Outsourcing cleaning services in the tourism and hospitality business.

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Outsourcing is an important part of most businesses and the hotel industry is no different. Managing the cleaning department of the hotel is not an easy business especially when there are no expertise to see it through. Outsourcing is a strategic way to improve performance by way of cutting costs, obtaining resources and by minimizing the organizational structure. These is done by sharing the non-core activities to other companies specialized in the field.

This paper will be looking at why most hotels outsource the cleaning department and how it is managed. It is generally more profitable to outsource the non-core activities for Hotel business to allow more focus on the more important aspects, but when outsourcing is done wrongly there consequences are great and costly. This paper will talk about the challenges as well as the benefits of outsourcing cleaning services.

Integrating cleaning service companies to align goals is an important part to overall success but achieving this cannot be simple. Having a proper tool and ways of guaranteeing this is essential. Some tools which aims at measuring success and failure is key performance indi-cator (KPI). KPI is an indication of how the business is doing and a good place to adjust and improve processes where appropriate.

Having a service level agreement in the very beginning for any business is a must and the hotel business is no different. This enables the service provider to have a full understand-ing of the hotel’s goals. Once this is done, there is a solid foundation to measure perform-ance which can minimize the supplier risk. There will also be suggestions of how SLA can help build and maintain a healthy supplier relationship management and how the sup-pliers can be integrated to share in the hotels goals.

**Keywords**

Procurement, outsourcing, housekeeping, hotel business
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1 Introduction

Outsourcing is a centralized operation for most hotels. The process of arranging for somebody outside a company to do work or provide goods for that company. (Oxford dictionary 2019.) This paper aims to identify the risks of outsourcing cleaning services and how to manage the activities to ensure professional service from all workers. With the proper management, the goal is that service providers and suppliers will be integrated into the business's core to ensure common goals enabling excellent customer satisfaction. This paper will concentrate on supplier relationship management and the use of such metrics as KPI's to achieve the set goals. The findings of the research will show that outsourcing facility services brings both negative and positive impacts with concentration on achieving the positive aspects to add values to the core business of the hotel. The paper will also suggest how these negative impacts can be avoided or improved which will be valuable for hotels.

Many companies are struggling to keep up with the rapid changing social and economic environment and upcoming technologies. Innovation and process improvements are critical now to all business in order to stay above the competition. In order for companies to focus on its core business processes, outsourcing will play a key role in the business strategy. Outsourcing can help companies strengthen their key skills and become more competitive whiles getting the best service quality for the money. Most businesses outsource certain activities believing that the outsourced company is an experts in that particular fields.

There has been issues where the contracted company employs unqualified workers or worker with illegal status, sometimes these workers have no or limited experience with regards to the job. The effects of this is sometimes getting complaints from customers about unprofessional behaviour from workers. Of course, this could lead to low customer satisfaction and low turnover.

Outsourcing can be used as a tool to cut costs, to obtain resources and to minimize the organizational structure by sharing non-core activities to other companies specialized in that field. Outsourcing as a strategy, can provide performance improvement in companies in many aspects of their activity.

The focus of this paper will be on outsourced cleaning services and the importance of successful management in order to ensure that activities have a positive effect on the company in terms of reputation, service and profit.
Supply Chain Management encompasses the planning and management of all activities involved in outsourcing and procurement, conversion, demand creation and fulfilment, and all Logistics Management activities. Thus, it also includes coordination and collaboration with channel partners, which can be suppliers, intermediaries, third-party service providers, and customers. In essence, Supply Chain Management integrates supply and demand management within and across companies. (Mentzer, J., Stank, T. & Esper, T. 2008 31-VII.)

To successfully implement Supplier relationship management, integrating of the suppliers and the company’s goal is essentially important. Supplier Risk can be minimised or avoided when the outsourced company fully understands the goals of the services provided. Supplier risk is the potential failure of a supplier to deliver on their agreement especially if the business relies greatly on their suppliers (simplicable 2015).

This paper will not be focused on any other outsourcing or procurement activities within the company. The paper will focus on the motives that drive companies to outsourcing, the strategies the advantages of outsourcing if there are any.

At the end of this paper, the Author aims to answer the following questions; Outsourcing cleaning services in the tourism and hospitality business.

− What are the challenges and benefits of outsourcing services in the tourism and hospitality business?
− How can outsourced serviced companies be integrated to the company’s goals?
− How to measure and improve success in outsourced cleaning activities in the hotel industry
2 Understanding the effects of outsourced cleaning services in Hospitality business

To achieve the long benefit of outsourcing, a hotel needs to think strategically in order to maximise the profit margin and to increase customer satisfaction. Thinking strategically is an extremely important part all businesses including hotels due to the fact that hotel industry has become very competitive in the recent years. Strategic thinking is needed in order to improve services, increase productivity and customer satisfaction which will then increase profitability and positive reputation. Many companies in the hospitality industry have decided to use outsourcing to achieve this objectives.

