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CUSTOMER SATISFACTION IN SERVICE QUALITY – CASE
COMPANY: CROWNE PLAZA ST. PETERSBURG, LIGOVSKY

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Customer Satisfaction in Service Quality – Case Company: Crowne Plaza St. Petersburg-Ligovsky

Abstract

The hotel industry relies on an excellent level of service. Bad service may cause the loss of customers. Customers will not come back if they are not happy with the level of service business provided.

This thesis aims to explore customer satisfaction in service quality. This includes finding the definition of customer satisfaction and exploring the customer satisfaction in various customer groups in Crowne Plaza St. Petersburg- Ligovsky. The answers are discovered from relevant literature, previous researches and the case company.

The thesis is intended to help Crowne Plaza St. Petersburg- Ligovsky and other hotels interested to determine its customers' levels of satisfaction and to improve its service quality according to the findings in order to stay competitive on a market.

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The hotel industry relies on an excellent level of service. Bad service may cause the loss of customers. They will not come back if they are not happy with the level of service business provide.

In the 21st century consumers have become more demanding. The quality of life is growing, and people want more. This is one of the reasons why standards of service increased. Nowadays, the competition between hotels is mostly about customers' loyalty. The hotels that are able to make customers happy and keep loyalty get the market.

1.2 Research objective

This thesis aims to explore customer satisfaction with service quality, find the definition of customer satisfaction and explore customer satisfaction in various customer groups in one hotel.

The questions of the thesis are:

- What is customer satisfaction and service quality?
- Why it is important to monitor customers' satisfaction?
- What are the factors affecting customer satisfaction and how to prevent the loss of customers?
- What is the difference in customer satisfaction of various consumer groups?

The answers are discovered from relevant literature, previous researches and Crowne Plaza St. Petersburg – Ligovsky.

1.3 Case hotel

The case hotel is Crowne Plaza St. Petersburg - Ligovsky, a four-star upscale segment hotel of a global brand, InterContinental Hotels Group, established in 2011. Crowne Plaza St. Petersburg - Ligovsky is under the direct management of InterContinental Hotels Group. (Plate 2017.)

Crowne Plaza St. Petersburg – Ligovsky, according to Business Traveller Awards 2017 Russia and CIS, is the best business hotel in the Northwestern Federal District. With 195 hotel rooms, the hotel provides its customers with various choices in terms of rooms' category all with TV, Wi-Fi, mini bar, bathroom amenities and so on. The hotel has other facilities including a restaurant, Olivetto, a lobby-bar, a gym, conference rooms and business centre. (Monastyrskaya 2017.)

1.4 Thesis structure

This thesis is divided into four parts. The first part of the paper is a description of the research and the case company. At the beginning of the thesis there is information about the brand, the hotel and main customer groups of a case hotel. The second part consists of the theoretical information about service quality and customer satisfaction. The survey is analysed in the third part of the paper. Finally, the fourth part includes results of the survey and recommendations for the case company.

2 BRAND AND HOTEL DESCRIPTION

2.1 The InterContinental Hotels Group

The British company IHG[®], also known as InterContinental Hotels Group, started its operations in 1777 as a domestic brewery and later transformed into a global hospitality brand. Nowadays, the company operates more than 5 200 hotels around the world and has 12 completely different brands: InterContinental[®], HUALUXE[®], Kimpton[®], Crowne Plaza[®], Hotel Indigo[®], EVEN Hotels, Holiday Inn[®], Holiday Inn Express[®], Staybridge Suites[®] and Candlewood Suites[®]. (IHG, 2017) From all these hotels 85% are franchised, 14% are under the direct management of IHG and only 1% are owned hotels. (Kosach 2017.)



*IHG[®] Rewards Club not applicable to Kimpton[®] Hotels & Restaurants; to be included at a future date.

Figure 1. IHG[®] brand bar (Source: IHG[®] brand warehouse).

2.2 Crowne Plaza[®]

At Crowne Plaza[®] Hotels & Resorts there are all conditions for effective work for business travellers. The brand is oriented towards business travellers and different events organizers and participants. Premium location is a Crowne Plaza[®] brand feature. All hotels have properties located in major urban centres, gateway cities and resort destinations all around the globe. (IHG website, 2017) There are also several more features that are aimed the main target group of the brand:

- Sleep Advantage[®] Program. The program provides comfortable bedding, aromatherapy kits to help guests unwind, quiet zones in hotels and guaranteed wake up calls.
- Completely connected. Modern travellers need their laptops, phones and devices to be fully charged and ready to go whenever they are. That is why all Crowne Plaza[®] hotels provide plenty of easily accessible power sockets or charging devices in rooms.
- Travelers do not always have time for a leisurely lunch or dinner. Fast & Fresh menu options are delivered to guests who are on the go.
- Planners' meeting needs first. Crowne Plaza[®] Meetings Directors help take care of the details.
- Wi-Fi included for all Crowne Plaza[®] guests. Free Wi-Fi connection is available in guest rooms and all common areas and do not include any hidden charges.
- Energy essentials. Complimentary fruit, water fresh towels and advice on local running, walking or cycling routes or fitness tips to help guests continue their healthy regime.

Crowne Plaza Hotels & Resorts is the only brand of IHG in a business tourism segment. Growing and strengthening its position in the market, the brand appears in a new image, reflecting a modern view of the dynamically developing direction of business tourism. Of course, the needs of the guests remain in the priority attention, in the life of which the boundaries between private and professional spheres are blurred.

2.3 Case hotel

Crowne Plaza St. Petersburg - Ligovsky offers 195 comfortable guest rooms combining the perfect conditions for work and rest. There are 4 room categories for guests choice: Standard, Executive, Deluxe and Suite. The Olivetto Restaurant, located on the second floor of the hotel, serves Mediterranean cuisine, as well as a special Russian menu. The hotel has a functional conference area: four conference rooms and one breakdown room are equipped with everything necessary for hosting events of any format. The hotel was opened in May 2011. The convenient location is within walking distance from the Moscow Railway Station, a serious advantage for guests coming to the city from Moscow. (Crowne Plaza St. Petersburg – Ligovsky brochure 2018.)

2.4 Customer groups

In Crowne Plaza St. Petersburg – Ligovsky there are two main customers groups: business travellers and leisure groups. These customers are completely different in terms of buyer behaviour, needs and preferences.

2.4.1 Business travelers

For those people who came to St. Petersburg on a business trip it is extremely crucial to be “on top of the game”. They always want that the hotel knows their needs in advance. A good hotel for them is the one that has good conference facilities, a business centre available, professional personnel and fast and qualitative service 24/7. A good room is the one that allows a guest to have everything needed at his/her fingertips. This includes, for example, a fast internet connection, effective room service, good bedding to rest well before a tough day, all necessary bathroom amenities, and so on. Business travellers pay a lot of attention to details. (Plate 2017.)

