



# UNIT-7

## Quality Management

### Learning Outcomes

**By the end of this unit the learner will be able to:**

- ✓ Explain the importance of service quality in hospitality Industry
- ✓ Explore Quality Management Operations
- ✓ Discuss the Role of ISO 9000 in Hospitality Operations

## Unit 7

### Introduction

The secret to any organisation's success, especially in the present age (where the world is moving toward globalisation) is quality control and management. This holds especially true for those who work in the service-oriented industry, where rapid changes and the guarantee of satisfaction, via quality products, is an uphill task. This unit focuses on factors that can help in coming up with, offering and delivery quality service products geared towards tourists. Factors that encourage consumers to repeat their purchases or verbally publicise your brand will be discussed.

### The Concept of Quality Management In Services

During the past two decades, the definitions of quality have evolved and become highly developed. The idea of quality, as superiority, has now been outmoded with definitions placing greater emphasis on quality than issues linked to production or modes of delivery. Furthermore, the new element of quality perception by the consumer has been added to the definition. Some existing definitions demand zero defects to associate quality with the product and manufacturing specifications, while others deal with quality from consumers' points of view and level of satisfaction. In this unit, we are concentrating on the idea of quality management as an essential challenge that the tourism and hospitality industries have to deal with - to bring together the quality of services actually provided and those demanded by the tourist.

### Quality Management in Hospitality Industry

For a successful business in the hospitality industry the quality of service is an important factor. The hospitality companies achieve competitive advantage by following existing trend of comprehensive quality management. So, what does quality mean? **Supplying a standard that you sense is correct for your customers, always.** This definition is easy and useful to contemplate. Simply it means that you pinpoint the needs of your guests and you must consistently supply those needs. You cannot do what you wish. You must do what your guests want every time and do it right from the first time onward. The importance of staff performance and variable arrangement of product and services, along with various guest expectations and assessments of positive service encounters, all add to the difficulties in managing a service industry as compared to the management of a manufacturing industry. Due to this and various reasons, many methods of performance monitoring and service quality management have been introduced. Investors in People, ISO 9000, complete quality management, and other schemes we all planned so central management procedures would make sure quality is provided 'right first time.' Also, this procedure permits specific businesses and divisions to communicate to guests and customers. This matter should not be taken casually since -

- Guests are many times not certain about the quality of experience that they will get;
- Standard labels make guests feel safer about the quality of service they will receive; and
- Once correctly applied these schemes can help in providing actual assistance in the

administration of the quality of service.

### Hospitality Retail Service Quality

The elusive components of the service make it hard for guests to find the benefits to be obtained from a service before the purchase. This can only be managed after experiencing that service. It is difficult to quantify and define the expectations of guests, service workers, and administrators in what the elusive benefits should supply. Effective service delivery often is dependent on the guests experiencing feelings of belonging and luxury that are hard to produce. Another feature that separates from typical manufacturing production is changeability of services. Delivery of services is often inconsistent and hard to standardise, due to personal nature of the interaction, between the guest and the service provider or the staff member.

- Staff members will differ in their understanding of guests needs Components of human interaction may obstruct with performance; some staff members may be more committed to positive service encounters.
- The expectation of the guests as to satisfactory services varies and can be hard to envisage.
- Production and consumption of services are inseparable; this is the third important feature of services.

- Patrons of the services themselves are contributors in the service delivery, for example, as are patrons in a restaurant or a bar. They intermingle with the service provider, the atmosphere and the guests. Consumers are part of the service interaction and will help form it – through their own observations of the service atmosphere and the observations of fellow guests.

It is impossible to save up sales and please them some other time. Neither can loss of services provided be supplied at a future date. Most often, the service is time sensitive and once the opportunity is lost it is gone forever. Therefore, the vacant hotel bed or the meals not sold in a restaurant is income lost that cannot be regained. Hospitality provider's services cannot be stored and cannot be made up by working overtime or multi-sourcing services to allow for variation in the demand and supply of services.

Defects in service quality cannot be amended and given back to the customer, as you can with a manufactured product. Demand in services has to be perfect as and when it is demanded, therefore it is hard to plan service delivery to match service demand. Lastly, many retail services in hospitality are provided to guests who do not possess the services as provided, if unacceptable, they cannot take it away or return it.

