

**Internship Report**

*« Constance Ephelia Resort »*

*Seychelles*

*2015*

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Looking for my internship I was using number of different websites and sources. Finally I found my internship on the HOSCO website - one of the greatest platforms where companies from all over the world can meet and interact with students and graduates.

Constance Ephelia resort offered me a 4 months training as a guest relation trainee in beautiful Seychelle Islands, world famouse for their turquoise water, white send beaches and amazing flora and fauna .

Constance Ephelia Seychelles which was opened in 2010 is a 5 star resort – part of a Constance group, based in Mauritius and well esteblished in the Idian Ocean with their 7 properties including Mauritius, Seychelles, Maldives and Madagascar

Ephelia is a biggest property of the chain as well as a biggest resort in Seychelles -

120 hectares of beautiful land located beside two beautiful beaches on the north west coast of Mahe Island (biggest Island of Seychelles) and overlooking the National Marine Park of Port Launay and 40 minutes driving from the airport.

Hotel has 184 Junior Suites, 40 Senior Suites, 18 Family Villas, 4 Spa Villas, 12 Beach Villas, 8 Hillside Villas and an unique Presidential Villa.

Ephelia is a very good organized family oriented resort, with the complete package of facilities and moderate price , perfect for unfogetable holidays.

Everything is there : one of the biggest Spa in the Indian ocean- U-Spa, Fitness Center, Tennis courts, 2 Boat houses with the wide choice of water activities , Kids Club, Zip line and rockclimbing adventures and even a Helipad from where you can take a flight to the neighbor islands or have an amazing scenic flight over Mahe.

It is also a very popular place for wedding and honeymoon couples and a perfect venue for helding a big events such a birthdays, corporate evenings, excebitions and so on

Ephelia is a very attractive combination of quality and price, which brings people from all around the world in search of paradise all year long , so the hotel keeps a high occupancy almast 12 months a year.

My internship position in Ephelia was a Guest Relations Officer .

We were the first persons meeting the guests and following them during whole stay

The target of our department was to ensure that guests are happy from the moment they arrived to the hotel till they leave and their experiance will be worth remembering

This is a perfect position to get a most complex experience of the hotel structure and hotel operations , you are daily connected to the all departments. Every day you aredealing with guests complains, scheduling guests activities and trying to meet their needs.

My course in SHMS was Hospitality and Events, we were learning a lot about hotel structure, responsibilities of different positions and departments and how they cooperate between each other.

It was a good theoretical base, but a real experience gave me a clear picture of he hotel operations, I was involved in every departments activities: F&B, housekeeping, room service so on. I could learn how departments communicate between each other and that one of the most important moments for the successful hotel is an excellent communications between all departments.

Speaking lots of languages also brings lots of benefits to the Guest Relations position

The more languages you speak the more international guests you can communicate with. My German classes in SHMS had been really helpful as we had lots guests coming from Germany so I could easily handle them as well as a French, Russian and of course all the English speaking countries.

Another important aspect which I learn from classes of Mr Bussien is emotional intelligence, dealing with a different type of guests, different cultures and characters is not easy especially in a big hotel, it is very challenging to be always positive, patient, be able to listen and find a wright answer to your guest.

I learned that your personal attitude plays a bigger role then just your professional scope, especially in a Guest relations job.

When you listening guests complain it is important stay positive, have a smart arguments and try always do your best to resolve a problem peacefully.

During my internship I got some new knowledge working with the Opera program

which I had not have a chance to study in SHMS. Now days most of the hotels using Opera system and it is important for all Front Office positions.

Internship is an opportunity given to the student to learn from his own mistakes. It is impossible to be perfect from the first time, perfection comes with experience, with a daily practice and a special trainings and of course with the support of people who is managing you. Management is a key to the successful team, manager has to be a perfect example, guiding you, point out your mistakes and encourage your successes.

During my practice I faced number of challenges, which I would like to write about:

**1. Room allocation**

It is not easy to memorize from the beginning allocation of almost 300 rooms in the resort. That’s why from the beginning I was a little bit nervous and confused during the time when I need to bring guests to the room. Before every rooming I was asking my colleagues where is the certain room located and making some notes. Only after 2,3 weeks I really started to feel confident which is absolutely normal, some things we can not accelerate, they taking some time to memorize but then they stay in your head forever.

**2. Buggy driving**

Another challenge I had to deal with was a driving of a little club car around the resort. It was not technically difficult as I was driving car since many years, but it has some specifics and also some of the buggies are 8 seats quite long so you need a special skills, also driving and talking to the guests, watching people around and driving the wright direction.

**3. When guest arrived but room is not ready**

Check in time in the resort was 14.00 p.m. but of course if the room is ready earlier we could always bring the guests before. Of course if the gusts arrived early in the morning you want to do everything possible to bring them to the room as soon as possible.

