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Gulf Journal of Advance Business Research

FE Gulf Publishers.<https://fegulf.com>

EXEMPLARY PROPERTY MANAGEMENT SERVICES: CASE OF PARK ISLAND, KAI SHING MANAGEMENT SERVICES LIMITED

Dr. Ming Kwan¹ & Leo Tong²

¹The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

²Director of Capital Delight Inc

Volume No: 1

Issue No: 2

Page No: 132-139

Received: 20/09/23

Accepted: 25/10/23

Published: 01/11/23

Corresponding Author: Dr. Ming Kwan

Email: ming-wai.kwan@polyu.edu.hk / leo.tong@capitaldelight.com

Abstract

This study focuses on the significance of providing 4P's - Proactive, Protective, Professional, and Passionate - in extraordinary property management services, using Park Island, Kai Shing Management Services Limited in Hong Kong as a case study. The real-life experiences and views shared by residents living in Park Island demonstrate the spirit of "PARK ISLAND" and underscore the importance of professionalism and exceptional service performance across all aspects of property management. By embodying the 4P's in property management services, irrespective of weather conditions or situations, professional practitioners can cultivate trust, respect, appreciation, and gratitude among residents. The practical implications of this research highlight the potential to exceed residents' expectations and enhance the reputation of property management companies. Furthermore, this study emphasizes the need for a fundamental service philosophy and attitude within the property management industry, encouraging all companies to strive for excellence in meeting and surpassing residents' needs, regardless of external factors.

Keywords: Property Management, Services Management.

INTRODUCTION

The increasing demands of residents in a competitive business environment have necessitated the establishment of high service quality standards in property management. Furthermore, the diverse characteristics of residents, influenced by factors such as culture, subculture, social class, family, education, religion, experiences, mass media, social media, and advertising, present a significant challenge. Effectively managing the diverse needs and expectations of customers can be a demanding task. Nonetheless, the unwavering dedication of property management professionals in Kai Shing Management Services Limited has upheld the motto of "WE SERVE YOU BEST!" Their remarkable commitment to providing services from the heart, guided by the golden rule and fundamental philosophy of earning trust, appreciation, and respect from residents, is truly commendable. Regardless of weather conditions or occasions, these

professionals consistently demonstrate the 4P's – being proactive, protective, professional, and passionate – in delivering exceptional property management services. The objective of this study is to investigate and analyze strategies for enhancing extraordinary property management services. Specifically, it focuses on the challenges faced by practitioners in meeting customer expectations during various weather conditions and occasions. By building upon existing research and exploring unexplored areas, this study offers valuable insights into strengthening performance in providing extraordinary property management services. It addresses inquiries pertaining to delivering exceptional services in critical weather conditions, thereby benefiting property management practitioners.

Park Island Background

Park Island, named “the leisure vacation island”, is a private residential area situated in Ma Wan, which is in the north-east part of Ma Wan. Park Island consists of over 5,000 residential units in 35 blocks with 3 large clubhouses covering an area of over 126,000 sq.m. In Park Island, over 40,000 sq.m are covered with greenery with gardens and mini farms, taking up nearly 40% of the site area. Since vehicle restrictions are enforced in Ma Wan to limit the emissions, the project by and large is described as a “pollution-free green city” which promotes one-stop green building and management (Chan, 2012). It is regarded as the first largest eco-friendly residential area which covers a large green space since planning (Chan, 2012). The management is dedicated to plan, implement and educate the residents through various environmental protection programs, workshops and events. Green concepts have applied in property planning, design, resources purchasing, architectural work, gardening, daily management operation and management as well as clubhouses activities and events management.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In the service industry, such as property management, the delivery of high-quality service is crucial. Meeting customer needs and surpassing their expectations is imperative (Baharum, Nawawi, & Saat, 2014). As the demand for superior management quality and sophisticated facilities increases, property management services have evolved beyond basic tasks such as cleaning, security, and maintenance. Some property management companies now offer additional services such as recreational activities, food and beverage provisions, and transportation (KSMS, 2023). Today, property management encompasses a wide range of responsibilities. This includes maintaining strict cleaning standards, ensuring reliable 24-hour security services, conducting necessary maintenance, creating appealing landscaping, managing clubhouses, coordinating recreational activities, organizing events, promoting sustainable practices, and more. It is evident that property management is a demanding and challenging profession (Baharum, Nawawi, Saat, 2009). Effective property management requires the establishment of efficient systems, as well as the direction, coordination, and control of available skills to preserve property value and prevent deterioration through proper upkeep and maintenance (Scarrett, 1986). The ultimate objective is to maximize the value of customers' properties. According to Mahatma Gandhi (Nair, 2009), the father of India, “A customer is the most important visitor on our premises; he is not dependent on us. We are dependent on him. He is not an interruption in our work. He is the purpose of it. He is not an outsider in our business. He is part of it. We are not doing him a favour by serving him. He is doing us a favor by giving us an opportunity to do so”. Although Mahatma Gandhi was not the father of marketing, he was

