ASHESI UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

IMPROVING THE SERVICE DELIVERY OF TENACK BEACH RESORT AND HOTELS THROUGH SPECIFIC OPERATIONAL INTERVENTION

APPLIED PROJECT

BY

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this Applied Project Report is the result of my own original work and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or elsewhere.

Candidate's Signature…………………………………………….

Candidate's Name: …………………………………………….

Date: …………………………………………………………….

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the Applied Project Report were supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of applied projects laid down by Ashesi University College.

Supervisor's Name: Mrs. Emefa Dako

Date: ………………………………………………………….

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

With increased competition in the hospitality industry, many hotels have had their fair share of struggles to be the number one option in their customer's mind. Due to this competition, pricing is no longer an essential but rather quality services and experiences. With Tenack Beach Resort's vision in upgrading its star rating by 2020, it is on course in improving its facilities and experiences, but through research, a gap in their services was discovered. The project was carried out to identify the fail points and bottlenecks of the hotel's service delivery process that needed urgent attention. Semi-structure interviews, observations, and internet research were conducted to obtain information and also understand the operations of the hotel goes through in delivering its services.

A department in the hotel that needed urgent attention was the restaurant. The restaurant was the main focus because first of all, it was the hotel's primary source of income. Also, the restaurant was the department that had the most complaint and lastly based on the research, improving the restaurant would increase its revenue. In solving this problem, a service blueprint was created first to understand the process customers go through, the difficulty they encounter in experiencing the services, the activities that go on in the backend and the support process available in the restaurant. After that, a new service blueprint was created and the fail points, waiting time and potential problem areas were eliminated from the blueprint. In addition to the solution, key performance indicators were also established to ensure that the works of each department were measured, and measurements could inform them of the areas to improve and the areas to maintain.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Ghana is a developing country located in the West of Africa, and its neighboring countries are Togo, Burkina Faso, and Cote D'Ivoire. Ghana has diverse languages and the official language being English (Ayeh, 2015). In 2017, the country had a population of approximately 29 million and a GDP of $47.33 billion (World Bank, 2018). Ghana's coastline is bordered by castle and forts built by colonial masters; the country also has attractions like wildlife parks, beaches, water bodies, natural reserves and caves (Ayeh, 2015). The hospitality industry in Ghana principally provides accommodation, food, car rentals, travel, and tour services.

Also, in 2014, the country recorded 1,093,000 international tourists visiting for various purposes like holidays, business, and health treatment (Ghana Statistical Service, 2017). In that same year, the revenue of the tourism and hospitality industry surged by about $2 billion, and with accommodation contributing about $582.6 million, it was the single highest contributor to the industry's revenue (Ghana Statistical Service, 2017). This implies that hotels are a significant driver of industry profitability. The tourism and hospitality industry is Ghana's fourth foreign exchange earner (Bentil, 2014).

According to Mrs. Ofusu- Adjare, Ghana's former minister of Tourism, Culture and Creative Arts, the tourism and hospitality industry in 2015 contributed about $2.1 billion to the country's Gross Domestic Product, and it also employed about 350,000 people (Dogbevi, 2015). The hospitality industry in Ghana is under the supervision of the Ghana Tourism Authority. The Ghana Tourism Authority was formed in 1973, but its

name was changed from Ghana Tourist Board to Ghana Tourism Authority in 2011. The Ghana Tourism Authority is the regulatory body of the Tourism and Hospitality sectors in Ghana, and their responsibility is to research on the hospitality space, provide licenses to businesses looking to venture into the industry, and regulate the hospitality sector of Ghana. Thus, the Hospitality industry plays an integral role in the development of Ghana.

This section of the paper is going to give a brief description of the company of focus and analyze the hospitality industry using the PESTEL framework. The use of the PESTEL framework in this analysis will help in identifying and understanding the macro-environmental factors that affect the hospitality industry.

1.2 Company Profile of Tenack Beach Resort and Hotels

Tenack Beach Resort and Hotels is a two-star hotel located at Beyin in the Western Region. The hotel is located on the coast of the Atlantic Ocean. The hotel is surrounded by various attraction sites like tropical jungles, game reserves, stilt villages, and forts. The hotel is also a hub for turtle refuge which involves the protection of endangered turtles and their eggs. The vision of the hotel is to own a chain of hotels globally and also be known as a prestigious global brand. The Mission of the hotel is to create a memorable travel experience for its customers with the fusion of natural and African elements. Tenack Beach Resort is a perfect getaway with a touch of nature and Africa. They provide exciting activities like tennis and volley ball tournaments, beach soccer and storytelling by the fireside. Aside from accommodation, they offer vacation, and site seeing packages.

