the hotel in a drive that took around forty-five minutes.

Arrival At The Hotel;

At the hotel, we were dropped off by the driver at the front door, and our luggage was carried off by the bellhop. As we passed through the doors, we entered into an ornate and grand lobby. It had beautiful chandeliers hanging from the ceiling that seemed to take over most of the space. Marbled floors with red carpets adorned it. All this added to the large windows, made the hotel look double the size it was.

We were received by the front desk clerk, who asked us for our details and then gave us our room keys. Our bellhop guided us to our rooms, following us with our bags. I told him to put down the bags and tipped him off with a ten-dollar note.

The Room Where We Stayed;

I mentioned earlier that I wanted a place that seemed fit for a five-star hotel and also has a view of the Sydney Opera House. Well, I was in for a surprise; the room was far better than what I had in mind. The windows opened to a view of the Sydney Harbour Bridge and the Opera House. I could see the horizon clearly, with sailboats and ships.

There was a master bedroom with a grand bed, comfortable and plush. The bathrooms were

luxurious, with the shower on one end and dual basins on the other end. Then there was the wardrobe. The wardrobe had towels and bathrobes sitting there as if waiting to be used.

Lunch;

By the time we reached our hotel, it was lunchtime. So, right after we had both had showers and had changed, we went down for lunch. The restaurant, Mode Kitchen and Bar, has a beautiful décor. The decor and the smell of carefully cooked, delicious food made me even hungrier.

The crowd was friendly, everyone seemed to be happy, and probably they were all on their vacations except for a few; who were dressed in business attire. Waiters stood on alert and responded to customers within seconds. Overall, the restaurant experience was excellent, with fantastic food cooked by the chef.

The overall experience was exemplary; I would give it five stars!
Signing off for today,

Manish

Analysis Of The Overall Experience

A hotel business is a service-based business. A service-based business is one where the product is mostly intangible. Of course, you cannot expect a jewelry store to have intangible products. But the courteous staff that takes care of its customers with great care and the elegant furniture where they seat their customers define the service they provide. Businesses like real estate consultancy, banks, advertising agencies and sports events are intangible and complete service-based businesses.

These businesses are entirely dependent on customer feedback and word-of-mouth marketing. To sell their services, they need to hit on the moment of truth former clients have had and the reviews they gave to the company (“Services Marketing – Definition and Characteristics,” n.d.). This is called Service Marketing.

This is a detailed analysis of the Four Seasons Marketing and how much it fulfilled my expectations. In this section, I have explained how and why I rate a particular aspect of the hotel. The analysis is based solely on what my expectations were and how I found the services that was delivered.

I will analyze the service provided according to the 7Ps of Service Marketing (“Service Marketing Mix – 7Ps of the marketing mix,” n.d.);

The Process: the process includes the way in which the service was delivered to the end customer. The Four Seasons, just like all other service-based businesses, has to provide its customers with excellent service to retain them. What is more important is that it has to repeat the same quality of

duty over and over again to maintain a standard for which it can be known.

Before I went to the hotel, my only sources of information was my friends and the reviews on the internet. I had heard good reviews about Four Seasons. My friends recommended the hotel to me because it is a luxurious five-star hotel with a history of providing what they promise.

The Hotel gave me a luxurious room with a magnificent view of the Sydney Opera House. The room itself was very well decorated with air conditioning and baths with both hot and cold water. The hotel also provided me with polite and efficient room service that responded every time I asked for them. Hence, based on the overall experience, I would rate the Process a 5 star.

The Price: considering that I availed the services of a well-known 5-star hotel that provided me with a full range of services, I would naturally expect the prices to be high. However, considering that the service delivered was according to the price charged. Secondly, the prices were affordable for someone belonging to the upper or upper-middle class. Therefore, I would give Price a thumbs up.

Place: The location of a business plays a vital role in its marketing. A business located in a marketplace can attract a large number of customers. Similarly, a services-based business, say a hotel, located at a place close to some tourist attraction, is a plus point. This can allow the company to attract visitors. However, it is not compulsory for hotels to be located near tourist locations. Most hotels that provide services for business executives are located near the city's financial hub, others near the airport.

In my case, the hotel is located at an appropriate place. At locations from where I can have both a beautiful view of Sydney's landmarks as well as privacy. I am therefore satisfied with this.

