

Service Encounter Front Office at Yogyakarta Marriott Hotel

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ABSTRACT

Keywords: service quality, guest experience, guest satisfaction.

Service encounter implemented at Yogyakarta Marriott Hotel, one of the leading five-star hotels in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. Aspects such as interaction with the receptionist, room service, food and beverage service, and complaint handling were analyzed to identify their contribution to building a satisfying guest experience. The hotel utilizes modern technology and implements high service standards to improve efficiency and personalization of service. The findings indicate that the implementation of effective service encounters at Yogyakarta Marriott Hotel plays a significant role in enhancing guest satisfaction and customer loyalty. Well-trained staff, spontaneous actions, and responsive problem-solving skills contribute to creating a memorable stay experience. Efficient check-in and check-out processes, 24/7 room service, and informative concierge services are integral parts of the service encounter offered by this hotel. In addition, personalization of service and small gestures such as surprises for special moments build positive relationships with guests. The study concluded that the implementation of superior service encounters provides significant added value, strengthening the image of Yogyakarta Marriott Hotel as a premier hospitality destination in Yogyakarta. The hotel successfully meets guest expectations by providing a high-quality service experience, which differentiates it from competitors in the hospitality industry.



Introduction

In the era of globalization and digitalization, the hospitality industry faces increasingly complex and challenging dynamics (KRISTINA, 2014). Along with increasing competitiveness in the international market, hotels are required to adapt and deliver services that are not only satisfactory but also exceed customer expectations (Prihatidini, 2019). Yogyakarta Marriott Hotel, as part of the globally renowned Marriott International network, stands in the middle of this competition by offering a service encounter that is oriented towards quality and excellence. Located in the heart of

Yogyakarta's cultural city, the hotel serves as a symbol of luxury and hospitality, striving to provide an unforgettable stay for every guest who comes (Damiyana & Sari, 2020).

The background of the focus on the service experience at Yogyakarta Marriott Hotel can be seen from the important role played by the hospitality sector in supporting the growth of the tourism economy in Indonesia, especially in Yogyakarta. The city is not only famous for its rich cultural heritage but also as a tourist destination that offers a variety of natural and educational attractions. As one of the top destinations in Indonesia, Yogyakarta attracts both domestic and international tourists, who demand a high standard of service from the lodging facilities they choose. In this context, service encounters are a key element that determines customer satisfaction and loyalty. The interaction between hotel staff and guests, known as service encounters, covers various aspects from the check-in and check-out process, and room service, to complaint handling. All of these elements contribute to the overall perception of guests towards the quality of service provided.

The current state of the art in hospitality services shows that global trends are leading to increased service personalization and the adoption of digital technologies. (Aolia et al., 2024). Many hotels are now leveraging technologies such as mobile apps to provide easy access for customers, offer faster services, and allow for personalization of the experience according to individual preferences. At Yogyakarta Marriott Hotel, the integration of technology in service aims to improve operational effectiveness and efficiency, while providing a more connected and relevant experience for guests. (Wahyuddin et al., 2023). In addition, continuous staff training is also the main focus to ensure that each team member has qualified communication and service skills so that they can provide services that exceed customer expectations. (Utami, 2020).

However, amid this positive development, Yogyakarta Marriott Hotel still faces several challenges that need to be overcome to maintain its position as one of the leading hotels in Yogyakarta. (Yoyo Sudaryo et al., 2020). In practice, problems related to slow response times, lack of personalization in interactions, and complaint handling that are not fully effective, are still often encountered. This phenomenon highlights several critical issues in service experience management that need serious attention. Although technology provides many benefits, without the right approach, this can reduce the personal touch that is the hallmark of quality service. (Toendan et al., 2024). Another problem is the increasing expectations of guests, which makes the challenge of meeting and exceeding their expectations more complex. Customer dissatisfaction with service can negatively impact a hotel's reputation, which in the long run can affect profitability and competitiveness in the market. (Khamaludin et al., 2024).

