

What Makes an Old Hotel a 5-Star?

OpenAxis, Inc. develops and installs "EzQC", a user-friendly system to make your quality control of hotel maintenance easy.

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Outstanding Hotel

My wife and I had a chance to visit a hotel in Salt Lake City. The hotel's quality evaluation always rated "Outstanding" for many years though its facilities are 20-years old. Within the hotel group in US, the hotel was ranked 5th in 2003, and 17th in 2004 out of 165 hotels. We wanted to know the secrets.

The evaluation consists of 3 factors: facilities, customers' satisfaction on accommodation, and customers' satisfaction on customer service.

Facility

The facility of the Salt Lake City hotel is well designed with good air condition system and 3 elevators. The floors of lobby and complimentary breakfast areas are covered with beautiful white Navajo tiles. The old atrium is as beautiful as brand new, and makes the hotel entrance sun-lit bright. The excellent facilities mean the hotel owner and managers understand how to invest in



and operate a hotel.

Accommodation

Accommodation was good as well. In a suite room, carpet, furniture, floor tiles, and white bath tub are all clean. We could tell the suite is well maintained.

Keeping the hotel in an excellent condition and maintain 100% customer satisfaction all the time is not an easy work but it is a challenging and exciting work.



We asked the General Manager, Ms. Cynthia Patton about her management. The followings are what she told us:

- I have very loyal and dedicated staff including division managers. I try to communicate my staff as much as possible.
- I believe my staff can find work at any hotels in Salt Lake City — even tomorrow if they wish. Other hotels know the reputation of our hotel's quality that we have built up over

many years.

- The hotel management makes quick decisions and quick actions. I can talk to the hotel owners directly on any issues. There are no red tapes.

Secret of Her Hotel Management

Is she just lucky to have hard-working people around? We asked her secret for her success. She said "There is no secret on managing this hotel. I am just a hands-on manager."



That is the secret of her good management. She is always walking around and checking the hotel, and communicating with her staff members. She gives hand-on instruction of how to improve the hotel on site, not from her office over the phone. She is always there with her staffs.



Leadership, Communication and Cooperation



Leftover Food on Hallway

When you stay in a hotel, have you seen any leftover foods on a tray outside of a hotel room? This unpleasant scene is common even at a good hotel. How do you think we can improve the customer services in such situation?



Why Trays are Left in Hallway

You can easily imagine why a food tray is left on the hotel floor. The followings are typical reasons:

- **Communication**
Customers do not want the leftover food smell in their room. But they do not know how to tell the hotel to get rid of it other than leaving it visible on hallways.
- **Lack of Cooperation**
The hotel restaurant space is leased and the restaurant operation is out of control of the hotel management. The restaurant manager is not serious about maintaining the hotel clean.

Leadership Solve Problems

Who manages the hotel and the restaurant? All daily operations are under control of both hotel and restaurant managers. Food trays left in hallways could be easily controlled if both of them recognize their leadership and responsibility to customers, communicate each other and work together.

Nobody wants to hear a long explanations or excuses for failing in achieving goals. We need a strong and solid leadership to bring the people together and solve the problem quickly. Let's take action.

The followings are my proposals:

- **Communication with Customers**
Place "Room Service Card" on a tray for room services. It says "Please call Extension 51 when you finish. We will pick up tray in five minutes. If you do not call us in one hour, we will call you to pick up your tray."

• **Standardize Cleaning Process**

Assist staffs to pick up trays. One staff periodically walks around to check for leftover trays, and prepare a daily log sheet. Hotel and restaurant managers walk around in the hotel at 7:00 every morning to make sure the system is working. Review daily log sheets and discuss any issues to sustain the system.

- **Raise Awareness**
Set up and celebrate "No Tray Day" and work with all staffs. When everyone understands the importance of the responsibility, it becomes easy to make things work better.

This episode on leftover food is an indication of quality of services. You may find the similar types of issues in any management. Let's pay more attention to these issues and find out practical and sustainable solutions.



