

# Hospitality systems



The objective of this essay is to explore whether the aspects and principles of systems theory are applicable in the management of a hotel business, and to confirm if systems theory is relevant, secondly to identify and discuss how systems theory can be integrated into the processes of managing a business, and to discuss how a hotel operation can benefit from the applications of systems principles. In order to answer this, firstly we need to determine what systems, systems theory and systems thinking is and if exists in the tourism and hospitality industry. The systems theory is basically the combination of technology, processes and human resources that makes it possible to deliver goods and services to customers.

Simply put, the systems theory consists of inputs, a transformation process and outputs. In order to gain the desired output, the inputs and the processes must be of quality and have some standard requirements. There are two main types of systems; hard and soft systems. (Pizam, 2005) Hard systems are mainly technology, machinery, or tools required to perform a task or produce a good or service, which is part of the systems process where outcomes are precise, measured and controlled. Examples of hard systems would be; management information systems, property management systems, central reservation systems and food productions systems.

Soft systems on the other hand are a blend of technology and the human resource factor which include marketing planning, total quality management, budgeting, employee recruitment and selection. Soft systems can sometimes lead to unpredictable behavior as everyone is different in the way they think and do things (Kusluvan, 2003) and because the human resource factor contributes in making sure that systems work. Some traits of the human

resource factor include the ability and skill level of the workers, their motivation and the context in which they interpret the system. “ It has been argued (Kirk, 1995) that given the occurrence in most problem situations of both technical and human dimensions, a hybrid of scientific, hard systems and soft systems methodologies will give the best solution. The soft systems approach will ensure that the human dimension is incorporated at an early stage in the process and that all groups of people are involved in developing a solution. Read the answer on what is not a physical security measure for your home? Within this soft systems overview, hard systems and scientific techniques can be used to optimize aspects of the solution. ” As stated earlier there are several components that make up a system; these are (systems model) (Ball, Jones, Kirk, Lockwood, 2004) inputs or resources (materials, energy and information), transformational inputs, the processes, outputs (inputs go through a transformational process to become outputs), feedback- feedback is important in the systems process to identify areas that need improving to improve the output. To produce a desired output there will always be some level of waste, which is the by-product of the process; residue is an output that is not used. Having an understanding of what systems are, it is now be easy to relate its relevance to managing the hospitality industry, I believe that all hospitality businesses use some form of systems to operate, many of which are beneficial while in some instances, can be costly to the company.

It is therefore important for managers to ensure that the systems that are in place are advantageous to the company, its guests and its employees. Johns and Jones (2000) agrees that systems are required on hotel management in

order for it to function properly. Systems exist at different hierarchies (Ball et al. , 2004) or different levels, which could be small or large, for example for the front office department, a front office worker may have systems in place to perform his or her duties such as checking guests into their rooms, answer any queries that guests have, and checking guests out of the hotel.

All these jobs are part of the system that makes the front office run smoothly, however the front office is only a part of the whole hotel system. The front office would have support from the room service department (ensuring rooms are clean and ready), the engineering department (making sure that toilets, bathrooms, water, air conditioning, fans and lights are all functioning properly). All these departments have their own systems in order to perform their jobs better and supplement other departments. It would be fair to say that, in the hospitality industry, in order for guests to have an enjoyable and memorable time all the systems within each department of the hotel must be running smoothly to gain maximum output or guest satisfaction.

As Mr. Pisirio Kitione put it: “ If someone working in a hotel is not directly dealing with hotel guests he must be assisting someone who is” (Kitione, 2008) In terms of hierarchies, systems can be seen in a larger context from large hotel chains where there is a head office, which is in charge of an overarching system that controls the subsystems within their hotel chain. Subsystems include: first level subsystems- individual hotels and regional offices, second level sub-systems- individual departments; and third level sub-systems – which are the operating units within each department. Systems exist within boundaries to ensure that there is some level of

precaution is in place to prevent abuse and produce a consistent output.

Sometimes system boundaries can slow down work efficiency or information flows between components. System boundaries can be classified as physical or non physical.

Physical boundaries include distance from suppliers to the head office; obtaining imports which affect consistency and quality of the service provide and delays in delivery as a result of shipping problems. Non physical boundaries are implemented to measure consistency in the quality of the processes and outputs. Non physical boundaries include job description (making sure everyone knows what job is required of them, standard operating procedures (to ensure consistency) and performance measurements (to ensure employees are maintaining the required standards). Within the secondary level systems of a hospitality system, these can be further divided into three different operating systems such as; (Ball et al. , 2004) 1. Operations-wide systems – includes stores or purchasing (procurement) department and maintenance department.

