

Study on How Executive Lounge Enhances the Customer Experience

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Abstract: *Service management is becoming the new paradigm in the hospitality industry. Hospitality establishments offer services to fulfill the needs and experiences of customers through innovative concierge or personalized services. Hospitality managers are conceptualizing their hospitality offerings as service offerings conducted in a framework of human relationships. This essay will advance the framework through a concierge service study to determine how and why customer service has either increased or decreased in regards to the acquisition of concierge service marketing techniques. The purpose of this research is to first, analyze how and why customers seek concierge services and second, determine whether the acquisition of these concierge services affect guest stay experience and offer increased choices in guest services. The hotel lounge was once a simple affair, offering a television, perhaps, and a small buffet to its regular customers. But as business travel has started to pick up, and revenue along with it, a number of major hotel brands are once more turning to sprucing up their executive club lounges, making them more residential in feel and providing healthier food and improved technology like free Wi-Fi.*

Keywords: Executive lounge, service management, hotels, customer experience

I. INTRODUCTION

Concierge Level -- the very phrase conjures up an image of your own personal hotel staff member, catering to your every request, no matter what time of night. Is it worth it? The answer depends on the particular hotel's service at concierge level and your own personal needs. Here's a rundown of what you can expect. This might include meeting room spaces, internet stations, a reception area with complimentary food and drinks, and of course, a special concierge desk to help you with requests. It is a lounge that is value for money. This concept was introduced by the Marriott Hotels, by starting a lounge facility for their repeat customers and business travelers. Over time it was a known fact that guests were ready to pay extra for the lounge facility. It also played a major role in guest satisfaction and repeat business. The American concierge is most common in larger cities and performs many of the same duties as the European concierge. One significant difference is that the American concierge deals primarily with business travelers, and thus, the need for foreign language skills is less important. The American concierge is less supervisory also, and therefore, does not have a large service staff reporting to them for direction.

Executive floors are fairly standard features across four- and five-star hotels. You almost certainly will find them at the well-known hotel brands: Hilton (hilton.com), Marriott (marriott.com) and Hyatt (hyatt.com) offer them at many of their properties, for example. Upper-tier boutique or independent hotels in major cities also are likely to have them. You'll find them less frequently at lower tiers of hotels, but some do offer them, particularly in business-travel-heavy locations. Holiday Inn (holidayinn.com), for example, has business and executive levels in some of its larger properties. Amenities on an executive floor can vary wildly, even among properties in the same hotel brand, so you will need to check with your hotel, either by phone or on its website, for the exact offerings. As a base expectation, they should offer a public lounge area with work spaces and a small buffet, and a room with extra working areas. Many hotels, however, have invested well beyond that. In the lounge, you might find cocktails, gaming areas and free Wi-Fi hot spots. Your room might have free goodies to eat and drink and nicer bedding and furniture. You also might have an elevator exclusive to lounge floors or a private check-in area. Some luxury properties even offer high-service perks such as a butler to handle your packing and unpacking. All the hotel lounges do not provide the same services the

services may vary from hotel to hotel or brand to brand. The customers' requirements are also a part in setting up for the services and facilities. Some of the common services provided by the hotels are:

Full Buffet Breakfast:

Most travelers, families included, love the convenience of getting breakfast without having to leave the hotel in the morning. That becomes even more important on days you chose to take early day trips or leave very early for the airport since many places are not even open at that hour. Note that breakfasts can vary by chain, country, and property. While some might offer a continental version, others have a full brunch-like buffet.

Extravagant Happy Hours:

The "Happy Hour" that first started in restaurants has successfully crossed over to hotel lounges. Most properties offer appetizers and drinks as a free option between 5-8 pm. Some executive lounges offer potatoes chips, pretzels, and cheeses, while others can offer ample spreads making it unnecessary for some to eat dinner (which can be a money saver for the average family.)

