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FORMATION OF HIGH-PERFORMING TEAMS IN THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY

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ABSTRACT
This article examines leadership strategies and their impact on the formation of highly effective teams in the hotel business. The role of various approaches such as directive, supportive, democratic, transformational, and liberal in increasing employee motivation and improving team interaction is explored. It analyzes how each of them affects team dynamics, as well as the overall business performance. Special attention is paid to the importance of flexible leadership strategies in the hospitality industry, where the requirements for staff, corporate culture and customer service are constantly changing.
KEYWORDS: *Hospitality Industry, Leadership Strategies, High-Performing Teams, Employee Motivation.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The hospitality sector is one of the economic sectors that play a major role in promoting tourism, international business, and other aspects. In an environment of intense competition and rising consumers' expectations, among the greatest demands for effective hospitality organizations are not only quality service, but also employees' performance. Creating high-performing teams is the ultimate key to unleashing competitive edge and improving overall firm performance.
One of the important elements involved in creating such teams is the leadership style. How different management styles affect team dynamics is of practical importance to hospitality business managers. They are tasked with motivating workers, managing their interaction, and encouraging a harmonious work setting. The aim of this study is to discuss leadership styles, their impact on building high-performing teams, and identify how these factors influence the performance of the hospitality industry.

2. MAIN PART. FEATURES OF FORMING EFFECTIVE TEAMS IN THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY

In the last decades, the subject of high-performing team building, and development has attracted increasing interest from researchers and practitioners in various fields, including the hospitality industry. Such teams consist of a group of individuals united by a common goal and tasks, where each member actively interacts with others, fostering interdependence and collaboration to achieve high performance (fig. 1).



Figure 1: Characteristics of an effective team

The characteristics of collaboration in the hospitality industry require the consideration of the features of this industry in designing models of effective interaction. The industry is characterized by high variability of external conditions – seasonal demand, unpredictability of economic factors, and fluctuating needs of customers [1]. In such conditions, flexibility, and the ability to quickly adapt are the most important qualities of a team.

Moreover, this industry, unlike most, demands not only effort at being professional by its employees but also having high emotional competence to present an image for the company and meet customers' expectations. Therefore, teamwork should not only be aimed at optimizing business procedures but also delivering high service.

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3. LEADERSHIP IN THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY

One of the most important elements that guarantee the success of a team is leadership. It is the process by which one person influences others to achieve certain goals. A leader is not just a manager, but also a person who inspires, motivates, and directs the behavior of the group, leading the group to achieve high results. He is most often associated with characteristics such as decision-making ability, self-confidence, and charisma. It does not necessarily have to be related to a formal status, but can manifest itself in the ability to influence and inspire regardless of one's position in the organization.

In the hospitality industry, its role goes beyond traditional management and organizational coordination. It is not only the hub around which the team is constructed but also a change agent with the vision of high performance and quality service. The leader must understand that successful team building is impossible without direct participation in the process of constructing corporate culture, shared values, and norming of behaviors. These tasks entail not just professional competence but also the ability to guide people, manage their motivation, and reconcile common interests and individual employee needs.

His duties include establishing effective communication within the team from the very first day, building trusting relationships and creating a working atmosphere in which each employee feels their importance and responsibility for the final result [2]. To this end, he must be able to adapt approaches to each employee, use various strategies to individual and group interaction, and build an atmosphere in which each team member can realize their potential.

Effectiveness of a leader depends much on the mixture of some personal qualities and professional competencies. He must possess the ability for strategic planning, problem-solving with a sense of urgency, and decision-making for short-term performance and long-term team development. In the hospitality industry, where work consists of a sequence of actions taken under stressful conditions and time constraint, he must be able to read situations quickly, react properly to crisis situations and mobilize the team in the right direction.

Constant close interaction with the team and clients requires the leader to be not just professional but also emotionally intelligent, provide a good moral climate in the team, and manage conflict [3]. With high empathy, they are able to create a climate of respect and trust, resulting in team unity and increased employee motivation. A very important quality is also the ability to learn and self-develop. In the dynamically evolving hospitality industry, a person must be prepared for the constant updating of his or her knowledge and skills.

Thus, considering the specifics of the hospitality business and the constant changes in the external environment, leaders in this industry must be flexible in applying various strategies. Table 1 presents the main types of management concepts.