2.4.2 Leisure groups

The hotel always has leisure customers who do not pay so much attention to details but still need special attention. The customers that come to St. Petersburg to see the beauty of the city or visit several sights always want to be in the heart of the city. A good location near the main transport hubs and within walking distance to the most famous places in St. Petersburg is one of the most important features of the hotel for them. The staff should be warm and welcoming. The restaurant should offer a traditional menu, and the rooms must to be comfortable. (Plate 2017.)

3 SERVICE QUALITY AND CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

3.1 Service

According to Philip Kotler service can be defined as “an action or an activity which can be offered by a party to another party, which is basically intangible and can not affect any ownership” (Kotler, Wong, Saunders & Armstrong). The most important feature that distinguishes any service from a good is that the service is abstract and intangible. The second diversity is that the service is produced and consumed at the same time.

Service is an abstract concept, and many scholars address a variety of thoughts and concepts. Most of them agree that the discrepancy exists between service and products because service has several properties. Examples of these are: intangibility, heterogeneity, perish ability, inseparability, etc. (Chena, Chioua, Yeha, Laia 2012).

Taking into account that service is intangible, customers may evaluate it only considering their own subjective feelings and perceptions. In order to reduce the resulting uncertainty, customers analyse the external factors or the evidence of the high quality of the service (office location, interior, equipment, personnel providing services, information provided, symbols and prices) (Kotler & Keller 2008).

One more important element is inseparability of services. According to Philip Kotler and Kevin Lane Keller (2008) this means that “Services, unlike material goods that are produced, stored in a warehouse and distributed through numerous intermediaries, usually are provided and consumed simultaneously.” In simple words, hotels’ managers should do their best to sell as many rooms as possible, because rooms cannot be stored and the revenue cannot be recovered (Karavaeva 2017).

Another key element of service’s characteristics is heterogeneity. Customer

satisfaction is directly depends on how the service is delivered. The skill level of the staff providing services always has an effect on customers' feelings about the service. It is especially very challenging for those businesses where the personnel communicate with consumers directly. However, employees of the so-called "back of the house" should also be trained well. They should be deal excellent with problem solving and provide the best quality of service. (Monastyrskaya 2017.)

Services are perishable. As soon as the plane breaks free from the runway, and the movie in a cinema begins, unsold tickets cannot be held until the next time (Kotler & Keller 2008).

3.2 Service quality

Quality is one of the most powerful tools. With its help companies position their goods and services on the market. This shows the direct effect on the ability of a product to perform its functions; thus, quality is a combination of the properties and characteristics of a product or service related to its ability to satisfy existing or perceived needs of consumers (Kotler et al. 2008).

According to Business Dictionary service quality is an assessment of how well a delivered service conforms to the customer's expectations. Service business operators often assess the service quality provided to their customers in order to improve their service, to quickly identify problems, and to better assess customer satisfaction (Business Dictionary 2017).

Service quality plays one of the key roles for the hospitality industry. It can be used as one of the strongest ways to be competitive on the market and improve the business. Service quality has a strong effect on customer satisfaction by providing solutions.

In conclusion service quality is something uncertain and subjective. Service quality is something that depends on customers' preferences, experiences and

mood. That is why it is wiser to explore the service quality considering different customer groups.

3.3 Customer satisfaction

Customer satisfaction is a part of a customer's experience that exposes a supplier's behaviour in regards to a customer's expectation. It also depends on how efficiently it is managed and how promptly services are provided (Juneja 2018).

The level of customer satisfaction with a purchase is determined by the ratio of expectations to the actual qualities of the purchased product. Satisfaction is the enjoyment that an individual has when comparing preliminary expectations and the perceived qualities of the acquired product (or the result of using it) (Kotler & Keller 2008).

Every company should do their best to satisfy customers. A satisfied customer will return and buy more. He or she will tell others about his or her experience, and this will affect future operations. Customer satisfaction basically shows how well a company meets all the expectations of the customer (Plate 2017).

Customer satisfaction is an extremely vital element of the hotel industry. The hotel industry depends on customer loyalty as no other industry does. Customer loyalty depends on the quality of the services provided in a hotel. In other words, if a customer does not get the preferable level of service in one hotel, he or she will look for it in another one (Monastyrskaya 2017).

To keep a competitive level of customer satisfaction, every hotel should monitor and analyse it. Nowadays, this is getting easier day after day with the help of modern technologies. Technology can help managers to monitor statistics regarding customer satisfaction. One of the most popular ways of communication with guests is an online survey. With the help of this tool a company may collect the feedback and opinions of guests and make future

developments according to customers' needs and preferences (Karavaeva 2017).

In order to gain higher results and increase the level of customer satisfaction, a company should show not only the ability to adapt, but also the desire to do its best to meet all customers' needs. Hotels pay a lot of attention to understanding customers and their satisfaction. This is because it is more expensive to get new customers rather than keeping existing ones (Plate 2017).

3.4 Reasons for measuring a customer satisfaction

Why should a business measure customer satisfaction? The answer is simple. If a company does not measure customer satisfaction, it cannot know if there are unhappy customers. If the company does not know about unhappy customers, it cannot know how fast they will go away. If customers go away faster than a company gets new ones, a business dies (Plate 2017).

It is necessarily required for an organization to interact and communicate with customers on a regular basis to increase customer satisfaction. In these interactions and communications, it is required to learn and determine all individual customer needs and respond accordingly. Even if the products are identical in competing markets, satisfaction provides high retention rates (Juneja 2018).

It is important for a business to measure customer satisfaction because it gives several metrics that can help to analyse the current situation and improve the quality of service provided. With the help of measuring customer satisfaction a company may indicate how likely a customer will return in future. Is a customer willing to pay again to get the same service level? Moreover, in a competing situation on the market it is crucial to be somehow different from those competitors who deliver the same type of service. Being aware of the company's customers' needs and preferences may help to reduce customer churn and negative word of mouth. Also, it is much cheaper to keep existing

consumers than to get new ones. Moreover, providing customers with high quality service gives a business the opportunity to set higher prices (Plate 2017).

In order to improve customer satisfaction it is essential for a supplier to measure it. It is purely believed that if anything is not measurable then it is not authentic. Customers are the most important asset for any organization as they are the ones responsible for driving the business. Measuring customer satisfaction helps in identifying specific customer information which is needed to run a business smoothly (Juneja 2018).

To conclude, all customers have their own expectations about a particular product or service. If a company does not meet the expectations of its customers they start to look for other variants. In order to provide customers with the exact level of service they prefer, it is necessary for a business to monitor and analyse its level of satisfaction and make improvements according to customer feedbacks.