Due to the elusiveness and perishability features, guests are often buying the right to a service or an experience. Problems of devotion and recollection are created due to this; unlike the owners of a physical product that is taken home, hospitality merchandising customers rarely have enduring reminders of the merchandizes features or benefits. Continuous patronages will be based on a collection of memories, experiences, and expectations. Personal observations and differences become vital concerns -

- Customer hopes of service quality become a paramount decisive feature of service quality when compared to experiences of the service;
- Consumers have a base level of anticipation of the services -the least they expect. They have a standard of expectation about what the service should be received compared to what they want;
- Consumers also foresee what they imagine the quality to be like;
- Consumers may differ in their outlooks; those customers that have higher experience of a service will have higher expectations compared to those with less exposure to that service;
- Providers of hospitality have a responsibility in influencing expectations; customer expectations are influenced by promotional activities and advertising; and
- It is important those expectations are met by the service provided by your unit.

The focal point is to make sure that consumer expectations are met in such a way as to make sure consumers appreciate that their expectations have been fulfilled, also, that they are pleased to warrant a return. It is important to view Herzberg's Motivational Model. Herzberg recommended that there are two sets of factors that individuals actually evaluate when viewing positive and negative reaction to service -

1. Cleanliness factors are precisely those features- such as hygiene of the bathrooms. Consumers have certain required standards, and will be disgruntled if those standards are not met. However, consumers are not moved to return when these standards are met.
2. Motivators are those features of a service that consumers find to be significant-mainly intangibles like being cherished and made to feel important, and hospitableness that will make consumers loyal.

Herzberg's Model is important since it advises that there are some features, which, if expectations are not met, will result in consumers becoming disappointed. However, meeting consumer expectations in these features does not pledge consumer loyalty- just a lack of disappointment. Actual consumer motivators are those features of the service that consumers hold significant. You have to make sure that you recognize consumer expectations, mainly:

- Cleanliness factors that may cause displeasure.
- The motivators that will ensure consumers to return.

**SERVQUAL** is used by some hospitality providers to equate consumer's anticipations with their experiences and with this show the strengths and flaws of the service provided. The routine of different contenders can be associated with the service organization's individual routine. Particularly, it identifies the "five service gaps," where there may be disparity between the expected level of service and the awareness of the service, which is provided. The five dimensions of service which have been recognized and on which SERVQUAL System of quality assessment is based are listed below.

### The Five Dimensions of Service

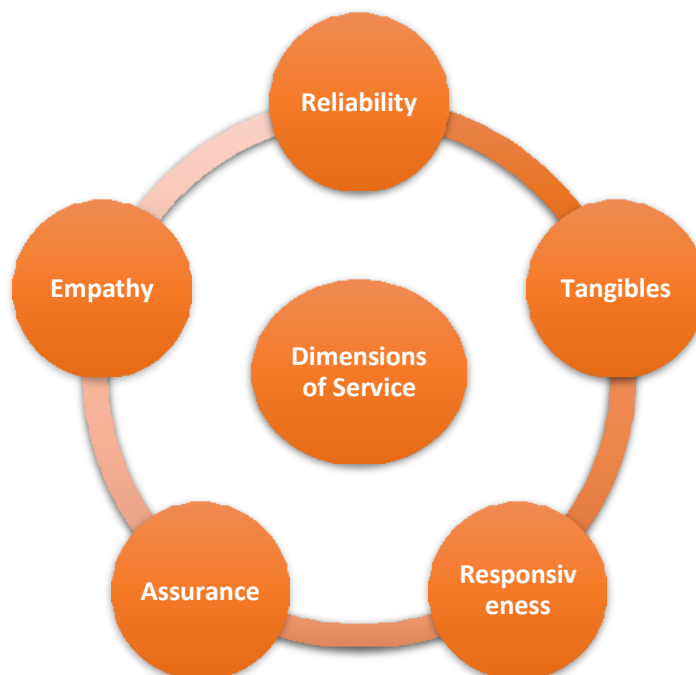


Fig. 6.1

**Reliability** - The skill to provide the guaranteed service consistently and precisely;

**Tangibles** – The presence of physical amenities, equipment, staff, and communication tools;

**Responsiveness** – The inclination to help consumers and deliver rapid service;

**Assurance** - The ability and willingness of staff to deliver with confidence; and

**Empathy** - Personalised consideration provided to the consumer

Responsiveness, assurance, and empathy are fundamentals of this model that highlight the significance of staff performance in the service encounter.

The response of the staff to service the delivery system's failures can be grave, because consumers will probably excuse a service disaster, if the disaster is accepted and rapidly corrected. Any problem, that is ignored at the time, may produce grievances reported to the head office and, more notably, a lost consumer. Making note of the fact that each consumer makes recommendations to friends and family, the lost consumer can result in loss in excess of the free drink or exchanged meal.

