THE IMPORTANCE OF TRAINING IN ENHANCING QUALITY SERVICE IN HOTEL AND TOURISM INDUSTRY IN NIGERIA

Augustine Nnoruka Okeke
Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management
Federal Polytechnic, Oko Anambra state Ph: (08089769775)
Corresponding Email: augustinennorukaokeke@yahoo.com

Abstract
A rising global demand for leisure travel is creating the need for tourism development in Nigeria. As a result, stakeholders are focusing on achieving high level human resource capital in order to meet national demand; address challenges militating against the tourism industry and harness the socioeconomic benefits that tourist can provide particularly developing economies like Nigeria. The tourist of this era is more discerning and sensitivity at the quality of the product being offered to him. Hence, there is need for training of the staff to enhance their knowledge and capacity thereby optimizing the ability to reach the level of performance expected to drive growth in the industry and bring economic benefit to the country.

Keywords: Hospitality, Management, Tourism, Training and Quality Product.

Introduction

The rising global demand for leisure travel is driving tourism development in Nigeria. As a result, a high level of human resource management is required in order to meet national demand; addressing challenges militating against the tourism industry and harness the socioeconomic benefit that tourism can provide to countries, particularly developing economics. Interestingly, the tourism and hospitality industry has become a key industry in the development of economic activities in various countries and is growing in others not normally associated with such activity, such as Nigeria (Briedenhann and Wickens, 2003; Ayeni, 2013; Osefoh and Agbonome, 2014; Monisola, 2014; Adeleke, 2013; Ndanusa et al., 2014; Kingsley, 2000). This is because the tourism and hospitality industry provides a source of revenue to government through taxation and leads to the attraction of the business that complement the operations in the industry (Monisola, 2014; Adeleke, 2013; Ndanusa et al., 2014; Kingsley, 2000). In the context, several researchers argue that training in the tourism and hospitality industry is crucial for the optimum performance of the industry (Martins et al., 2014; Manoj, 2013; Austin, 2008; Kyriakidou and Maroudas, 2010; Poulston, 2008). This is arguably because training enhances the knowledge of employees and optimizes the ability of the employee to reach the level of performance expected by the organization (Martins et al., 2014; Manoj, 2013; Austin, 2008). The hospitality and tourism industry may be considered a fledgling industry in Nigeria, which raises the issue as to whether training and tourism provision for the industry is keeping pace with needs. It is this issue which this presentation explores.

The Growth of Hospitality and Tourism

Despite the common ground on the relevance of the tourism and hospitality industry through economic activities, Briedenhann and Wickens (2013) identify other factors that have led to the growing importance of the tourism and hospitality industry. They argue that changes in agricultural sector performances and decrease in rural industrialization act as factors that have resulted in the growing importance of the hospitality and tourism industry to revamp and diversify the economy, and arguably such would be the case in Nigeria.
According to Borhman (2012), the growing concern for the development of the tourism and hospitality industry could be better appreciated by understanding the ‘multiplier effect’ that results from the development of the hospital and tourism industry. He points out that the multiplier effect can be categorized into three strands namely: direct, indirect and induced effects. The direct effects encompass how it affects accommodation, transportation, entertainment and retail trade while the indirect include government collective travel and tourism spending and impact of purchase from suppliers (Brohman, 2012). Furthermore, he argues that the induced effects of spending of direct and indirect employees on clothing, housing and food. However, Brohman, (2012) maintains that higher multipliers can only be achieved if investment in the tourism and hospitality industry is dispersed ad focused on the local economy through the operations of SMEs.

The State of the Hospitality & Tourism Industry in Nigeria

Nigeria is the most populous African country situated in the gulf of Guinea (Ayeni, 2013) with a vast land mark, huge wildlife reserve, good vegetation and natural beeches spread across her virgin coastline (Ayeni, 2013; Adeleke, 2011). The country boasts of scenic destinations such as the Cross River National Park, Yankari Game Reserve, attractive waterfalls and other tourist destinations (Ayeni, 2013) although the demand is arguably more focused on business tourism needs rather than the leisure sector. According to Market Lin (2014), Nigeria is one of the greatest producers of crude oil and her economy has depended majorly on crude exports over the years which have stimulated both an industrial sector and growing service sector, so stimulating business tourism.