At the same time there are a growing number of suppliers who offer services that cover almost all hospitality related activities making it necessary for the hotels to run smooth operations. The possibility to outsource all these activities can be very successful for many hotels to be able to concentrate on their core competencies and to reduce labour costs which affects the performance of the business, but there can also be a great risk involved.

Core activities are the important and high strategic activities of the hotel, and are a source of competitive advantage which creates added value for the business (Espino-Rodriguez & Padron-Robaina 2005, 713).

Services that can be outsourced in a hotel can be but not limited to non-core activities which may include housekeeping, catering services, laundry, marketing and sales. “Non-core activities are standard activities with low strategic importance and do not necessarily create added value to the business” (Espino-Rodriguez & Padron-Robaina 2005, 715-719). For many of these outsourced services, the demand is unstable and combined with the constant shifts and changes outsourcing them will transfer the risk to the supplying company who are more experience and has the expertise to manage them better.

Key performance indicator (KPI) is used as a tool to measure a company’s current standards in this case the company is a hotel against their cleaning service suppliers. The aim of doing this is to find alternative solutions where there are gaps between goals and actual performance. When gaps have been identified, it is clearer for hotels and suppliers to work on closing these gaps, in other words it is easier to strategies.

Service level agreement (SLA) is flexible and can be changed depending on the company’s needs to fit the current situation and future goals. This paper will discuss the use of both Key performance indicator and Service level agreement to achieve goals. There will also be suggestions of how SLA can help build and maintain a healthy supplier relationship management and how the suppliers can be integrated to share in the hotels goals. The alignment of goals will greatly increase performance which will reflect in the overall
customer satisfaction. The long benefit of this is the increase in profit margin and good reputation. An illustration of that can be seen in the figure 1. Below.

![Theoretical framework](image)

**Figure 1 Theoretical framework**

### 2.1 The changing trends

According to Benn & Pearcy (2002, 7) people have been delegating work to third parties for most of human history, but the concept of outsourcing has exploded in the past decade as management gurus have popularized the idea that organisations should concentrate on their core competencies.

The advancement of technology is causing constant changes and development in all industries and the hotel industry is no different. “There has been significant growth in outsourcing and downsizing since 1990s” (Blumberg 1998, 8, 5-18).

Even though the idea behind most technological advancement is to make work and life easier, technology can sometimes create complications where extra resources may be required. More resources may be in the form of finance towards additional staff, staff training or the acquiring the technology itself.

With the advancement of technology, most if not all consumers check ratings and not just the price of a hotel before booking. The ratings are based on the experiences of formal guest, cleanliness among other things is one of the main reasons why a customer will rate a hotel good or bad. Customer satisfaction is continuously evolving with changes of tastes
and desires for the standard of hotels, therefore consumers are responsible for changing the face of the hotel industry.

Outsourcing departments like marketing and advertising is also becoming more of a trend. Even though a hotel might have a marketing department, members of the team may not possess the necessary skills and knowledge to successfully run a marketing campaign. A successful campaign is important to reach consumers and the desired target audience.

Social media has become one of the most important tools for many industries to capture the attention of audience and the hotel industry is no different. Being present online makes it easy for consumers to reach businesses and therefore increases the relationship with consumers positively.

Changing consumer needs has led to new and innovative services, examples of these services are Airbnb and couch surfing. These are also great ways for visitors to get integrated with the culture of a new place which most people like to do nowadays. Even if visitors choose to stay in a hotel, a certain level of local influence is expected in the form of locally sourced products including drinks and food. The same way employees of other departments are expected to be able to advices customers about where to find and purchase local items and places to visit, local knowledge is expected from the cleaning staff by most guests.

Innovation and the invention of new technology has made it so that the basic requirement of consumers are far from what it used to be. Free access to Wi-Fi and wireless check-in for hotels are a normal thing which customers expect to have access to. Other technologies becoming more common but not necessarily important are lights controlled by apps and for opening doors. There is also any technology used by cleaning stuff to log in ready clean room, this sends an alert that the room is ready for the next customer.

Nowadays there are apps for managing Supplier Relationship management (SRM) which makes it easy to view suppliers and analyse all of the risk factors involved. Using SRM technology provides a full and unparalleled visibility into your supplier base, giving a detailed picture of what the impact is on the supply chain and to make it easy to mitigate the risk.

### 2.2 Supplier Relationship management (SRM)

“Supplier relationship management is a comprehensive approach to managing an enterprise's interactions with the organizations that supply the goods and services it uses” (Impartx, 2019). Supplier relationship management is the possibility of working with strategic
partners to increase innovation either through process improvement, product development or both (research gate, 2010). Below are some of the ways to achieve and maintain a successful supplier relationship.

