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# Chapter 2 - The Guest Service Imperative

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## CHAPTER 2 OUTLINE

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### **Guest Service Overview**

Importance of Guest Service

Emphasis on Service Culture

*Core Values*

*Vision*

*Mission*

### **Managers' Role in Quality Service**

#### **Service: The Guests' Perspectives**

#### **Steps to Deliver Quality Guest Service**

Consider the Guests Being Served

Determine What the Guests Desire

Develop Procedures to Deliver What the Guests Desire

Train and Empower Staff

Implement Revised Systems

Evaluate and Modify Service Delivery Systems

### **Service and Moments of Truth**

#### **Management Tactics for Superior Guest Service**

Remember That Service Is Delivered by Employees

Managers Cannot Delegate

Responsibility for Superior Service

Managers Must Recruit and Select Service-Minded Staff

Provide Effective Orientation and Training

Supervise with a Service Emphasis

Empower Staff with Service Authority

Emphasize Continuous Quality

Improvement

Effective Service Recovery Can "Save the Day"

## **Chapter Overview**

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In this chapter students learn the importance of providing outstanding service to hotel guests. It defines Moments of Truth as those instances in which guests form positive, or negative, impressions of a hotel. The chapter concludes by addressing the strategies and tactics hospitality professionals use to ensure the consistent delivery of high quality guest service in the hotels they manage.

## **Chapter Objectives**

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1. Explain three aspects of guest service: its importance, the need for service to be an integral part of the hotel's culture, and the role of managers in quality service.
2. Discuss the need to role model guest service as a core value as service processes are developed, implemented, and maintained.
3. Emphasize the importance of considering the needs of hotel guests from their own perspectives.
4. Describe six steps important in the consistent delivery of quality guest services.
5. Define the concept of moments of truth and discuss how they can help guests confirm they are receiving exemplary levels of service.
6. Review tactics that can help hotel managers consistently achieve superior levels of guest service.

## Lecture Outline

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### GUEST SERVICE OVERVIEW

An on-going emphasis on the importance of guest service is important and, as is true in many other areas of lodging management, “it all begins with the manager.”

### Importance of Guest Service

The guests’ perceptions about the level of service quality are an important factor in their total experience that determines whether they receive value from the hospitality operation.

*Quality* means the consistent delivery of products and services according to expected standards.

*Service* is the process of helping guests by addressing their wants and needs with genuine respect and dignity in a timely manner.

*Value* can be described as a guest’s perception of the relationship between what was paid for a hospitality product or service relative to what was received for the payment.

### Emphasis on Service Culture

An emphasis on guests must be an integral part of the hotel’s *corporate culture*: a collection of understandings shared by the employees that influence organizational decision-making.

#### Core Values

*Core values* are the foundations of a corporate culture that describe how people in the organization intend to act.

They guide the planning, decision-making, problem solving, and prioritizing of actions that hotel managers use to transform plans into reality.

#### Vision

A hotel’s *vision* is a picture of a hotel’s ideal future and answers the question: “What do we want to create?”

Hotel managers maximize efforts to attain a shared vision when they consistently consider their core values, including a genuine concern for guest service, as decisions are made

### Mission

The *mission* clarifies how a hotel will add value for guests, employees, and others that it impacts

In many cases, missions recognize that a hotel can only be successful through the efforts of its staff members to consistently deliver quality products and services, and then the needs of other stakeholders are identified and considered.

### **MANAGERS' ROLE IN QUALITY SERVICE**

Hotel managers are the primary impact on corporate culture. They do so by:

- Motivating employees to achieve service goals
- Recognizing and rewarded employees who achieve those goals
- Develop and implement the processes used for:
  - Employee recruitment
  - Selection
  - Orientation
  - Training

Managers *empower* employees by granting them the authority (power) to make key decisions within their areas of responsibility.

### **SERVICE: THE GUESTS' PERSPECTIVES**

Hotel managers must consider the needs of their guests and develop service delivery processes and procedures to address those needs.

Examples include the guests' need for a clean room and the process and procedures are met by an effectively staffed, trained, and equipped housekeeping department.

Consider you own service expectations while checking in to a hotel. You probably expect:

- Minimal waiting time to check-in
- A friendly welcome, including eye contact, a genuine smile, and acknowledgment of your name
- Accurate and confirming information about your reservation
- The proper type of room immediately available
- Answers to your questions about the hotel and its services
- Directions to your room

Planners must consider and often combine the needs of different guest demographics (e.g., business travelers vs. family travelers) when planning for areas (e.g., business center and playground) that contribute to the experience of the guests during their hotel stays.