3.5 Factors influencing satisfaction

According to Prachi Juneja customer satisfaction is the overall impression a customer has about the supplier, products and services delivered by the supplier. The following are the important factors that could affect customer satisfaction:

- Type and quality of response provided by the supplier.
- The supplier's capability to commit to deadlines and how efficiently they are met.
- Customer service provided by the supplier.
- Complaint management.
- Cost, quality, performance and efficiency of the product.
- The supplier's personal facets such as etiquette and friendliness.

- The supplier's ability to manage an entire customer life cycle.
- Compatible and hassle free functions and operations.

The higher the satisfaction level is, the higher the sentimental attachment of customers to a specific product brand and also to the supplier (Juneja 2018).

4 RESEARCH METHODS

4.1 Survey organization

During the research a survey was conducted. The idea of the survey was to collect and analyse guest feedbacks and create a strategy for further improvements. An online form was sent automatically to each guest of the hotel after his or her check-out. The form included seven gaps of service with a five-point assessment scale, where 1- is poor and 5- is excellent, and an empty space for personal opinions. The guests were asked to assess the overall satisfaction, staff service, value for money, room comfort, sleep quality, cleanliness and atmosphere and ambiance. This form also include background information about the guests, for instance, the level of membership in loyalty program, check-out date, age, traveller type, region of origin and willingness to recommend the hotel.

The research was held from June 2017 until January 2018. There were 84 responses.

Unfortunately, there was no guarantee that customers who received the form would respond. As a consequence, the survey received only 84 responses during the given period. Thus, it was decided to analyse also Booking.com and Tripadvisor feedback about the case hotel.

4.2 Reliability of the method

The questioners were sent to guests' e-mail addresses upon check-out. The research results are accurate and valid. However, it is only valid for this research and within the timeline of the research.

5 RESEARCH RESULTS

5.1 Respondents

Altogether 84 guests returned their answers fully or partially. Forty-five respondents answered all the questions and filled up all personal information, whereas 38 respondents missed at least one question.

During the same period 342 pieces of feedback were published on Booking.com and 47 on Tripadvisor.

One of the ideas of the thesis was to analyse the responses of two customer groups (business travellers and leisure tourists) and the difference between their perceptions of service. Taking into account this fact, it is valuable to split all answers into two main groups.

During the period of the survey 55.1% of all respondents came to Crowne Plaza St. Petersburg – Ligovsky for tourism purposes and 44.9% for a business trip.

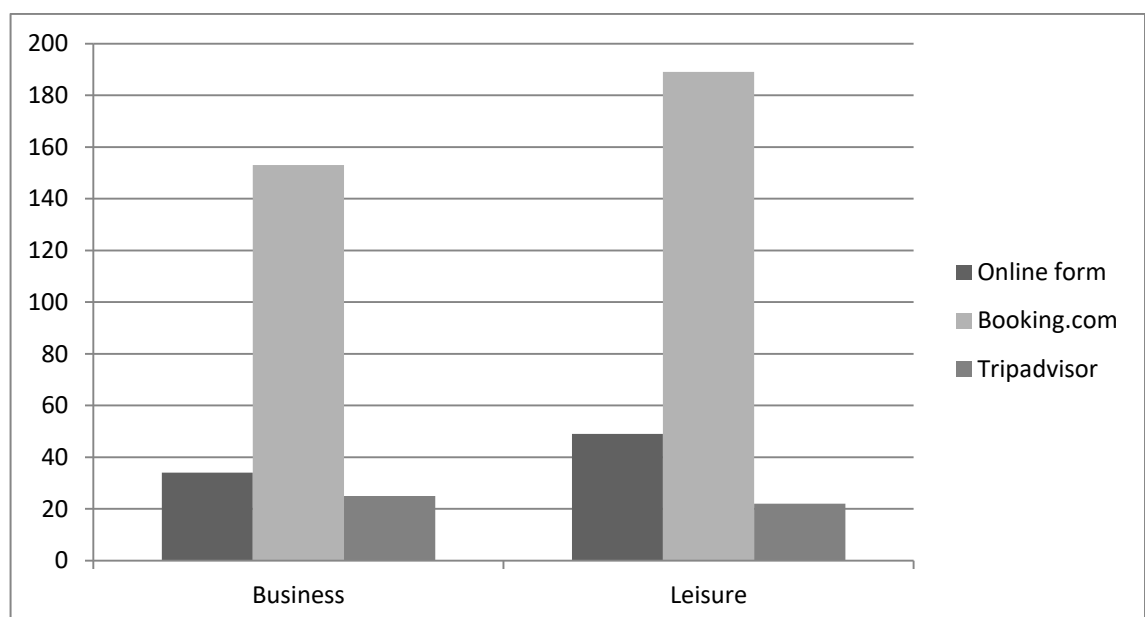


Figure 1. Number of respondents by traveller type.

The next aspect differentiating the guests is age. The questioner and feedback

from Booking.com and Tripadvisor have five categories for customer age: 18-24 years old, 25-34, 35-49, 50-64 and 65 and older. The age demographics are shown in Figure 2.

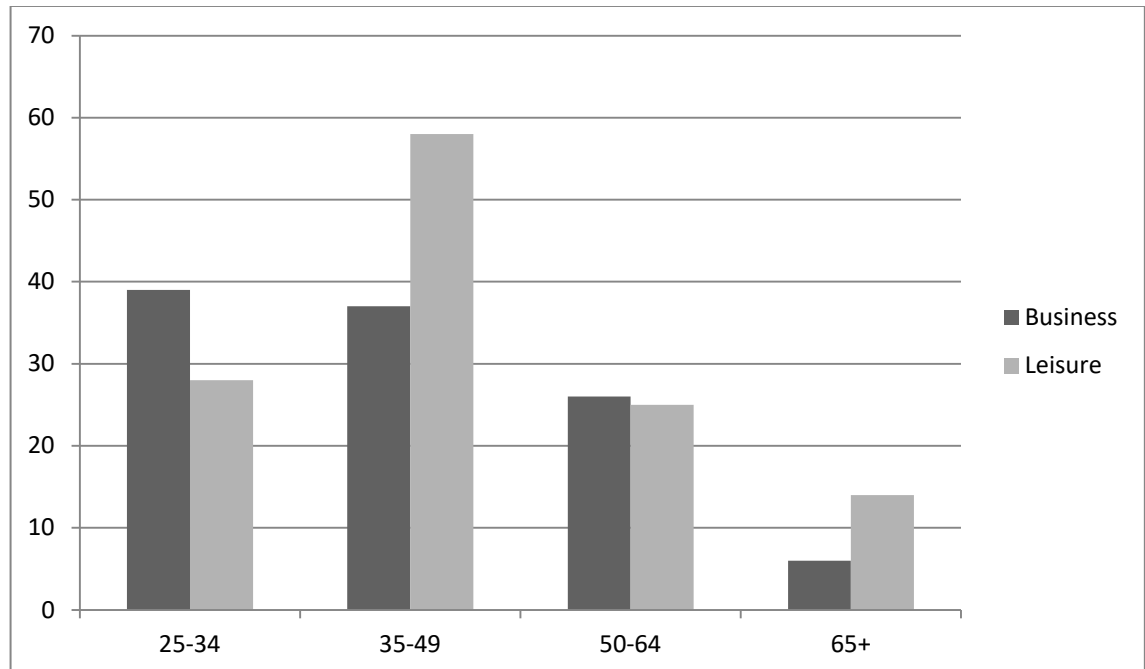


Figure 2. Age of respondents of survey participants.