Likewise, staff response to consumer demands and requests are important in all service situations since there are going to be times when consumers need something that is not ordinarily sold by the brand, or when they make a mistake and need help in amending their fault. Consumers are more likely to respond positively if they are treated with flexibility and the staff does their best to meet the consumer's demands.

The segment recommends many key concepts in handling service quality.

1. Hospitality retail operations provide merchandise and service to consumers and this result in concrete and elusive benefits. Although it is simpler to manage the concrete aspects of the operation, both are significant and need vigilant monitoring.
2. A unit supervisor must understand that consumers utilize the same restaurant and bar on various occasions with varying expectations and aims. You must appreciate these various requirements and expectations so that you are better able to understand and focus on what consumers believe are important.
3. Consumers have various expectations of the service features provided and rank these differently. Several consumers will expect that service provided is up to basic standard, although abundance of this service may not motivate consumers to return. You have to understand motivators- those parts of the service that will help form solid customer loyalty.
4. The performance of the staff in delivering service is the vital component of the consumers' experience. The staff's sensitivity, assurance and responsiveness when handling the customers, and their ability to handle serious incidents, are vital to the encounter. Suitable human resource

management procedures - enlistment and selection, preparation, inspiration, and enablement - are all essential.

## Quality Management and Hospitality Retail Operations

The ensuing is a brief summary of various systems and expressions used:

1. **Quality inspection:** tangible output of an item or service is compared to a standard specification. Imperfections are then redone or tossed for waste. Although quality inspection is done by line supervisors, quality managers and anonymous consumers, the approach is usually limited by the nature of the hospitality goods and services. It is not always possible to amend a defective product or service. It is also difficult at times to identify the source of the problem
2. **Quality control:** quality is calculated into the comprehensive description in the production of merchandise and services through meticulous standards. Throughout the various stages of the process quality checks are introduced, between units. The foundation comprises with the detection and improvement of faults. This may not improve quality but indicates when quality is absent.
3. **Quality assurance:** instead of waiting for errors to occur, quality is calculated into the process in a way that errors cannot occur. If an error does occur it is amended as it occurs. The method involves producing a documented and calculated quality system. Quality assurance needs complete organization, commitment and participation of all staff in the process. A crucial problem is that while quality assurance may provide continuous flawless products and services, the standard may not meet the demands of the consumer.
4. **Total quality management:** The emphasis is on consumer satisfaction by meeting the customer's needs. The arrangement is completely focused on the consumer's satisfaction and elimination of any hurdles to providing consumer satisfaction. Individuals in the organisation are crucial to effectively obtaining consumer satisfaction; staff training, incentives, and empowerment are vital. Once more, effective implementations need to be complete commitment and this can be hard to achieve since it is often difficult to amend the administrations culture. The tactics noted above are not of themselves mutually exclusive; one method shapes on another and, as we will see later, effective quality packages usually include features of all these methods. So, organisations, which have been founded on complete quality management requires involvement of quality inspection and quality control, although the number of errors and problems should be largely reduced.

## Inspections and Quality Assurance

Although the first appointment from the quality assurance unit of your tourist authority or evaluation agency can be strenuous, it should not be so, since their goal is the same as yours, in that they want you to be as perfect as you can be. You might evade this stress if the quality consultant checks into your hotel under cover.

A new study on restaurants showed that the top two concerns on which customers rate them are cleanliness and friendliness. It is interesting to note that the reason for visiting the restaurant, the food, did not make it to the top two picks on the list.

## Quality Advisor's Visit

There are eight distinct areas that quality advisors check and include in their final grading report when they visit a property.

One of the units is “Bedrooms” and within this unit are the sub-sections:

- Decorations;
- Furniture and fittings;
- Floor coverings; and
- Beds and bed coverings

