

# The portman hotel case study

[Sport & Tourism](#), [Hotel](#)



The Portman Hotel Company was a relatively small hotel with only 348 rooms and 21 floors located in San Francisco's booming hotel district. It was influenced with Asian philosophy of services, to provide high quality hospitality to its guest at affordable rates. On paper, the hotel sounded like a great success, one that would definitely flourish amongst the competition. However, even with this philosophy, there were numerous problems that plagued the Portman Hotel. A few examples of these problems are the common mistake of fundamental attribution error (FAE), expectancy theory, as well as operant conditional theory.

This essay will explain how these three things can potentially bring down an entire company very quickly. First we will look at FAE and how it relates to the Portman Hotel. To find an example of FAE located in The Portman Hotel case, we must first define what FAE exactly is. Fundamental Attribution Error is the tendency to over-value dispositional or personality-based explanations for the observed behaviors of others while under-valuing situational explanations for those behaviors. It is typically most visible when people explain the behavior to others.

Essentially, what FAE suggests, is that we, as human beings, tend to be too judgmental of others without actually seeing that there might be external factors causing that individual's behavior. Now that we have defined exactly what FAE is, we can begin to identify an example of this contained within the case. One great example of this common error in action involves the personal valet's (PVs) of the company and Spencer Scott. Scott criticizes the PVs for always taking on additional tasks and pursuing new needs and even

states that they want to do everything, which causes them to suffer short attention ps.

He is so focused on the PVs being a group of freethinkers that he has failed to remember his companies purpose, which is to cater to every desire the hotel guests might have. He has failed to realize that the guests are to blame for ordering the PVs around getting them to tend to their every need. In this specific case, the guests are the external environmental forces that are causing the behavior. If Scott had realized that his employees were just doing their job, then his opinion of them would be a lot different and would begin to realize that he might need to change something about the companies' day-to-day processes.

Next we will discuss the Expectancy Theory (ET) and how it relates to this case. Again, first we must define what exactly ET is before we can know how it relates to this case. ET proposes that a person will decide to behave or act in a certain way because they are motivated to select a specific behavior over other behaviors due to what they expect the result of that selected behavior will be. Now that we have defined what ET is we can relate it to the case. Due to the social and environmental forces pushing down on certain PVs, they tend to engage in "shirking".

An example of this act is when a few PVs began to be lazy and not do their fair share of the work, other PVs had to begin picking up the slack of their colleagues. After a while of doing this, they began to wonder why they were working twice as hard and getting paid the exact same. The PVs that were picking up the slack for the others then became less motivated to perform which lead to all of the valets lost their sense of responsibility. So to go back

<https://assignbuster.com/the-portman-hotel-case-study/>

to the original definition, the PVs that were originally working harder than the others began to work less hard because they knew that they weren't going to be fired.

Lastly, we will look at the Operant Conditional Theory to see why supervisors would choose to avoid using the Portman's disciplinary procedures. Operant conditional theory is defined as, getting people to do things because they want to by applying positive and negative reinforcements to move them in a particular way. The supervisors of the Portman Hotel were adamant about avoiding formal disciplinary actions towards their employees. The supervisors believed that discipline was actually going against what the hotel's philosophy was.

Therefore, instead they used positive reinforcement under the operant conditioning theory as a means to motivate the poor performers. Spencer Scott tried to persuade the poor performers to believe that good performance had many rewards, such as good tips. He felt that with showing the valets the benefits of working hard for the guests, that those same guests would in return graciously reward them. Now that we have analyzed and pointed out the flaws of the Portman Hotel, we can begin to describe some simple solutions to these problems.

First, with the FAE, the problem is with management. If Spencer Scott attempted to figure out why his PVs were running around everywhere he might figure out the source of the problem, instead of jumping to conclusions as he did. He might explore other options such as; hiring additional PVs so that the current ones aren't always so busy, or attempt to figure out a different strategy in assisting the guests with their high demands. Secondly,

<https://assignbuster.com/the-portman-hotel-case-study/>

we must analyze the problem with the PVs and their constant habit of “shirking” and how we could fix it. Shirking” is a bad habit that happens in a lot of work places no matter what industry a person is in. The difficulty is finding a way to overcome these types of action and being effective at it. One way to overcome this dilemma is to begin to figure out which few are the individuals initially starting it and begin to discipline them accordingly. If discipline is not the answer, the managers could sit the entire PV staff down at once and explain that they are beginning to notice a downward trend in performance and that there will be a new set standard for what the expectations are.

With this new standard, if anyone fails to meet the standards of work, then they will be disciplined and eventually let go if it continues. Finally, we have the obstacle of the supervisors choosing to avoid using the Portman’s elaborate disciplinary procedures. Unfortunately, implementing a formal system of disciplinary actions would be violating the ideals that Portman wanted to establish. The solution for this would be for the management team to be stricter on their expectations of the employees.

I feel that the good employees are not being praised enough for their actions while the bad employees continually get worse. It is a common behavioral understanding that people want to reach and operate at the “ normal” level of standards and not do anything more or less. In order for them to strive to be better employees, there must be a rewards system in place. Performance reviews should be put in place to analyze, which employees are the good employees and which are the bad employees.

Once management establishes this, they will begin to understand where the problems are and how to correct them/discipline them by giving them written warnings. All in all, there are numerous obstacles that each and every company has to overcome throughout the company's lifetime. Some are easily remedied while others take much more time and thought to correct. Using the theories; FAE, ET, and Operant Conditioning, almost any company can begin to understand where the real problems consist, which will allow that company to begin taking action and fixing them.