5.2 Results

Respondents of the online form were asked to evaluate the hotel according to seven aspects: value for money, staff service, room comfort, sleep quality, location, cleanliness and overall satisfaction. Feedback from Booking.com and Tripadvisor was divided into the same groups by the author.

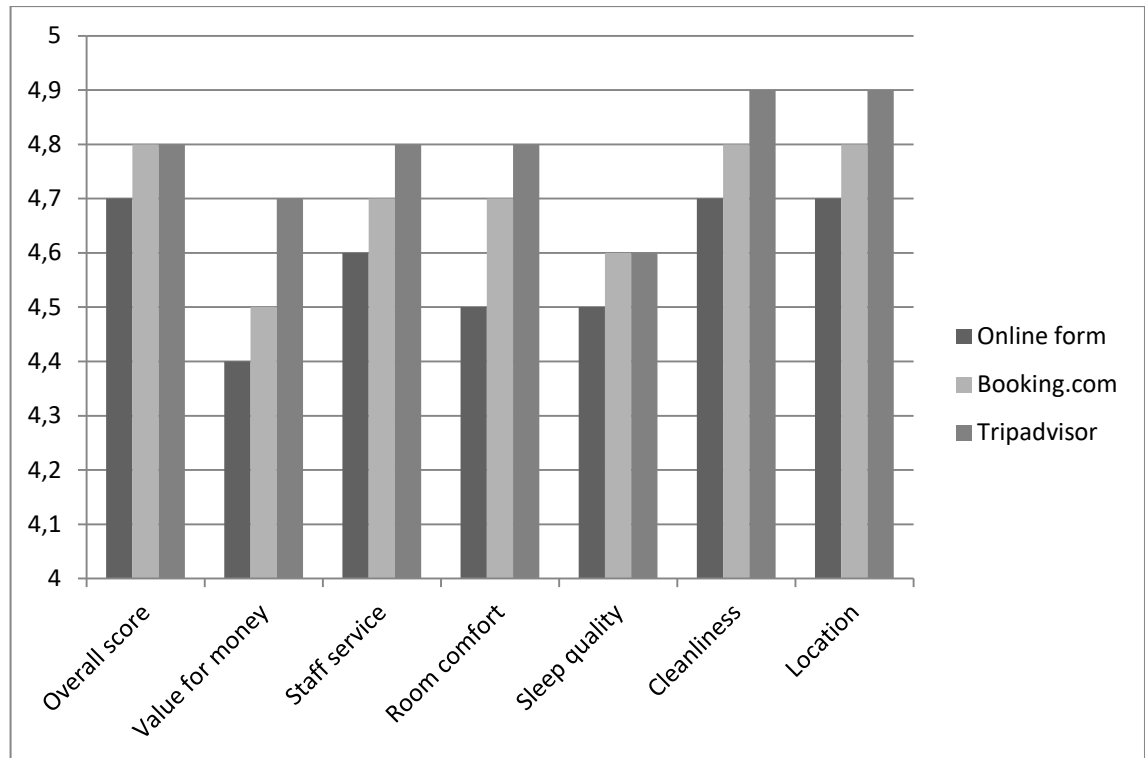


Figure 3. Average scores from the online survey, Booking.com and Tripadvisor.

As it can be seen in Figure 3, customers of Crowne Plaza St. Petersburg – Ligovsky are mostly satisfied with the services of a hotel. However, it is still makes sense to analyse results of the survey separately to the compare results, determine the weak points and make a strategy of improving them.

Value for money

Business Dictionary gives a definition of the term *value for money* (VFM) as “a utility delivered from every purchase or every sum of money spent” (Business Dictionary 2016).

According to Glendinning (1988), the concept of value for money in everyday life is easily understood: not paying more for a good or service than its quality or availability justifies. He explains that in relation to public spending it implies a concern with economy (cost minimization), efficiency (output maximization) and effectiveness (full attainment of the intended results).

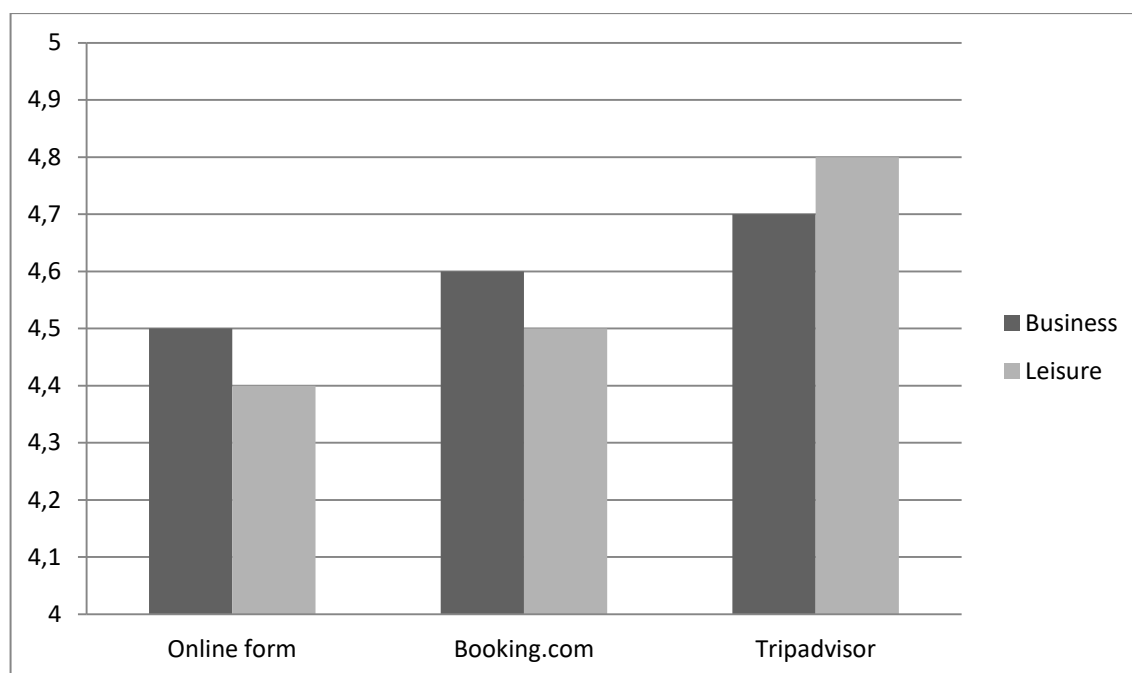


Figure 4. Value for money scores from online survey, Booking.com and Tripadvisor.

