



Sustaining Competitive and Responsible Enterprises
in SOUTH AFRICA's Tourism Sector



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Enhancing guest experience:

Gaining customer feedback and using results

The Amakhala Game Reserve covers 6500 hectares of land that has been converted from sheep and cattle farming to a conservation area with re-introduced wildlife, including lion, elephant, rhino, buffalo and cheetah.

The reserve is located 60 km from Port Elizabeth, in the Eastern Cape of South Africa. The Safari Lodge and Woodbury Lodge are both situated in the reserve, and offer luxury suites to their discerning guests.

Initial situation

Although both lodges had visitor books, the comments made by guests were not being used to their full potential by management. Guests would leave simple comments such as 'Wonderful stay with such warm and welcome hospitality'. Although this type of feedback is always nice to hear, such anecdotes were not detailed enough to identify areas for improvement.

Therefore feedback from guests was not being used effectively, and was only being seen by management. Other staff members were not aware of the type of concerns guests would have.

ILO SCORE training

In November 2010, managers and staff from both lodges participated in the ILO's Module 2 (Service Quality) SCORE training. Trainers explained how the use of a customer feedback form could help the lodges to see how different departments were performing, and also to track changes over time.



TOP:
View from decking at
Woodbury Lodge

BOTTOM:
Pool area at The Safari Lodge

Changes that took place

The two lodges developed new guest feedback forms, for them to rate the staff, their ranger, rooms, grounds and food. Their target is to get top ratings, of *Excellent*, for every department, all of the time. The Safari Lodge compiles information from the forms every month and share these with all staff, by posting them on a staff notice board. When notable comments are made, these were also posted.



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Direct impacts of the change

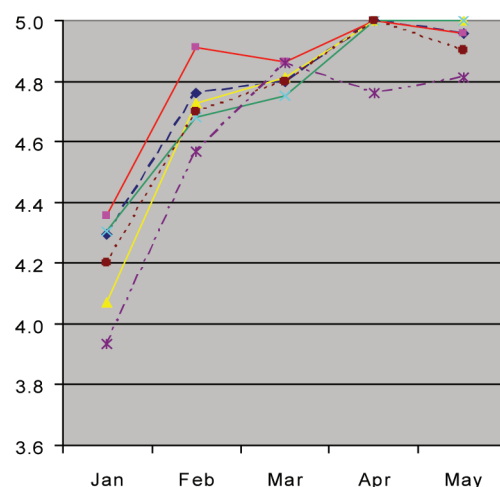
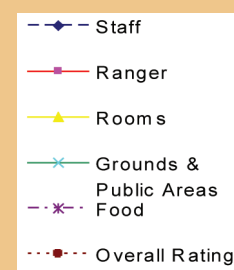
Tracking performance from January to May 2011 at The Safari Lodge clearly shows that guest's overall satisfaction improved rapidly at the start of the process, from an average of 4.2 to 4.7 out of a maximum of 5. By May, ratings had stabilised at an impressive average of 4.9 across departments. The most impressive improvement was shown for food, which began at 3.9 in January, and rose to 4.8 in May.

Now that this feedback from guests is available to all, it leads to discussions between staff about what was good, or not, and what can be improved.

The changes and the improvements in satisfaction have led to greater staff morale, and their efforts to achieve higher scores from guests, by giving them a better quality of experience.

Return on investment

This case study shows that improvements in the quality of service can be made simply by openly and systematically collecting and sharing guest feedback. Not only are all staff aware of problems and improvements, but also action can be taken to address any issues of guest dissatisfaction quickly.



Target group	Benefit
Employees	Improved morale. Incentives to improve guest satisfaction.
Management	More motivated workforce. Improved communication between managers and employees.
Company	Better communication. Happier clients. Greater productivity.

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