## STEPS TO DELIVER QUALITY GUEST SERVICE

*Competitive Edge* is a tactic, process, or program used by a hotel that is desired by guests but not offered by the hotel's competitors

FIGURE 2.1: Six Components of Quality in the Hospitality Industry

Ingredient 1: Consider the guests being served

Ingredient 2: Determine what the guests desire

Ingredient 3: Develop procedures to deliver what guests want

Ingredient 4: Train and empower staff

Ingredient 5: Implement revised systems

Ingredient 6: Evaluate and modify service delivery systems

### Consider the Guests Being Served

Hotel managers must understand what their guests want

### Determine What the Guests Desire

A questioning process is a good way to determine guests' wants and needs

### Develop Procedures to Deliver What the Guests Desire

Two good ways to make procedures more guest-friendly are to benchmark and to utilize cross-functional teams of employees

*Benchmark:* The search for best practices and an understanding about how they are achieved in efforts to determine how well a hospitality organization is doing.

*Cross-Functional Teams:* A group of employees from each department within the hospitality operation who work together to resolve operating problems

### Train and Empower Staff

When procedures are implemented to meet or improve the guests' service expectations, employees must learn work methods

After staff members are trained, they should also be empowered to make decisions about their guests' unique needs

### Implement Revised Systems

Employees work together to develop improved procedures

### Evaluate and Modify Service Delivery Systems

Due to the frequent changes in guests' preferences, technologies, and work methods, there is a constant need to evaluate and, if necessary, modify procedures

Hotel managers cannot address problems unless they are aware of them

Comment cards are a useful way to address concerns of current guests

Prompt attention dramatically increases the likelihood of repeat business

### SERVICE AND MOMENTS OF TRUTH

*Moments of truth* involve any opportunities for guests to form an impression about a hotel

Moments of truth can be positive or negative

Positive moments of truth can be turned into a *wow factor* at any moment

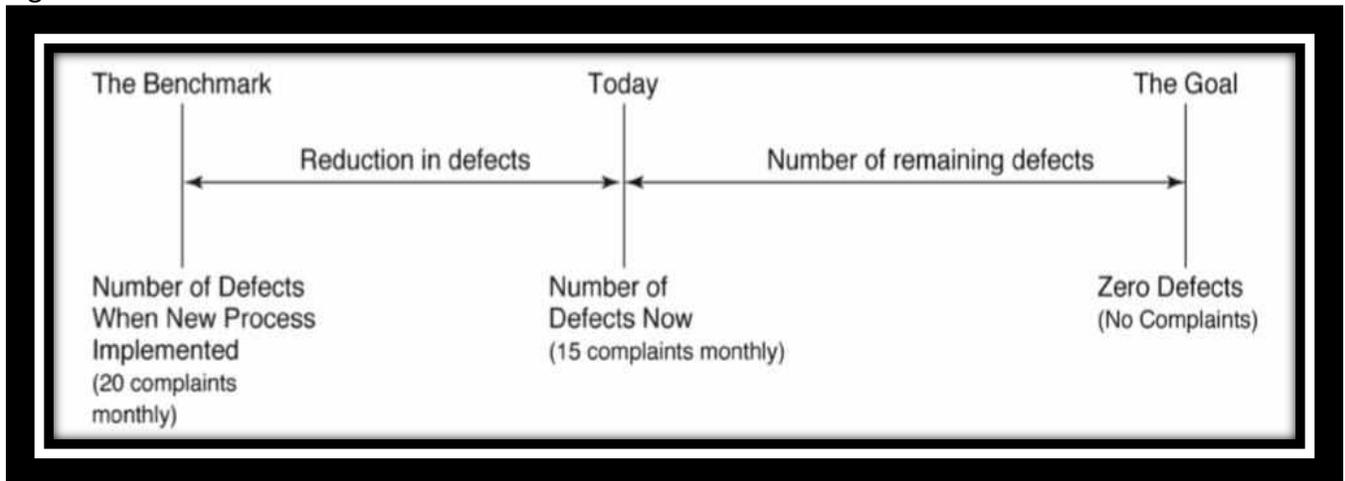
A wow factor is the feeling guests have when they experience an unanticipated and positive “extra” as they interact with a hospitality operation