Business tourists are more satisfied with value for money of Crowne Plaza St. Petersburg – Ligovsky than leisure ones (Figure 4). It can be explained by the orientation of the hotel. As the hotel is oriented towards business travelers it is understandable that it has a lot of services and facilities for business people; a premium location in the city centre, a business centre, conference rooms, etc. At the same time the hotel is not so attractive for tourists, mostly, because of distance to the main sights and the absence of historical entourage.

Staff service

Taking into account the fact that the hotel industry is based on hospitality, the quality of staff service is one of the core points.

Various tourists groups expect different staff service, and it is extremely important for a hotel to understand and fulfil customers' expectations.

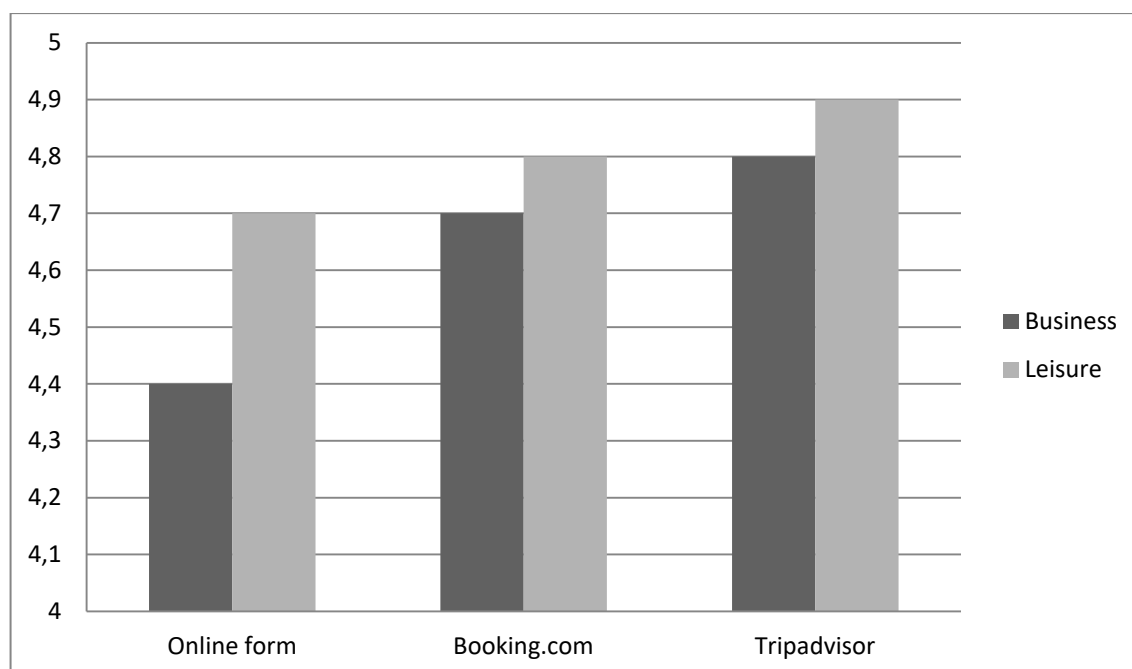


Figure 5. Staff service scores from online survey, Booking.com and Tripadvisor.

As it can be seen from Figure 5, leisure tourists were more satisfied with staff service than business travellers.

Many respondents of the online survey and guests who had left feedback on Booking.com or Tripadvisor, outlined a very high level of staff professionalism and helpfulness.

During the survey period there was a lot of feedback about unnecessary services or vice versa about lacking service. From some feedback it is understandable that sometimes a lack of attention is much better for a guest than its abundance. On the other hand, many guests pointed out the indifference of bellboys, who stand in the lobby of the hotel and pretend that they do not see anyone.

Room comfort

Room comfort is another important aspect of the hotel. Both business travellers and leisure travellers after a long working day or a tiring excursion prefer to come to their rooms and have a good rest. As a result, it can be a great bonus if the room is full of various additional amenities for a comfortable time spending.

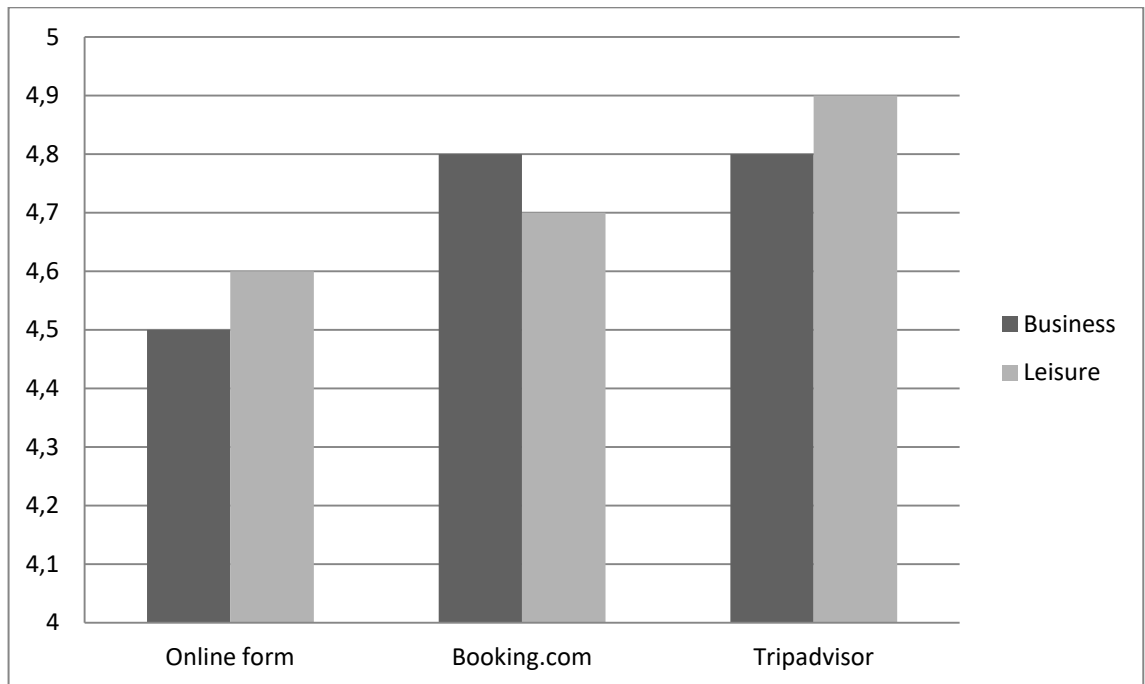


Figure 6. Room comfort scores from online survey, Booking.com and Tripadvisor.