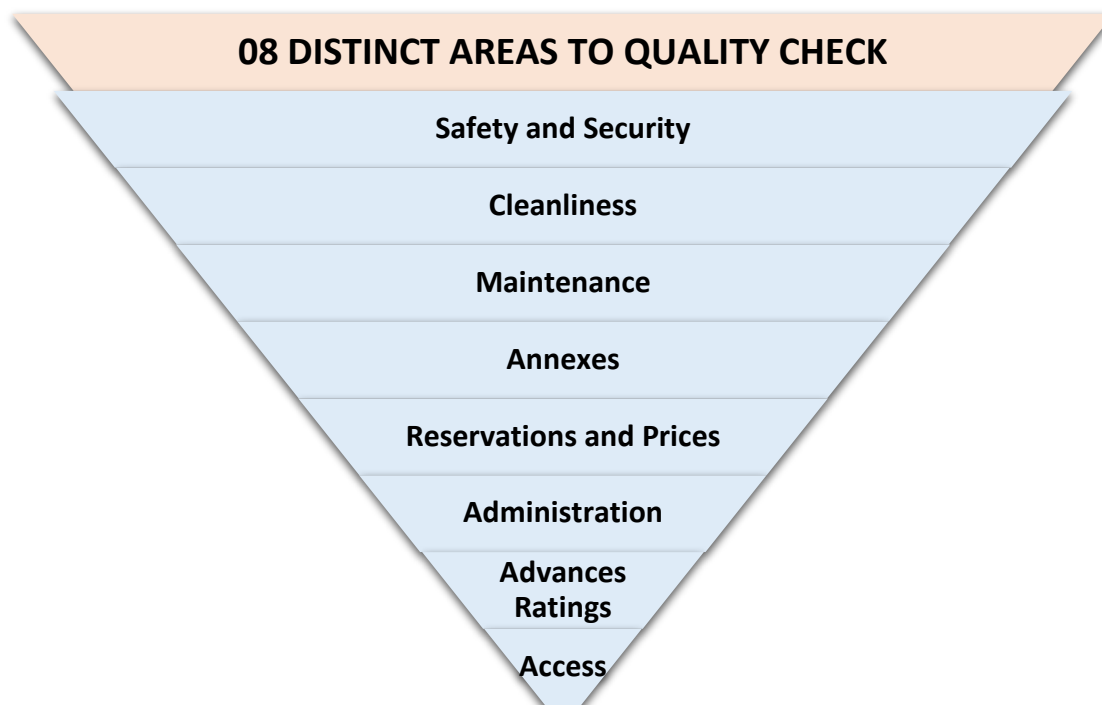


Fig. 6.2

1. **Safety and security:** The main entrance should be visibly identified. Preferably, the doorway should be well - illuminated. There should be a great amount of overall safety and security measures put in place, including knowledge on procedures in the case of an emergency. Also, there must be written details of how to call for assistance in case of an emergency at night. Acceptable action should be taken for the safety of the lodgers and the property. There should be a way for locking bedroom doors from the inside and out, allowing entry of the room with a key. Lodgers should be able to leave the bedroom easily without the need of a key.  
Sufficient amount of lighting should be available for safety and security in all public areas with ample light on stairways and landings at night.

Meticulous attention should be paid to the security and comfort of guests, especially those whom inhabit the ground floor rooms.

2. Cleanliness: A high standard of sanitation should be sustained throughout the property, specific attention should be paid to the bathrooms, showers and toilets.
3. Maintenance: Structures, their fittings and fixtures, the furniture and décor inside and outside has to be well maintained in a sound, sparkling condition and must be safe for the purpose intended. All electrical apparatus has to be well maintained in excellent working order.
4. Annexes: Where an annexe is a part of the establishment, the amenities supplied in the annexe will be included in the assessment of the establishment. Pathways and halls leading to the annexe must be in excellent condition, well lit and even surfaced.

Guests must be informed at the time of booking or later in the event of a change, if the lodgings offered is a separate annexe, or has individual external access. The locality of this lodge should also be specified.

5. Reservations and prices: The style of the accommodation should provide suitable welcoming and well organized service. All questions, requirements, reservations, communications and grievances from guests should be attended to quickly and courteously. It should be specified to the guests precisely what is included in the price quoted for the room, meals, and refreshments, together with service charge and any other surcharges, e.g., credit card use.

A pamphlet or brochure should be accessible.

The price quoted at time of booking should not be surpassed and all quotes must include VAT. All housing providers, regardless of the size of the organization, should show the following in the entrance or reception area. This information should also be displayed outside the premises:

- Existing price of the cheapest and most costly single room
- Existing price of the cheapest and most costly twin or double room
- Existing price of the cheapest and most costly family room
- Prices should be quoted either by 'per person' or 'per room'.
- Prices quoted must include VAT.

The hotel's cancellation policy should be clearly explained to all guests when they book their room as well as details of charges for any additional services or amenities available and their full details. This comprises of all communications (telephone, fax, and email), as well as, in brochures. The conveniences, services, and facilities that are provided by the hotel, should be clearly and fairly described to all guests and prospective visitors through advertisements, brochure, or verbally. Information regarding any in-house policies such as no smoking should be made clear at the time of booking. Guests should be able to check out the rooms and establishment if they want before booking. Potential guests should be informed of any seasonal closure or any major renovations taking place at the time of their visit. Potential guests should be assured that their booking has been recorded properly and correctly.

