

Hotel Managers' Motivational Strategies for Enhancing Employee Performance

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Abstract

This multiple case study using census sampling was to explore motivational strategies three hotel general managers used for enhancing employee performance in South Florida. The findings revealed that recognition and guest satisfaction unveiled a positive effect on employee performances and community engagement gave employees reasons to perform well.

Problem

18.8% percent of employees left their place of employment voluntarily in 2012 of which nearly 600,000 employees departed from the hospitality industry each year (Cutler, 2013; U.S. Department of Labor, 2013).

The *general business problem* was that managers in full-service business hotels struggle with organizational effectiveness when addressing performance control or performance management.

The *specific business problem* was that general managers (GMs) often lack motivational strategies for enhancing employee performance.

Additional **challenges** faced by the most GMs at frequently visited hotels in South Florida:

- community acceptance,
- maintaining profitability,
- employee commitment.

Purpose

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore:

- the motivational strategies GMs used;
- what informed leadership's understanding of why employee motivation is significant to performance;
- leadership's active participation in society for positive social change.

Relevant Literature

Conceptual Frameworks

Vrooms Expectancy Theory and Gilbert's Behavior Engineering Model (BEM)-

Employee performance depended upon individual factors that motivate individuals to achieve goals and contribute to performance and that motivation does not exist without an expectation of a desired result and changed behavior.

Background

Motivation, a primary factor for employees in the hotel industry, is a guarantee of high quality for customer service and motivating factors differ with individuals (Deci et al., 2008; Ferris et al., 2014; Sheridan, Slocum, & Richards, 1974).

Motivation is having the will to perform, and it has a role in enhancing the employee performance, which in turn becomes beneficial for the entire organization (Bansal & Corley, 2011; Lamatic, 2011; O'Neil & Drillings, 2012).

Identified information, instrumentation, and motivation are measurable factors in performance management and that employee motivation is a determinant of job performance in which organizations could be more efficient (Korzynski, 2013; Lin, Yu, & Yi, 2014).

Research Question

What motivational strategies do full-service hotel GMs use to enhance employee performance?

South Florida hotel locations



Procedures

Adhering to the scope of the study:

- Multiple case study using census sampling.
- Participants randomly selected from 250 hotels in South Florida. Three GMs of three branded hotels were selected.
- 60 min face-to-face interview; 15-30 min Member checking follow-up until data saturation.
- Methodological triangulation using interpreted interviews and member checking, corporate documents, journal notes, recordings, and annual reports.

Data Analysis

I created a graphical picture, a mind map of the raw information of the data to determine the common themes and categories. Sorted and created scales of similarities per category for analysis.

Findings

The findings from this study indicated that hotel GMs acknowledged they used varied motivating strategies to increase employee performance:

- Community outreach programs
- Employee recognition
- Goals positioned around guest and employee satisfaction
- Participation in organization process and goals
- Acts of social expectation by way of giving back; the employees that volunteered were more conscious of other people helped other employees performed better.
- Autocratic styles were not productive, but instead found demonstrative leadership style gave employees positive outlook to management engagement.
- Leadership motivated employees by communicating openly, develop teams, reinforced positive behaviors; create trust, verbally praising, written praising, and acknowledgments.

Limitations

- Data were one sided and reflected leadership expectations, observations, and organizational outcomes. Individual motivation and performance were difficult to measure.
- Lacked employee viewpoint.
- Interviews provided the views of management practices and strategies to permeate change in performance.
- GMs not open or willing to share corporate information.

Conclusions

The hotel industry will have to accommodate the emerging leaders, employees who are a part of the succession path and hotel sustainability in order to continue to grow.

Knowledge gained from this study may help other hotel GMs create awareness on how and what motivation truly means to their employees and how they could achieve enhanced performance by creating strategies to maintain goals.

Social Change Implications

Improving hotel GM's motivation strategies that have influenced job satisfaction, social expectations, motivation techniques, and positive performance may also contribute to community and promote positive social change.

- Encouraging hotel GMs to adjust and develop motivational strategies that engage employees to improve the employee-customer relationship.
- Increasing community involvement through volunteering and donations.
- Promoting business relationships through local market involvement.

Dr. Susan Fan, Committee Chairperson, Dr. Peter Anthony, Committee Member, and Dr. Judith Blando, University Reviewer