It is significant to build stronger relationships with suppliers just as it is to build lasting relationships with the customers. Suppliers may have unique requirements and expectations that hotels should meet to sustain the healthy relationship. Without a positive hotel-supplier relationship, it can be difficult for hotels to ensure to remain the supplier’s top priority. SRM will streamline and improve processes between a hotel and its suppliers. Another main goal of supplier relationship management is to enhance communication between the hotel and suppliers. Hotels need to understand that managing the suppliers is about strengthening relationships which may make or break the business. It is important to earn the suppliers’ trust with honest communication and by listening to raised concerns. Suppliers becoming partners is mutually beneficial to both parties and not just the company. It decreased risks and enhanced collaboration and innovation. (Procurement leaders, 2013.)

With an effective supplier relationship management in place, hotels can centralize procurement and avoid fragmented outsourcing processes that often result in higher spending. This will lead to Cost reduction in a long term and deliver big opportunities. Having a long lasting and trusted relationships with dedicated suppliers should be the primary goal of any business that strives to be successful (Procurement leaders, 2013). Successful SRM yields a faster time to the market, transactional efficiency, competitiveness, risk management, and large financial gains (Raymond 2019, 47). All of which not only contribute to the hotel’s bottom line, but also allow delivery of quality and cutting edge service, putting the hotel ahead of the market.

There are always risks involved when dealing with a supplier most especially when the chain of supply is a complex one. Supplier’s reputation should always be taken into consideration and not only the price. Finding the right supplier will ensure smoother running of the business and reduce interruption due to changing suppliers regularly. The work of housekeeping directly affects the experience and comfort of costumers at a hotel. Housekeepers are one of the faces guests meet daily and the work done is observed by guest throughout the hotel in all areas.

2.3 Maintaining Regular communication

Maintaining a strong and regular communication with each cleaning service supplier is a key to building a stronger relationship. Communication with suppliers needs to be on a regular basis as suppliers need to be informed and kept up to date on new and upcoming
strategies including plans which may involve them in anyway. Sometimes keeping in
touch may be on a social level which may strengthen the working relationship in the long
run.

Regular and efficient communication may involve paying suppliers promptly on time and in
full which will prove reliability as a customer and ensure a continual business relationship.
When and if payment cannot be made, suppliers need to be informed in advanced and
also be notified specifically when those payments can be made. This will demonstrate to
the supplier that the hotel is a good customer. This will be in the good direction of a better
understanding and working relationship.
Maintaining Regular communication has great benefits to the business over time, which
may reflect in getting quality service and material for the right price. As well as complain-
ing about the bad, cleaning providers should be praised for good work as well. Moreover,
getting everyone on board and using best practice is a major opportunity for the business
as a whole.

Unexpected situations are very common in the hotel, but avoiding rush requests wherever
possible will eliminate the possible stress for the hotel and the outsourced company and
lower the possible strain on the relationship between supplier and hotel. The same way
suppliers need to be aware of any financial situations in the hotel, the hotel should also
keep an eye on the supplier’s financial situation and be aware of any possible setbacks.
Any issues and concerns should be addressed immediately as well as customer com-
plaints and faulty goods and equipment with supporting documents where possible.

2.4 SLA as a tool (service level agreement)

When buying services on a regular basis like performing cleaning duties in a hotel, Sup-
plier Relationship Agreements and or service level agreement are a must. Every single
expectation should be written down by both parties. Expectations may include but not lim-
ited to service description, the price, payment terms, communications and terms of deliv-
ery, who will be performing the service and the time the service will be performed. The
agreement must then be signed by both parties.

For most Companies seeking service providers, it is usually the Service level agreement
(SLA) which is signed at the end of outsourcing contract and before any service is per-
formed. The SLA will make all requirement clear and in terms of accepted reliability.
These will be the standards against which the outsourced company will be judged suc-
cess or failure. (Ian Benn & Jill Pearcy 2002, 10.) A well-documented Supplier level
Agreement will reduce the possibility of confusion or disputes. The document can either be very simple or complicated depending on the business requirements.

“Many contracts are weak in service definition and many in-company services have unspecified or poorly specified service products and services commitments. Service level agreement fully defines the services to be supplied and the service quality and timeline or responsiveness associated with them in unambiguous terms”. (Hiles 2002, 5). A service level agreement is provided to the service provider. Its needs to be measured in this case by Key performance indicators which is relative to the business to make it meaningful. For a hotel, this will usually include Service standards and quality, services that has been promised, selection of training and development, health and safety, duties and responsibilities, lead time in cases of emergency, equipment maintenance and repair.