Hotel managers plan many aspects of a guest’s experience at their properties

The best hotel managers attempt to ensure that effective plans are in place to minimize the number of service failures and to correct those that do arise

Some hotel managers’ goal is to have *zero defects* or to never have any guest-related complaints after guest service processes are implemented

Figure 2.3 illustrates how a decline in defects can be measured



## MANAGEMENT TACTICS FOR SUPERIOR GUEST SERVICE

### Remember That Service Is Delivered by Employees

- Provide a hospitable greeting
- Practice the “art and science” of suggestive up-selling to provide a guest with a wider awareness of the property’s products and services
- Utilize product knowledge to answer all of a guest’s questions
- Help other employees when they became especially busy during the work shift
- Consistently meet or exceed the guests’ service expectations

### Managers Cannot Delegate Responsibility for Superior Service

The manager recruits, trains, and empowers staff members to serve the guests

The manager serves as a role model to emphasize the importance of guest service

Managers are held accountable or responsible for the extent to which the property is successful

*Accountability:* An obligation created to complete an assignment that has been delegated by someone in a higher level of management

Service is an essential ingredient in the success of managers

### Managers Must Recruit and Select Service-Minded Staff

An *employer-of-choice* refers to the concept that the hotel is a preferred place of employment in the community for applicants who have alternative employment opportunities

*Employee turnover rate* is a measure of the proportion of a work force that is replaced during a designated time period (month, quarter, or year)



In the selection process, some managers ask open-ended questions, such as “*What would you do if a guest waiting behind other guests to check in came to the front of the check-in line to ask a question?*”

Managers should discuss and share the property’s core values, vision, and mission with their service focus

Emphasize the importance of service and review how the position for which an applicant is applying directly relates to serving guests

### **Provide Effective Orientation and Training**

Introduce to the property's core values, vision, and mission with emphasis on guest service

During the orientation process, train employee in guest-friendly procedures

Thoroughly deliver the knowledge and skills required before new staff members have contact with guests

### **Supervise with a Service Emphasis**

Employees normally do what they are rewarded to do

Managers should always thank their staff members when exceptional guest service is rendered

Effective managers practice the delivery of superior service by "Walk to talk"

### **Empower Staff with Service Authority**

Hotel managers empower their staff as they

- Share their service mission
- Provide the training and other resources required to meet the needs of the majority of guests
- Encourage staff members to help guests with out-of-the-ordinary service requests

### **Emphasize Continuous Quality Improvement**

*CQI* are on-going efforts within a hotel to better meet (or exceed) guests' expectations and to define ways to perform work with better, less costly, and faster methods

Address with employees both the largest and smallest problems and then put procedures in place to resolve those issues

### Effective Service Recovery Can “Save the Day”

The best employees with the most positive guest service attitudes using “proven” service delivery processes will appeal to most of the guests most of the time

When negative feedback arises, staff should to use an appropriate service recovery tactic

Step 1: Introduce yourself by name and position.

Step 2: Discover necessary information

Step 3: Empathize with the guest

Step 4: Fix the problem and apologize on behalf of the hotel

Step 5: Thank the guest for bringing the matter to your attention

## **Real World Hotel Challenges: Suggested Answers**

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### **Real World Hotel Challenges: 2.1**

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1. Hotel general managers must recruit, select, and facilitate the work of employees who care about their jobs, their peers, and the hotel's guests. However, this is much easier to say than it is to accomplish. Employees who do care are less likely to set non-essential priorities higher than work responsibilities.

There are numerous factors that can enhance the preferred employee-supervisor relationship. One way to identify them is to ask students to think about the very best boss they ever had and to answer the question, "Why was he or she my best boss?" Their answers to this question suggest what managers should do and what might have been done to reduce the current challenges to providing exemplary service to the guests who will be checking in.

2. There may be several tactics to reduce the guest service consequences of an under-staffed front desk department when many guests will be checking in. Examples include calling staff that are off for the day to come in and asking those working now to please remain a few hours longer. If other employees are scheduled for a late night shift (audit), one of them might also be called.

Employees scheduled to work the next day (especially morning) could be asked to work this afternoon and early evening because there will be fewer guests checking out tomorrow morning. Another possibility: a "pre-check-in" reception might be quickly planned in an available public area. Guests awaiting check-in could be invited to the area for complimentary wine and cheese or other easy-to-prepare food items while awaiting check in.

