

The Importance of Complaint Management Tools at selected Luxury Hotels in Vienna

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Abstract

Complaint management is a significant management system in the hotel business, because often the way employees deal with dissatisfied guests can make the difference in customers' loyalty and relationships. Sometimes guests become more dissatisfied when the complaint management process is not satisfying. Nowadays customers have a lot of alternatives for accommodation and so they would not come again if the service recovery process for a complaining guest is not appropriate for the standard of a hotel. It is essential that employees use different tools to deal with complaining guests, because a good complaint management system can improve relationships.

In luxury hotels, this kind of management is a significant aspect too, because even in 5 star hotels failures can happen. The focus of this research work is on Vienna, because the city is well known in the hospitality sector and has a high number of luxury hotels with good reputations. Luxury hotels in Vienna might have different philosophies, because while there are several old and traditional properties, the number of more modern hotels has increased over the last years. A qualitative methodology in form of expert interviews with 18 general managers and department heads are carried out to gain insights into the complaint handling process.

In the interviews, the author was able to determine that well-developed complaint management procedures are very significant for all properties, because an efficient service recovery process can have a positive impact on the guests.

Several analyses have been conducted to see how the complaint management process is developed at selected luxury hotels. Guests have changed over the last years, so companies have to adapt their procedures concerning guests' desires. In order to have success and to satisfy guests after a complaint, employees might assume responsibility and deal proactively, because they want to be taken seriously. Companies have to use this feedback as an opportunity to improve a service to avoid mistakes in the future.