When it comes to Hotel housekeeping, routine cleaning and maintenance operations will include Dust and wipe, floor maintenance, buffing/vacuum, empty waste bins and the frequency and time of when these operations are normally carried out. Sometimes certain areas are not included in the contract. Therefore, if satisfaction cannot be guaranteed a 100 percent, the hotel may lose guest and acquire bad reputation in the process. Providing a clear and detailed agreement may reduce the level of risks greatly and ensure guest satisfaction. (Procurement leaders, 2013.)

An SLA for a cleaning provider should be properly drafted and well thought out and should include the following elements listed below:

- Stating the business objectives to be achieved in the provision of the services
- The place and location where the service will be performed.
- Who will be performing the service?
- Pricing is one of the important things which should be included:
  - Description of the service
  - How the service provided will be measured and the standards
  - When and under what circumstance the contract can be terminated
  - Liability and compensation
  - Contract Management
  - Change management

(Procurement leaders, 2013.)

2.4.1 The service provided

The SLA should set out the overall objectives for the services to be provided. A business objective can be to improve performance, save costs, to have expertise where the hotel is lacking or provide access to skills and technologies which cannot be provided and sometimes managed internally. This will help the hotel to craft the service levels in order to meet these objectives and should leave the service provider with a clear understanding as to what is required and why. A clear definition of the place and location where the service
will be performed should be specified and the person who will be performing the service should be stated as well.

The SLA should include a detailed description of the services and each individual service should be clearly defined. There should be a description of what the service is, where it is to be provided, to whom it is to be provided and when it is required. How the service provider will be measured, taking each individual service in turn the hotel should state the expected standards of performance. This will vary depending on the type of service, it is often the case that individual services will be weighted differently depending on their business importance. Other individual services may be less important and the service levels for these can be set at a lower level. (City, 2018.)

Often the SLA will include a change control procedure, which sets out a mechanism for agreeing and recording changes to the agreement or to the services to be provided. In an agreement of any length or complexity, it is inevitable that changes will be made to the services which will have a great effect on the service levels provided and an agreed and properly implemented change control procedure is important (City, 2018).

2.4.2 Contract Management & termination

When service performance falls below the expected level, there has to be consequences for compensation. The SLA should include when the contract can be deemed void by either party. It should include what can be accepted, so the SLA should include a level of critical service level failure, below which the service provider has this termination right and the right to sue for damages. It may be that if service credits kick in if a service level failure has occurred twice in a particular period, the SLA could state that the hotel has the right to terminate the agreement for service breach if the service level has not been achieved under certain conditions. (Cio, 2019.)

Each service level has to be looked at individually and weighted according to business importance.

In long run contracts, the parties can to be compelled to keep performance of the services below review. Provisions coping with news, meetings, info provision and step-up procedures for disputes are generally enclosed within the SLA instead of in the main body of the agreement. Sadly these forms of provisions are typically unnoticed, except for a contract for services to achieve success, it’s important that contract management procedures are united and are literally followed. (Cio, 2019)
Pricing is one of the important things which should be included in a SLA. Price may need to vary depending on a number of factors and the SLA should therefore include a pricing review mechanism or provisions dealing with the sharing of cost savings.

2.4.1 Liability and compensation

In order for the SLA to be successful, it needs to have a financial consequence for the service provider. This is most often achieved through the inclusion of a service credit regime. In short, where the service provider fails to achieve the agreed performance standards, the service provider will pay or credit the hotel an agreed amount which should act as an incentive for improved performance. (Cio, 2019.) These service credits can be measured in a number of ways. An example can be that if the level of service is not achieved, the SLA could include a service credit that specifically reduces the prices for that time/day or the service will be performed again. Alternatively, service credits can be given where there are three or more failures to meet a certain service level in any specified period.

Each service level needs to be looked at individually and a sensible level of credit agreed between the service provider and the hotel. The important thing is to ensure that the service credits are agreed upon beforehand. As there are main consideration which should be include in a service agreement, there are others which are equally important in a service level agreement.

2.4.2 The difference between a contract and an SLA

"Typically a contract is defined as an agreement between two or more parties, especially one that is written and enforceable by law. This legal document outlines the services provided, duration, cost, resources, approach, assumptions, etc." (Southend, 2019).

An SLA would focus only on the performance measuring and service quality agreed to by both parties, and may be used as a measurement tool as part of the contract. The service levels however may be established based on several factors an example could be that the service provider may provide on line credit checks to the hotels requiring the service. A service level in the contract may state the online service must be operational 99% of any given month, or it must provide the requested information with 3 hours after a request. (Southend, 2019).