Figure 6 shows satisfaction with comfort in rooms of Crowne Plaza St. Petersburg – Ligovsky.

Sometimes, the breakfast buffet is very overcrowded. However, for many business travellers it is important to remain seated alone in the morning to have the opportunity to get in a right mood for the busy day. That is why the management of Crowne Plaza St. Petersburg – Ligovsky launched a new room category with a personal coffee machine.

Cleanliness

Having a clean hotel is one of the most important factors in gaining customer loyalty (Jani-King International 2014).

Taking into account this fact, it may be stated that a clean hotel attracts customers, whereas dirty rooms and common areas may cause a reduction in customers.

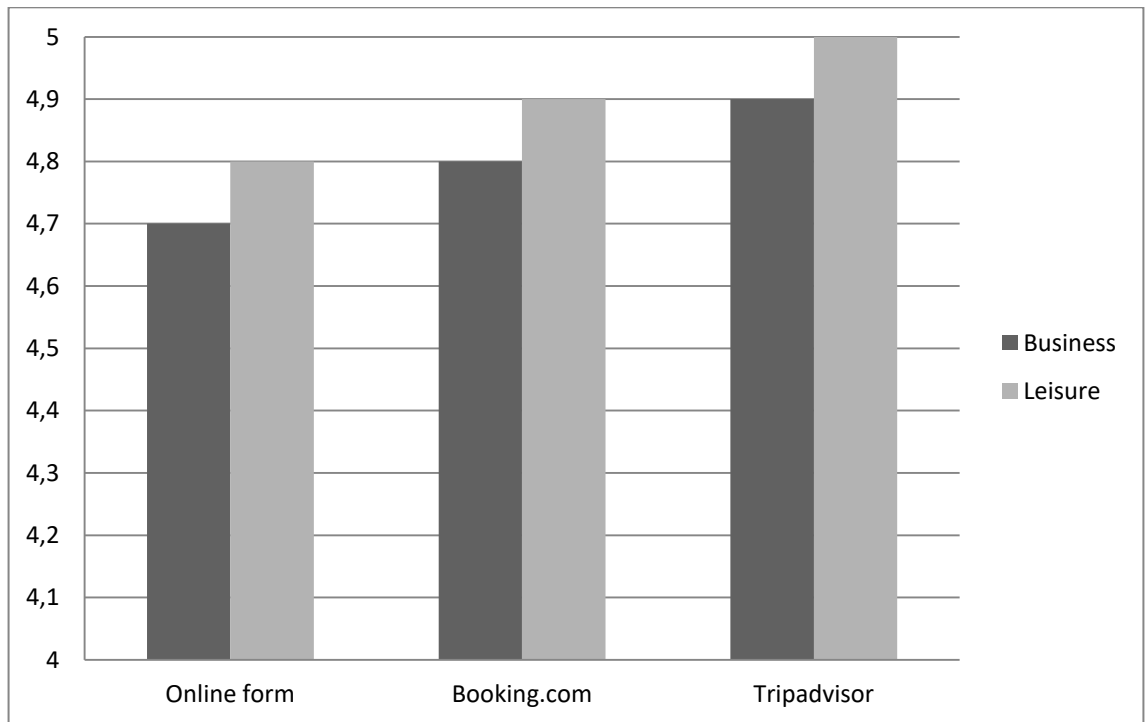


Figure 7. Cleanliness scores from online survey, Booking.com and Tripadvisor.

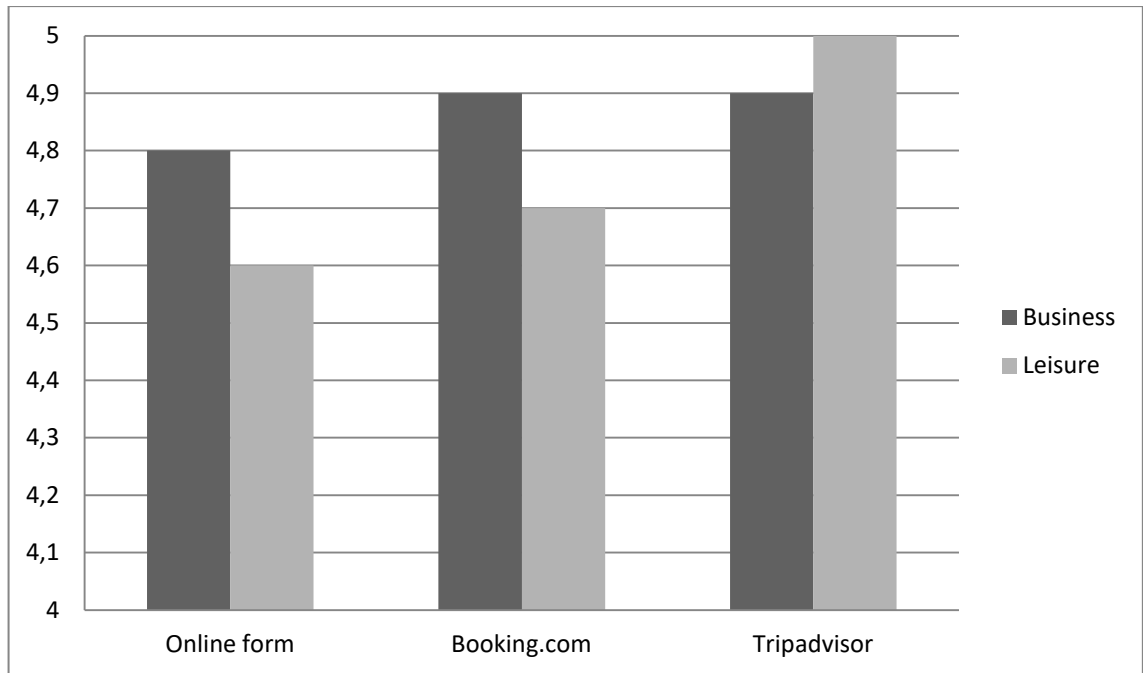
The cleanliness at Crowne Plaza St. Petersburg – Ligovsky is on a high level and it is remarkable for most of the guests (Figure 7). It is extremely important to have not only clean rooms, but also clean public areas. For example, the first area of the hotel that guests see when they enter is the lobby and reception desk.