the father of India, and his wisdom and insight from this statement can still be applied in properties management. In the service industry like property management, quality and perception of quality is essential. Service quality is an abstract and elusive concept because of the well-known distinctive natures and characteristics of services which is intangibility, perishability, heterogeneity, and inseparability of production and consumption (Zeithaml et al, 1985; Rust et al, 1996; Kotler and Armstrong, 2001). Thus, quality can vary from person to person, and from situation to situation (Kandampully, 2002). Perceived service quality was defined as the difference between customer expectations and perceptions or also known as gap analysis (Parasuraman et al, 1985; 1988). The gap analysis model is based on the expectancy disconfirmation theory. Expectancy disconfirmation theory predicts that customers will judge that quality is low if performance does not meet their expectations and quality increases as performance exceeds expectations (Oliver, 1993). Hence, customers' expectations serve as the foundation on which service quality will be evaluated by customers.

Quality

In the service industry like properties management, quality and perception of quality is essential. Thus, the need to deliver quality service is imperative to meet the needs of customers and even exceed their expectation (Baharum et al., 2014). The role of service quality in the success of businesses cannot be denied and it is vital for the managers to have a good understanding on what exactly the customers want (Akbaba, 2006). Quality is a subjective assessment based on the thoughts and feelings of customers, referring to the aspects of a service or product that generate customer satisfaction (Grönroos, 1983; Parasuraman et al., 1985; Rust et al., 1996; Reichheld & Sasser, 1990; Amorim & Saghezchi, 2014). There is no universally agreed-upon definition of quality; instead, different definitions arise within different contexts (Reeves & Bednar, 1994). Given the complexity of the quality construct, multiple definitions are necessary for companies to address quality issues that evolve as products progress through various stages, from planning and implementation to market promotion (Garvin, 1984; Sebastianelli & Tamimi, 2002). Initially, quality was defined as value (Feigenbaum, 1951; Abbott, 1955), fitness for use (Juran et al., 1962), or conformance to specifications (Levitt, 1972; Gilmore, 1974). Over time, quality research explored various dimensions or attributes of quality across different industries and contexts. Garvin (1984, 1987) proposed a framework comprising eight dimensions: performance, features, reliability, conformance, durability, serviceability, aesthetics, and perceived quality. Kano et al. (1984) categorized product or service attributes into "taken for granted quality" and "surprising quality" based on their ability to satisfy customer needs. In the realm of service research, quality was recognized as a subjective customer perception (Grönroos, 1983; Parasuraman et al., 1985), with Buzzel & Gale (1987) stating that it is determined by customer opinions. Grönroos (1990) emphasized that customer-perceived quality is what truly matters, and Zeithaml et al. (1990) argued that only the customer's judgment of quality is significant. According to Rust et al. (1996), customer service revolves around perceptions. Service quality, being an abstract and elusive concept, is influenced by the distinct nature of services, characterized by intangibility, perishability, heterogeneity, and the inseparability of production and consumption (Zeithaml et al., 1985; Rust et al., 1996; Kotler & Armstrong, 2001). As a result, quality can vary from person to person and from situation to situation (Kandampully, 2002). Perceived service quality is defined as the gap between customer

expectations and perceptions, based on the gap analysis model rooted in the expectancy disconfirmation theory (Parasuraman et al., 1985, 1988; Oliver, 1980). Thus, customers' expectations serve as the basis for evaluating service quality, which depends on the extent to which actual service performance meets customer needs and expectations (Chakrabarty et al., 2007). It is crucial to recognize that customers play a pivotal role in evaluating service quality, as their judgment determines the success of a product or service (Kelesbayev et al., 2015). Therefore, customer surveys are effective tools for measuring service quality (Homburg et al., 2013).