The contract between a hotel and a service provider should of course refer to the SLA, however it is a smart decision to have the SLA document separately to enable easy revi-
sion of the SLA without changing the whole contract and revising the contract. The con-
tract might then last for a certain period of time but the SLA may be reviewed frequently,
for example. This reduces the administrative burden of reviewing the contract too fre-
quently. (Southend, 2019.)
The service level agreement should not be drawn up by the service provider, although it is
essential for the supplier to decide which services should be supplied to satisfy and com-
prehend the requirements of the hotel, but the hotel should provide whenever, wherever
and to whom.

Don’t permit the service level agreement to become a promoting document as this could
happen once the service supplier prepares the SLA. In such a scenario the primary draft
SLA contains giant chunks of fabric taken from promoting documents that do very little
over give a high level summary of the services with none detail. (Cio, 2019.)
Do not leave the Service Level Agreement preparation until the eleventh hour, the SLA
should take precedence. A final minute implementation of a rigorous SLA might lead your
service provider to update their assessment as well (Cio, 2019).
Do not strive for complete perfection, when drafting do not expect unrealistically elevated
standard of service quality to be associated as this may not be essential and trigger an in-
crease in value. Bear in mind that a long lasting and mutualist connection could be the
easiest result.

2.5 KPI Metrics evaluation

Key Performance Indicators (KPI) is the vital few metrics that indicate progress towards
strategic objectives where metrics include the numerical measurement, measuring pro-
cess and frequency. Key Performance Indicators are a set of quantifiable measures a
company uses to determine how well it is meeting its operational and strategic goals.
(Service performance Inc 2012.) KPI can be used to report and determine whether or not
service promised is been delivered.

Although KPIs can vary from customer to customer, establishing realistic and productive
metrics, such as those listed below will help ensure that as a hotel manager, the business
expectations are being met and the investment in the cleaning service is a good one. Us-
ing KPI to optimize outsourced services is a strategic organizational objectives. Some Ho-
tels are more likely to see KPIs used as a supplier management tool rather than for strate-
gic purposes. It is important for hotels to not have too many KPIs rather it should only fo-
cus on the most relevant one and it should be flexible enough to suit each stage of opera-
tion.
As a supplier management tool, KPIs are a matter of perspective used to view contract compliance and to measure the value of service received from the cleaning provider. KPIs are important in performance-based contracts like cleaning where the provider outsourced company put a portion of the hotels profit at risk. The hotels reputation and profit will depend on the performance of the cleaning service provider. Some productive metrics may include but not limited to the following:

- Quality of Service.
- Customer Satisfaction and Responsiveness.
- Cleaning team.
- Health and Safety.
- Financial/ Net Profit Margin.

(Service performance Inc 2012.)

2.6 Housekeeping

The primary duty of hotel housekeeping is to clean and maintain the hotel units and rooms. Cleaning company objectives usually include a statement regarding a company's main goal and the time period in which it plans to achieve (Batinić 2015, 15). Hotel must look clean and tidy not just the personal rooms but the entire hotel depending on the type of contract in order to make the guest have a remarkable stay. This always has a direct effect on the experience the guest has in the hotel whether positive or negative.

Cleaning services are very important department when it comes to the hotel business, first things customers look for and notice when visiting a hotel is the cleanliness of the premises so therefore, it is accurate to say that cleaning services will contribute to the reputation of the hotel. It very important to recognise that the cleaning staff is not the responsibility of the hotel but the responsibility of the outsourced cleaning company and therefore exempted from liability. Under the service level agreements, areas which will be included in the cleaning duties are stated since not all areas are covered under some contracts. Areas can include lobby area, restaurant, front office, guest rooms and bathrooms, Kitchen, the gym, and meeting rooms.

2.7 The benefits of Outsourcing services

Outsourcing can be defined as “the decision to use the outside market to buy in products and services rather than use the organization’s own resource to make them” (Richard Lynch 2006, 198). This is because it is cheaper to buy from an outside supplier than to make them in-house.
“By analysing and understanding its value chain, an organisation can focus on the elements that are core to its business and outsource others, while maintaining overall strategic control” (Benn & Peary 2002, 10).

Businesses can also avoid expenses associated with overhead, equipment and technology. Outsourcing non-core activities can improve efficiency and productivity because another company performs these smaller tasks better than the hotel itself. With the hotel focused on its strengths, there should be an improvement of the core business activities. This strategy may also lead to faster turnaround times, increased competitiveness within an industry and the cutting of overall operational costs.

According to Lynch (2006, 198) there are two benefits

- Outside suppliers can achieve economies of scale that in-house departments producing for their own needs cannot
- Outside suppliers are subject to the pressures of the market and must be efficient and innovative to survive.