Yet Ndanusa et al (2014) argue that the fluctuations in the global oil prices represent an urgent need for the government to diversify the economy the economy. Diversification enables a country to have different streams of income from various economic activities thereby stimulating a country growth and development in results in diversification of income sources and production of different economic outputs thereby making the country’s economy to be strong, stable, growing and reduces unemployment (Zhong et al 2008; Aguero et al 2006). Hence, tourism has been given prominence in the drive for the diversification of the economy due to its potential grow the economy through creation of jobs, foreign exchange and sustainable development of the local economy (Ndanusa et al., 2004; Ojo, 2014; Tunde, 2012). This is why the Federal Government has solicited the assistance of the United Nation World Travel Organization and United Nation Development Project to assist and part funds the Development of the Nigeria Tourism Master Plan (Adeleke 2012).

This plan has led to the recommendation for the ST-EP a Program (Sustainable Tourism Eliminating Poverty) the focus was sustainable tourism development which encourages tourism as a tool for poverty elimination and provision of employment opportunities, cultural enhancement and improvement of physical environment (Esu, 2012). Sustainable small scale and medium enterprise is the goal of the Federal Government of Nigeria due to its ability to benefit wider group of people in terms of employment, education, infrastructural development and health care in the host community (Hall et al., 2003; Ndanusa et al., 2014) according to (UNWTO 2011), tourism promotes local communities to benefit from their culture and natural assets through employment in tourism local communities activities and the supply of services and goods such as food, excursions or handicrafts, to tourism business or direct to visitors, without having to migrate to towns in search better life. However, this assumes that people have the capability- through education and training – to seize such opportunities.

Purpose of the Study

- To identify the importance of hospitality industry in Nigeria
- To examine the need for training and motivation of staff in order to render quality service
- To identify the need for tourist satisfaction in order to increase repeat visit and word of mouth promotion for Nigerian destination
- Finally, to identify the need for public-private partnership so as to enhance maximum benefit.
Overview of Tourism Services product and Quality

The Supply of tourism-a production system (Stephen and Joanne, 2006)

The tourism services product is intangible as a result of its difficulty to be demonstrated or evaluated in advance. A tour operator cannot allow a demonstration or test at a tourism product or a sampling of the accommodation in the far away destination that he is selling. Much of the sales is through brochure or secondary materials, videos etc. normally, the sale is based on trust and timely delivery of the products by transport company or promise of comfortable accommodation by the hotel company. This is unlike the tangible product that can be tested at the point of sale such as automobile. Another characteristic of the tourism product is perish-ability. The revenue of unsold hotel room or airline seat cannot be recovered again. Therefore Staff needs to be trained to be tactical in sales and the ability to forecast demand and use specialized websites to affect last minute sales of rooms. Tourism service is also inseparable. The service supplier and customers are available at the same time the service function occurs. The tourism product is an amalgam of service, this usually happens when various companies is responsible for each stage of the service delivery. A tour package for a example may involve an airline, hotel company and amusement park at the destination. The customer exposure to these services is of short duration, therefore should be trained to deliver service that will build relationship and hence repeat business.

Due to the intangible nature of the tourist business, management must plan the delivery of service encounter, in terms of cleanliness, decor, ambiance to ensure the customer has positive and satisfactory experience. These aspects of the tourism product presuppose that the tourist supplier must be prepared to deliver quality tourist product in order to enable the tourist destination thrive economically. For example the NTDC or Nigeria Tourism Development Company has the mandate to regulate and control service quality and ensure satisfactory experience by the visiting tourist. Therefore, they mandate a standard of quality that the tourist provider must attain through various regulatory tools. The quality tourism service should be an established standard which attain to enhance customer satisfaction by focusing on continuous improvement on service delivery. This must be an established culture and concern of all employees of the hospitality establishment. The value should be created in the mind of all the employee.

Cooper et al (2006) enlisted the following tours quality determinants:
In summary, the quality of the service product is determined by the value of the relationship between the tourist, management and guest contact employee’s, hence, the need for adequate training for all staff to deliver quality service experience for all the tourist consumers.

Defining Training and Tourism

According to Blanchard and Thacker (2004), training is a continuous process of improvement targeted on the acquisition of knowledge, skills and attitude that help workers to perform better in an organization. Se Martin et al (2004) also defined training as a set of orderly schemes and programs designed to enhance the participants’ knowledge, skills and attitudes as fundamental target areas for improvement. However, Blanchard and Thacker (2003) maintained that training must be a continuous process that is focused on enhancing the knowledge, skills and attitudes of employees in the hospitality and tourism industry (Manij 2013, Denby, 2010). The tourism industry has different forms of business such as hotels operations, airline and other forms of transport, restaurant, entertainment industries, amusement and parks, travel agencies and tour operations. This is heavily labor intensive and therefore need well trained qualified staff to administer them, operate the tourist product and have competitive advantage in an ever increasing global tourist industry.

