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Be on the field: Practical experiences and comments of Managers from the field of Hospitality and Tourism Industry. *Case Study: JEBEKA SHADOW: Hospitality Business Located in Rwanda-Kigali, Gasabo District*

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Abstract: With this research work, the researchers were motivated by their continued intellectual joy and field contribution to work as bridge and alerting junior entrepreneurs who are interest to invest in tourism and hospitality sector in the study location (Gasabo District-Bumbogo Sector) or elsewhere. Within six months, researchers collected qualitative data to deeply understand types of customers being expected, demagogies used by worse customers, important business partners and how to finance the newly opened business. The varieties of customers such as information seekers, real buyers, royal buyers, challengers, destroyers and other more, are the results of this research work. Four recommendations are given to junior business entrepreneurs engaging in tourism and hospitality, those include: (1) know to deal with customer varieties, (2) Early detection of business antagonists, (3) Maintain good partnership with all important partners, and (4) Improve personal financial discipline

Index Terms – Hospitality, Customer, Business, JEBEKA SHADOW, Tourism

Introduction

Engaging in the business is a decision which is not easy for everyone because of different factors including financial capability, worry for risk taking, lack of alternative ideas and other related skills. After one of year of thinking on what activity should we engage in to earn some money, we have established a company named “JEBEKA SHADOW” with three business activities: Accommodations, Beverages services and Event catering. It is now ten months of existing of this company.” When you want to share with generations, writing and know where to document these writings is the best tool to be used (Faustin, 2024)”

The content on this document, it is a serie of experiences that we will keep publish and store them online so that the current and future generations can benefit from them.

Methods

As we were seeking an in-depth understanding of practical experiences that are on the field of hospitality, qualitative method such as observation, interactions and interviews were used to understand people's beliefs, attitudes, and behavior. With convenience sampling, the research targeted customers entering JEBEKA SHADOW within six consecutive months and other important partners within the same period. The data were analyzed qualitatively by stating or interpreting what we got within the research period.

Finding 1: Types of customers being awaited in Bars, Restaurants and Accommodations

1.1 Information seeker

This is the first in customers who are pushed by house door posts to enter in the house and they don't have direct buying intention. They are only looking for information of what is being done there, sometime they come back another day and can buy one or more products in the house for tasting.

1.2 Real buyer

The real buyers enter the house directly with buying intention, they get info from the house posts or they may come with information gotten from other customers or friends

1.3 Royal customer

The real customers when appreciate the service and come again for more times become royal and profitable customers. They are friends of business; they come for spending and enjoying the service being provided in the house

1.4 Challenger

They enter the house for disturbing the staff or business owner, they don't spend or they spend very few and use their time by asking unnecessary questions or by teaching the house staff on how they should perform their work, if not well treated, they can cause problems by querying and complaining for nothing.

1.5 Steelers

They are very dangerous to the business; they do surveillance for long and use different tactics to steel assets, products or money of the business.

1.6 Greeters

The greeters are there to say hi to the business, they don't buy any products or service, they come for just greeting staff or business owner and return back in their activities. They don't cause any harm to the business

1.7 Destroyers /Damagers

This is another dangerous customer following Steelers and challengers; they buy and consume your products and services but finally they damage your assets and it is difficult to detect whether they do it intentionally or not.

1.8 Friendship seekers

Having a business lends to make you a known and important person in the community, friendship seekers are people we receive and expect them to come from real to royal customers but they don't as they want to use the first purchase of our product/services to create a strong relationship with employees or business owner, if not detected well, they use to come back by taking our products/service on loan which will not be paid back, just they consume and promise to pay later but they don't do and sometime they don't come back in the business.

1.9 Beggars

Beggars are everywhere, they enter every house or work on the street by begging, helping them is not a problem, the problem is how to detect those who really need a help and those who are begging because they don't want to work or they are **head hunters**. Again it is not possible to help each one who is begging, employees or business owners need to use critical thinking before spending any coin from the business revenues.

Finding 2: Tricks used by Steelers to be successful in their operations

2.1 Inquiry balance confusion

One day, an expected customer entered in the promise, I was on duty myself (our employee was late to report on duty), the customer said "Good morning, last Tuesday when I was with Claude (one of my royal customer), I bought energy drink for six hundreds and I paid two thousand, because I was on hurry, you missed the change and I said, it's ok, I will be back to take the balance, I was very busy and I forget to come back, now I come to take balance", this time, I trusted the customer cause he is mentioning my royal customer and I gave directly the balance of one thousand four hundred! After he left and after double thinking on that, I discovered that he's a thief, I called my royal customer (Claude) and tell him about that by trying to describe the man, he said:" sorry, I don't know that man even the scenario he was presenting to you". Going back to my employee, she said "I don't know that case". From this history, I shared that with other business operators in our city and confirmed that it is one of technics that thieves use to steel the money and I preferred to call it "**Inquiry balance confusion**" (Faustin, 2024).