So from the beginning I was really on the guest side, forcing housekeeping to do their thing as soon as possible and apologizing to the guest for uncomfortable situation.

Then I learned that you have to inform guest from the beginning that normally check-in time is at 14.00 p.m. and then if the room was ready earlier guests are very happy and you and housekeeping department had less stress.

**4. Room change.**

There will be number of the reasons why guests would like to change their rooms.

And then if the hotel had availability of course we were trying the best to meet guests wish according to the availability of the hotel.

Doing the room change you have to follow a number of instructions: first call porters, call housekeeping and send an email to all departments about the room change.

**5. Service recovery**

Most of the time resort was at 100% occupancy, so it is very difficult to offer all the guests same care and quality service. There will be always some little errors, which could reflect on a guests satisfaction. It could be anything: food delay, some technical issues, or your personal mistakes. If it happened there is always a way to make up the issue, make guests feel that the hotel care and their satisfaction is very important. It could be any small things, like bottle of wine, some pastries in the room or a nice turn down, in case of a serious issue some complementary meal or treatment or special activity. It will make both you and a guest happy and it will always leave a nice impression about the hotel.

**6. Complementary upgrade**

It is necessary to recognize the guests who staying in your hotel long time or who is coming not the first time to the same o property or any other property of the chain.

According to this hotel often gives a complementary upgrade to the guests to appreciate their choice and spending money.

But there were some periods when the hotel is overbooked and the number of reservations accepted was not matching the number of rooms in the hotel. It was usually happened with the Junior Suits (lowest category of rooms). As a resolution hotel was given complementary upgrade, usually to repeater guests, high spenders, VIPs or celebrities. But doing this action it is always a risk. We had some cases when guests refused upgrade and then you have to explain that hotel is full and this is unconditional step.

**7. Cooperation with Villa host**

Our Guest Relations team was mostly dealing with the Junior Suit guests, SS guests and guests staying in villas had their own Villa host who had a function of a personal concierge.

Sometimes the guest from villas, especially Russian guests (as we had only 2 Russian speakers in the hotel including myself), accessed on various issues and of course for me all guests are the same and I was helping them equally, till Villa host Manager warned me always inform the villa host about every action I do for the villa guests. It is absolutely correct, the stronger communications between departments the more professional service we can give to the clients.

**8. Problem of personal sympathy**

“One of the greatest gifts you can give to anyone is the gift of attention”

Jim Rohn

There is no doubt that some of the guest you will like more and some of them less,

Of course there will be some people you will spend more time with, meeting them every day, talking and organizing their daily activities, all people are different, some will really appreciate everything you do for them and some will speculate your sympathy, asking for some discounts or complementary service. It is important to be professional and try to give to every guest the same attention, no matter if you personally like them or not. And if you do an exception for one guest you will have to do it for another, or be ready to give a strong argument why you did an exception. So you have to always think carefully before doing any special offer for your guest.

**9. Communications inside the team**

As I told before it is necessary to support a good communications inside the department and between departments in order to improve the quality of service in the hotel. Sometimes I had no time or ability to make a booking or resolve a problem during my working time. For that reason in Opera you have an option where you can leave a trace- message to the certain department about any reservation or any order of a guest. In our department we also had a hand over shit, which was going between the shifts in order to pass each other a list of actions and tasks which has to be resolved.

**10. Guests feedbacks**

« Thank your customer for complaining and mean it. Most will never bother to complain. They’ll just walk away. »

Marilyn Suttle

In order to assure that guest stay is going well one of the Guest Relations responcibilities was collecting the feedbacks from guests and passing them to the management. It is always nice to hear a positive feedbacks, but sometimes guest are not satisfied with some service or food or they don’t like hotel in general, in this case it is very important also to listen the comments of the guests, be grateful for that, make them understand that their opinion is very important for us and we will do everything possible to improve in the future.

Overall I can say that I had a great experience working as a part of the Guest Relations team in Constance Ephelia Resort. It was a very intensive training due to the size of the resort and high level of occupancy.

First of all, I learned an importance to be a team worker, because the hotel operations based on communications and regular cooperation, there is always a time when you need a help from your colleagues so you have to show first of all your positive attitude towards other team members and readiness to help them back.

Secondly, I underlined that no matter what guest complaining about you have to always try to stay on the hotel side, to keep the face and reputation of the hotel, because you can never satisfy all the guests but you can always

Finally, working as a guest relation officer I evaluate my strength and weaknesses and in The future I know what other knowledge and trainings I need and where I am confident enough.

Month by month of my practice I was becoming more confident and efficient in term of managing my time, duty performance, understanding guests psychology.

More and more I started to hear positive comments from my colleagues and guests.

And of course there is no greater praise then read the feedbacks of your guests on Tripadvisor.com or Booking.com about their excellent stay in Seychelles and a special thanks to the guest relation officer Margaryta.