

HOW DO HOTELS IN HONG KONG ACHIEVE AND SUSTAIN COMPETITIVE
ADVANTAGE BY DEVELOPING LUXURY HOTEL SERVICES AND USING TALENTED
STAFF?

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Introduction

Hospitality and tourism industry is one of the main pillars of Hong Kong's economy. In recent years, the tourism sector in Hong Kong has grown significantly a trend that has also led to growth in the hospitality industry. In terms of tourism, the country is ranked 13th among a total of 141 countries around the world. This also implies that the hotel industry in the country is well developed. By 2018, the country had a total of 283 hotels with a total of 79200 hotel rooms. Various initiatives have been taken by the government to promote this industry such as setting up an area that is exclusively for hotels. This has encouraged the formation of different types of hotels that meet the needs of different people that visit the country. With a population of 7.392 people and an area of 1106 m², the number of hotels is quite high.

Most of the visitors that come into the country are from mainland China who comprises of about 71% of the total visitors. The two main reasons why visitors come into the country are tourism and business. The visitors are accommodated in the 283 hotels that have been set up in the country. In 2018, the average occupancy rate of the hotel rooms was about 91% compared to the rate in 2018 which stood at 89% (Gov.hk., 2019). This statistics shows that in as much as performance is concerned, the entire industry is doing well. However, one issue that is underlying is about competition. Comparing the size of the country, the number of visitors and the number of hotels in this country, it is clear that the competition is quite high.

The management in each hotel has to ensure that they come up with strategies that promote the competitiveness of their hotel. The failure to come up with such measures will result in great losses. When it comes to the hotel industry, most individuals are very selective. Minor

details can alter the decision that an individual takes when looking for accommodation.

Therefore, there is a need to determine the factors that influence the decisions of various customers in terms of the hotels that they choose to reside in. Two of the major factors that most hotels tend to consider are Luxury and Talent management. This paper will examine how hotels sustain a competitive advantage by developing luxury hotel services and using talented staff.

Luxury hotel services

In the world of hotels, luxury is everything. Customers want to get value for their money, and one way is through getting luxurious services. There are no specific standards for luxury in hotels. However, the expectations that people have and current advancement in technology and the hospitality industry has created a bar that hotels have to meet for them to be termed as being luxurious. For most hotels that are rated as at 4 star and above, the services that are offered can be regarded as being luxurious due to their upscale quality and comfort. Luxury is one of the qualities that help in distinguishing the hotels in Hong Kong despite the large number.

To ensure that customers experience the real touch of luxury, there are various factors that must consider. One is simplicity where a customer must not encounter any difficulty while acquiring the services offered by the hotel which starts from booking. The other factor which counts most is the products and services that are provided in the room where an individual resides. The other factor is related to dining in the hotel where the quality, quantity and variety of food is considered by many. Another very important factor is the amenities that are availed for the guests in the hotel. By considering all these factors adequately, the management in hotels are able to create an environment that is suitable for the guests.

Talent management

A talent management plan focuses on the employees and helps them to the skills that they have while acquiring new and improved skills. Once a hotel has incorporated all the features that help in promoting luxury, the next initiative is to ensure that the hotel has the right people. Image is everything, and when it comes to hotels, the members of staff are a true reflection of the hotel. Therefore, by hiring the right people, a hotel is placed in a better position in terms of competitiveness. Some employees are very essential to the performance of a hotel such as those employees that touch customers directly. A good example is the chefs who may work behind closed doors but are in charge of preparing everything that guests eat. The quality of the food is essential and therefore, there is a need to hire someone that will ensure that the quality is maintained at its best.

Other services that are offered which require the employees to interact with customers directly. This requires individuals that have the right skills and who can communicate eloquently with the visitors. A good is the customers that work at the reception and those that offer room service. These employees are required to handle customers with the right etiquette and to display other qualities such as professionalism. Therefore, the management must ensure that their team of employees have these qualities to be in a position to maintain a competitive edge in the market. These qualities can be acquired by making use of various talent management practices which helps to improve their employees. The next section will examine the precise practices that are maintained by hotels in Hong Kong To promote competitiveness.

