

New Employees' Integration and Orientation Management in Hotel Companies

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Abstract

The significance and relevance of this topic are rendered by the complexity amplification of actions performed by hotels in the context of developing and diversifying human resource management instruments used for the administration of economic, social and institutional variables. All type of evolution determines the reorganization of the human resource strategic role within organizations, people being seen as the organization's main competitive advantage over rivals. The research in this work falls under this reasoning and is a contributing factor to consolidating information related to the integration and career guidance management of the human resources working in the tourism industry. The studies carried out emphasize the best practices in regard to the welcoming and integrating of newcomers. They also apprehend the most efficient optimization and competitive development solutions of the hospitality trade.

Key words: integration of employees, human resources, management

J.E.L. classification: M12

1. Introduction

Organizations' modern management implies a systemic conception regarding all resources management, firstly human resource management - as it capitalizes on all the other resources within the company. In this regard, the company's management activity is primarily a social process, allowing for the relationships the manager establishes with his subordinates. Due to the personnel expenses entailed, some human resource management activities, such as the personnel employment and remuneration, retention and development stand as activities attracting the most considerable investments in the human resource branch. (Byars, L.L. and Rue, L.W., 2010, p.15).

Human resources represent the image of a society inside the tourism industry, which requires a certain prestige, a standard able to define the society's organizational policy and culture. The role of the employees' integration process is herein revealed as a factor that establishes the quality of the newcomer's activity, performance and implicitly the organization's performance. Integration is the activity dealt with by human resource management, which ensures the assimilation of the newcomer in the social and professional environment and their adjustment to the culture of the group they are part of (Manolescu *et al*, 2004, p.211).

Research shows that improvement of the hotel employee integration process may augment the employee retention rates. In the first place, professional integration takes into account familiarization with the new work place and that is why the new employee must receive all the information he needs. In the second place, the integration must ease the new employee's adjustment to the work team and in the third place, its purpose should be creating an atmosphere of safety, confidentiality and sense of belonging for the newcomer to cultivate the confidence he needs to follow through with the tasks related to his position (Cohen, E., 2011, p.9).

Integration may be seen as completed when the new employee has reached his highest capacity of performing the tasks related to said position. The integration program efficiency may be assessed by checking the integration feedback, developed through various procedures: anonymous questionnaires filled in by the new employees; periodic interviews with them; group discussions

with the new employees. The Human Resource Department is entirely responsible for the integration process management (Căprărescu, G., and Stancu, G., 2013, p.57).

The novelty of this work is given by the original holistic approach of the interaction between the human resource management, especially the newcomers' integration and guidance, and the hotel management-related activities. It was brought to life by the elaboration of the guide to best practice for the front desk personnel, which could assist the professional counseling programs development for the new employees within the reception department.

The general objective of the study was the diagnosis - analysis of the hotel activity between 2013 and 2015 used to highlight the essential problems of career management in the hotel industry. It stressed the identification of present and forthcoming exigencies in addressing the integration activities within the company in order to emphasize the opportunities that might be exploited in the human resource management sector.

2. Research methodology

Research into the newcomers' integration and guidance activities were conducted in Dali Hotel in Constanta, which has been providing lodging services on the three star hotels market for fifteen years.

The necessity to research the integration and guidance activities as important parts of the career management materialized in the research issue summarized by applying the following hypothesis:

- human resource policy elaborated by the hotel management is faulty when it comes to the improvement of new employees' integration;
- staff's dissatisfactions, in particular those of the front desk personnel regarding the methods used by the hotel's management to ensure career guidance, may generate conflicts, which may affect the work relationship integrity and organizational climate.

The objective of this work was focused on highlighting and analyzing general issues revolving around career management in the hospitality industry, the stress being placed on identifying current and future exigencies in tackling the human resource activities optimization. All these research viewpoints aimed human resource performance underpinning within Dali Hotel Constanta and, based on these grounds - global performance improvement in hotels.

The main objectives of this research were the following:

- **O1:** investigating the tourist welcoming procedures in view of identifying the qualities necessary for the personnel in the hotel's reception department;
- **O2:** putting forward recommendations on optimizing professional guidance for the new employees within the reception department.

For the presentation of the current status of knowing and using research methodology, bibliography documenting was fathomed through the study of the representative works in the specialty literature discussing the human resource management, work relationships and hotel management in the hospitality services industry. This step was aligned with knowledge updating, corresponding to a documentary-type research and carrying out a temporal analysis.

To ensure adequate scientific grounds for this work, the following methods and research instruments were used:

- direct observation of activities;
- simultaneous panels from the general manager and heads of the main hotel departments;
- study of the personnel registries in office research.

To process data yielded from the analysis carried out and their graphic representation, statistic methods and Microsoft Excel program were used.

The data sources and information required for the developed analysis were provided by the staff registries in the Human Resource, Technical and Development, Financial and Accounting Departments within Dali Hotel Constanta for the period comprised between 2013 and 2015, classified according to a content corresponding to necessities. For the registries unclassified according to such content, the information required for the analysis was obtained subsequent to personnel details processing. Other instruments for data collection also used were direct and indirect observation, working day image capturing. During the meetings organized, the heads of

departments and the hotel manager validated the recommendations offered as suggestions for the activity improvement in the field where a critical issue was noticed.