3. Meeting planners and guests do not generally care about the challenges that confront hotel employees as they provide products and services. Instead, their perspectives focus on receiving value in return for the costs they have incurred. Therefore, an interesting class discussion can evolve between students. One group will likely suggest the importance of being "transparent" and informing the meeting planner about the issue and what is being done to manage it. A second group may believe it best to wait to see if the planned corrective actions will be effective and not inform the meeting planner unless it is absolutely necessary to do so.

## Real World Hotel Challenges: 2.2

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1. General managers must understand that their employees have a critical role to play in the success of their hotels. There is no “quick fix” in efforts to establish and maintain a culture that emphasizes guest service. Hopefully, hotel owners realize this as they retain general managers to “turn around” the business.

General managers and their top management teams must agree on the core values that will drive the property’s culture. These core values must include genuine employee respect and an emphasis on guests, quality, and value. They must recognize that profits result from the strategies implemented in concert with these core values. A long range plan is needed, and it should be developed by the management team.

2. Each manager should work with employees in their department to determine what they can do to help the property move ahead and accomplish their long range plan. When employees are involved in the planning process, they are much more likely to help ensure that it is successful. Employee input can include making suggestions about planning priorities and in suggesting tactics to address them. Employee input to new and revised work processes driven by the plan will also be helpful.
3. Owners and their general managers should agree on factors used to evaluate improvements in hotel operations. While profitability is important and obvious, owners should realize that long-term, not short-term, profitability should be the goal. This in turn, involves much more than cutting costs.

Time is needed to plan and implement marketing efforts to determine guests’ needs and desires and to train staff to deliver them. Costs incurred for technology, equipment, renovation, and human resources improvements may also be needed.

With the above in mind, the success of a general manager’s efforts should be evaluated by factors including profitability, adherence to agreed-upon operating and capital budgets, employee turnover rates, guest comments, and market share.

## Your Opinion Counts: Suggested Answers

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### Your Opinion Counts

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1. Excellent service is defined by the guests who are the recipients of the service. Some perceptions will be the same, and many others will differ for those who visit a highway motel and a five star property. For example, all persons will appreciate a genuine welcome and direct answers to their questions. All will desire a clean and safe room, a positive correlation between what was promised and what was received, and confirmation that they received product and service value based on what they paid.

Many of the differences in service expectations for the two types of properties noted above relate to the value concern. Higher prices are needed to pay for greater levels of service, finer and larger guest room accommodations, and more significant public space ambiance, among numerous other amenities. Other factors including reputation and prestige are also important. Hoteliers in both types of properties, however, must consistently provide what their guests want at a value to the guests.

2. Moments of truth relate to anything, regardless of how seemingly minor they may be, that form an impression for the guests. Some persons may notice how clean—or dirty—the restrooms are. Others might notice the “little extras” in guest service or miss them because they were not provided. The concept of value was noted in the *Question 1* response above, and it applies here as well.

Many guests, who received only what they expected, obtain the minimum required value and, therefore, have no reason to complain. Other guests who receive a “Wow” positive moment of truth experience are delighted with the extra value. Unfortunately, still other guests who are recipients of more-than-expected negative moments of truth are turned off and away from the hospitality operation. The best hoteliers know that, in fact, the “little things” do count.

3. A basic management fact is that a person cannot delegate accountability. Therefore, it is correct that managers are responsible (because they cannot delegate accountability) for the problems that occur in the hospitality operation. They—not the employees—have the authority (power) to correct the causes of problems through process revisions, and increased training, supervision, and motivation activities, among many other tactics.

4. A well-thought-out training program on guest service would address numerous issues including:
  - The importance of guest training
  - The role of employees in delivering guest service
  - Emphasis on the fact that guest service is important for front-and-back-of-house staff
  - Explanation of the concept of moments of truth
  - Looking at the operating from the guests' perspectives
  - Empowerment to enable employees to meet unusual but reasonable guest expectations
  - Complaint resolution
  - Common guest service errors
  - Learning from guest service mistakes
  
5. Managers should explain, justify, and defend why process changes are needed. They can enable employees to make suggestions about process revision changes during their planning, implementation, and revision. If employee suggestions can be used, they should be. If they cannot be used, managers should explain why they cannot be used.

Managers who have a history of emphasizing employee participation tactics generally have fewer change-related management challenges, and tactics to overcome employee resistance to change can then become less necessary.

## Exam Bank: Questions and Answers

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Choose the letter of the best answer to the questions listed below.