Outsourcing cleaning services is a solution for many firms to better control and reduce cost which will possible give way to new investment opportunities. When cleaning services are outsourced, the hotel has more time to concentrate on the main duties leaving the cleaning to a company who is an expert in that field getting it done efficiently in less time. Many cleaning company also provide their own tools, equipment and supplies, they are also responsible for hiring, training and all expenses of their employees including taxes, compensations, insurance and employee benefits. There is an increase in efficiency since the outsourced company are specialists in the field making the work more productive.

2.8 Challenges of outsourcing services in the hospitality business

Selecting the right provider can be one of the main challenges hotels face in the very beginning. This is not a simple process and sometimes appearance can be deceiving. Checking ratings of cleaning companies and reputation is one way to establish possible success. Selecting the right provider can make all the difference in success or failure of the service provided. KPIs should be set and monitored immediately from the very start to help eliminate possible problems.

Building trust is important since cleaning stuff will be in direct contact with customers. The reputation of the hotel is at risk constantly due to the fact that cleaning stuff are in contact with guest frequently. The hotel needs to require some level of customer service training for the cleaning stuff. It was observed that most cleaning company do not see this as an
issue. There also has to be some level of security measures in place. Whatever gets done by the cleaning stuff will affect the hotel either in a positive way or a negative way. Adding cleaning to the obligations of then present staff is a choices for some hotels, risk of losing sensitive data and the loss of confidentiality is a disadvantage. There is more assurance that with just representatives taking care of cleaning assignments, the hotel will be better guaranteed of information security and service. The hotel may prefer in house supervision of cleaning practices and prefer to hire own dedicated staff cleaners but this is not possible when that department is outsourced. Sometimes the service delivered falls below the expected line or the outsourced company may go out of business. When this happens, the hotel will have to find alternative solutions fast to avoid major damages.
3 Findings

It is clear to say that when complaints are managed efficiently, it can lessen the expense and consequences thereafter. Nowadays there are several organization specialized in sup-porting hotels and other businesses by setting up and overseeing completely re-appropriated complaint activities.

Regular operational training is important across the business especially for the cleaning staff to be continuously aligned to the hotel’s goals and regulations. Also for customer service to be satisfactory, work training is carried out on regular basis, this is usually the responsibility of the outsourced company. All staff of all levels should take part in relevant awareness and training and should be on board with current standards and operations.

This paper can be implemented by hotels to improve their supplier’s relationship management. Suppliers use this paper as a guide to improve their services. In the end, the customers from both company and suppliers will be satisfied. Other businesses may as well gain from the research by using it as a guide.

This thesis can be greatly beneficial for a variety of groups
- Hotel and restaurants
- All other hospitality businesses
- Service Suppliers especially cleaning services
- Student in a similar study field

3.1 Health and safety

Worker health and safety training is an important aspect of any good housekeeping program. Cleaning staff need to know and understand how to work safely with the products required for the job. This is one of the reasons why trainings are carried out on a regular base. Cleaning staff will also need to know how to protect colleagues from injuries which can be in the form of leaving simple notes and signs such as Wet and Slippery Floor signs, all of which should be available and provided by the company.

From the author’s observation, hotel housekeepers are required as part of the daily activities to be in challenging physical tasks and postures which overtime have health risk factors. Such task involve the use of heavy trolleys, awkward postures while cleaning, repetitive motions for long periods and little rest, which can result in serious injuries such as:
- slipping on greasy, dirty and wet surfaces
- striking against poorly stacked items and misplaced material
- tripping/falling over loose objects on floors, stairs and platforms
cutting, puncturing, or tearing the skin of hands or other parts of the body on projecting nails, wire or steel strapping
being hit by falling objects

It is more likely for housekeeping stuff to get injured due to not sufficient posture and handling of tools. This is one of the reasons proper training should be mandatory for all stuff periodically. It was clear from my observations that rest is not enough, there is constant rush to finish one task just to move on immediately to the next. A good housekeeping project designs and manages the orderly storage and movement of materials from point of entry to exit. The cleaning company is responsible for providing tools, material and equipment required for the operation. It is the duty of cleaning staff to ensure that work areas are not used for storage material and tools to prevent accidents. A good housekeeping project could include investing in extra bins and more frequent disposal. (Batinić 2015, 15-19.)

Health and safe doesn’t not only apply to the stuff. The hotel guest are at risk when cleaning is not done properly which can be referred to the quality of work. Consider where the toilet is not properly clean from one guest to the next. The time given for a whole room is realistically not enough to properly clean a room but this is somehow required of housekeepers to do. A good housekeeping program is able to identify and also assign responsibilities for the below. This will enable identification of deficiencies and ways to make appropriate changes required.