Location

Premium location is one of the brand features of Crowne Plaza. However, as the brand is oriented towards business travellers its premium location means city centre, proximity to the business centres and main transport nodes.

On the other hand, leisure tourists prefer to stay in historic places of the city and to have most of tourist attractions in walking distance.

Figure 8 shows that leisure tourists are less satisfied with location of the hotel than business travellers, so this supports the previous statement.



Graph 8. Location scores from online survey, Booking.com and Tripadvisor.

Sleep quality

Crowne Plaza St. Petersburg – Ligovsky pays a lot of attention to the quality of sleep. Crowne Plaza has its own special offer – the Sleep Advantage[®] program (Chapter 2.2). This program provides comfortable bedding, aromatherapy kits to help guests unwind, quiet zones in hotels and guaranteed wake up calls. With all these small details Crowne Plaza St. Petersburg – Ligovsky promises its customers sweet dreams.

Business people are more satisfied with the quality of sleep at Crowne Plaza St. Petersburg – Ligovsky than leisure tourists (Figure 9).

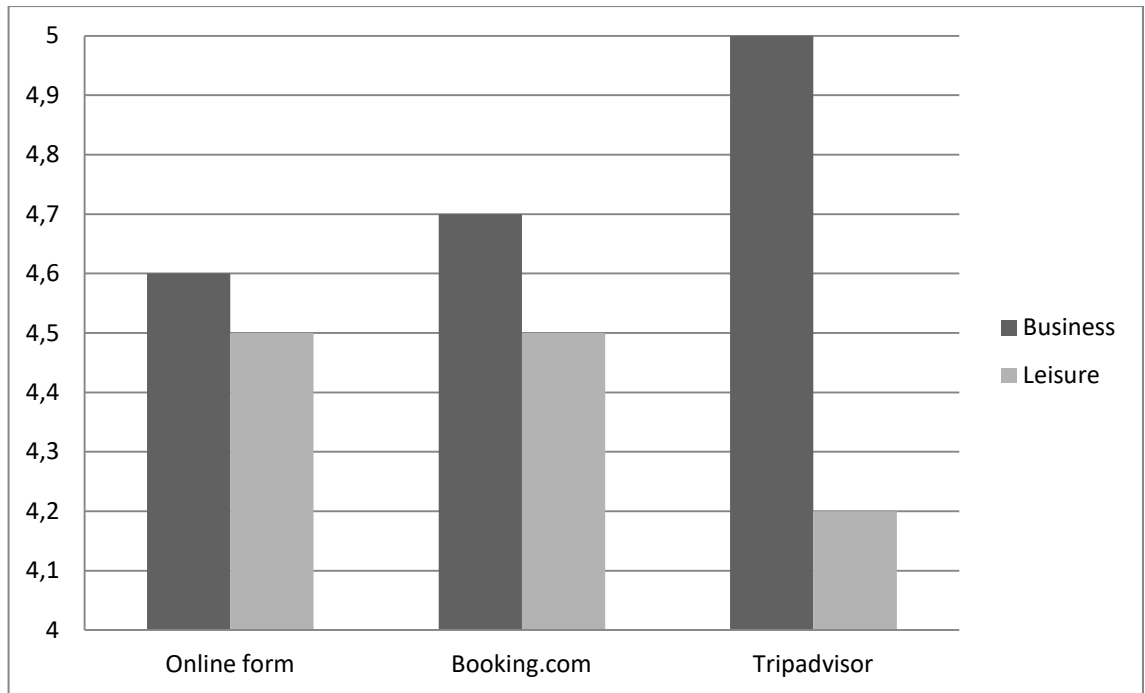


Figure 9. Sleep quality scores from online survey, Booking.com and Tripadvisor.

According to feedback from Booking.com and Tripadvisor, low scores for sleep quality may be caused by the poor noise insulation in connected rooms.

Besides the discussed aspects of Crowne Plaza St. Petersburg – Ligovsky operations, customers also commented other dimensions. For instance, some of the guests complained about the breakfast. In their opinion breakfast does not justify its price due to poor taste and the small variety of dishes.

Overall score

Figure 10 displays the overall customer satisfaction in the service quality of Crowne Plaza St. Petersburg – Ligovsky. This fluctuates between 4.6 and 4.8 points in business travellers and 4.7 and 4.8 points in leisure travellers.

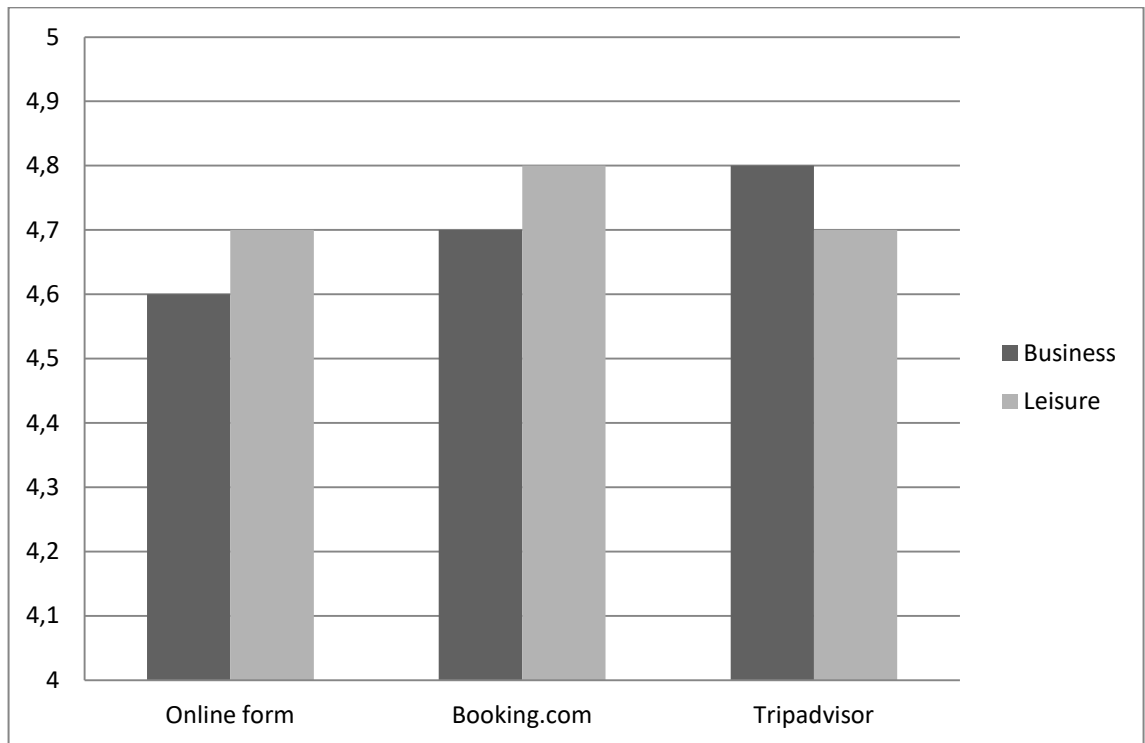


Figure 10. Sleep quality scores from online survey, Booking.com and Tripadvisor.

