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Implementing Solutions to Deal With Negative Comments from Customers in the Commercial Food Service Industry

(Student's Full Name)

Implementing Solutions to Deal With Negative Comments from Customers in the Commercial Food Service Industry

a) What is the root cause(s) of the problems/issues occurring and what other factors contribute to them?

The possible root causes of the problems or issues occurring which initiating the negative responses from the customers of Harrington's are the following: lack of communication amongst staff members; inadequate of inspection of surroundings and improper sanitation; and improper training which lead to lack of attention to detail and prohibiting the staff from anticipating the customers' needs.

The possible factors which contribute to them include: poor management which affects the proper financial management and bookkeeping, and leads to the inadequate compensation of staff members. This would explain why the waiter would refuse to give the customer his or her change so that they could get a large tip or gratuity. Inadequate bookkeeping will also prevent a restaurant from providing its customers with high quality food and beverages made with quality ingredients; hence, this would explain why a restaurant would place water in a ketchup bottle, for instance, to ensure that the product lasts a sufficient amount of time, and delay buying more ketchup, as noted one by one of the customers at Harrington's. Another customer complained that he or she did not receive value for money because he or she

was overcharged for having his or her glass two-thirds full. Another customer complained that a substitution was not made when or she asked for it because the restaurant was “ out of rice,” thus indicating that the restaurant had insufficient funds to buy the required amount of food for its customers. Furthermore, a restaurant affected by poor management will prohibit the staff from receiving useful advice to improve their service as well to ensure that they receive the proper training to provide excellent service to the customer. This would explain why Louise Crane received a comment from a customer who complained about no employee smiling in Harrington’s. Yet another client complained that he or she had to wait five minutes before someone greeted the customer when he or she arrived at the restaurant. Another customer complained that their steak was not cooked medium rare as they had requested. He or she implied that the center was not pink. Another customer emailed that his wife received her food cold and ten minutes after he did. A waiter who is adequately trained to serve his clients promptly would not slow down when the customer tells him that he or she is in a hurry, as noted by another customer on one of the guest comment cards. Improper training of the staff was evident at the Harrington’s restaurant when the waiter told the customer that he or she would make a substitution but immediately said that the restaurant was “ out of rice,” without politely asking the customer what he or she would like instead or offer alternative side dishes besides rice. Proper training of the staff will also ensure that customers’ requests are not ignored, as in the case of one customer who complained that he or she did not get the ice water that he or she asked for.

Poor management will ensure that the restaurant is adequately inspected as to its adherence to safety code and health regulations, and endeavor to eliminate pests and rodents, such as cockroaches. It appears as if proper inspections and checks were not done by the management of Harrington's, as a customer complained on one of the guest comment cards that he or she saw a cockroach in the restaurant. Proper checks and inspection will ensure that the bathrooms are adequately cleaned as this was not the case in Harrington's as indicated by an email from a customer.

In addition, another possible factor which could contribute to the root causes of the problems listed above is employee conflict. This is evident at Harrington's when one customer complained that there was no one smiling at the restaurant. This implies that there is a certain amount of tension amongst the workers, which could be a result of employee conflict.

Moreover, employee conflict could be a possible factor contributing to the lack of communication amongst the staff members, which led to a guest being ignored for five minutes while he or she waited to be greeted at the door. Employee conflict would have prevented communication amongst the relevant staff member or members whose job it is to ensure that the guests are greeted.

b) Discuss the key players and the role they play in this case. What role does each individual play? Are they contributing to the problems you discussed? What should their role be in fixing those problems and creating solutions? The key players within the case described at Harrington's are the general manager, Louise Crane, the maitre d', the servers and the executive chef. Clearly, the general manager, Louise Crane, should take most of the blame