Affective Competencies

Affective competencies encompass a broad range of qualities and skills related to an individual's understanding and engagement with aesthetics, beliefs, spirituality, passion, values, attitudes, commitment, emotions, feelings, self-concept, identities, characters, interests, personality, relationship skills, and appreciation (Hall, 1976; Bloom & Krathwohl, 1984; Nanthachai, 2002; Schuck & Grootenboer, 2004). These competencies include soft skills, often referred to as interpersonal, human, people, or behavioral skills (Kantrowitz, 2005; Rainsbury et al., 2002), as well as work commitment, work effectiveness, and respect for others (Horng & Lu, 2006). At a psychological level, it is important to recognize that emotions and cognition are closely interconnected, with each influencing and shaping the other (Caine & Caine, 1991).

METHODOLOGY

A descriptive research design is adopted by using a qualitative approach, with customer's views on service quality management in Park Island. Research on service quality has traditionally employed a variety of deductive processes, testing a plethora of hypotheses and pre-determined theories. Service quality researchers have typically approached the problem from a positivist perspective, utilizing quantitative research techniques such as surveys and questionnaires, and processing data with the help of statistical data analysis tools. While mostly deductive in nature, such research tools tend to measure a set of predetermined hypotheses, searching for answers to the "what" questions and not allowing for any additional factors to enter the researcher's process of reasoning (Yin, 1994). Qualitative research is based and derives strength from its inductive approach, it focusses on specific situations or people, and emphasis on words rather than numbers (Maxwell, 2005). Respondents in the service interaction context have been shown to demonstrate a multitude of contributions and it is very likely that their attitudes, behaviors, perceptions and experiences of service quality differ. To gain a degree of emotional depth, which is not possible to achieve simply by analyzing quantitative data, a qualitative research approach has been chosen as a more appropriate research strategy. Qualitative research is "concerned with understanding things rather than with measuring them" (Gordon & Langmaid, 1988, p. 2), whereby the "subjectivity and the authenticity of human experience" (Silverman, 2010, p. 138) allows the researcher to gain an insight into the different meanings, perceptions, feelings and attitudes of research subjects (Holloway et al., 2010).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Park Island Management's Exceptional Services in Challenging Weather Conditions

In the face of challenging weather conditions such as typhoons and black rain in Hong Kong, the Park Island Management Service Office has consistently displayed unwavering dedication and professionalism. Their commitment to providing exceptional property management services

remains steadfast, even in the most adverse circumstances. One incident exemplifies the exceptional service led and provided by the Property and Facility Manager at Park Island. When faced with a water seepage issue, they exhibited a remarkable combination of passion, attentiveness, responsiveness, and professionalism. They efficiently coordinated with skilled technicians to ensure a swift resolution. The management's level of efficiency and professionalism went above and beyond residents' expectations, showcasing the importance of property management services that prioritize the needs and well-being of residents, irrespective of the prevailing weather conditions. This incident serves as a testament to the unwavering commitment of the Park Island Management Service Office to provide exceptional service and exceed residents' expectations, regardless of the challenges posed by inclement weather. Their dedication and ability to deliver outstanding service in any weather condition is a testament to their unwavering commitment to resident satisfaction.

Promoting Environmental Awareness and Resident Engagement for a Greener Community

Park Island Management has taken proactive steps to implement various environmental protection measures and organize events focused on environmentally friendly property management. These initiatives aim to promote environmental awareness, encourage resident involvement in sustainable practices, and foster a collective responsibility towards addressing climate change. Recognizing the urgency of tackling climate change, Park Island Management has integrated environmental protection into every aspect of community life. These efforts span from energy conservation and waste reduction to promoting eco-friendly transportation options and green spaces. By implementing these measures, the management company seeks to create a more sustainable and environmentally conscious community. To enhance environmental awareness and promote sustainable practices, Park Island Management organizes educational events that engage residents in matters of environmental importance. These events have been well-received, with participants acknowledging their effectiveness in promoting environmentally friendly property management, raising environmental consciousness, and encouraging resident involvement in sustainable practices. The success of these initiatives depends on the collective efforts of residents, management companies, and governments. Each stakeholder has a crucial role to play in embracing environmentally friendly practices and actively participating in environmental protection initiatives. By fostering a community-wide commitment to sustainability, Park Island aims to contribute to the preservation of our planet and create a more environmentally conscious society. It is essential for all stakeholders to recognize the significance of their individual actions in building a sustainable future. Through the joint efforts of residents, management, and government, Park Island can continue to lead the way in creating a greener and more environmentally conscious community. By promoting environmental awareness, encouraging sustainable practices, and fostering resident engagement, Park Island Management is working towards a sustainable future for all.

