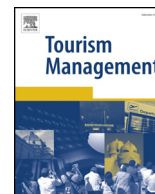




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Book Review

Customer Service for Hospitality and Tourism, S. Hudson, L. Hudson. Second ed. Goodfellow, Oxford (2017). 352 pp., (Pbk.), £34.99 ISBN: 139781911396468

Arguably, customer service is one of the most important and relevant issues today for the hospitality and tourism sectors globally. From warm and responsive treatment of guests to the right way to deliver food to different markets, attention to detail counts and helps businesses to survive and grow. This new edition from Simon and Louise Hudson sets out how to deliver to customer needs and develop successful businesses, and is a useful addition to the hospitality book market. It is written in an accessible style: often, academic books contain too many industry specific words so that non-academic readers, especially businesses, have difficulties in extracting concepts to apply to business strategy or operation. The 12 chapters reflect real customer service issues in the hospitality industry and the text is highly applied. The flow of the chapters and the close connection of themes gives the book a clear structure for a wide range of readers.

A particular focus of the book is on the day-today customer relationship. More than half the chapters look at front-line interactions and how to serve customers in the right way. In addition, there is an emphasis on how to develop customer service and the additional service steps towards achieving outstanding service experience. Examples from Disney to a Ski Resort in the Rocky Mountains show how service can move from good to outstanding. Case studies are a key feature of this book. The cases are thoughtful, collected from all over the world and highlight practice in hospitality and culinary arts sectors. Every chapter starts with a case study, often focusing on a specific problem or issue, the themes of which are then discussed in-depth through the chapter. At the end of each chapter, a second case study takes the

problem on again and shows how it can be solved in a similar or slightly different way. While the range of case studies from different countries and cultures is notable in this book, the management of customer services from cultural perspectives is missing. To understand the customer, a deeper understanding of consumer cultures is necessary. For example, an American tourist will think and act differently to a Korean tourist but both expect outstanding customer service experience. In the twenty-first century, cross-cultural considerations need to be included in any management book.

Despite this text being predominantly applied in nature, there is some theoretical content with reference to a range of models and strategies. Again, theories are explained in an accessible style. After a short description and explanation, the text outlines how models and strategies can be transformed from theory to practical understanding and application. Conversely, the light touch on theory means that readers get an idea of lots of different models but do not gain a deeper understanding. While not all theories can be introduced and discussed in depth in one book, perhaps what would be more effective is if the authors explained the critical ideas in more depth, with illustrations from real life scenarios.

Overall, this is an exceptional book for understanding customer service in hospitality and tourism. It will serve as a good introduction to the subject for hospitality and tourism students to support learning of theory applied to real life examples. In addition, businesses and staff in the hospitality and tourism industries might find this book useful reading to support activities designed to develop customer service to achieve outstanding quality.

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