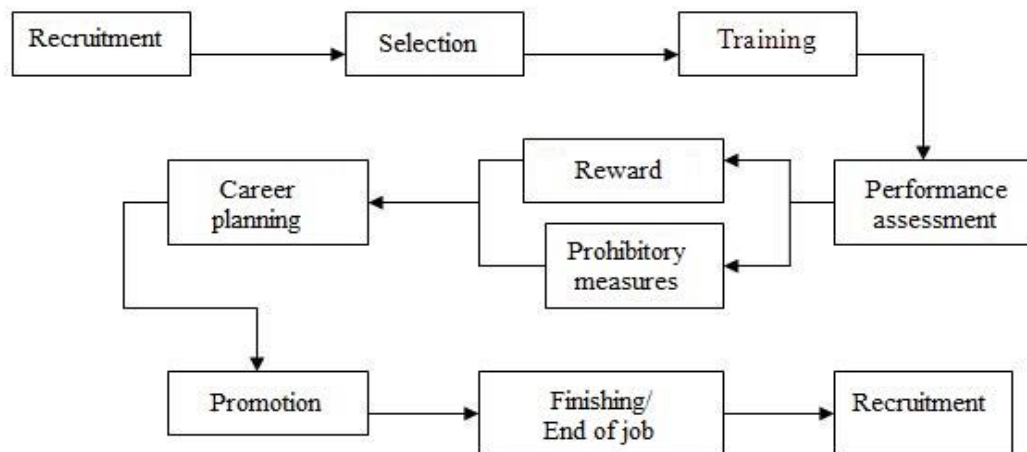
3. Analysis of professional guidance programs for the new employees within the reception department

The main role in tourist services rendering is played by human resources and their quality. Hotel's labor operations are intensive and excluding certain situations, it is impossible to replace human factor with other production factors, reason for which the employee's service quality owns a determining role in the company's general competition in the hospitality industry. From the guest's arrival, a tight interaction between customers and the workforce servicing in the Reception, Restaurant, Bar and Upper Floor Service Departments is expected.

Dali Hotel's personnel must rise to a certain quality level, as the hotel clientele expects to be provided the same services at the same quality standard in all situations and existing conditions. Here emerges the need for its employees' integration, guidance and training, process that I will further present. The new employee's integration in the Reception Department of Dali Hotel Constanta is divided in two phases: preparation and evaluation, the head receptionist being the one responsible for the employee's professional integration.

The essential phases of the employment cycle are identified and illustrated in Figure 1, starting from Recruitment and unfolding the steps taken while hiring human resources in the reception department in Dali Hotel Constanta.

Figure 1 Employment cycle in Dali Hotel Constanta



Source: author

Previous to the training, the employee is provided with the “receptionist’s guidelines”, which includes FIDELIO, CLOCK procedures (hotel management computer programs), which need to be known for a smooth and efficient development of the Front Desk operations. The components of the guidelines bring the attention onto the reservation, check-in and check-outs, currency exchange and pay-desk processes. Receptionist’s guidelines present the theoretical part of the technical training, while for the behavioral part, the employee must study, apply and abide by Dali Hotel Constanta Standards. Subsequent to studying the theoretical data, the new employee participates in a training workshop concerning the correct and efficient computer use, the use of FIDELIO and CLOCK programs and the attitude towards the customer (employee’s appearance). Following training, the new employee shall be tested by the Head Receptionist.

Within Dali Hotel Constanta, there were no cases where the new employee failed to pass the test. However, the newcomers are supervised by the Head Receptionist and the more experienced co-workers until the former no longer finds any difficulties in executing tasks and solving problems. Ever since the newcomer’s first work day, his co-workers must help him smoothly integrate into the team, as Standards of Dali Hotel impose particular respect towards its clients, work colleagues and the team spirit must always be present.

4. Guide to best practices regarding new employees' integration

Many works in human resource management field recommend an equal treatment of new employees, even if they are new graduates or people who already have a certain organizational experience. This applies even though the new environment implies unique challenges both categories must face the best way they can, with the help of those who manage the new employees' orientation and organizational integration. Up to a point, this approach is precise and useful as it pressures us to treat everybody with the same undivided attention, raising focus on the prejudice of those who had the occasion to gain previous experience. Right from the new employee's arrival, the manager must treat him as to make him feel part of the team and organization and also make him feel important for achieving its objectives. This situation might be accomplished only when the newcomer is presented with his future responsibilities and clear objectives, as previously underlined by a group of authors. (Micu, C. and Stănculescu, G., 2012, p.159). Thus, the new employee will shortly feel the need to make himself useful and prove his knowledge.