Ample Seating Space:

Depending on the space allocated by the property the executive lounge can feel spacious or crowded. Naturally, the larger the room the more comfortable the traveler will feel. Bear in mind that during the peak hours of 8am-10am and 6pm-8pm even some of the larger lounges might appear packed.

Unlimited Sodas or Drinks:

Though many hotels in the United States offer unlimited bottled waters, sodas and coffees throughout the day, this will vary from country to country. You will discover greater differences on the wines, beers and hard liquor policies – some places offering very few choices and actively limiting patron consumption.

Separate family space:

A growing number of hotels wishing to cater to traveling families now offer a separate room with books, toys and the quintessential TV/video set to help occupy the kids. This is a good idea for all lounge guests – the adults enjoy a relaxing atmosphere while the kids get to play and enjoy their own TV shows.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Richard Mills, Denis P. Rudd, Frank Flanegin, 2009, this paper suggests that the concierge services are not only related to the facilities provided but also to the service provider. It determines that the concierge facility also helps to find the customer satisfaction level. Now days the customers are looking forward to innovative concierge or personalized services. The paper also throws light on the human relationship.

Jane L. Levere, 2004, this article is saying that the customers do return to the hotels offering concierge services as a part of the facilities. It was noticed that 90% of the repeat customers were business travelers, who look forward to use this facility as it aids in their business trip needs.

Sara Dolnicar, 2003, in this research the author focuses on the Hotel attributes which turns out to be a wide and extremely heterogeneous field of research. The authors review empirical studies investigating the importance of hotel attributes, provide attribute rankings and suggest a framework for past and future research projects in the field, based on the dimensions.

Noora Sirkiä, 2013, This thesis gives information about the types of VIP guests in hotel industry in the United States and the specific procedures the hotel departments use in order to answer to the various needs of the guests and to provide high quality customer service, and one way of achieving the same is through the executive lounge.

Suzana Markovic, Sanja Raspor and Klaudio Segaric, 2010, have examined and analyzed that satisfaction has a greater impact on customer loyalty. And it can be achieved through the services and facilities provided by the hotels.

Sarah Peterhans, 2010, Standards, has studied that maintaining the level of service in the hotel should be done by understanding the guests' expectations and setting service standards to meet the guests' expectations.

Jiao Mingyu, 2014, this paper analyses the formation of customer value and has identified the five driving factors which are functional value, social value, emotional value, utility value and cost value.

Phillips Paul Louvieris Panos, 2005 have analyzed the performance measurement processes. And have suggested a balance score card for the improving the service quality for customer retention in the hotel.

III. CONCLUSION

The executive lounge services continue to have a great impact on the hospitality industry that is greatly affected by loyalty programs. Therefore, the level of executive lounge services continues to have a great impact on the revenue of the business as well. To be able to maintain the relations the property needs to excel in the job without exceptions. As executive lounge guests also include high profile individuals from around the world and therefore it is imperative in the hospitality business to make a long lasting impression that gives a positive impression of the property and furthermore effects on the reputation and revenue of the hotel. In the future the executive lounge guest services could be further researched by utilizing properties that are more involved with transient guests or properties that are located in other countries. This might provide surprising information on the executive lounges. Although executive lounge guests in different cultures and locations may have different requests and preferences, the fact that the hotel should nevertheless provide the guest with undivided attention and act on preferences and requests does not in my opinion change. I believe that the fact that unobtrusive personal service keeps the guests coming back to the property.

Also for future reference I would recommend using an objective guest satisfaction survey targeted to the executive lounge guests. I think if would correctly executed provide valuable information to hospitality industry. Because hospitality industry relies on customer service, it is essential to have a comprehensive training program for the associates who are providing the service. By providing professional and polished customer service the hotel is able to demonstrate that every guest is as important and that the guest is the reason for the hotel's existence. In my opinion the basis for excellent executive lounge service starts from recruitment and continues through training. This combined with well-planned executive lounge service processes results in high-quality customer service and in impressed guests.

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