Operations-wide departments ensure that the everyday running of the hotel is functioning, from purchasing everything the hotel needs to function (office stationary supplies, food supplies, chemicals and cleaning equipment etc) to ensuring the utilities (water, electricity, heating and cooling, plumbing etc) are adequately working. 2. Accommodation systems- include front office and housekeeping, which provide for guests initial needs (checking in and making sure the rooms are prepared- cleaned, stocked and ready to be occupied) 3. Catering systems – Include food production (kitchen), holding and storage, dining (restaurants), bar and waiting, these services ensure

guests are properly nourished and satisfied with the services rendered.

Another factor in hospitality systems is simultaneous multiple containment (SMC) (Ball et al. , 2004).

SMC is when systems exists as sub-systems of more than just one system, for example a hotel can be a member of a multi-national chain, act as an employer in the local economy by buying local produce from farmers and other local producers. On a smaller scale, within a hotel department, a front office worker may, at any given time may have multiple tasks to perform simultaneously, such as answering a phone, answering guests questions, checking guests in or out and posting sales on the reservation system, the way this staff member deals with these tasks could determine the amount of satisfaction the hotel guests will get. Therefore it would be important that the staff has the right equipment - computerized reservation system (CRS), phone, fax, and stationary etc. Furthermore the staff member themselves must be trained and knowledgeable in the operations of the front office. This is where SMC of other departments such as the human resource manager and recruitment manager come into play, preparing the suitable candidate for the job.

Hotels and hospitality industries greatly rely on systems as they have been formulised to make tasks simpler and to have accountability. Most hotels market there brands as a product that provides the best service, we all know that this is true to some extent, but the end result is also making a profit. So in order to run the business at a profit and at the same time providing the top of the range service, systems need to work and a good flow of communication is a must. If we take the typical scenario like the one below

<https://assignbuster.com/hospitality-systems/>

of a guest making a booking, checking in, staying at a hotel and checking out, we will see that hotels really rely on systems. Example- Mr. Johns calls the Sheraton Resort in Denarhaus' reservations department to make a booking for Monday next week staying for two nights checking out on the Wednesday.

Mere who is on duty in the reservations department receives the call and takes the booking. Mere enquires through the computerized reservation system to check for room availability for that date. The system tells Mere that there are only executive rooms available and all the regular rooms are occupied. Mere informs Mr.

Johns of the availability of the rooms and the cost. Because Mr. Johns is on business and the company he works for paying all expenses, Mr. Johns happily agrees, Mere takes down details of where he is from, the company he works for and a credit card number, he also tells Mere that he will be arriving at the Sheraton at 11am on Monday and has a slight problem with his back and will be requiring extra pillows to sleep. Mere then enters the booking on the hotel reservation system and advises Mr.

Johns of the confirmation; she also places in the special requests area of the reservation of Mr. Johns request of extra pillows. At 8am on Monday morning Sera, who is the supervisor at the front office checks the system and prints out a copy of all arriving guests on that day, she then prepares the check in cards for arriving guests including Mr. Johns, then places them in the arriving guests file (visible for all front office staff to see). She then calls Adi the

housekeeping supervisor to make sure she is aware of guests who are checking in on that day.

Adi checks the CRS and sees all the arriving guests. Adi now briefs all her house maids on the rooms to be prepared for new check in's and the special request of Mr. Johns because it appears in her system as well. At 11am Mr. Johns arrives at the Sheraton Hotel and goes straight to the front desk. Marika who is now on duty welcomes Mr.

Johns with a smiling face and asks him how he could be of assistance. Mr. Johns informs him of his reservation and Marika checks the system. Marika acknowledges the reservation and then hands Mr.

Johns the check in card and asks him to fill it out other personal and company details. He also asks Mr. Johns for his credit card and swipes it in the credit card machine as a guarantee of payment. Marika then prepares a room key then calls room service for confirmation that the room is ready. Adi answers the phone and confirms that Mr.

Johns room is ready and can be occupied. Marika then calls the porter and hands Mr. Johns his key. Tui the porter arrives with a big bula smile and escorts Mr.

Johns to his room carrying assisting him with his overnight suitcase. Marika now enters all the details from Mr. Johns check in card into the system and places Mr. Johns check in card in the in-house guests file.

Mr. Johns arrives in his room and gets settled, he goes through the room and notices a basket of fresh fruit and an information booklet of the hotel on the <https://assignbuster.com/hospitality-systems/>



bed, the bed has clean sheets and has extra pillows like he requested, the bar is fully stocked the TV is working, there are fresh towels, soap, shampoo and conditioner, shower cap, and hand towels in the bathroom. He is quite content with the room as it has a beautiful ocean view, a few minutes after checking in Mr. Johns realizes that the air conditioning system isn't working properly, he then calls the front office to be greeted by the welcoming voice of Marika who is at the same time preparing a bill for checking out guests. Marika asks Mr.