In this context, it is important to identify the root causes of various service issues faced and develop effective strategies to improve the customer experience. This study aims to analyze in depth the service encounter at Yogyakarta Marriott Hotel by exploring various factors that affect customer satisfaction (Barinta et al., 2024). This research is expected to provide valuable insights for hotel management in their efforts to implement continuous service improvement. The purpose of this study is to identify weaknesses in

the current service experience, and propose practical and innovative solutions to overcome these problems. In addition, the results of this research are also expected to be a reference for other hospitality industries in developing best practices in the field of customer service so that they can compete effectively in an increasingly competitive market (Deeteng & Pettalongi, 2024).

Based on the formulation of the problem above, the purpose of this study is to obtain findings on:

1. Quality of service at Yogyakarta Marriott Hotel.
2. Problem-solving skills at Yogyakarta Marriott Hotel.

Method

This research uses a qualitative method. The qualitative research method is by conducting observations, interviews, and documentation studies (Arischa, 2019).

Observation

A data collection method that is carried out by systematically observing and recording certain phenomena or behaviors. The goal is to obtain accurate and objective information about the subject or object being observed. In the context of research, observation is often used to obtain qualitative and quantitative data, depending on the type of research conducted.

Interview

A process of interaction between two or more parties, which usually involves an interviewer and an interviewee. The goal is to gather information, opinions, or views from the interviewee.

Documentation

Documentation in a research journal is the process of compiling and presenting data and information related to research. It includes the background and objectives of the research, research methods, results, discussions, conclusions, suggestions, and references. Background and objectives explain the reasons and objectives of the research. The method describes the research procedure, while the results present the findings obtained. The discussion analyzes the results and their implications and compares them with previous research. The conclusion summarizes the main findings and suggestions for further research. References list the sources used. Good documentation ensures that research is repeatable, results can be verified, and scientific transparency and reliability are maintained.

Results and Discussion

service encounter

Service Encounter is a term used to describe direct interactions between customers and staff in a service, especially in the hospitality industry. Service encounters in hotels include every moment when guests interact with hotel staff, from the moment guests make a reservation to when they check out.

Here are some important aspects of service encounters in hotels:

1. Interaction with the Receptionist:

The check-in and check-out process is one of the most important moments of service encounter. The receptionist is responsible for giving a friendly welcome, assisting guests with administrative processes, and answering questions or requests for information from guests.

2. Room Service:

Interaction between guests and housekeeping staff is also part of the service encounter. Guests may need additional services, such as daily housekeeping or requesting extra amenities.

3. Food and Beverage Services:

In hotel restaurants or through room service, the interaction between guests and restaurant staff or waiters is an important part of the guest experience. The staff is responsible for providing fast, friendly, and professional service.

4. Concierge Services:

The concierge provides information services, such as attraction recommendations or ticket booking, that require direct interaction with guests to understand their needs and preferences.

5. Hotel Activities and Facilities:

The use of facilities such as a spa, gym, or swimming pool may involve interaction with the facility's staff, who are tasked with ensuring that guests have a satisfying experience.

6. Complaint Resolution:

One of the crucial aspects of service encounters is how hotels handle complaints or problems that guests face. Quick responses and satisfactory solutions can significantly improve guest satisfaction.

7. Implementation of service encounter at Yogyakarta Marriott Hotel

Yogyakarta Marriott Hotel is one of the leading five-star hotels in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, known for providing luxurious experiences and high-quality service to its guests. As part of the Marriott International network, the hotel is committed to implementing superior service encounters to ensure customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Here are some of the service encounter implementations at Yogyakarta Marriott Hotel that contribute to an exceptional guest experience:

1. Efficient Check-In and Check-Out Process

Fast Check-In: Yogyakarta Marriott Hotel implements a fast and efficient check-in process with the help of modern technology. Guests can do online check-in before arrival to reduce the queue time at the front desk. Upon arrival at the hotel, guests only need to show their identity and get a room key quickly.

Hospitality Desk: The staff at the reception desk are trained to greet guests with a friendly smile and assist with all their needs. The check-in process involves a brief explanation of the hotel's facilities and providing recommendations on activities during the stay.

Seamless Check-Out: The check-out process is designed to allow guests to leave the hotel quickly and easily, including providing payment options through an app or automated machine to avoid queues.

