

## Communicative Hospitality: Acts Of Service Among Front Desk Hotelier

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Article Info	ABSTRACT
<p><b>Keywords:</b> Communicative Hospitality, Corporate Services, Hotel management</p>	<p>The study seeks to explore how the communication practices of front desk personnel, who interact primarily with hotel customers, influence the overall quality of the hospitality experience. The current body of research on hotel management emphasizes the crucial role of communication in providing outstanding service. It is crucial to develop a deeper understanding of the communication strategies and interpersonal abilities utilized by front desk hoteliers, and how these aspects influence visitor satisfaction and loyalty. Robert K. Yin's case study methodology entails engaging in extensive interviews with front desk personnel, closely observing their interactions with visitors, and thoroughly analyzing pertinent organizational documents. By considering a range of perspectives, individuals can gain a deeper understanding of the intricate dynamics between different forms of communication, the delivery of services, and the overall hotel environment. The findings suggest that providing exceptional hospitality service relies on effective communication, characterized by understanding, attentive listening, and a sincere commitment to meeting guests' needs. The study investigates how different management approaches and organizational cultures influence the communication behaviors of front desk staff in a hotel setting. As a result, this has an impact on guest satisfaction, loyalty, and the overall perception of the hotel brand. The findings of this study enhance the current scholarly knowledge regarding the role of communication in the hotel industry. Additionally, they provide practical implications for front desk training programs and hotel management. This article emphasizes the significance of fostering a culture of outstanding communication among front-line personnel to prioritize the communicative aspects of hospitality. This will assist in preserving a competitive edge in the ever-changing hotel industry and improving the overall satisfaction of our guests.</p>
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### INTRODUCTION

Ensuring customer happiness and loyalty in the fast-paced, very competitive hotel sector depends on providing outstanding service. The front desk is absolutely important in the service-oriented sector since it is the first point of contact for customers. Making sure

customers enjoy a pleasant and unforgettable stay falls on hoteliers. The whole hospitality experience is shaped in great part by the successful communication and interpersonal skills of these front-line employees (Khmiadashvili, 2019; Nelfan & Setiawati, 2014; Putra et al., 2023).

Previous research on the field of hotel management have underlined the need of effective communication in offering exceptional service (Cheng, 2014; Chin et al., 2017; Putra et al., 2023). Nevertheless, it is important to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the particular communication techniques and behaviors utilized by front desk hotel staff and how they influence guests' perceptions and satisfaction. This case study, following the methodological approach of Robert K. Yin, seeks to explore the significance of communication in the hospitality experience, specifically examining the service interactions between front desk staff and hotel guests. As a highly competitive and service-oriented profession, the hotel industry is a field in which the quality of communication and interpersonal skills of front-line staff can have a substantial impact on the overall experience that guests have (Almeida, 2016; Rony & Panuju, 2018; Sugianto & Thoyib, 2012). Within this framework, strategic communication has developed as an essential component of efficient hospitality management. This is because hotels are constantly working to differentiate themselves from their competitors and to establish long-lasting relationships with their clientele.

Effective communication in the hotel sector comprises a variety of methods and practices. These include interactions with guests that are both clear and empathic, proactive problem-solving, and the strategic alignment of organizational messaging (Harliantara et al., 2023; Kim et al., 2001; Presbitero & Attar, 2018). As the primary point of contact for visitors, front desk hoteliers play a vital role in shaping the communicative experience. Their interpersonal skills and capacity to meet guest demands significantly impact customer satisfaction and loyalty (Isnaini et al., 2022) Front desk hoteliers are responsible for answering questions and providing information to customers.

The necessity of cultivating a culture of communication excellence among front-line staff has been brought to light by research conducted in the field of hospitality management. Studies have shown that hotels that invest in communication-focused training and development programs, such as active listening, conflict resolution, and emotional intelligence, tend to outperform their competitors in terms of guest satisfaction and overall service quality (Indrasari et al., 2019). These programs include active listening, conflict resolution courses, and emotional intelligence training. Furthermore, the strategic alignment of corporate communication, which includes everything from brand messaging to internal policies and procedures, has the potential to produce a unified and customer-centric experience that resonates with guests (Octaviana & Susilo, 2021; Susilo, 2023).