Johns what seems to be the problem. Mr. Johns tells Marika of his problem with the air conditioner and Marika informs him that he will have someone sent up right away. Marika now calls Raju the maintenance supervisor.

Raju then informs his best air condition worker Epeli to go to Mr. Johns room and fix his air condition. Epeli arrives at Mr. Johns room within ten minutes of receiving his job order, he knocks lightly on the door and Mr. Johns welcomes him in explaining the problem of the air conditioner. Epeli goes straight to work and fixes the problem which was only a flat battery on the remote control.

Epeli assures Mr. Johns that the problem is fixed and he leaves the room. Epeli goes back to the maintenance workshop and completes a job completed form, which is then signed by his supervisor Raju. Mr.

Johns is now feeling a little hungry but has to catch up to some of his work on his lap top. He turns his laptop on and he has wireless internet connection and can do a lot of his work online. Mr. Johns calls room service and speaks to room service supervisor Litia who happily takes his order of a club

sandwich and pina-colada for lunch, in his sandwich Mr. Johns asks for some local chillies to be added because he likes spicy food. Litia types in the order on the kitchen computer system, prints out an order and takes it to the kitchen.

Chef Jack receives the order and assigns kitchen hand Tom to prepare the club sandwich informing him of the extra chillies that was required by the guest. The drink order is sent to the bar where Mike the barman prepares a pina-colada and hands it to room service waiter Jerry who goes over to kitchen and collects the prepared sandwich together with the lunch invoice. Jerry then takes the lunch order up to Mr. Johns room knocks on the door and delivers him his lunch. Mr.

Johns signs the invoice and Jerry is on his way back to his supervisor. Mr. Johns finishes his lunch and gets a call from his business associates to meet him for dinner at 7pm in Nadi town. Mr. Johns calls the front desk and book a taxi for 6.

30pm Marika takes the call and makes the taxi booking with the hotel taxi service. The next two days Mr. Johns is busy in meetings and doing business, On the Wednesday morning Mr. Johns has finished his business and is checking out at 10am. Mr. Johns arrives at the front desk and is greeted by Marika, he informs of Marika that he is checking out and would like to settle his bill, Marika prepares his bill by making sure that all the postings have been entered in the system, which picks up all the expenses from all the departments (room-service, housekeeping mini-bar, restaurant, bar etc) that Mr.

Johns had incurred during his stay over the past two days, and at the same time making friendly conversation on the quality and satisfaction of his stay at the Sheraton. After all the postings have been entered Mr. Johns receives his bill checks it, and find everything in order. Marika then asks for Mr. Johns credit card and then swipes it to make the payment.

Mr. Johns returns the room key and is given a copy of the bill thanks the staff for a pleasant stay and is on his way back to Nadi airport. (This example is a true account of the authors stay at the Sheraton Fiji Resort- names of staff members have been changed to protect their identity) In conclusion this simple example shows how systems are integrated in the hospitality industry and if managed carefully can provide the full satisfaction of guests. All the systems and processes that make up the hospitality system must work together like a well oiled machine such as, the human resource aspect- All staff are trained to promote a high level competent service within the Sheraton training departments, so everyone is skilled and effective in their job, the technology is of high quality the CRS system for making bookings and confirming rooms are all interlinked with housekeeping, the kitchen and the bar, the internet wireless connections, the communication systems are efficient and reliable, the resources (inputs to make food and other necessities such as hose keeping material) which is the responsibility of the purchasing or stores department to ensure that everything is readily available (Feinstein, Stefanelli. 2001), also areas where SMS is actively performed (Marika multi tasking answering phones checking guests in, filing document etc) is another area where systems theory is relevant in a hotel operation.

The Sheraton group of hotels is a good example of systems hierarchy, where the Sheraton Fiji Resort is a partner of getting resources from their head offices in Asia, and the hotel itself having the different departments that fall under the hierarchical system, such as the general manager, the duty managers, the chief engineer, food and beverage manager, financial controller, front office manager, chief security, activities manager, etc. who run different departments that interlink to make the whole system work. All these managers are accountable and have regular management meetings with the general manager to get feedback from the departments and guests to continuously improve on the standards of the goods and services provided by the resort. Furthermore, as the statement by Pisirio suggests, even though the hotel has more than 200 workers, guests don't see that many staff because a lot of staff are behind the scenes ensuring that they do their work because the quality of the final output (which is guest satisfaction) is a direct result of the quality of their work.