- cleaning required during each shift
- daily cleaning activities
- Clean and available waste disposal
- removal of unused materials
- inspection to ensure cleaning is complete
- shelves, basements, sheds, and boiler rooms
- hotel rooms cleaning

3.2 Managing complains

Customers complaining is part of every business and by listening positive changes can be made to improve the business operations. When businesses ignore customer complaints, then it means customer’s opinion has no value.
All hotel managers the author interviews did agree that cleaning employees should be trained on how to respond and handle complains since the possibility of being in direct contact with hotel guests is extremely high. The managers did add that unfortunately the actions of the cleaning stuff is always seen as the actions of the hotel since guests don’t make distinctions. Improving the quality of service can be achieved through stuff satisfaction. The satisfaction of the employees can greatly affects the quality of jobs performed which will minimize complains when the quality is high.
For a customer to make a complaint, it most of the time due to the fact that their expectations have not been met and are feeling very strong about it. Since the housekeeping staff are very close to the guest, one manager added that asking for opinions and views on a regular base is beneficially for appropriate changes to be made and that these concerns and complains has to be resolved whenever possible.

3.3 Quality control & supervision

“Service quality has been described as a form of attitude, related but not equivalent to satisfaction, that results from the comparison of expectations with performance” (Bolton & Drew 1991, 33; Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry 1988, 86).

A professional cleaning company will employ the most advanced and an effective methods to get the job done right. Whether the hotel need industry specific cleaning like the healthcare services industry or the hotel is considering green cleaning options, a professional cleaning and maintenance company should be able to help the hotel to explore the choices. Likewise, most highly skilled, professional companies have a menu of other services that the hotel can utilize as needed from minor facilities repair to carpet cleaning.

Most hotels do not have the professional knowledge when it comes to non-core activities, yet whether that part of the business is in-house or outsourced it has to be supervise to ensure continues standardise delivery and improvement where applicable. With someone else handling these responsibilities the hotel can lighten the load enabling workers to concentrate on main duties.

Supervision is a distinct professional activity in which education and training aimed at developing science informed practice are facilitated through a collaborative interpersonal process (Falender & Shafranske 2004, 3). For a hotel, lot of time and money can be saved by outsourcing professional cleaning service. However without proper control and supervision, all can go down the drain. This can be especially challenging when supervision cannot be a direct one, it will have to go through the right channels. First to the cleaning company’s management then to the stuff.

Managing the outsourcing process is vital to ensure positive outsourcing outcomes. Positive influence from a supervisor who will also act as a role model to support the growth of the employees is a key requirement for success.
3.4 Training and Motivation (initiatives)

Organising training sessions for clean stuff is important for all to ensure the understanding of current techniques. Trainings can also help refresh workers minds on already gained experiences and to remind stuff of how important the job is. Two hotels interview admitted to scheduling training to at least twice a year and to insist on the outsourced company to do the same for the cleaning stuff. Even though it is the responsibility of the outsourced cleaning company to maintain a constant and satisfactory level of service, it was observed that some hotels organise and conduct regular training sections for the cleaning stuff with the outsourced company’s agreement. Some hotel managers interviewed stated that the duties and behaviours of stuff can greatly affect the profit and reputation of the business. Therefore spending money on this part of the business is rather important than to loss customer satisfaction. Cleaning stuff should be able to demonstrate and provide good customer service since it’s more likely to have contact with hotel guests.

According to an outsourced cleaning company supervisor, the training of employees can enable understanding of how the individual duties and work fits into the company’s goals, mission and structure. Many employees become more motivated once there is an understanding of how the duties carried out matters and the importance of it to the company. This does not relate only to training based on core skills alone, there is also motivational training which is equally important. Low self-worth can lead employees to have developing poor moods and can lead to falling short of work potential and may also struggle to manage relationships with colleagues. The complete opposite of this however being over confidence may lead to the inability to learn from failures and new skills. It is the duty of the team managers and line managers to use available resources of the company balance out and deliver a productive levels of employee self-confidence.

A good way to motivate cleaning stuff is to improve working conditions. Working condition can affect the motivation and the eagerness of employees positively or negatively. Working conditions does not necessarily mean only the physical condition of the work place or the tools and equipment used to perform tasks but rather it can also refer to the mental and physical demand related to the work including hours of work, periods of rest and the work schedules.

When workers are treated well and without discrimination, work is done properly and whole heartedly. Workers will go an extra mile to achieve customer satisfaction and overall top performance.
4 Methodology

The theoretical part of this paper was mostly done through secondary research approach to get the most information. Different sources were researched to achieve a conclusive understanding of the concept.

The research method for this paper was conducted through qualitative research. Qualitative research will be done through interviewing hotel managers and observation. Information was attained from 4 individuals including the operations manager and head of housekeeping department in various hotels in Cambridge. Qualitative research is appropriate because the respondents will be a small group selected based on the information only they can provide.