A warm and kind welcoming will remove the disbelief and unease feeling that might emerge from a cold and indifferent reception. The welcoming denotes the first impression the staff inspires to newcomers; it has a much stronger impact than we could ever imagine. A pleasant welcoming may represent a special stage in the new employee's integration process; thus, team members take part in the success of the integration, therewith establishing primary sources to collect basic information, as a renowned specialist declared (Alexander, J., 2013, p.21). During the first encounter and with the first handshake, subliminal messages such as domination, submission or equality are being unconsciously conveyed. Dominance and control take-over message is rendered by a handshake with the palm facing downwards, while the palm facing upwards gives away submission and trust. Moreover, by observing a person's gestures, one can understand if the individual is fiery, with dominating tendencies and who would not accept competition or if the respective individual lacks self-confidence, is easily disturbed, truly dynamic or frail.

In the wake of the information about the front desk staff in Hotel Dali Constanta that we collected and assessed, we proposed a guide to best practice able to be reflected in the employee's behavior towards customers and not only, exemplified in the Table 1.

Table no. 1 Guide to best practice for the Reception department within Dali Hotel Constanta

<p>Employee's behavior towards customers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - When greeting a guest, they must use his or her surname and also every time they have the occasion; - Upon departure, the guest must receive thanks, a warm greeting and a smile; - The guests must never be interrupted as they are the reason why the employee is servicing there; - The employee's manner of expressing himself is salient. He must use proper vocabulary; - The employee must anticipate the guest's wishes; - The employee must make the difference between his and the customer's necessities; - The employee must forsake the conversation he is partaking to giving priority to his guest, also when entering elevators, doors, restaurant doors, etc.; - The employee must not point; whenever possible, the guest must be taken to the desired place. - Professionalism over the phone is vital for forming a great first impression. If the position requires the employee to communicate with the customer over the phone, the former needs to get involved and supply quality services. - All calls must be answered before three telephone rings. - The employee must avoid exaggerated familiarity towards the client; - The employee must notice the guests' nonverbal behavior. Are they relaxed? Are their arms crossed? Does they seem in a rush/ tired? - If the hotel wishes to send certain offers or greeting cards, then the front desk officer will ask the guest if he would like to receive one and the address where it could be sent to; - When an employee receives a complaint – he or she becomes its "recipient" and shall proceed at once to solve it and ensure that the customer is satisfied.
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<p>Employee's behavior towards co-workers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Each employee must welcome his or her co-workers with a smile... be friendly; - Each employee must revere his or her co-workers' personal effects; - Listen to your co-workers' opinions and advice, they may be utterly helpful when newly employed; - Each employee must recognize the significance of every other position within the company; - Encourage team work and leave your personal problems at home;
<p>Employee's behavior towards the work place</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The employee must remember that their job requires a proper attitude. - The employee must possess as much information as possible regarding the hotel services, restaurant and pool opening and closing times, the distance to the local attractions, etc. - The employee must save water and electricity; - The employee must show respect for the hotel property and installations and properly maintain them; - Each employee is a seller; the employee shall always recommend the hotel's food and beverage followed by the other outdoor facilities; - It falls under each employee's responsibility to maintain the cleanliness within the hotel, in front and behind it; - A clean, ironed uniform, proper shoes and name tag are crucial and may create a great first impression about both the employee and the hotel;
<p>Employee's behavior towards superiors</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Every time an employee needs help or has to solve a more delicate problem, he or she must not hesitate to ask his superiors for their assistance; - The manager must be immediately informed about an incident or event that might develop into a potential accident.

Source: author

All details comprised in the guide to best practice are highly important for an optimal efficiency at the work place, in relation to all departments and individuals employees make contact with. But beyond all rules in the tourism industry, it is vital to have respect for all people you encounter (customers, managers and outside people), the work you have, yourself and as a result, the customers will thank you in the same way, appreciating you, as employee, and the tourist accommodation as well.

Work performance levels are determined not only by the personnel's ability but also by the power of motivating them. Attention must also be paid to the nature of motivation and satisfaction through work if it means the staff fulfilling their tasks at their highest capacity. A special place in the efficient human resource management should be occupied by the process of new employees' integration within the organization, as premise for achieving the organization's objectives and performance increase.

5. Conclusions

It is well-known that within the lodging services field, a hotel's success depends to a great extent on the employees' activity quality and for this reason, orientation toward their interests is an essential goal of the personnel policy within Hotel Dali Constanta. The conclusion drawn from studying hotel human resource management reveals that, what the hotel is offering (a sure job, professional achievements acknowledgment, satisfaction of working in a famous hotel) has something to do with the employees' motivation and satisfaction for their activity. Thus, in addition to the professional training granted to different positions of the lower hierarchical levels within the hotel, a professional development activity is organized for the management team. This development targets experience augmentation and theoretical and practical knowledge enrichment that the management needs. To that effect, a more profound study on human resource and their management is impelling.

The results yielded by the analysis related to the new hotel employees' integration and orientation led to the idea that within the immediate future, employees' performances management will progressively develop, while the rewarding mechanisms according to performances will be strategically significant.

In conclusion, primordial direction of future research will go towards major issues the hotel confronts in relation to human resource management activities, issues that must be solved as soon as possible to avoid their aggravation.

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