2. Excellent Room Service and Housekeeping

24/7 Room Service: Yogyakarta Marriott Hotel offers round-the-clock room service, ensuring that guests can order meals or request additional needs at any time. The room service menu offers a selection of high-quality local and international dishes.

Housekeeping: A well-trained housekeeping team ensures that each room remains clean and comfortable. Guests can request additional services such as the provision of new towels, extra room cleaning, or additional toiletries via the app (GXP) or call the housekeeping department directly.

Turndown Service: The hotel also provides a turndown service, where staff routinely prepares guest rooms for the evening, including changing towels, making beds, and placing sweets or chocolates as a greeting for the evening.

3. Informative and Personalized Concierge Service

Tourist Information: The concierge at Yogyakarta Marriott Hotel is always ready to provide information and recommendations regarding tourist attractions, restaurants, and local activities. They have in-depth knowledge of the culture and attractions in Yogyakarta, allowing them to provide advice tailored to guests' preferences.

Transportation Arrangements: Concierge services also include transportation arrangements, such as taxi booking, car rental, or airport shuttle services, ensuring guests have a smooth journey during their stay in Yogyakarta.

Personalized Service: Concierges can assist in arranging restaurant reservations, event tickets, or even private tours for a more personalized and customized experience for guests.

4. A Satisfying Dining Experience at the Hotel Restaurant

Pilar Restaurant: The main restaurant at Yogyakarta Marriott Hotel, Soiree Restaurant, offers a luxurious dining experience with international and local menus served in an elegant setting. The restaurant staff is trained to provide prompt and courteous service, ensuring that guests feel comfortable while enjoying the meal.

Local Culinary Experiences: The hotel often hosts special culinary events featuring Yogyakarta's typical local cuisine, allowing guests to experience authentic flavors.

Buffet and A la Carte Service: Guests can enjoy a varied breakfast buffet or order from an all-day à la carte menu. Staff are ready to assist guests in choosing dishes that suit their tastes or special dietary needs.

5. Utilizing Technology for Guest Comfort

Marriott Bonvoy App: Guests of Yogyakarta Marriott Hotel can take advantage of the Marriott Bonvoy app to book services, request assistance, or get information about hotel facilities. The app allows guests to interact with hotel staff efficiently and get more personalized service.

Fast Internet Connection: The hotel offers fast and stable Wi-Fi connections throughout the hotel, ensuring that guests can stay connected for personal and business purposes.

6. Staff Training and Development

Regular Training: Yogyakarta Marriott Hotel regularly conducts training for staff to improve communication, customer service, and complaint management skills. This ensures that all staff can provide consistent and high-quality service.

Positive Work Culture: The hotel promotes a positive and supportive work environment, where staff feel valued and motivated to provide the best service to guests.

7. Effective Complaint Management

Feedback System: The hotel implements a feedback system that allows guests to submit suggestions or complaints easily. Quick responses and effective solutions are provided to address any issues guests may face.

Proactive in Handling Issues: Staff are trained to proactively address potential issues before they escalate into major complaints, to keep guests satisfied at all times.

8. Quality Hotel Facilities

Swimming Pool and Spa: Yogyakarta Marriott Hotel offers spacious swimming pool facilities and a relaxing spa, providing a place for guests to relax and rejuvenate. Staff at the spa are trained to provide treatments that suit guests' preferences.

Fitness Center: Guests can use the fitness center's facilities fully equipped with modern equipment, and instructors are on hand to assist if needed.

Meeting and Event Rooms: The hotel provides meeting and event rooms equipped with the latest audio-visual technology, as well as a team experienced in organizing various events, from business meetings to weddings

Front office service quality at Yogyakarta Marriott Hotel

Front office services at Yogyakarta Marriott Hotel are known to have high standards in terms of quality and professionalism. The front office is one of the first points of interaction between guests and the hotel, so it's important to make a positive impression from the start. Here are some aspects of the quality of front office service at Yogyakarta Marriott Hotel that make it famous and appreciated by guests.