6. Administration: Each guest should be presented with the bill that is clearly written and well laid out. The bill should provide the details of payments due and a receipt, as required.

## Statutory Obligations

All legal responsibilities and modifications, which pertain to you, must be met including, but not limited to:

- i. **The Trade Descriptions Act of 1928.**  
This act says that it is a crime for you to carelessly or knowingly make ‘false statements’ about any amenities or facilities offered by you.
- ii. **The Fire Precautions Act of 1971**  
This Act states that any facility which has accommodations for more than six lodgers and/or employees, or such lodging is provided above the first floor or in the basement (below ground floor) a certificate issued by the appropriate Fire Authority will be necessary
- iii. **The Food Safety Act of 1990**  
This act must be observed in those establishments that provide their lodgers food or drinks. This also pertains to the sale of drinks.
- iv. **The Hotel Proprietors Act of 1963**  
In cases where this applies to your establishment, a notice must be shown which limits your establishment’s liability to £50.00 for any object, with a maximum limit of £100.00 per lodger. Unless, of course, the item has been deposited in a safe for safe - keeping.
- v. **The Health and Safety Act of 1974**  
This act sets the regulations for health and safety guidelines in the work environment and sets accountability and responsibilities on all individuals in that work environment, including the owners and the staff, as well as, those who are self-employed.
- vi. **The Disability Discrimination Act of 1995**  
Two aspects of running an establishment are covered in this Act, mainly, staff employment and access to amenities and services for the handicapped.
- vii. **The Consumer Protection Act of 1995**  
This Act says that it is illegal for hoteliers or lodge providers to give consumers false information about the prices charged for room rentals and any associated facilities, goods, and services. Owners are also required to have Public Liability Insurance. The person representing the inspection team will require evidence that the requirements are being met.
- viii. **Access**  
Once a lodger has checked-in they must have access to the institution and bedrooms unrestricted. The owner and/or workers must be accessible during the day.

**ix. Advances Ratings**

For an establishment to achieve a higher award, i.e., four or five star status, additional requirements must be met.

**Grading bands and conditions**

The following pages provide information on different quality ranking levels.

<b>Five Stars</b>	<b>93 – 100%</b>
Housekeeping must score	10
No item to score less than	8
All service elements to score excellent	(9 – 10)
<b>Four Stars</b>	<b>84– 92%</b>
Housekeeping not less than	9
No item to score less than	7
50% of total scores to be excellent	(9 – 10)
and 25% of total scores to be wry good	(8)
At least 50% of service elements to score excellent	(9 – 10)
<b>Three Stars</b>	<b>77 – 83%</b>
Housekeeping not less than	8
No more than two items to score	6
And no more than one of these in any one section	
NO acceptable or poor items (less than 6)	
Heating and hospitality sections must not score less than	7
At least 25% of service elements to score excellent	(9 – 10)
<b>Two Stars</b>	<b>71-76%</b>
Housekeeping not less than	7
No poor items	less than 3)
Not more than one acceptable item	(less than 6) and this
must not be in the hospitality section	
<b>One Star</b>	<b>60 – 70%</b>
Housekeeping not less than	6
No poor items	(less than 3)

**Fail – less than 60%**

Below: minimum standards

The marks earned equates to the following:

10 Exceptional

9 Outstanding

8 Excellent

7 Good

6 Respectable

5 Average

4 Acceptable

3 Barely acceptable

2 Below acceptable

1 Poor

0 Not suitable

## Quality Standard Awards in Hospitality Operations - I S O 9000 Series

Many schemes of service quality management and performance monitoring have been presented. Investors in People, ISO 9000, Total Quality Management and other systems were all developed so in-house administration practices would guarantee quality 'right first time.' Also, these methods certify specific businesses and units as an indicator to external consumers and guests. This matter should not be taken lightly because -

- Guests are usually unclear about the quality of experience they will get;
- Standard brands help guests feel protected about the service they will experience; and
- When these systems are used practically, they can help deliver real benefits in administering service quality.

This method sets a standard with which an organisation can document an operational system that establishes the company's commitment to quality and the method that makes sure that quality is conveyed. Once the company has developed and documented a method, they are then evaluated by one of many independent assessor agencies. Registration is normally for three years, but the organisation is subject to examination to make sure that the methods are still being observed.