The training objective is to optimize the ability of the employer to reach the level of performance expected by the organization. It develops knowledge and skills to increase competency in the work place and motivate the employee. It benefits both the organization through increase output and performance. The employees acquire greater skill and optimism in the job which ultimately leads to job satisfaction, reduce truancy and can increase the technological ability of the employees. According to Blanchard and Thacker (2003), the outcome of the training process are influenced by design and implementation of the training process, vis a vis how the trainees are challenged, encourage learning method implemented the environment at the organization. The objective of the training program should also be developed to specify the expected skill the training program should achieve.

Training and Tourism need Analysis

Several researchers and proactive business managers have seen the importance of training need analysis in conducting effective training program and making other strategic business decisions (Guptal et al 2007; Stone 2009; Burner 2010). This is because it helps the company to equip the employees to be ready for new business methods, work patterns and make them adaptable to opportunity in changes in technology, structure and exposes non training needs for strategic management decisions (Cheng and Dawson 1998; Bozafth 2008; Rosett, 2009).

TNA is the comprehensive x-ray of the organization based on its objectives, resources and operational environment and then process of identifying discrepancies among the organizational expected performance and actual performance. The intervention stage identifies the cause of the discrepancies and decision is then taken by the management based on the result of the analysis to use training or non-training approach or both to deal with the issue (Anderson 1994; Blanchard and Thacker 2003). TNA is the gap between current and desired results, what is and what should be. An effort that analyzes the organizational task and still positions to determine if cure is needed and what cure is most likely to produce the desired result (Goldstein l9S6). However, without a thorough training need analysis, valuable investment is wasted. This may lead the organization to wrong training and focus which may not deliver the expected solution (Chartered Management Institute, 2006). This is because TNA helps the organization to identify a specific need of the organization and design appropriate training intervention. The process involves gathering qualitative and quantitative information from different resources: such as cost of labor, inventories, existing skill matrices, organizational goals and structure.

Furthermore, training need analysis involves a process review, that is, a review of the system and process currently being used which is critically analyzed. Another key factor in TNA is observation and it involves the examination of those individual occupying different positions so as to measure their performance, working style and aptitude. While observation
in TNA might also involve personal or group interviews, TNA is a total diagnostic aspect of various area of the organization to ascertain their training needs.

The Importance of Training Need Analysis

The TNA exposes training need and helps the organization to factor it on their planning and budget, the plan will then highlight areas of future analysis and training (Denby, 2010). The situation is examined to know whether the corrective measure requires training or not such that if the employee lacks the necessary KSA to do the task training would be conducted to arrest the situation (Blanchard and Thacker, 2004). This exposes the current and future potential need and enables research to be carried to determine training category. In addition, valuable information is collected to inform appropriate decisions. Again, TNA helps the employee career development because it reveals the areas of weaknesses or deficiencies that require training and upgrading (Brown, 2002). This truth is captured by the following statement of this researcher "TNA is a means of determining the training and development system and program needed by the organization, employee groups or individual employee to make the organization, competitive in its industry, improve productivity, build employee morale and job satisfaction, improve promotional potential and faster career development". Need assessment further identifies gaps in capabilities and on the job results (performances) and places the identified need in priority order for assessment (Tracy, 2004)

Training Methods

There is a need to keep the customers satisfied by providing quality products and services in the hospitality industry or any vibrant organization. This is done to attract, motivate and keep key personnel. It is important to point out that for this to fall in place it requires careful thought out, planned and continuous training program that would be implemented in the company and should cut across the various levels of the organization (Harris and Cannon, 1995; Hanqin et al, 2001; Denby, 2010). This is because global competition is on the increase that involves constant change in technology for service deliveries. Therefore organizations need to be innovative to remain profitable, retain their market share and maintain their leadership position hence the importance of adequately trained manpower (Harris and Bonn, 2000; Okonkwo and Jacinta, 2013; Manij, 2013) When the proper need assessment is conducted to identify the problem areas that may require training solution, the training program is then developed to counter the problem (Denby, 2010). The method and tools that will deliver effective result becomes paramount to the individual or organization conducting the training (Martin, Kolomito & Lam, 2014). According to Cage (2011) training aids or tools are instruments used to enhance the learning process in order to drive home the Skills, Knowledge and abilities (SKA) effectively to the trainee. They may include flip charts, printed materials, films and videos that are capable of demonstrating various tasks. The training programs must meet the need and the level of the audience and the trainer must understand them in order to apply the appropriate training method (Harris and Bonn, 2000)

The Learning Modality

This refers to the way in which the learning content is delivered to the learners. It could either be; through visuals' hearing and acting or doing. However, according to Lujan and Dicarro (2006) it is necessary to ascertain the best mode of learning that is appropriate or suitable for individuals or groups in assimilating new information. For example, Learning by doing is in agreement with the educational philosophy that is known as the experimental education. This suggests that learning is acquired by transformational experience as the trainee performs the tasks in the training content (Roger, 1996; Kolb & Kolb, 2005).