Friendly and Professional Welcome

Friendly Staff: The front office staff at Yogyakarta Marriott Hotel are trained to greet guests with a warm smile and a friendly attitude. They ensure that every guest feels welcome and comfortable from the first moment they arrive at the hotel. This friendly attitude makes guests feel valued and prioritized.

Professional Appearance: The staff maintains a professional appearance, by the standards of a five-star hotel. This includes a neat uniform, manners, and polite body language. Staff are trained to maintain good posture and give full attention to guests.

Service Personalization

Recording Guest Preferences: The front office strives to record and remember guest preferences and habits, such as favorite room types, favorite drinks, or special needs. This allows them to provide more personalized service and make guests feel valued.

Surprise and Delight: On special occasions such as birthdays or celebrations, front office staff may give small surprises in the form of congratulations, cards, or small gifts, which make guests feel cared for and remembered.

Customer-Focused Service Culture

Ongoing Training: Front office staff receive ongoing training to improve customer service, communication, and conflict management skills. This training ensures that they are always ready to provide the best service and can deal with various situations that may occur.

Positive Work Culture: Yogyakarta Marriott Hotel creates a supportive and motivating work environment, where staff feel valued and motivated to provide the best service. Staff who feel happy and motivated tend to provide a better guest experience.

spontaneous actions carried out by Yogyakarta Marriott Hotel staff

The spontaneous actions taken by the front office staff at Yogyakarta Marriott Hotel play an important role in creating added value for customers. This spontaneous action can help differentiate the hotel from its competitors and leave a deep impression on guests. Here are some ways in which the spontaneous actions of front office staff can improve the customer experience and add value at Yogyakarta Marriott Hotel:

Warm welcome upon arrival:

Action: When guests arrive at the hotel, front office staff often greet them with a warm smile and greet them by name, especially if the guest has stayed many times before.

Added value: A personalized welcome makes guests feel valued and welcomed like family. This creates a positive initial experience and makes guests feel comfortable from the start.

Surprises for Special Moments:

Action: If front office staff knows that a guest is celebrating a special occasion such as a birthday or wedding anniversary, they can arrange a surprise such as room decorations, congratulations, or small gifts such as a bottle of wine or fruit.

Added value: This kind of surprise shows that the hotel pays attention to detail and cares about the guest experience, making guests feel special and more likely to remember their positive experiences.

Quick Response to Complaints:

Action: Upon receipt of a complaint or request, front office staff strive to act immediately and provide quick solutions, such as changing rooms if guests are not satisfied or providing additional items requested.

Added Value: Quick responses demonstrate a hotel's commitment to ensuring guest satisfaction, and increasing customer trust and loyalty levels. Guests feel that their needs are prioritized, which increases the overall value of their experience.

Be Proactive in Dealing with Potential Problems:

Action: For example, if it is known that there is a renovation or construction work that could be disruptive, the front office staff may inform the guest in advance and offer solutions such as moving the room to a quieter area.

Added Value: This proactive action shows that the hotel cares about guest comfort and strives to minimize distractions, which gives an impression of care and dedication.

Personalize Services Based on Guest Preferences

Keeping in mind the preferences of regular guests:

Action: Front office staff often take note of the preferences and habits of regular guests, such as preferred room types, favorite drinks, or other special needs.

Added Value: By providing services tailored to guests' preferences, hotels provide a personalized and unique experience, increasing guest satisfaction and making them feel cared for individually.

Offers Customized Recommendations:

Action: Based on conversations with guests, staff can provide recommendations for activities, places to eat, or tours that match guests' interests and preferences.

Added Value: This shows that the staff not only provides standard service but also strives to customize the guest experience, making them feel valued and providing a deeper impression of the professionalism and knowledge of the staff.

Fast Service for Sudden Requests:

Action: For example, if a guest requests additional room services such as transportation arrangements or meeting arrangement assistance at the moment, front office staff strive to handle it as quickly as possible.

Added Value: This action shows that the hotel is flexible and ready to adapt to the needs of guests, improving the comfort and efficiency of their stay.

Proactive Concierge Service:

Action: Front office staff often work closely with the concierge team to provide additional services such as event ticketing, local tour recommendations, or even last-minute travel arrangements.