How hotels in Hong Kong harness Luxury and Talent to promote competitiveness

With regard to luxury, the hotels in Hong Kong have implemented several practices that have helped in increasing their competitiveness in the market. The first quality is coming up with an easy and fast booking process which is coupled with a fast and a discreet process in checking in. Most hotels have realised that customers want efficiency in everything and this starts in the booking process where one can see the room that they wish to reside and to book for it wherever they are. Some hotels such as the Four Seasons Hotel in Hong Kong have even gone ahead and offered transport services to the visitors such as from the airport to the hotels (Fourseasons, 2019).

Once an individual has checked in a hotel, the most important factor that counts concerning luxury is the room features. Various hotels in Hong Kong have ensured that the guest rooms have luxurious features. One way is by fitting the rooms with furnishings that are of high quality starting from the bed which must be king size to everything else that counts as furniture. The guest rooms are also fitted with expensive touches where the aesthetic detail of all the items must be ensured. The other quality is the space of the rooms, the flow of air, and the view from the rooms. The rooms are also fitted with modern technology equipment such as HD television, internet, and effective heating/AC systems. These guest rooms are also well decorated and fitted with original paintings on the walls. Everything is of high quality starting from the robes, bed sheets, curtains, and the mattresses. Adequate storage areas are also provided for the guests (Baker, 2016).

Some of the hotels in Hong Kong such as the Grand Hyatt and Ramada Hotel among others have gone ahead and given and provided rooms that have harbour views to ensure that their guests experience the true touch of luxury. The bathrooms that are installed in these hotels

are also very luxurious with sufficient counter space, tabs for two, plenty of fluffy, artisan toiletries, high quality towels, and ventilations among others. Apart from the room features, there are other qualities that have helped to define luxury in the hotels in Hong Kong. Most hotels are ensuring that their interiors are a true touch of luxury by fitting hotels with exclusive interior designs, haute couture styling and using sculptures and other means to decorate the hotels (Anon, 2019).

Various hotels are also ensuring that they gain a competitive edge by ensuring that they offer guest facilities and amenities that are of high quality. A good example is the Hotel Icon, the Renaissance hotel, and the Cordis Hotel among others in Hong Kong. The features that are offered are high-end SPA treatments, swimming pools, fitness centres, babysitting services, laundry services, and dog walking services among others. Lastly, by offering guests services that are amazing, the hotels manage to make the guests feel valued which also contributes to improving the overall experience that the guests get. Having examined the various practices that help to promote the competitiveness of various hotel through the provision of luxurious services, the next section will examine how talent management is used to harness competitiveness.

In the hospitality industry, the talent of the employees is a true reflection of the reputation that a hotel has. For a hotel to remain ahead, there is a need for attracting, training, developing, and retaining competent employees. This is the first initiative that has been taken by most hotels in Hong Kong. The management in these hotels is strict where they ensure that only individuals with the right experience are hired. For instance, most hotels ensure that their food is prepared by Michelin chefs which provides the guests and other customers with food that is of high quality. On the other hand, the management also ensures that individuals hired to perform other skills

such as customer service have adequate experience and knowledge of the roles they are supposed to play (Carter, 2018).

However, the hotels ensure that they make use of various talent management practices to improve their employees. One way is by creating an internal talent pool in the hotels. Instead of hiring employees from outside the organization, the hotels are focusing on improving the individuals working within the organization to prepare them for future leadership positions. The other practice that is carried by the management in the hotels concerning talent management is aligning the overall goals that an organization has with the individual goals that each employee in the hotel plays. This helps in giving the employees a sense of ownership which increases their productivity. A good example of a hotel in Hong Kong using the alignment tool is the Four Seasons Hotel. The other talent management practice that hotels in Hong Kong engage in is involving the employees in decision making and other important issues regarding the hotel. This helps in keeping employees at par with issues relating to the hotels and serves as motivation.

Conclusion.

In conclusion, based on this paper, one can clearly see how hotels harness competitiveness through the use of luxury and talent management. In relation to luxury, it is clear that customers are very attentive to details in as much as luxury is concerned. Therefore, the management in various hotels should ensure that the guest rooms are installed with a variety of luxurious products that may appeal to the needs of the customers. On the other hand, concerning talent management, various practices that are useful in improving the employees and in helping them to acquire essential new skills should be put in place. Using these two tools, the hotels will capture and retain customers which is essential in maintaining competitiveness in the market.

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