1. A guest's perception of the relationship between what was paid for a hospitality product or service relative to what was received for the payment is called
  - a. **value.**
  - b. service.
  - c. quality.
  - d. Moment of truth.

Answer: a

Learning Objective: 2.1. Explain three aspects of guest service: its importance, the need for service to be an integral part of the hotel's culture, and the role of managers in quality service.

Difficulty Level: Easy

2. An integral part of a hotel's corporate culture must be an emphasis on
  - a. staff.
  - b. **guests.**
  - c. image.
  - d. profits.

Answer: b

Learning Objective: 2.1. Explain three aspects of guest service: its importance, the need for service to be an integral part of the hotel's culture, and the role of managers in quality service.

Difficulty Level: Easy

3. Which answers the question "What do we want to create?"
  - a. Service level
  - b. Values
  - c. Culture
  - d. **Vision**

Answer: d

Learning Objective: 2.1. Explain three aspects of guest service: its importance, the need for service to be an integral part of the hotel's culture, and the role of managers in quality service.

Difficulty Level: Medium

4. Which is the act of granting employees the authority (power) to make key decisions within their areas of responsibility.
- a. Supervising
  - b. Mentoring
  - c. Coaching
  - d. Empowering**

Answer: d

Learning Objective: 2.1. Explain three aspects of guest service: its importance, the need for service to be an integral part of the hotel's culture, and the role of managers in quality service.

Difficulty Level: Medium

5. Which tool clarifies how a hotel will add value for guests, employees and others?
- a. Service level
  - b. Culture
  - c. Vision
  - d. Mission**

Answer: d

Learning Objective: 2.1. Explain three aspects of guest service: its importance, the need for service to be an integral part of the hotel's culture, and the role of managers in quality service.

Difficulty Level: Hard

6. To best anticipate and develop service delivery processes and procedures to address them managers must consider the needs of their
- a. property owners.
  - b. guests.**
  - c. supervisors.
  - d. vendors.

Answer: b

Learning Objective: 2.2. Emphasize the importance of considering the needs of hotel guests from their own perspectives.

Difficulty Level: Easy

7. Which is a universal need of all hotel guests?
- a. Wi-Fi access
  - b. Mini-bars
  - c. **Clean drinking water**
  - d. In-room safes

Answer: c

Learning Objective: 2.2. Emphasize the importance of considering the needs of hotel guests from their own perspectives.

Difficulty Level: Easy

8. Employee guest ratio is typically calculated as the number of hotel employees relative to the
- a. room revenue achieved by a hotel.
  - b. **number of rooms in a hotel.**
  - c. number of rooms sold in a hotel.
  - d. supervision levels in a hotel.

Answer: b

Learning Objective: 2.2. Emphasize the importance of considering the needs of hotel guests from their own perspectives.

Difficulty Level: Medium

9. As hotel guest expectations increase, hotels can typically
- a. decrease the number of rooms they sell.
  - b. increase the number of rooms they sell.
  - c. decrease their prices.
  - d. increase their prices.

Answer: d

Learning Objective: 2.2. Emphasize the importance of considering the needs of hotel guests from their own perspectives.

Difficulty Level: Medium

10. A 150-room hotel employs 30 workers. What is this hotel's employee to guest ratio?
- a. 1:3
  - b. 1:4
  - c. **1:5**
  - d. 1:6

Answer: b

Learning Objective: 2.2. Emphasize the importance of considering the needs of hotel guests from their own perspectives.

Difficulty Level: Hard

11. Which is a tactic, process, or program used by a hotel that is desired by guests but not offered by the hotel's competitors?
- a. Span of control
  - b. Empowerment
  - c. Quality service
  - d. **Competitive edge**

Answer: d

Learning Objective: 2.3. Describe six steps important in the consistent delivery of quality guest services.

Difficulty Level: Easy

12. Which is the initial step hotel managers take in developing and implementing a quality service system in a hotel?
- a. Train and empower staff
  - b. Implement revised systems
  - c. **Consider the guest being served**
  - d. Develop procedures to deliver what guests desire

Answer: c

Learning Objective: 2.3. Describe six steps important in the consistent delivery of quality guest services.

Difficulty Level: Easy

13. Cross-functional teams are made up of hotel employees
- from different departments.**
  - of different ages.
  - with different years of experience.
  - who are paid different hourly amounts.

Answer: a

Learning Objective: 2.3. Describe six steps important in the consistent delivery of quality guest services.