Table 1. Types of Leadership Strategies [4, 5]

Leadership style	Description	Examples of application in the hospitality industry
Directive style	The leader makes decisions independently and expects strict compliance with them.	Used in crisis situations where immediate action is necessary, such as handling emergencies or dealing with sudden fluctuations in guest numbers, ensuring a quick and efficient response.
Supportive style	The leader emphasizes support and development of employees, aiming to increase their satisfaction and motivation.	Commonly applied in training new employees, offering guidance during onboarding processes, or improving the moral climate of the team. It is effective when teams are learning new systems or processes.
Democratic style	The leader involves the team in the decision-making process, encouraging participation and collaboration.	Effective when the team is faced with complex tasks that require innovative solutions or collective input, such as improving guest experience or redesigning service offerings.
Transformational style	The leader inspires the team to achieve higher goals by motivating and developing their potential.	Used to drive cultural change, foster innovation, and increase employee engagement. For example, leadership initiatives to improve customer service standards or enhance employee loyalty to the brand.
Liberal style	The leader delegates decision-making power, allowing employees to make their own decisions.	Applied in high-skill environments, such as management teams or specialized service areas like VIP guest management, where employees are expected to take ownership and exercise creativity.

Thus, a successful leader in the hospitality industry must possess the capability to modify their activities depending on the situation, employing different strategies to create an effective and balanced team. They must ensure that they not only set the example for their employees but also tackle future issues with flexibility, with high team cohesion and performance.

4. THE IMPACT OF LEADERSHIP STRATEGIES ON TEAM PERFORMANCE

Leadership strategies directly impact team performance, as they determine the value of employee communication and the ability to generate high results. Probably the most noticeable consequence of the implementation of such strategies is an acute increase in employee motivation. The application of approaches that determine the value of each member of the team can generate a sense of satisfaction and loyalty among employees [6]. For example, the supportive style allows for enhancing motivation because employees believe that their needs are taken into consideration and are more likely to put more effort into the success of the team. It must be noted that motivation in the hospitality industry is not merely about materialistic aspects but also about creating a setting in which each and every employee realizes their significance to the company. Thus, the right approach works to arouse inner interest, which results in increased productivity and the quality of services.

Effective communication and collaboration are the most essential components of an efficient team. For example, a transformational or democratic style of leadership will promote open and free communication between all members in the team. This facilitates quick resolutions of problems and enduring trust-based relationships between members of the team.

Active support for innovation and an open mind to new ideas can significantly increase the level of creativity and flexibility within a group. For the hospitality industry, where changing customer requirements and external circumstances call for immediate response, flexibility of the team is essential. The transformational style, which stimulates creativity, creates environments for the team to respond quickly to change, propose new ideas, and devise new solutions to improve the quality of the services.

One of the major consequences of successful implementation of leadership strategy is to increase the employees' dedication towards fulfilling the company's overall goals. Team participation by taking decisions and setting high but definite goals enables every team member to feel that his or her personal contribution towards the organization's success. This approach is most effective in the hospitality industry, where every member of the staff, from the reception to the top management, directly affects the impression and satisfaction of the client’s [7].

Thus, effective implementation of management practices works to increase team interaction considerably. One good example of effective implementation is Marriott International. The company uses adaptive leadership practices actively in an effort to establish high-performance teams, providing high-quality service and achieving demanding business goals. In everyday operations, the company makes use of a supportive style, encouraging employee development and creating a positive moral climate for the team. However, in response to changes in the external environment or the need to implement new ideas, Marriott uses transformational leadership with great passion, inspiring employees to high levels of achievement and pushing innovative solutions. In crisis situations, where quick decisions are needed, Marriott uses a directive style. The approach enables the company to respond immediately to challenges and ensure stability [8]. This picture indicates that only a whole approach will bring conditions for achieving high results and long-term development for the company.

5. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, highly effective team building in the hospitality industry is a complex process in which leadership styles take the central position. They are critical not just to guide and lead staff members, but also to create a culture of development and collaboration. With the assistance of an appropriate style, directive, supportive, democratic, transformational, or liberal, the leader can increase the overall team productivity, employees' morale, and the quality of services delivered. Knowing every style and shaping it in a manner to meet the company's unique requirements, a dynamic and flexible team can be developed that will meet the evolving business requirements.

The success of hotel companies more and more depends on the ability to build intact, motivated teams that collaborate effectively with each other and solve global problems in a changing world. As employees at companies like Marriott International have demonstrated, leadership skills, when effectively used, lead to greater team cohesion, increased customer satisfaction, and long-term business success. For a company where rapid response to both external pressures and customer demands is crucial, a management style that generates trust, creativity, and flexibility is critical. It is ultimately the combination of strategic direction and extremely effective team culture that ensures the long-term operation and growth of organizations in the face of stiff competition in the hotel secto

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