2.2 Story telling versus DETAL (Direct Enter, Take and Leave) Technic

This is another technic used by a group of thieves where they use long time field investigation to know the habit of business operations. "My employee was on duty; one gentleman entered and say Good morning! I want a beverage, he point a finger on Miitzing (One popular beer in Rwanda), he has been served and enjoy

the beverage on counter (my employee was charging the phone), after he finished, he paid and left the promise, approximately after five minute another gentleman entered: “Good morning, do you have a safe place where I can sit and have I drink? I don’t like the counter”, the employee said yes, come and show you! He appreciated the place and said go and bring for me one big Miitzing, the employee went back in the counter to take miitzing and serve the customer (the phone was still one charger), while serving, the customer tried to delay employee to go back on counter by asking a lot questions related to business (the employee was responding by thinking that he is getting the good customer who is going to consume a lot), the discussion last for about two minutes, when she backs on the counter , the phone was stolen already!. When I reported on duty, he told me that, as a business operator and researcher, I shared the story to other business operators and I got 8 people out of 15 asked (53.3%) in the city that have been stolen their belongings in the same way. I concluded by naming this demagogy “**Storytelling and DETAL technic**”

2.3 Consume and Leave Technic

With this trick, the customer is real as he enters the premise, buy and consumer the product/service unfortunately the end is not good as he will manage to leave after consummation without settling the payment. The customer monitors the staff and will get an opportunity to leave and run away without paying the bill. For example, he will be busy on the phone by trying to search for network by saying that in the service room, there is no good network and then if the staff is busy with another customer, that one will run away immediately.

2.4 Pack and leave technic (for room facilities and amenities)

This steeling technic is commonly find in accommodations where by some real customer after using the room on their departure, they do packing of bed sheets , towels, slippers, body lotions and other amenities and leave the premise in normal way, this has found at high rate for ladies who are carrying hand bags

Finding 3: Collaboration with local authorities, business operators and local community

3.1 With local authorities

Local authorities are focal partners when operating businesses in Rwanda, only what you need is to fulfill your legal and social responsibilities like paying taxes, trading license, security fees and rubbish collection fees. When you do that responsibly and by respecting business operation guidelines, you will be operating smoothly without any disturbance from local authorities.

3.2 With business operators

As junior business operator, you may need advice and expertise from senior business operators, it is advised to have time to meet with them and share live experiences, from there, you may create networks with wholesalers and this may facilitate supplying process.

3.3 With local community

People in your community need to have full information of what you are doing, they are like ambassadors for your business as any new arrival in the area might need information from them. This will be possible through enhanced advertising and maximizing opening hours so that everyone who wants may enter and get aware of what is being done in the business.

Finding 4: Financing the newly opened business and rent payment

4.1 Finance

It is okay that you have got capital for starting the newly opened business, but also you need to bear in mind that you will not have profit immediately, you need to wait and as you wait, the additional money to the capital is needed to keep operating the business, for example, salary for your employees, rent payment, daily expenses, restocking fees, taxes payment and other more.

4.2 Rent Payment

Rent payment is not an easy burden for newly started business, although you pay for two or three months, you may need to get money to pay for the next month, believing that you will generate money to pay your next month it is not always true, hence if you are not limited financially on the starting, it is recommended to make early long term rent payment which is more than six months as maximum time to wait the business to be self-financed.

5. Conclusion and recommendations

Field experiences is a typical daily life for business operators, it improves the maturity level in the business. As a new entrepreneur, in hospitality industry, you will met different experiences far from people working in other sectors like manufacturing, engineering, medical, finance, insurance and others. As introduced, this document is a serie of other more that the writer will keep sharing with interested people to what is on the field, we shall keep collaborating with other managers working in high ranked hotels, restaurants, guest houses and even tourism agencies to bring more tangible experiences that will prepare other people who want to invest in hospitality and tourism industry.

The following few recommendations have to be considered with new operators in the field of hospitality:

5.1 Know to deal with customer varieties

As discussed on finding 1, there are a lot of expected customers when on duty, employees in the field of hospitality should have advanced skills to deal with all those customers and know whom to serve or not by minimizing the business loss in the early stage of business development.

5.2 Early detection of business antagonists.

Steelers, challengers and damagers all are in category of antagonists, they don't have good wishes for the business, their aim is delay the business development or to see the business closing its doors. Business owner as well as employees should be well trained for early detection of those kind of customers and chase them away from the business.

5.3 Maintain good partnership with all important partners

None can stand alone and work alone, none is working by not following or respecting the country laws, policies and guidelines. Newly started business should do whatever they can to make sure that a good partnership is maintained, for example by: (1) attending meetings with local authorities for being updated on new guidelines, (2) paying taxes and trading license on time, and (3) paying security and garbage collection fees on time. Partnering also with other business operators in the same career and channel of suppliers is recommended

5.4 Improve personal financial discipline

Financial discipline is a consistent practice of spending, saving, and investing wisely to ensure effective management of financial resources and accumulate wealth in the long run. It centers on adhering to a budget, preventing debt, and achieving financial stability. Building personal financial discipline requires commitment, self-control, and a strategic approach to money management. It is true that you are starting the business and you were having your financial habits before opening the business, like spending a night with friends in bar by enjoying the beer, expensive trips with the friends, family and relatives, party contributions for your friends, co-workers or relatives. Now as you engage in the business you should look back at those spending and think twice in order to spend wisely so that you will not end up by spending the business money in some unnecessary expenses.

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