

STUDY OF HOSPITALITY SKILLS AMONG BANQUET EMPLOYEES IN 5 STAR HOTELS#

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ABSTRACT

Background: *Hospitality skills are the skills that are used to provide warm reception and treatment to the guests coming to the hotel. Banquet staff in particular should master these skills as at banquet party/gathering huge number of people gather at one place from various cultures, regions, of various religions and from various backgrounds.* **Objective:** *To find out the skills required by Banquet staff;* **Methodology:** *Structured questionnaire was prepared on Google Drive and the link was shared on the Facebook and WhatsApp platforms for responses.* **Results:** *The ratio of the skilled permanent staff and the contracted unskilled staff was around 3:2 approximately. 88.9% respondents felt satisfied with the services of the hotel, whereas, 11.1% people were unsatisfied with the services of the five star hotel's banquet services.* **Conclusion:** *To overcome the mentioned gap between the expected and delivery, hotels must train their each and every staff in hospitality skills and review them among the staff from time to time. To stand up the expectations of the guests, hotels should hire hotel management graduates and diploma holders in the respective department.*

Key Words: *Hospitality Skills, Banquet Employees, 5 Star Hotels, Services, Training*

INTRODUCTION

Hospitality skills are the skills that are used to provide a friendly reception and treatment to the guests coming to the hotel. Hence forth to apply these practices in the hotel, a hotel's staff must have these skills which includes customer service, languages, communication skills, understanding the industry and cultural awareness. This applies to the banquet staff in particular because in a banquet party/gathering there is huge number of people who gather at one place from various cultures, regions, religions and from various backgrounds. Banquets of the hotel are as much important as rooms or F&B outlets because there are many people from different walks of life gathering together at one place and take the impression and image of the hotel's hospitality in those couple of hours. It is also to mention that banquets are equally revenue generating, marketing and promoting place as any other part of the hotel. Therefore, it is of utmost importance that the banquet staffs needs to be competent

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enough to serve to the guests from different walks of life, accordingly carrying and promoting the brand image of the hotel along with them through their service and hospitality.

However, it has been noticed that there is some gap in between the expected and delivery of services.

Thus, the objective of the study were :

- To determine the gap between the expected and delivery of the services by the banquet staff of the 5 star hotels and therefore suggesting ways to fill in the gap.
- To find out the skills a guest expects from the banquet staff of a five star hotel.
- To find out that do the banquet staff of the five star hotels stand up to the expectations of their guests.
- To determine the gap if any between the expected and delivery of the services by banquet staff and therefore suggesting the ways to fill in the gaps.

METHODOLOGY

Observation design was adopted for work, wherein observations about the banquet staff in the five star hotels were made, and survey design, wherein online sampling was done, responses were obtained from people of Delhi. The subjects were approached by online tools namely, Facebook and WhatsApp. Structured questionnaire was prepared on Google Drive and the link was shared on the mentioned platforms for responses. Data analysis was done with the references from the responses received through the above mentioned path.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

From the observations conducted upon the banquet staff of five star hotels in New Delhi, it was found that the hotels have a mix of permanent banquet staff who have somewhat hospitality skills that are required in hotels to serve the guests from different walks of life and contracted unskilled staff who are hired according to the events in the hotel. The ratio of the skilled permanent staff and the contracted unskilled staff was around 3:2 approximately.

The permanent skilled staffs were either hotel management graduates or diploma holders in F&B Service. Communication skills that are of utmost importance while dealing with the guests was found to be present in them to some extent, for say, there are skilled enough to communicate appropriately both in basic languages i.e. Hindi and English. They were active listeners, they were polite in guest dealings, they had friendly nature, but to some extent they lack in providing clear and accurate information to the guests. They were sufficed in taking initiatives, identifying and discussing service related problems with their supervisors and managers. They are participative in activities which involve learning and skill developments conducted in the hotels. The problem solving skills among these

personnel was only limited to the few. Teamwork among these personnel does not suffice up to the mark as expected. Most of them qualified for the skills required to operate on the tools and equipments used in the banquets with safety.

The contracted unskilled staff were neither a hotel management graduate nor a diploma holder which states that they lack in basic hospitality skills that are required while serving in the banquets. They remain unfamiliar with the names of the items they are serving. They did not suffice in communication skills and as observed largely, not also in most of the hospitality skills that are must in five star hotels.

From the survey, of guests, it was observed that out of the 27 respondents, 23 respondents have visited five star hotels' events more than a couple of times. 88.9% respondents felt satisfied with the services of the hotel, whereas, 11.1% people were unsatisfied with the services of the five star hotel's banquet services. 77.8% people voted in favour that different hotels have different levels of services. 66.7% people voted affirmative that the quality of services changes according to the type of event or occasion.

51.85% respondents expected good communication skills from the banquet staff. 22% respondents, expected personnel should have good problem solving skills. 66.67% respondents felt that staff should be helpful. 25.92% respondents looked for generosity among banquet employees. 37% respondents believe that people serving them should be humble. Last but not the least, 59.25% respondents preferred that the five star hotels' employees to be approachable. 14.81% respondents felt that staff lacks in communication skills.

85.2% respondents who have experienced the banquet services of different five star hotels on different occasions like business meeting, marriage, inaugurations, conferences, get together and so on feels that banquet staff of five star hotels lack in communication among staff and trainees, lack in training, are not guest focused, slow in services, are not appropriate, lack in politeness, helpfulness, lack of knowledge, coordination, cleanliness, have casual behaviour which leads to chaos and misconceptions, unaware how to respond to specific problems of the guests, lack in approachability, humbleness, unable to understand what a guest really wants, lacking in guest handling, lack of knowledge, and lastly, lack of interest in their work.

CONCLUSION

Hospitality skills, especially communication skills are of utmost importance among each and every personnel of banquet who are, in serving and are in direct contact of the guests they are serving to. Because, it is practically true that first impression is the last impression, whether, it is beauty of the tangible matter (interiors and exteriors) or intangible matter (as delicate as words of mouth). Moreover, a guest may not complain about the inconveniences or bad experiences he/she had, to the hotel, but he/she would surly spread the words among his/her peers.

To overcome the mentioned gap between the expected and delivery, hotels must train their each and

every staff in hospitality skills and review them among the staff from time to time. Also, hotels keep in mind that only skilled and trained staff should service the guest overlooking the type of event and backhand work can be allotted to the unskilled and untrained staff.

Hotels can contact the local hotel management schools to provide experienced students for the services which would be beneficial for both the hotels and the students. Hotels will get services of the skilled students, in fraction of the cost and on the other hand, students would get experience and recognition.

Another way to stand up the expectations of the guests, hotels should hire hotel management graduates and diploma holders in the respective department. Because they come trained, with basic hospitality skills and therefore, can be groomed accordingly.

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