During the research, feedback from three different sources was compared. It was found out that the scores and the detailed feedback from the online survey, Booking.com and Tripadvisor have mostly minor differences. The most valuable difference between feedback is the number of them. The online survey received 84 responses, and Tripadvisor collected 47 feedbacks during given period of time. Booking.com displayed 342 opinions of the guests of Crowne Plaza St. Petersburg – Ligovsky. This situation is due to the fact that most of the rooms are booked using Booking.com. Booking.com has its own questionnaire that people receive after checking out from the hotel. As a consequence, it may be stated that it is not valuable for the hotel to have another questionnaire for guests with the same questions.

6 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INCREASING CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

As the result of this research it is suggested to the management of Crowne Plaza St. Petersburg – Ligovsky to be more active in adjusting to different customer groups. For a hotel there are business and leisure seasons as well as low and high ones, and it is extremely crucial to get ready in advance in order to stay competitive on a market. Crowne Plaza St. Petersburg – Ligovsky should train employees how to serve customers with different preferences and needs. This might include, for example, to provide business travellers with additional amenities without special request and offer leisure customers tour packages around the city. This policy will help to keep current customers and attract new ones.

There are several aspects of service in Crowne Plaza St. Petersburg – Ligovsky that should be improved. For instance, one guest complained: “On the morning of the departure day I was standing in a bathrobe, looking out the window. There is a knock at the door. A woman who urgently needs to check the minibar ran past me, checked, apologized and ran away. Everything was polite, but why should it be done at the time when I do not want to see anyone?” (Alexey 2017). The management of the hotel should consider a different way of checking the minibar. Customers who do not want to leave a deposit may get offended when straight after checking in housekeeping comes to the room and closes the minibar with a key or checks every day to see if something is missing something or not.

Moreover, bellboys at the hotel help guests only when they have already paid for it. “It was very strange for me to see bellboys who were just staring at us when we were trying to enter the hotel with our luggage...” (Marianna 2017). However, sometimes it is not about the payment, but about politeness and etiquette. It is therefore suggested that bellboys always help potential guests with luggage and not only when he or she has already paid for it. This could be done by slightly increasing their salary and adding this duty to their normal

position instructions.

It is advisable to carry out the landscape design works on in the inner courtyard of the hotel. Most of the rooms, both standard category and higher, overlook the technical entrance to the hotel and the facade of the office building. “The view to the inner courtyard is completely unpleasant” (Olga 2017). That is why it would be more attractive to the guests of Crowne Plaza St. Petersburg – Ligovsky and more reasonable for the room price to have a better view through the window.

Despite the fact that in Russia it is forbidden to smoke in public places, there are still plenty of people who need to have a special place for that. There is only one place near Crowne Plaza St. Petersburg – Ligovsky where it is allowed to smoke – the main entrance to the hotel. However, in the opinion of many smoking guests it is not convenient to, for example, dress up in the late evening and go to smoke in the middle of one of the main streets of Saint-Petersburg. “I understand that smoking is a bad habit, but I smoke and I would prefer to have a more private place to do it” (Halil 2017). Moreover, a large number of smokers close to the main entrance to the hotel creates a not very pleasant impression among passers-by and even worse for guests who do not like cigarette smoke or who came with children. That is why it is suggested to the management of Crowne Plaza St. Petersburg – Ligovsky to rethink the establishment of a place for smoking in a place more secluded and hidden from the prying eyes, for example, in the backyard of the hotel.

As mentioned in Chapter 5.2, connected rooms have poor noise insulation. Unfortunately, guests can hear each other through the doors between two connected rooms, even when speaking in normal voices. It is advisable to improve the noise insulation in such rooms by applying special equipment.

Furthermore, it would be helpful to make room navigation clear. For instance, many guests are disappointed by the absence of blackout curtains. “It would be great to add blackout curtains. It is very light at night in St. Petersburg” (Martin 2017). However, there are automatic blackout curtains in each room, but guests usually do not see a small button behind the bed. It is suggested to put a small

desktop tablet on the windowsill with information about the location of the button.

To conclude, the management of Crowne Plaza St. Petersburg – Ligovsky is recommended to think about further research. It would be wise to add an empty space for suggestions for improvements in a future questionnaire. It may help to determine the level of service that the customers will be satisfied with.

7 SUMMARY

The main goal of the thesis was to explore the definition of customer satisfaction and service quality and to determine why it is important to monitor customers' satisfaction. Moreover, the work aimed to explore the factors affecting customer satisfaction and analyse the level of customer satisfaction in service quality in different customers groups of Crowne Plaza St. Petersburg – Ligovsky.

During the research a survey was conducted. The idea of the survey was to collect and analyse guests' feedback from an online survey, Booking.com and Tripadvisor and create a strategy for further improvements. As 21st century consumers have become more demanding, the hotel should increase the standards of service as well.

Nowadays, the level of customer satisfaction in services of Crowne Plaza St. Petersburg – Ligovsky fluctuates between 4 and 5 (5 points scale). This means that current customers of the hotel are mostly satisfied with the level of service.

To conclude, such solid corporations as InterContinental Hotels Group are challenging in terms of staying competitive on a market. As a consequence, hotels as Crowne Plaza St. Petersburg – Ligovsky put a lot of effort into customer satisfaction. The thesis was deliberate to help Crowne Plaza St. Petersburg- Ligovsky to determine its customers' levels of satisfaction and to improve service quality according the findings of the research.

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Online form

First part

Age bracket:

- 25-34 35-49 50-64 65+

Traveler type:

- Business Leisure

Recommends hotel?

- Yes No

Second part

Please, give a rate to each aspect of Crowne Plaza St. Petersburg – Ligovsky operations in a scale of 1 to 5 (1 – is poor, 5 – is excellent)

Value for money 1 2 3 4 5

Staff service 1 2 3 4 5

Room comfort 1 2 3 4 5

Cleanliness 1 2 3 4 5

Location 1 2 3 4 5

Sleep quality 1 2 3 4 5

Overall score 1 2 3 4 5

Third part

Please, give a detailed feedback to the Crowne Plaza St. Petersburg – Ligovsky.