Cultivating a Customer-Centric Culture: How Park Island's Management and Frontline Staff Achieve Excellence

In the context of properties management services in Park Island, the management and frontline staff have successfully implemented the following strategies:

1. **Customer Relationship Building:** The frontline staff has excelled in building positive relationships with customers. Through their empathetic approach, active listening skills, and

- understanding of individual needs, customer service representatives have successfully established trust and loyalty among customers. Their efforts in nurturing these relationships contribute to delivering exceptional customer service.
2. **Effective Communication:** The frontline staff demonstrates strong communication skills, ensuring that customers' inquiries, concerns, and requests are promptly understood and addressed. By articulately conveying information and providing accurate guidance, customer service representatives facilitate effective communication, which is vital in delivering outstanding service.
 3. **Integration of Technology: Achieving Outstanding Customer Service through Affective Competencies and Technological Integration:** The management has effectively integrated computerized technologies into the property's security services. CCTV, motion detectors, and other innovative technologies have been deployed to enhance the efficiency and convenience of security services. This successful implementation has positively influenced customer satisfaction by providing accurate and convenient security solutions (Tse, 2018).
 4. **Problem-solving and Conflict Resolution:** The management has equipped the frontline staff with affective competencies that enable them to handle challenges and conflicts in properties management services. Customer service representatives exhibit a solution-oriented mindset, actively seeking resolutions and mediating conflicts to ensure customer satisfaction. Their ability to address issues promptly and effectively contributes to a positive customer experience.
 5. **Emotional Intelligence:** The frontline staff demonstrates emotional intelligence, recognizing and managing their own emotions while understanding and empathizing with the emotions of customers. Customer service representatives navigate challenging situations with tact and sensitivity, ensuring that customers feel heard, understood, and valued throughout their interactions. This emotional intelligence fosters a positive service environment.

The successful implementation of these strategies by the management and frontline staff of Park Island's properties management services has resulted in exceptional customer service. By prioritizing interpersonal skills, affective competencies, and the integration of technology, they have created a positive and memorable customer experience, consistently meeting and exceeding customer expectations.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the case of Park Island exemplifies the embodiment of the 4P's - "Proactive, Protective, Professional, and Passionate" - in delivering extraordinary property management services. The spirit of "PARK ISLAND" encapsulates the core values and principles that guide their service approach. These values include being Passionate, Attentive, Responsive, Knowledgeable, Industrious, Sincere, Loving, Affective, Naturalistic, and Dedicated. This case study highlights that extraordinary service performance is not limited to isolated instances or specific occasions. It encompasses the continuous provision of services from the heartfelt dedication of the management staff throughout the years. Regardless of whether it is a day with favorable weather or adverse conditions, moments of tranquility or challenging situations, or ordinary or special days, Park Island's management consistently delivers exceptional services. Residents expressed their gratitude to Park Island's management for their unwavering commitment to caring for our properties and providing extraordinary services 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and 365/366 days a year. Their dedication and efforts contribute to the overall

satisfaction and well-being of the residents, ensuring that their properties are well-maintained, and their needs are consistently met.

Future Studies

It is important to acknowledge that the findings of this study provide a snapshot of the thoughts and feelings among residents in Park Island. The authors do not make claims about the generalizability of the results. However, the study does highlight a concentration of high service quality in property management at Park Island. This finding should be of particular interest to property management companies aiming to provide exceptional services that surpass customer expectations.

Future research could delve deeper into understanding the factors that contribute to divergent perceptions of service quality and explore ways to align these perceptions for improved customer satisfaction. In addition to the dimensions of quality examined in this study, future research could explore other dimensions, particularly the influence of culture. Given the multicultural nature of many countries, including the challenges and opportunities it presents, investigating the impact of culture on service quality in property management would be a valuable area of exploration. Lastly, future research should explore innovative techniques and methodologies that can provide meaningful insights into service quality and customer satisfaction in property management. Embracing new approaches, such as advanced data analytics or customer feedback analysis, can contribute to a deeper understanding of the dynamics at play and inform strategies for enhancing service quality.

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