

Additional Case Studies

Chapter 7

Management Processes in Hotels

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The Artist Residence markets itself as a boutique hotel and is located on the Brighton seafront, one of the city's best locations. The hotel's unique selling proposition is that it features paintings and sculptures made by the up-and-coming artists who also live and work at the hotel. Adding to the youthfulness atmosphere is the fact that the manager, Justin, is an undergraduate student himself and the son of the owner.

Although the concept of having young people run the hotel in exchange for accommodation, suggests that at least expenses will be minimized, in reality this seems to be the least of the problems facing the establishment. The hotel has very low occupancy rates and online reviews are scathing.

There are various reasons for the hotel's poor reputation. Alex Polizzi, a hotel management guru, finds that the hotel is 'grubby' and in addition that some of the artwork in the entrance may put off potential customers rather than attract them. The hotel has nine bedrooms and a gallery space that is also used as the breakfast room.

She also questions the value of the art in the bedrooms, some of which appears to have been rather randomly selected. In addition the bedrooms themselves are poorly maintained, with dirt and dust obvious to the visitor.

Although the hotel considers its basic breakfasts a highlight (the manager considers it to be minimalist), Alex Polizzi considers it to be *too basic* for the type of visitor that the hotel is trying to attract. Guests are served with ordinary white bread for their toast and there is a small selection of cereals. She recommends that Justin address the issue of breakfast and also focus more clearly on the management of the hotel. For example the cleaners and maintenance staff need strict cleaning and maintenance regimes, with the required cleaning work being clearly specified and the cleaner having to tick that it has been done. More senior staff need to ensure that cleaning tasks have been effectively completed. As far as breakfast is

concerned, Alex shows Justin what can be achieved by having some warm pastry items bought in from the local patisserie. Breakfast can then be presented as 'on-the-go' with a high-quality fruit bar and juice as well as a hot drink. This would still be far cheaper than a traditional hotel breakfast and would not require a cook for its preparation.

Another hotel with trading problems is The Rutland Arms Hotel in Bakewell; it is housed in a 17th century building and owned and managed by David, a retired solicitor who bought it 12 years ago, hoping to retire on the profits. The hotel has good occupancy rates in the summer when the area has many visitors, but in the winter there are very few people visiting the outdoor sights in the region and as a result the hotel has been losing £50,000 per year (he has lost £750,000 since he bought the place). However, this is not due to any lack of effort on David's part. He can be seen scurrying around cleaning the rooms, running the bar and also winding up his collection of antique clocks.

Alex finds that the level of cleanliness in the hotel is inconsistent and draws David's attention to the hotel reception that is cluttered, there are leaflets and stands clustered in various places. The signage is poor, to the extent that people can be confused as to where they need to go. In addition the level of service experienced by guests at breakfast can also be poor. Overall she finds that a key problem that the hotel faces is poor leadership. While David is hard-working he lacks the ability to inspire and support staff. For example he fails to praise staff when they have undertaken a task particularly well and he can be quite a morose and self-deprecating personality, which does not present the positive image of the hotel needed to attract premium customers, including event organizers.

A means of addressing the lack of custom in the winter months appears to be the ballroom, which could have a number of different uses, if it was refurbished correctly. This large room could serve a number of different uses, for weddings, parties and conferences. The establishment could then be marketed to local events organizers, wedding planners and others as a possible destination for large groups of people.

Alex Polizzi has the following words of advice for anyone thinking of setting up in the hotel trade: 'I would say, work in the industry. It's fairly self-evident, isn't it? What you should actually do is have a go, and see if you like it. Make a bed or two before you decide to have customers in your house. When you have a B&B you are your own kitchen porter; your own room maid; your own chef. You might as well know what it's about. Just have some

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Blundel, *Exploring Entrepreneurship, 2e*
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experience of actually doing that day in and day out, and seeing if it suits you or not, because it just doesn't suit everybody.'

Source

www.channel5.com/show/the-hotel-inspector/