Added value: This helps guests save time and effort, providing added value through a complete and well-coordinated service.

Providing Complimentary Upgrades:

Action: Where possible, front office staff can provide free room upgrades to incoming guests, especially for those celebrating special occasions or as a reward for their loyalty.

Added Value: Room upgrades enhance the guest experience at no additional cost and leave a positive impression that can increase their loyalty to the hotel.

Giving a Personal Touch:

Action: Staff may provide a personalized handwritten note or a small gift such as a local chocolate in the guest room as a welcome greeting.

Added value: This personal touch shows that the hotel strives to provide a unique experience that focuses not only on accommodation but also on good personal relationships.

The spontaneous actions performed by the front office staff at Yogyakarta Marriott Hotel are one of the keys to creating an exceptional guest experience. Through friendly welcomes, prompt complaint handling, personalized service, and memorable little

touches, front office staff provide significant added value for customers. This not only increases guest satisfaction and loyalty but also strengthens Yogyakarta Marriott Hotel's position as the top choice for travelers looking for a high-quality stay experience in Yogyakarta. By focusing on exceptional customer service and personalized details, the hotel has managed to create an unforgettable experience for every guest who comes.

Problem-solving skills at Yogyakarta Marriott Hotel

At Yogyakarta Marriott Hotel, problem-solving skills are one of the most important aspects of providing the best service to guests. Here are some of the ways that these hotels usually do in solving problems:

1. Responsive Customer Service

Yogyakarta Marriott Hotel has a responsive and well-trained customer service team to handle complaints. They try to respond as quickly as possible after receiving complaints from guests.

2. Proactive Approach

Hotel staff are trained to be proactive in identifying potential problems before they become major complaints. They try to maintain the comfort of guests by conducting periodic checks and asking for feedback from guests during their stay.

3. Troubleshooting Policy

The hotel has a well-structured problem-solving policy. Guests who experience problems can report them to the front desk, and staff will immediately take the necessary action to resolve the issue.

Action Personalization

Each complaint is treated individually, with an approach tailored to the needs and preferences of guests. This aims to ensure that guests feel valued and cared for.

4. Follow-Up After Completion

After resolving the complaint, the hotel usually follows up with the guest to ensure that the problem has been resolved satisfactorily and asks if there is anything else that can be helped.

5. Service Evaluation and Improvement

Every complaint received becomes an evaluation material for management to improve services. The hotel is committed to continuously improving service standards based on feedback from guests.

6. Guest Relations

Yogyakarta Marriott Hotel strives to build a good relationship with guests so that guests feel comfortable to voice their complaints. With good relationships, communication between guests and staff can run more effectively.

7. Compensation When Necessary

In some cases, hotels may offer compensation such as room upgrades, discounts, or free additional services as a form of apology and effort to improve the guest experience.

Conclusion

Service encounter is an essential element in the hospitality industry, especially in five-star hotels such as Yogyakarta Marriott Hotel, which prioritizes the quality of interaction between staff and guests. This interaction covers various aspects, from the check-in and check-out process, room service, and food and beverage service, to complaint handling. By implementing high service standards and ongoing training, hotels can create an unforgettable stay experience for guests. At Yogyakarta Marriott Hotel, service encounter is implemented thoroughly by utilizing modern technology for process efficiency and personalized service tailored to guest needs. Professional and friendly front office service is one of the main keys to giving a positive impression from the beginning of the guest's arrival. In addition, the spontaneous and personalized actions of the hotel staff contribute to increasing guest satisfaction and differentiating this hotel from its competitors.

Problem-solving is also an important focus, with a proactive and responsive approach to ensure that every complaint is handled quickly and satisfactorily. With a structured problem-solving policy and a commitment to continuously improve service standards, Yogyakarta Marriott Hotel has succeeded in creating loyalty and trust from its guests.

Overall, an effective service encounter not only enhances the hotel's image but also provides significant added value, making Yogyakarta Marriott Hotel a top choice for travelers looking for a high-quality stay experience. By focusing on communication, flexibility, and technology, the hotel can provide superior service and strengthen its position as a leader in the hospitality industry in Yogyakarta.

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