Training Environment

The training environment refers to the place where the training is conducted. It is categorized into three environments; the natural, contrived and simulated environment. The natural is the real work environment where all on-the-job training are performed. The contrived environment does not look like a work environment but it is a special place that has been designed for training purposes like some training schools’ Lastly, the simulated environment is contrived but is aimed to replicate the work environment' Normally all off-the-job trainings are conducted in simulated or contrived environment.
Trainer presence

The training presence refers to whether the training methods require the physical presence of the trainer or if the training would be transmitted through mediums like the computer. The presence of a trainer is a major determinant of the training method to apply in the training process since most training can be delivered without the presence of a trainer by using emerging technologies (Klein, et al. 2006).

Proximity

Learning can now be delivered face to face or can be conducted at a distance. Technology and globalization have changed the methods of knowledge sharing and impartation in most training and professional development. Furthermore, video conferencing and other new technology is enabling long distance learning to be a social experience as if one is interacting face to face in a classroom lecture (Illoord & Peterson 2010).

Interaction Level

The interactive level refers to the association between the trainer and the trainees or the cooperation amongst and or within the trainees like in group discussions. A training method that encourages interaction is preferable since learning is a social-cultural phenomenon and is made effective through social interaction during training (Webster-Wright, 2009).

Time Demand

Time demand is very important in considering the training methods because duration can affect organizational decisions and trainee participations. The flexibility of the training method should be put into consideration as well as answer whether the methods require an ongoing participation. The time factor is then analyzed before the training decision are taken by the organization. In general, when all these criteria are put in place, a training method has taken place.

Internship Training

The Internship training enables an employer to train an employee at a fraction of or no cost at all. It gives the employee the opportunity to get first-hand knowledge of the role that they are being trained in especially when they are not sure of which profession they want to go into. It not only gives the trainee opportunities to acquire practical skills that would be useful in the future job requirements but also the trainees get the chance to explore different areas of interest.

Game-Based Training

This type of training methods, offers a low cost and effective training as it is competitive and offers motivation for the learners. The contents are applied since the training games are designed to stimulate processes or situations and circumstances that occurs in a real job. They also simulate situations that would bring the trainee in a controlled setting care which will enable them to develop skills or discover concepts that will improve their job performance. The games are designed to develop the skills of the trainees while they participate in the game.

Mentoring and Apprenticeship

Mentorship allows the trainee to understudy the mentor on a one to one basis. Normally interpersonal relationships are developed and they pro-ride psychological support to the trainee and help to facilitate the trainee’s career. Mentorship is more appropriate in a situation where a company wants to groom its trainees to climb within the company’s ladder. Additionally, it requires senior employees to develop the junior ones and this is often times done in the management level on the other hand, apprenticeship involves skill acquisition by serving in a particular trade or condition for an extended period of time till the skill and competency to perform the task is acquired. Apprenticeship, in other words give trainees a chance to learn and get paid on the job unlike internships where the trainee only gets a chance to learn. Although over the years, paid internships have been on the rise. Moreover, of recent most apprentice programs are partnerships between the labor unions, employees, schools and the government aimed at empowering the youth for employment.

Programmed Instruction
Programmed instruction as a training method is flexible and its instructions can be repeated. The consistent delivery of this method makes the learning experience standardized and also has the ability to appeal to sensory features such as color, sound, text animation, graphic, and special effects (Martin, et al, 2013).

**Conclusion**

The quality of the service product is determined by the value of the relationship between the tourist and the employee’s, hence, the need for adequate training for all staff to deliver quality service experience for all the tourist consumers.

**Recommendations**

- The importance of hospitality industry cannot be over emphasized if the actions must achieve the necessary demand
- The need for training and motivation of staff in order to render quality service is of utmost importance
- The need for tourist satisfaction in order to increase repeat visit and word of mouth promotion for Nigerian destination
- There is need for public-private partnership to thrive for maximum benefit.
- Also, the Nigerian Tourist development cooperation should constantly monitor tourist establishment in order to maintain high quality standard, consequently, making Nigerian tourist destination to have competitive advantage in the global tourist market.

**References**