Qualitative research will be conducted through both secondary and primary data collection. Desktop research will be a means to gather theory information and understand the background information about the industry and outsourced services. The second part will be the Primary method which will be conducted through the interviews and observations where appropriate with the respondents been employees of the outsourced cleaning company and the hotel. The main aim will be to find out the current situation, their individual experiences and motivational level.

The interview will be conducted using mainly face to face method because the target group is a much focused one. In addition, the best way to ensure response is through the face to face interview. Risks which may occur in the data collection procedure can be that the outsourced company may not want to agree to any interviews and survey. Which is one of the reasons why having a face to face interview with a few might be better compared to having a questionnaire for a larger group of people.

To ensure that the reader trust my work, this research will be based on a deduction emphasis meaning there are lots of information available for this topic which will make it relatively easy to gather all needed theories before moving to data. Analysis will be done on sample collected from decent size for a generally on answered questions during the interview, the writers own observation and assumption due to reactions.

The interview question for the managers and supervisors are as follows. This was conducted as an interview and therefore the question below was only as a guide to keep the interview on track.

- Why outsourcing and not in house
- Does the housekeeping stuff receive training?
- How often do stuff receive training?
- Who provides the training?
− What is the current problems the hotel face from outsourcing cleaning service?
− Would the hotel recommend outsourcing to other companies?
5 Conclusion

This paper examined the outsourcing of cleaning service in the hotel industry and investigated some of the factors that influence outsourcing. The focus was on challenges, benefits, and also how to measure and improve outsourced cleaning activities in the hotel. SLA is very important in any contract including outsourcing. The findings of this study indicated that external outsourcing suppliers were expected to encourage hotels to utilize the management expertise provided by the outsourcing supplier because they expected that external outsourcing suppliers were supposed to be experts in the outsourcing function and able to operate it successfully.

Outsourcing decision can be a strategic one which is done to ensure that services required are performed by experts ensuring success. This study has several implications for hotels and managers. Risk is a factor in every business transaction especially when the level of control is limited, this paper talks about the effects and issues related to supplier outsourcing and how significant the impact can be if not done correctly. Outsourcing may expose the hotel to several types of risk and this is because the outcome of the job done by the cleaning stuff is directly seen and judged by the hotel's customers. This simple means that the reputation of the hotel is always at risk with little control. For this reason, careful consideration and planning is essential before the selection of a cleaning company is made. SLA needs to be drafted with the hotels goals in mind, this will help in choosing the right supplier and set the foundation for a successful contract.

The paper also talked about the importance of integrating the cleaning company into the company's goals and objectives. Some major challenges hotels face are the quality control ad supervision when it comes to outsourcing. There is the need to build and maintain a healthy relationship between the cleaning company and the hotel to ensure a successful business transaction. It can be said that KPI is one way to measure a supplier's performance and standard. With proper KPI in place, the room for unaware errors are limited. Whenever a gap is created, it can be noticed promptly and adjustable solutions can be implemented.

Overall the hotels the author interviewed will commend outsourcing cleaning services especial when it comes to the bigger hotels to save time and money. Although quality supervision is required for success and business growth.
6 Limitations & Recommendations

The author met lot of challenges finding and getting permission to conduct a quantitative research. The original aim of this paper was to interview several working in different hotels to understand the current situation from their point of view concerning delegating duties to third party companies.

The studies although provide significant findings have several limitations particularly in terms of the sample size. Sample size is relatively small and it was distributed using convenience sampling that is the audience were selected on specific grounds. It is the view of the author that better understanding would have been met if the sample size was large enough. Conducting a survey for cleaning stuff would have helped the author to understand the situation from their point of view and not just from the management team’s perspective. Due to small size sample, generalizability of this study is limited and because convenience sampling was used, the results are not representative of the whole sample population.

Nevertheless, it must be noted here that numerous efforts were made to increase the sample size and to use some form sampling frame. However, these efforts were not successful as many of the hotels do not want to participate in the survey due to time constraint as well as nature of their job and the need to keep certain information private.
References


Appendices

Appendix 1. Traditional report structure

Interview guide for hotel managers

I am a student from Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences, Helsinki Finland. This survey aims to figure out the current condition of outsourced housekeeping stuff and the effects on the hotel. Answering this survey will only takes about 5 minutes and your feedbacks will be treated with confidentiality. Thank the hotel for your participation.

1. why outsourcing and not in house

2. Does the housekeeping stuff receive training?
   ○ Yes
   ○ No

3. How often do stuff receive training?
   ○ Once a month
   ○ Once a year
   ○ I don't remember

4. Who provides the training?
   ○ The hotel
   ○ The outsourced company

5. What is the current problems the hotel face from outsourcing cleaning service
☐ No proper tools and equipment
☐ Lack of proper training
☐ Lack of communication
☐ Lack of supervision

6. Would the hotel recommend outsourcing to other companies?