On the other hand, the literature that is currently available indicates that the application of strategic communication in the hospitality business is not devoid of difficulties. The communication process can be made more difficult by a number of factors, including significant personnel turnover, language and cultural obstacles, and the various requirements and expectations of guests (Isnaini et al., 2022). These factors necessitate an approach that is nuanced and adaptable. In addition, since technology is playing an increasingly important role

in the hospitality sector, new communication touchpoints and concerns have been introduced for hotel management (Bharwani & Jauhari, 2013). These new communication touchpoints include mobile applications that are directed toward guests and online booking platforms.

Hotels need to adopt a holistic and multifaceted approach in order to address these challenges and capitalize on the strategic advantages of effective communication. This approach should include the incorporation of communication-focused training, organizational alignment, and technological integration in order to create a seamless and memorable experience for their guests. Hotels have the ability to differentiate themselves in the market, strengthen their relationships with customers, and eventually achieve lasting success in the competitive market if they use this opportunity.

It is the front desk that serves as the major point of contact and the symbolic representation of hospitality for guests (Putra et al., 2023). The front desk is at the center of the strategic communication efforts that are being made by the hotel sector. The front desk employees of a hotel play a crucial part in molding the overall guest experience as well as the perceptions that guests have of the hotel's brand and image (Shin et al., 2019; Wang et al., 2023). This is accomplished through their ability to communicate and interact with guests (Isnaini et al., 2022).

The front desk is frequently referred to as the "face" of the hotel because it is the location where the initial and last impressions are created. The manner in which front desk employees welcome, interact with, and attend to the requirements of visitors can have a considerable impact on the overall pleasure of those guests as well as the chance that they will return to the hotel or recommend it to others (Wang et al., 2023). Front desk hoteliers can provide a pleasant and memorable experience for their guests by employing effective communication tactics such as active listening, empathy, and problem-solving. This will assist to cultivate a favorable link between the guest and the hotel brand.

Furthermore, the front desk acts as a symbolic reflection of the hotel's commitment to providing excellent service and hospitality to its guests (Shin et al., 2019). The professionalism, attentiveness, and attention to detail displayed by front desk staff have the potential to express the fundamental principles and organizational culture of the hotel, thereby influencing the guests' opinions of the establishment's overall quality and reputation. When viewed in this light, the front desk becomes an effective instrument for hotels to differentiate themselves in the market and construct a distinctive brand identity that is centered on the client journey.

On the other hand, the front desk is responsible for more than just providing assistance to customers; it also plays an important part in the gathering and distribution of information (Isnaini et al., 2022). It is common for hoteliers working at the front desk to serve as the primary conduit between visitors and other departments inside the hotel. They are responsible for facilitating the coordination of numerous services and ensuring that the hospitality experience is delivered in a seamless manner. The symbolic significance of the front desk as the embodiment of the hotel's commitment to providing great service and ensuring the satisfaction of its guests is further strengthened by the fact that it occupies a central position within the operations of the hotel.

It is possible for hotel management to prioritize the development of strategic communication skills and practices among their front-line workers if they acknowledge the crucial function that the front desk plays as a symbol of hospitality. The hoteliers can benefit from this investment in communication-focused training and development by cultivating a culture of excellence. This culture will allow the front desk to become a powerful tool for building brand loyalty, improving the guest experience, and ultimately driving the hotel's long-term success in the highly competitive hospitality industry.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the communicative component of hospitality in order to improve the academic understanding of the aspects that influence the experience that guests have while staying at a hotel and to provide useful insights for training programs that are designed for hotel management and front desk employees. The findings of the study can supply hotel management with valuable information that can assist them in developing a culture of good communication among their front-line staff. This has the potential to result in enhanced service quality as well as a competitive edge in the hotel industry, which is constantly evolving.

## METHODS

Following Yin's (2014) model, this study applied a case study research design. Particularly in cases when the boundaries between the phenomena and the context are unclear, the case study approach was judged appropriate since it allows a comprehensive analysis of a present phenomenon within its natural environment (Yin, 2014)

The data collecting approach guarantees a complete awareness of the phenomenon by using several sources of evidence. Semi-structured interviews with front desk managers and employees at three selected hotel sites helped to gather data. With permission, the interviews were carried out in person and lasted between 45 and 90 minutes. The interview questions sought to provide understanding of the front desk's influence on the hotel's reputation, the means of communication applied, and the challenges in offering first-rate guest experiences. To further grasp the information gathered during the interviews, the researchers also watched front desk operations and staff member guest interactions.