There are many variations in the ISO 9000 series and ISO 9002 is believed to be the better suited for hospitality firms.

### Investors in People

The system offers twenty-four indicators in evaluating the organizations commitment to investing in their staff. Each indicator has guidance notes that define what each indicator should determine. The standard is not rigid and organizations can construe the indicators in their own way.

The process consists of four main stages – commitment, planning, action and evaluation. Once an organization has developed these stages, the organizations are evaluated by the local Training and Enterprise Council. Evaluation consists of examining all documents and, essentially, on site visits to meet with staff and supervisors – those that have received the training.

### Total Quality Unit Management

Complete quality systems are essential for hospitality retail organisations that are inclusive enough to encompass the characteristics of services and the various observations of the guests. Complete quality management seems to offer service organizations the method needed. Although there are many forms of total quality management the subsequent list of principles contains many general qualities that are found in many descriptions of this initiative:

- The proposal indicates a responsibility to quality services as a central organisational matter. The dedication of senior administration is important and the approach has to infiltrate every part of the business.
- The proposal is very appealing to hospitality retail organizations because its goal is to produce a culture.

### Quality Advisors’ Sample Assessment Sheet

Factors to take into account:

#### Façade:

1. Look of the structure
2. Gardens and lands

#### Bedroom

1. Décor of the bedroom
2. Furniture
3. Floor coverings
4. Linens and bedcovers
5. Lighting and fixtures
6. Heating accessories
7. Roomy/airy / overall impression

## Bathrooms

1. Decoration and floor coverings
2. Fixtures
3. Bath linens
4. Lighting and heating
5. Fittings
6. Roominess/freshness

## Public Areas

1. Design/scheme
2. Furniture and fixtures
3. Floor covering
4. Lights and proper illumination
5. Ambiance

## Dining room

1. Interior decoration
2. Furnishing and furniture
3. Floor covering
4. Lighting and heating
5. Menu
6. Table selection
7. Ambiance

## Food

1. Dinner-arrangement
2. Dinner -Quality
3. Breakfast –arrangement
4. Breakfast –Quality

## Hospitality and service

1. Reception –welcome, friendliness, attitude
2. Reception- efficiency
3. Bedrooms-housekeeping/cleanliness
4. Public areas- housekeeping/sanitation
5. Dining room dinner service
6. Dining room- breakfast service
7. Check- out competence

## Other

1. Tourist information/tours/guides

## Quality Management in Tourism

The concept of quality management became significant in tourism operations as soon as different countries started to understand that not all tourists are the same. They differ in their origin, length of stay, travel purpose and activities etc. For example, German, Japanese and North American tourists are considered to be bigger spenders. Due to this, a large number of countries have crafted their services to fulfil the needs of a segmented tourist market. As a result, a number of countries/destinations made it known that they desired quality tourists. The theory here is that the large spender will also be an

excellent customer in regards to the different sensitivities, but this may not always be the case. A situation can arise where the big spender, due to their elevated purchasing power, may exploit the resources of tourism more. Some countries realized that due to the segmentation of the market, it has to be associated with the resources available and the infrastructure at the destinations. This gave birth to another type of an approach, in which not only the quality of the product and services has to be considered, but the quality of the users also has to be taken into account.

This means that, if a single tourist spends as much as three others, the effect and resource use of the former will be significantly smaller. Therefore, the cost benefit ratio will have a more positive effect. This is why the 1980s saw a great many service providers in North America acting in response to the 'quality' crises, which had been created by products offered by rival providers as a way to retain market share. So, if the 1980s were identified by a business environment with commitment to quality, then the 1990s were characterised by Total Quality Management, which is a more complex way of understanding the consumer needs as an inseparable part of the organisation's aims.

From the viewpoint of the cost-benefit ratio, quality management is dependent upon a number of factors, including expenditure in a time unit (i.e., money spent per day/expenditure per trip), the amount of money spent making it available, the regional and sectorial patterns of expenditure, governmental objectives and aims in this objective.

Before you determine what makes for quality in tourism services, you must first define your own idea of Service Quality (Quality Policy) and your intended market. As stated earlier, some tourism industry sectors associate the boundaries of quality with the power of the tourist to purchase. To a certain extent, this might be in line with the most common objectives of tourism development, like the elevation in foreign exchange earnings, balance of payment improvement and greater earnings through tourism and related industries. However, many economists think that calculating the per-day expenses of tourists may not always be an accurate measure, as high daily expenses go hand in hand shorter durations of stay.

