



Some Dubai Hotel Reservation Departments Fail To Measure Up
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Undercover Reservations Survey Reveals Customer Service Flaws

"As the busy tourist season begins and upcoming new hotels, some of Dubai's 4 and 5 star hotel and residence properties might be driving potential guests straight into the arms of their competitors because of poorly trained reservation staff and less-than-professional telephone etiquette," says Elisabeth Brehl, Manager of International Hospitality Check (IHC).

Dubai-based IHC, a mystery customer research company specializing in providing undercover "mystery guests" to the global hospitality industry, has released the results of an anonymous investigation where agents posing as potential guests attempted to make hotel reservation via an international call during Dubai office hours.

Surprisingly, what should have been a relatively easy task, for hotel staff, who are the first line of contact for potential paying customers and seeing the large availability of accommodation, proved to be a challenge at most of the 4 and 5 star properties in Dubai and sometimes even impossible.

According to the undercover callers, whose mission was to pose as guests wishing to secure hotel reservations during the prime tourist season, these were the most common obstacles they encountered:

- Reservationists had difficulty speaking and/or understanding English
- Reservationists were rude or impatient
- Requiring written reservation requests in lieu of telephone-based reservations
- Poor listening skills
- Failure to anticipate caller's needs or requests
- Dropped calls
- Poor sales ability reflecting an "order-taking" mentality
- Limited or no mention of hotel services and amenities
- Late or missing confirmations
- Failure to use the callers name during the call
- Presence of loud and disruptive background noises

Although some of the issues, such as dropped calls and late or missing confirmations, possible were technology-related, the majority of challenges were decidedly training and coaching-related issues.

In an industry where hospitality is the core product, there is no excuse for properties to lose revenue over poor service.

Elisabeth Brehl invites any hotel or residential property manager who wants to experience their reservations department through the ears of potential guests to visit www.internationalhospitalitycheck.com or contact her directly. IHC offers the ability to log Mystery calls digitally into their on-line reporting system so they can be heard and shared with a client's training departments, supervisors and respective staff members in an effort to raise the level of service even via self-assessments.