The researcher used several approaches to ensure the dependability and correctness of the data. First, data triangulation—that is, compiling data from several sources—was achieved by means of interviews, observations, and evaluation of relevant corporate records including client comments and training manuals. This strengthened the validity of the results and helped to cross-valuate data (Yin, 2014). A reliability test was also conducted whereby two separate researchers coded the interview transcripts and examined the findings. The developers agreed rather highly as a result. In order to guarantee the accuracy of their interpretations and conclusions, the researchers eventually asked the interview subjects validation by presenting the preliminary results.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Role of Front Desk Officer

The findings of this case study underscore the front desk's multifaceted responsibilities in shaping the hotel's reputation and embodying the essence of hospitality. The front desk's strategic importance in the hotel industry was emphasized by the data analysis, which revealed several critical themes.

At first, the front desk was consistently acknowledged as the primary point of contact and the hotel's representative, with the responsibility of influencing the initial and concluding impressions of the guest experience. Representing the hotel's brand is a critical responsibility of the front desk personnel. Guest perceptions of the hotel's quality and service excellence are significantly influenced by their exceptional communication skills, problem-solving abilities, and overall demeanor. As per a front desk manager, "The front desk is the central hub of the hotel." It is the starting and ending point of the guest's voyage, and we have the power to influence the quality of that experience.

Furthermore, the data underscored the critical role of the front desk in the effective coordination and delivery of a diverse array of hotel services. Front desk hoteliers are essential in facilitating the connection between guests and various departments, thereby ensuring the smooth administration of the hotel and the fulfillment of guest needs.

This coordinating function further solidified the front desk's symbolic importance as the representation of the hotel's dedication to providing outstanding hospitality. According to a front desk staff member, "We are the central point of the hotel." We are responsible for ensuring a seamless experience for our guests, handling all aspects from check-in to check-out and everything in between.

### Strategic Communication and Strategic Hospitality Management at the Front Desk

The findings of this case study emphasize the need of strategic communication in the function of front desk representation of hospitality. The statistics underlined the need of front desk hoteliers developing a broad spectrum of communication abilities including active listening, empathy, problem-solving, and conflict resolution. Creating unique guest experiences and shaping the brand identity of the hotel were said to depend critically on these communication abilities.

Guests' happiness was found to be much raised and loyalty fostered by front desk employees who had extraordinary people skills and a real drive to deliver outstanding services. One guest said the front desk employees were really polite and helpful. As a client, I felt much welcomed and valued. Strategic communication training and development must first take front stage in hotel management. This is so since it greatly helps the hotel to become more competitive and reputable.

Furthermore underlined by the results is the need of including the front desk into the more general strategic hotel management system. Hotel managers can ensure that front desk operations complement the general vision, values, and service delivery criteria by realizing the significance of the front desk as a vital point of contact and a symbolic manifestation of the hotel's brand. Implementing thorough training courses, performance management systems,

and feedback systems strengthening the front desk's function as a hotel ambassador helps to achieve strategic alignment.

Furthermore emphasized in the case study were the front desk's capacity to offer insightful consumer intelligence and market analysis. Regular visitor interaction gives front desk hoteliers the ability to gather instantaneous comments, identify developing patterns, and provide insightful analysis for the strategic direction of the hotel. Using the front desk as a useful tool can help hotel management to better fulfill guest needs, simplify service delivery, and strengthen the hotel's market competitiveness.

In the end, this case study underlines the important part the front desk plays in the hotel sector since it reflects hospitality and is a fundamental component of the brand and dedication to first-rate service of the hotel. Hotel managers can release the front desk's potential to provide exceptional guest experiences, build brand loyalty, and accomplish long-term organizational success by investing in the development of strategic communication skills and including the front desk into the more general strategic management framework.