Promote: the central point for marketing is the promotion activities the company undertakes. This tool includes the direct as well as, the indirect marketing activities of the enterprise. Most companies get involved in direct marketing tactics; like telemarketing, personal selling, internet marketing, etc.

Direct marketing results in a cost for the business. This cost may sometim run up to millions, depending on the firm and the size of the company. An alternative to avoid massive costs is indirect marketing. Indirect marketing is less costly because the company does not pay for expensive advertisements and for sending targeted emails ("52 Types of Marketing Strategies – cultbranding.com," n.d.). Instead, the company is using tools like word-of-mouth marketing.

In the case of the Four Seasons Hotel, their reviews on popular websites, like Facebook and TripAdvisor, as well as the reviews I got from its former customers, are indirect marketing that I found very effective. The Hotel also uses direct emailing and text messaging to promote itself, though I have found word-of-mouth a more reliable source.

People: I found the Hotel staff very experienced and well trained. They were very polite and attentive. Every time I asked for something or placed an order, I was served well. I must say that the hotel staff

made me feel quite at home here at the Four Seasons.

Product: the result of a service-based business is different from that of a regular business. A service is intangible; hence, the product cannot be touched. In the service industry, products are carefully decided and then maintained.

At the Four Seasons Hotel, the product seemed to have been carefully planned. Everything appeared to be perfect, and the entire staff appeared to work as if they had rehearsed the whole thing beforehand.

Physical Evidence: individual hotels, including the Four Seasons, tend to give some physical gifts to their customers for they to remember the service. This is a kind of marketing gimmick for the client to return the next time he wants to avail of the service. At Four Seasons, Susan and I were given a gift basket, which included chocolates, a thank-you card and a bottle of red wine.

Below is a table detailing my and Susan's experience in a nutshell:

EXPECTATION	WHAT WE GOT	COMMENT
Room Service	Timely and Polite	Service was quick, responsive and polite
Variety in Food	Very little options	Food was only seafood and Mediterranean, none of which I wanted.
Hotel Location	Idyllic location	Loved the location
Tangible Gifts	The Hotel gave us a gift hamper with lots of chocolates.	Four Seasons gave us a gift hamper as a token to remember them with.
Cleanliness	Tidy and well-managed room	The rooms were clean and comfortable
Food Quality	Poor	I didn't like the food at all.
Accessibility	The hotel is an hour away from the airport.	The Hotel is too far away; it took us an hour to get there.
Service Quality	I wasn't offered a menu of my choice.	Poor

Service Quality

I have given below a further analysis of the service quality I received according to ServQual (Arlen, n.d.);

Reliability: the hotel was able to deliver the promised service with accuracy.

Assurance: the employees were acutely aware of their duties and seemed to perform work well. Their attitude gave me full confidence in them.

Tangibles: the hotel has ultra-modern and chic furniture and a well-maintained building.

Empathy: the hotel is open round the clock and provides efficient services at all hours.

Responsiveness: the hotel's staff was always very polite and answered all my queries and demands with warmth and ease.

The Knowledge Gap: The knowledge gap relates to customer's expectations about management. When I didn't like the food at Four Seasons, I expected to be provided with a menu of my choice. The hotel did offer me to serve me a dish of my choice, though.

The Standards Gap: this refers to the management's inability or disinterest to meet customer expectations. Technically, the employer should train their staff to ensure that they establish the right type of service and maintain standards. Except for the lunch incident, which took place in the hotel's restaurant, everything else was fine.

The Communication Gap: this part refers to the point that the service provider must ensure that delivery matches the promise. For example, before selecting a suitable hotel, I read about the hotel on its website. Based on that, I formed some expectations. When I received the service, it was somewhat like what I had in mind.

Conclusion

My overall experience at the hotel was significantly better than I expected. The hotel was able to give me the services that I was looking for a five-star, luxurious hotel that offered posh services and privacy. My girlfriend and I had a memorable time at the Four Seasons, and I would recommend it to my friends. Though, I do admit that I was not comfortable with their choice of food. I was expecting that they would have a wide variety menu, but the restaurant mostly had seafood, in which I was not interested. The service was exceptionally good, and I had absolutely no issue with the service provided. Overall, the Four Seasons Hotel is an exceptionally "A" quality hotel, though I wonder why they do not market themselves more. They need to cash more on the country's tourism business.

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