They claim that in many cases, the tourists spending the greatest amounts per day are not the ones spending the highest amount per capita or per trip expenditure. So, simply concentrating on per-day expenditure of a tourist might not be in line with the total earnings from tourism. What's more, in such situations tourism does not provide equal benefits to everyone in the host destination. Some types of tourism may be based more on a wider region, though most will likely be focused on the main tourist destinations and international gateways.

The tourist who falls into the category of very low daily expenditure may actually end up being a quality tourist, when the destination's interests are taken into account. They might be more caring towards the local resource/customs and show more respect instead of exploiting them – they may choose to work in harmony with them. So when the sustainability of the destination is considered, they may actually turn out to be quality tourists. So, quality operations in tourism needs to be associated not just with the amount of spending, but with the guiding principles of tourism at the location *and* the contentment of tourists and hosts combined.

The Quality Management of the 1990s is of major concern to tourism operations for practitioners and academicians equally. This is because of the greater interest in and concern for satisfaction and customer care. Hence, it can be thought of as an all-inclusive approach, allowing an organisation to create a more holistic view of the consumer, quality factors and service offerings, as an ongoing process connected with the quality perception of the hosts.

Problems always exist when formulating an universal definition of “quality,” which is applicable to the varying sectors of tourism operations. Townsend and Gebhart (1986) differentiated between the subjective evaluations of quality by the consumer (quality of perception) and offer a more objective evaluation (quality of fact). This is, that the meaning of quality will change in accordance with the context and perceptions of who is establishing it and what is considered to be quality. This concept in tourism necessitates that establishments work at reaching specific targets, built upon an agreed idea of quality.

Corporate devotion is a must, so that Quality Management filters through from every aspect of the business. Quality Management can also provide the opportunity to keep an eye on and put into operation internal procedures to monitor suppliers, using recognised quality standards and practices. One of the major issues for Quality Management in tourism operations is how to determine or decide what clients think of as ‘excellence in service provision’ and go on to design a service delivery system, in order to be able to satisfy each tourist’s demands, needs and expectations. Many tourism industry players are now targeting each customer individually through value added products, by analysing what the individuals think of as quality. Of course, both price and costing go up in these types of cases. Other players have made efforts to offer a budget-friendly category of tourists.

The tourism service providers need to work out a strategy at policy and planning level and agree on how to continuously improve quality when making services available, so that the tourist’s experience is made better. One obstacle, in this effort, will be to eliminate the idea in the tourist’s mind that travel is a mundane and stressful activity. Putting a Quality Management strategy into action is a difficult task at any time for service providers - especially when it involves changing corporate culture. Nonetheless, when management works hard to adapt certain principles, management strategies can become the key to successful functioning of quality management in tour operating business.

If you are a manager looking to carry out Quality Management with success, the following points have to be kept in mind:

- Uphold long-term commitment to ongoing improvement;
- Adapt a culture of “right the first time”;
- Train employees to understand customer-supplier relationships;
- When making purchases, the price should not only be the focus - the total cost and quality need to be considered as well;
- Perfection in delivery should be practiced;
- New training and supervision methods should be implemented;

- Breakdown of inter-departmental barriers is a must to improve communication and encourage teamwork, which in turn will aid in managing the service process;
- Build human resource strategies (motivation, incentives, and on-the-job training), to develop and nurture specialists and experts within your workforce;
- Lastly, establish systematic methods to manage the total implementation of a Quality Management Program in your company.

To recap, we can state that execution of a Quality Management Program can be moulded by the application of the above-mentioned concepts, and their combined result can be felt in the following areas:

- a) Enhanced customer-service provider relations;
- b) Improved management procedures;
- c) Transformation of organisational culture;
- d) Employee commitment

These results are naturally connected with the requirements of a system founded on national or international standards. Additionally, the equipment that is capable of examining and predicting what kinds of remedial steps are required to improve quality and ways to monitor the progression of the remedial action are also needed. A durable Management Information System supported by customer feedback and front-line employees also assist quality management.

### Caring For Customers in Tourism

One of the manager's duties in the tourism business is to provide quality service to customers. This automatically brings in the idea of customer care. When this is ignored, it becomes difficult to attract customers. There is tremendous competition to win and retain clients for inbound as well as outbound travel. Only the establishments providing exceptional customer care can thrive in the tourism sector.

