

THE BUSINESS STANDARD

Our hospitality industry neglects service quality at its peril

When selecting a hotel's service offerings such as accommodation costs, facilities, location, and the visiting season, consumers consider service quality as a differentiating feature

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Local hotel enterprises must recognise the importance of employee loyalty and sustainability implementation. Photo: Tbs

Service quality is the most significant factor influencing a customer's feelings about the hotel business. The five criteria that characterise service quality are the physical facilities, the delivery of specialised

services, the willingness to address customer issues, the capacity to handle these challenges, and the reaction to customer expectations.

In 2020, when the global Covid-19 pandemic was raging, the hospitality industry played a crucial role in sustaining our local economy.

The compulsory hotel quarantine compounded the social alienation and loneliness that returning international tourists and expatriates suffered. If the industry had been sufficiently prepared, this issue might have been resolved and the level of service offered could have exceeded expectations. On the other hand, the hotel industry in Bangladesh had to rapidly react to the pandemic.

Hotels responded quickly to price increases but did not take aggressive steps to improve service quality. Customers were also left despondent for various reasons, including a personnel shortage, reduced facilities, poor food quality, etc. Since then, the hotel business has yet to make much effort to recover by making the changes needed to improve service quality and match client expectations.

The service sector provided 51.3% of Bangladesh's GDP in 2021, according to The World Bank. As a result, the demand for travel and tourism for relaxation and family pleasure is increasing across the country.

Customers demand first-rate service quality to justify the cost and effort of getting away from their hectic lives. Not to mention, it is also difficult to schedule time off from their demanding work schedules to arrange for a holiday.

When selecting a hotel's service offerings such as accommodation costs, facilities, location, and the visiting season, consumers consider service quality as a differentiating feature. Customers need clarification, and the hotel's actual service level rarely matches their promised service quality. Because this facility has to be prioritised, the supervision of the staff to ensure good service to local clients needs to be improved.

Hotels are not immune to duplicate organisational policies designed to protect their company's vision and goal. Companies voluntarily attempt to develop more policies, while neglecting to focus on the corporate culture and the employees — it's not surprising that this industry faces so many challenges.

Local hotel enterprises must also recognise the importance of employee loyalty and sustainability implementation. Overtime and employment benefits not being paid, a lack of empathy for employees, an inability to provide job assurance, and forcing staff to do their jobs all contribute to an unhealthy and poisonous work environment.

To solve these existing challenges in service quality, hotel corporations might adopt the following standard actions:

Organisational culture assesses the potential of current and incoming personnel by fostering beliefs and attitudes. Hotels should teach existing staff to save money while also increasing employee commitment. Tangibles such as adequate holidays, overtime compensation, work perks, job security and on-time salaries can foster the organisational culture required for the growth of the hotel industry.

Hotels can no longer focus solely on daily operations by cutting expenses and focusing on year-end revenues—sustainability necessitates a mix of economic goals and social responsibilities.

The absence of long-term strategies impacts business objectives. Hotels that fail to restructure their business objectives are likely to lose market share or close their doors. Hotels could improve service quality by enhancing lodging and transportation efficiency, establishing a clean and eco-friendly atmosphere, updating their maintenance and furnishing rooms, decreasing waste, and constructing green infrastructure.

Bangladesh has an additional cultural legacy that should be incorporated into hotel management. Cultural appreciation may consistently be demonstrated through service excellence.

For example, southeast Asian countries like Thailand, Malaysia and Cambodia continue to build a name for themselves through this exuberant notion of "Asian Hospitality" in their service industries. Consistency in personalised service quality necessitates sincerity, commitment and an open mind. A customer's poor experience may justifiably affect their impression of a hotel's service.

Failing to move fast on a refreshed brand image will be a mistake. Every company has traditionally relied on brand identification to strengthen client relationships. However, a customer's previous experience with a hotel's

service quality influences how they react to new marketing for current services. Therefore a strong brand positioning is still essential in the modern organisational framework for sustainability management.

Maintaining service quality to prospective clients regarding hotel booking, available facilities, and service inquiries, seamless omnichannel technological integration via email, social media, internet, and telephone are also essential.

This level of service quality minimises consumers' physical and psychological tiredness, influencing positive purchasing behaviour toward hotel services. It also serves as a model for social media word-of-mouth; a customer's sharing their actual positive experience may be more beneficial for a hotel's market positioning than planned marketing.

Due to this challenging climate, the hotel industry is quickly discarded as a viable choice for prospective employees. Hospitality organisations are at fault for failing to fill the remaining local labour market gaps effectively.

Their first strategy should involve cooperating with prominent private universities to offer hospitality management courses at both the undergraduate and postgraduate levels. Their combined efforts and consideration will result in more administrative positions for local graduates around the country.

There is no way around the undeniable fact that Bangladesh's hospitality industry has not yet reached "the promised land." In the years to come, the quality of service given by our hotel business will be crucial for locals to comprehend the significance of sustainable development and infrastructural growth, as well as for altering their views.

If Bangladesh can maximise this industry's growth, it may emerge as a significant challenger for a larger part of its gross national income in the services sector.



Illustration: TBS

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