Difficulty Level: Medium

14. When they engage in benchmarking hotel managers seek to find
- new customers.
  - cost cutting techniques.
  - best industry practices.**
  - high-quality employees.

Answer: c

Learning Objective: 2.3. Describe six steps important in the consistent delivery of quality guest services.

Difficulty Level: Medium

15. Which is the final step in ensuring the consistent delivery of quality service?
- Train and empower staff
  - Implement revised systems
  - Consider the guest being served
  - Evaluate and modify service delivery systems**

Answer: d

Learning Objective: 2.3. Describe six steps important in the consistent delivery of quality guest services.

Difficulty Level: Hard

16. Moments of truth are impressions formed by hotel
- managers.
  - staff.
  - guests.**
  - owners.

Answer: c

Learning Objective: 2.4. Define the concept of *moments of truth* and discuss how they can help guests confirm they are receiving exemplary levels of service.

Difficulty Level: Easy

17. Hotel owners want their guests to have
- as many moments of truth as possible.
  - as few moments of truth as possible.
  - as few positive moments of truth as possible.
  - as many positive moments of truth as possible.**

Answer: d

Learning Objective: 2.4. Define the concept of *moments of truth* and discuss how they can help guests confirm they are receiving exemplary levels of service.

Difficulty Level: Easy

18. Word-of-mouth advertising originates from a hotel's
- managers.
  - staff.
  - guests.**
  - owners.

Answer: c

Learning Objective: 2.4. Define the concept of *moments of truth* and discuss how they can help guests confirm they are receiving exemplary levels of service.

Difficulty Level: Medium

19. What is true about word of mouth advertising?
- It is neither positive nor negative.
  - It can be positive or negative.**
  - It is always positive.
  - It is always negative.

Answer: b

Learning Objective: 2.4. Define the concept of *moments of truth* and discuss how they can help guests confirm they are receiving exemplary levels of service.

Difficulty Level: Medium

20. A goal of no guest-related complaints established after guest service processes are implemented is referred to as
- positive reinforcement.
  - zero defects.**
  - a mission statement.
  - corporate culture.

Answer: b

Learning Objective: 2.4. Define the concept of *moments of truth* and discuss how they can help guests confirm they are receiving exemplary levels of service.

Difficulty Level: Hard

21. "Employer of choice" refers to the concept that a hotel is the preferred place of employment in the community for applicants
- a. with little chance of finding a job.
  - b. who have alternative employment opportunities.**
  - c. with extensive industry experience.
  - d. who have minimal industry experience.

Answer: b

Learning Objective: 2.5. Summarize information about five basic leadership tactics: decision-making, delegation, communication, motivation, and discipline.

Difficulty Level: Easy

22. Which is the formula managers use to calculate their employee turnover rate?
- a. Number of Employees Separated ( ÷ ) Number of Employees in the Workforce
  - b. Number of Employees Separated ( x ) Number of Employees in the Workforce**
  - c. Number of Employees Separated ( + ) Number of Employees in the Workforce
  - d. Number of Employees Separated ( - ) Number of Employees in the Workforce

Answer: b

Learning Objective: 2.5. Summarize information about five basic leadership tactics: decision-making, delegation, communication, motivation, and discipline.

Difficulty Level: Easy

23. Service recovery tactics are used when a guest
- a. experiences high quality service levels.
  - b. provides negative feedback during a current visit to a hotel.**
  - c. provides positive feedback during a current visit to a hotel.
  - d. experiences a positive moment of truth.

Answer: b

Learning Objective: 2.5. Summarize information about five basic leadership tactics: decision-making, delegation, communication, motivation, and discipline.

Difficulty Level: Medium

24. When is the ideal time to address service-related concerns of a guest with the goal of identifying problems and resolving them?
- a. Before the guest checks in.
  - b. While the guest is still on the property.**
  - c. Within 24 hours of the guest's departure.
  - d. Within 1 week of the guest's departure.

Answer: b

Learning Objective: 2.5. Summarize information about five basic leadership tactics: decision-making, delegation, communication, motivation, and discipline.

Difficulty Level: Medium

25. A hotel has 50 employees. In a specific time period the hotel experienced the separation of 15 employees. What was the hotel's employee turnover rate for this time period?
- a. 5%
  - b. 15%
  - c. 30%**
  - d. 50%

Answer: c

Learning Objective: 2.5. Summarize information about five basic leadership tactics: decision-making, delegation, communication, motivation, and discipline.

Difficulty Level: Hard