because the bulk of the responsibility for running the restaurant rests with her. It is her responsibility that the financial records of Harrington's are update, and to ensure that proper bookkeeping is done so that the restaurant is financially secure. A financially secure restaurant will ensure top class service and high quality food and beverages in significant amounts. It is also Louise's responsibility that her staff is adequately trained to competently deal with requests of customers in a prompt, courteous, and competent manner. It is also her responsibility to ensure that the proper ambience is created within the restaurant so it is imperative that makes every attempt to resolve employee conflict so that proper communication and harmony is maintained at the restaurant. Louise should also ensure that her restaurant adheres to the health and safety regulations of her city, region, or country so as not place the customer's health and safety at risk. It is the responsibility of the maitre d' to welcome the guests who arrive at the restaurant as well as to create the atmosphere needed (along with the manager) so that they feel at home. The maitre d', who is the head waiter, should ensure that the other waiters do their jobs competently, efficiently, and promptly. The maitre d' should assist servers during busy times. The maitre d', should also follow up on guests to ensure that they are pleased with the service that is being offered to them. The maitre d' clearly was not doing his job by creating a friendly atmosphere by ensuring that the servers were pleasant, provided prompt service, and he did not greet the guests promptly, as indicated by the various complaints on the guest comment cards. Proper training of the maitre d' will ensure that this does not take place.

The unprofessional behavior of the servers proved to be problematic in the operation of Harrington's, as most of the customers complained about the waiters not smiling, ignoring their request, being unaccommodating and taking tips from the customer without his or her consent. The servers should ensure that they participate in the required training sessions, which are supposed to be provided by the management, so that they can serve courteously, politely, promptly and competently. The servers should be trained to not accept tips from a customer without his or her consent. The servers should also learn to be accommodating and anticipate the needs of the customer so that he or she is offered a variety of alternatives.

One customer complained about the chef not cooking his or her steak medium rare when he or she asked for it to be done that way. The executive chef is, therefore, expected to adhere to the requests of the customer, and be able to work efficiently and competently under pressure during peak periods at the restaurant. The chef is also required to do the necessary prep work along with his sous chefs to ensure the efficient and prompt service of orders. The chef should also ensure that the food is warm and served on heated plates before serving it to the customer, as this was not the case as a customer complained that his wife received her food ten minutes later than he did, and it was cold.

c) What are the possible solutions to the problems that you will implement?

You are a consultant that has to make recommendations on what needs to occur to correct the problems. Present your plan of action.

My plan of action to correct the problems at the Harrington's restaurant will have a multi step approach to address the issues experienced by all of the

key players of this case. As indicated previously, general the manager, Louise Crane, needs to learn how to ensure that she manages the finances of the restaurant efficiently so that high quality products are bought and the sufficiently paid. Resources and adequate training will provided with the help of the administration of the national chain to ensure that she does this task competently. In the event, that she is unable to do this on her own, she can hire an accountant or a deputy manager, who is capable of handling such duties. It is also imperative that Louise be trained in conflict resolution strategies and tactics so as to ensure that the workplace harmony is maintained. When this occurs, it will become easier for her staff to create a welcoming and pleasant ambience for the customers. Proper implementation of conflict resolution strategies will also ensure that proper communication is maintained amongst the staff members of the restaurant. The general manager should also regularly inspect the restaurant for rodents and pests, and hire professionals who can rid the restaurant of these nuisances. Louise should ensure that the bathrooms are cleaned, especially during peak hours. Louise would then have to hire janitorial staff who would do this periodically during service times.

The maitre d' as well as the servers should participate on a regular basis in trainings, preferably monitored and supervised by the administration of the national chain of Harrington's, so that they can be well versed in not only creating the required ambience for the customers to be welcomed, but adequately anticipating and meeting the demands of the customers.

The executive chefs and the sous chefs should be encouraged to do more prep work so that they can prepare meals efficiently and promptly. After the

finances of the restaurant are sufficiently organized by the management of Harrington's, the restaurant cook invest in equipment and machinery to ensure the proper preparation of foods. The chefs could also enroll in classes taught by master chefs who help them improve on their techniques and cooking skills.

Reference

Fisher, William P. and Robert A. Ashley (2003). Case studies in commercial food service operations. Lansing, MI: American Hotel and Lodging Educational Institute.