Keep in mind that this field is composed of specialised services and your customers hold high hopes for the services you promise/deliver. Your company delivering on those anticipations or otherwise is going to be determined by how good you are as a manager. Your actions can make the tourist's dreams come true, or turn them into a nightmare. It is up to you to ensure that you not only meet the expectations of the client, but go beyond what's expected. Otherwise, your actions could make them very unhappy.

Keep in mind that a number of your clients might be experienced travelers. In which case, they will make comparisons between your product/services with those of previous travel businesses.

Customer contentment is gained through not just providing value for money, but gaining their repeat business and good verbal publicity. The best way to make certain that your clients get the high quality service they deserve - and know they are cared for - is to establish a system of checks and tests before delivering the product, to make sure you are ready. To be able to deliver quality service to each customer means maintaining high standards and delivering them consistently. It also means to implement new schemes and make them work, so that the organisation's quality and client's

contentment goals are reached. You have to keep in mind that each client wants to feel like they are special - ensuring that a single client is treated different from all of others is a difficult task. A start can be made by using the communication skills of your front-line staff effectively.

The staff should be trained to:

- Remember to acknowledge the customer every time;
- Smile genuinely;
- Address the customers politely;
- Not forget to look them in the eye while conversing with them;
- If the customer's name is known, use it

When considering customer care, going the extra mile beyond what the customer expects should come to mind naturally. For example:

### **Situation 1**

When selling your standard services to a corporate client like traveller cheques, insurance, foreign currency, collection and application of visa and hotel vouchers, make the additional effort of supplying them with a taxi/chauffeured car to get them to and from the airport. This gives them the feeling that you understand their situation and are in a position to offer them what others cannot.

### **Situation 2**

A passenger in an aeroplane gets an additional smile from the airhostess and an enquiry like the following: "Sir, can I get you something?" This makes the customer feel that they are looked after. In each of these situations, it should be noted that what gives the client a special feeling is that they are looked after. Another key factor of these examples is the compassionate method of delivering your service that contributes to the success of your organisation. It also demonstrates that the client's interests should be placed first. There are situations in a job where the focus may shift from doing the job to pleasing your seniors and top-level management. In reality, the job is to make sure the client always is given top priority.

As the manager, you need to understand and train your employees to realize that the most vital part of your job is to provide the optimal standard of service and care to the customer - this differentiates your duty from others. Alternatively, giving the extra push shows you are thinking of your customer's response to your work and are making every effort to ensure their comfort and fulfilment. With time, you will understand that the secret to providing extra care is foreseeing the request before it is made - being ready to provide it and maybe even offering it before it is requested. Another vital area that is crucial and the manager must be able to deal with is complaints. It is understood that when things go wrong, customers will complain. Their grievances will need to be handled tactfully and appropriately by you.

While such complaints are considered from the individual tourist transport operation's point of view, predominantly to improve the quality of services provided in accordance with the clients' expectations, the circumstances remain almost the same in all tourism businesses. Thus, the essence of complaints and the proper handling of the complaints stay the same. Particularly, when it comes to dealings with difficult/intense emotions and feelings, in addition to dealing with the problems themselves. Even if you feel that the complaint is overstated or irrational, you must always take it seriously.

This shows the client that you are willing to listen to them and help. In such a situation, keep calm and maintain a professional tone using conversational language. Ask the client questions to be able to ascertain full details.

Interject with comments, such as, "I see," "I understand," or "do go on," while listening to their story. Such comments show that you are paying attention, but do not make comments that indicate that you agree with them. If you indicate agreement in any way regarding the problem or fault, that means you are accepting responsibility. When this happens, the customer then expects some kind of compensation - maybe even through legal channels.

All this illustrates how while caring for customers, their complaints need to be dealt with tactfully.

As a tour operation manager or a travel agency business, if you are able to provide customer care as expected by clients, you can build and nurture excellent professional relationships. Once this stage is reached, your clients may even begin to ignore small mistakes made by your staff or you, which otherwise may have ended up taking a great deal of your time to solve. More importantly, the satisfied client becomes a source of reference, i.e., they recommend your name as a dependable and thoughtful service provider in their business and social circles. In this way, customer care and quality management become the main principles of becoming successful in service sectors, such as tourism operations.

### Further Reading:

- ✓ *Connie Mok, Beverley Sparks, Jay Kadampully, (2011), Service Quality Management in Hospitality Tourism and Leisure*
- ✓ *Robert A. Riedel, (1995), Hotel Air Quality Management*
- ✓ *Jessica Salver, (2005), Brand Management in the Hotel Industry and Its Potential for Achieving Customer Loyalty*