### **Image Handling and Impression Management at the Front Desk**

These findings from the case study provide an incisive understanding of the significant role that the front desk plays in regulating the impressions and image, both of which are essential components of effective hotel administration. Based on the statistics, it is evident that the front desk plays a crucial role in the interaction between the hotel and its guests because it is responsible for shaping the initial and last impressions that guests have of their stay. Members of the hotel personnel who work at the front desk have a strong knowledge of how their brand is represented. They are aware that the contacts they have with guests, your demeanor, and your capacity to find solutions to problems directly influence how guests perceive the hotel's image and the level of service they receive.

According to the findings of the observations, the personnel working at the front desk strategically managed impressions by employing a variety of strategies in order to accurately display a consistent and positive company image. Keeping a professional appearance, demonstrating a friendly tone of voice and body language, and demonstrating a genuine concern for the satisfaction of the guests were all quite important. The position of a front desk manager is said to involve more than simply greeting people as they enter and exit the building. The planning of an experience that is in accordance with the values and aspirations of the hotel is required.

In addition, the case study highlights the significant role that the front desk plays in effectively resolving any issues or complaints that guests may have, thereby ensuring that the hotel's reputation is maintained with integrity. Those who work at the front desk of the hotel are the first line of defense in protecting the hotel's reputation. They are equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to address customer issues in a timely and effective manner. Through their compassionate demeanor, their capacity to find solutions to issues, and their unwavering commitment to providing first-rate service, the personnel at the front desk were able to successfully transform potentially negative events into chances to enhance the hotel's reputation and encourage brand loyalty among guests.

In light of the perspectives expressed by the guests, the importance of front desk image control and impression management was brought into even greater focus. Guests frequently emphasized how much their whole image of the hotel is dependent on the front desk when they were there. A significant number of individuals stated that the professionalism, alertness, and attention to detail displayed by the front desk staff played a significant role in their choice to either return to the hotel or recommend it to others.

The importance of the front desk in shaping and preserving the hotel's brand is shown by this case study, which demonstrates its significance. This demonstrates how effective method of problem resolution and strategic management of impressions contribute to supporting this. With the knowledge and application of the front desk's ability to shape the reputation of the hotel, hotel managers will be able to improve their competitive edge, increase the satisfaction of their customers, and cultivate long-term devotion to the brand.

## CONCLUSION

Stressing its multifarious role as a symbol of hospitality, a necessary touchpoint for guest interactions, and a main driver of the hotel's overall brand image and competitiveness, this thorough case study of the hotel sector has highlighted the strategic relevance of the front desk in the hotel business. The results show that the front desk's responsibilities go much beyond the conventional transactional ones and include a wide spectrum of communication skills, impression management techniques, and strategymaximizingt with the main vision and service delivery criteria of the hotel. Data shows that front desk hoteliers with strong interpersonal skills, a real dedication to service excellence, and the ability to properly handle guest issues and complaints have a major influence on the development of memorable experiences, the growth of guest loyalty, and the improvement of the hotel's reputation. Moreover, the research has underlined the front desk's potential to be a major source of consumer knowledge and industry insights, so defining it as a strategic asset for hotel management to apply in their decision-making process. Understanding and adopting the strategic value of the front desk helps hotel managers to boost the competitive advantage of their companies and guarantee long-term success in the ever-changing hotel sector. Although this case study has effectively given insightful analysis on the strategic function of the front desk, it is proposed that more research be done in order to improve and enlarge the conclusions. Among the several subjects of more research are the following: Comparative analysis is the method of doing a comparison research among several hotel sectors, geographic regions, or brand affiliations in search of industry-specific best practices and contextual elements defining the strategic value of the front desk. The objective of the quantitative evaluation is to create a clear return-on-investment for strategic front desk management by developing a comprehensive quantitative framework to measure the influence of the front desk on important performance metrics, such guest happiness, loyalty, and revenue generating. An important component of frontline employee perspectives is investigating the views, motivations, and professional development needs of front desk hoteliers so that more successful training and support programs could enable them to flourish in their strategic responsibilities. Technological integration is shown by looking at the junction

of the strategic functions of the front desk and the inclusion of developing technologies including artificial intelligence, self-service kiosks, and data analytics to increase the responsiveness and efficiency of the front desk. By means of the quest of these research areas, hospitality academics and industry practitioners can enhance their knowledge of the strategic function of the front desk and create more strong frameworks for maximizing its contribution to the general hotel performance.

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