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Necessary Deductible Expense for Business

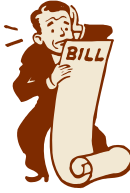
A business expense is an ordinary and necessary expense for your trade or business. For the expense to be a "business expense", it also must be "reasonable".

Below is a list of the most common types of business expenses:

Depreciation

If you have any business assets that have a life of more than 1 year, generally you must depreciate the cost of the asset over its life time. Some common assets are computers, vehicle, desks, chairs, other equipment and etc. You should keep a list of all assets you acquire that includes the cost and date of purchase. You may qualify for "Bonus Depreciation", which will give you an additional

30% or 50% deduction in the first year.



Bad Debts

The money that someone owes you but you cannot collect is a bad debt. A business bad debt is generally one that comes from operating your trade or business.

Insurance

You may deduct fire, flood, worker's compensation, and other types of business related insurance costs.

Lease or Rent Payments

Rent is any amount you pay for the use of property you do not own. In general, you can deduct rent as an expense only if the rent is for property you use in your trade or business. If you have or

will receive equity in or title to the property, the rent is not deductible.

Taxes & Licenses

You may deduct real estate taxes, state and local taxes, excise taxes, employer's share of Social Security and Medicare taxes, professional license fees. Be careful, the Federal income tax is not deductible.



Meal and Entertainment

You can deduct the cost of meals if your business trip is overnight or long enough that you need to stop for rest to properly perform your duties. In this case, you can deduct only 50% of meal expenses. You may be able to deduct

business related entertainment expenses for entertaining a client or customer.

Meal and entertainment is not 100% deductible.



Utilities

Such as gas, water, electric, interest, telephone and cell phone.



Other Expenses

Things such as advertising, education, bank charge, trash and property management fee.

Therefore, if we follow the laws and apply all the necessary deductible expenses; we can save lot money. To avoid getting audit by IRS in the future, one must keep all receipts.

Information Security – How Is your Company's

When you think of information security at your company, please be aware of the following 6 issues.

1. Responsibility of Each Department

Each department should have a person

in charge of security control. Make sure he/she understands the importance of protecting personal information. Without a sense of responsibility, he/she cannot supervise and raise awareness of security con-

trol among computer users.

2. Reevaluate Communication System

Accidents can happen even with a good protection. It is important to review your com-

pany policy on how to report information security emergencies to prepare for highly-likely incidents, such as information leakage. However, a reporting policy needs to be practical and ef-



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fective. For all employees to accurately and quickly report to the person in charge, they need to know exactly how and what information to report in such emergency. Having a drill would be a good preparation.

When an accident should happen, instead of penalizing the responsible person, work together with the person to find out why it happened and how to prevent it from reoccurring.

3. Cooperation from Individuals

Many companies are not enforcing computer security rules, such as limiting access to restricted rooms to employees wearing an authorized badge. Enforcing such rule requires each employee's cooperation and commitment. When seeing a person without the badge, asking a simple question of "Where do you need to go?" or "May I help you" would make the system work better, and helps avoiding suspicious people.



4. Access Control by ID

"Limiting data access to employee who needs

it" is the fundamental rule of Information security. However, many do not bother this rule and share ID or password just for the sake of their convenience.

The rule of thumb is to establish and control an ID and password for each individual. If employees complain of the new system, it means that you have not explained to them well about the importance of security control.

5. Rule of Encryption

One effective way to prevent data leakage is to encrypt data when transferring it.

You need the rules of encryptions that state names of the person in charge and security level of encryption. You also need everyone's agreement on the rules. Create the rule on pass phrase set-up is also necessary because if you are not careful, even a long pass phrase can be deciphered fairly easily. Use both numbers and alphabets in a pass phrase, and use alphabets in both capital letters and lower case.



6. Don't Leave Your PC Alone

Increasing number of personal lap-top computers are stolen in car jacks recently. Do not leave your laptops alone, and tell your employees to be careful. As mentioned in Section 5, it is important to encrypt the data in your personal computer, a whole hard disk drive if possible.

Precaution by each employee is vital in information security. If you can convince employees of the importance of the information security and cooperation of individuals, they will naturally follow the rules.