During their seven years of being in operation, the hotel has grown quickly, and they currently have about sixty rooms. At the moment the hotel is undergoing revamping and expansion. This is aimed at providing services for more people.

1.2.1 SWOT Analysis of Tenack Beach Resort and Hotels

A SWOT analysis is a tool used in analyzing the internal and external environment of a company. The SWOT analysis involves strengths, weakness, opportunity, and threats that are peculiar to the company. Below is the SWOT Analysis of Tenack Beach Resort and Hotels.

Strengths

Location: The location of Tenack beach resort puts the hotel at an advantageous end. Because the hotel is located in a serene and quiet place, customers tend to love the place because it serves as a perfect get away to enjoy nature. The hotel is also surrounded by tourist attractions like Nzelezu and Ankasa Forest. The hotel is also located on the coast of the Atlantic-ocean. Since the hotel was also the first to start in the area, they have a first mover advantage.

Pricing: Rooms and services of the hotel are priced at affordable rates. Since the target markets of the hotel are middle-income earners, they cut down costs and price their services at an affordable rate compared to its competitors.

Weaknesses

Slow adaptation to change: Tenack Beach Hotel's inability to adapt to change quickly has been its greatest weakness. The area in which the hotel is located has undergone a lot of development due to the exploration of oil in its neighboring towns.

Tenack's inability to respond to change in demand quickly has given its competitors a significant portion of the market share. The hotel has low publicity due to the absence of a marketing team in the company.

Also, an increase in the number of complaints at the restaurant serves as a weakness to the hotel. Many of the employees are low skilled and performances of employees are not tracked or measured. Also, the hotel does not have some facilities like conference rooms and pool.

Opportunities

Exploration of oil: The discovery of oil in the Western Region has led to a lot of development and many forms of other developments are yet to come. The construction of the Atuabo Gas Processing Plant serves as an excellent opportunity for the hotel. This is because companies in charge of building the gas plant would have to provide accommodation for its employees. The increasing number of tourist activities in Ghana also serves as an opportunity for the hotel since it is also located around tourist sites.

Threats

Due to the discovery of oil and the construction of the Atuabo Gas Processing Plant, there has been a lot of development, and this has attracted has brought about many competitors. Though the construction of the Gas Processing Plant would increase the need for accommodation, the entrant of new hotels is a threat to the hotel. The location of the hotel poses a threat to the company because many employees are not willing to work in the hotel due to the distance. This has caused a lot of management problems for the

hotel as many experienced people are not ready to move, hence the hotel has no option

than to train inexperienced people to carry out its operation.

Below is a summary of the company's SWOT analysis.

Strengths	Weaknesses
• Rooms and services of the hotel are priced at affordable rates. • The location of Tenack beach resort puts the hotel at an advantageous end. • Perfect hideaway spot	• Tenack Beach Hotel adapts to change slowly • Low publicity • Increased complaint in their restaurant • Low skilled labour • Performances are not tracked or measured. • No conference rooms and pool
Threats	**Opportunities**
• An increase in the number of competitors • Many skilled employees are not willing to work in the hotel due to the distance.	• The construction of Atuabo Gas Processing Plant serves as a great opportunity for the hotel • The increasing number of tourism activities in Ghana.

Table 1: SWOT Analysis on Tenack Beach Resort

1.3 Industry Analysis Using the PESTEL Framework

The PESTEL framework is a tool that is used to analyze the macro or external environmental factors that can influence an organization (Professional Academy, 2018). The acronym stands for Politic, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental and Legal factors.

1.3.1 Political Factors

The political factor determines how government policies and stability can affect an organization or an industry. The target markets of the hospitality sector are foreign and domestic customers, and for this to be possible, it is important for Ghana to have a favorable political environment. This is because the political stability of Ghana influences how people will patronize services in the hospitality industry. Tourism, which has a direct relationship with the hospitality industry can operate efficiently and profitably in a country where there is freedom, peace, and stability. In a situation where there is conflict or war in Ghana, the revenues of the firms in the hospitality industry would mostly be affected. According to the UK-Ghana Chamber of Commerce (2017), Ghana has been a stable democracy since the introduction of constitutional democracy in 1992.

In 2016, Egypt experienced a decrease in the number of tourists; the number dropped from 14.7 million to 5.4 million (Geiger, 2017). The fall was due to the conflicts and bombings that the country experienced. According to the Ghana Investment Promotion Centre (2019), Ghana has strong political stability which explains why its hospitality sector is doing well. Thus, when there is peace and political security, tourists are incentivized to visit the country because they generally believe that they will feel safe.

1.3.2 Economic Factors

Economic factors determine the country's financial performance, and this affects the industry directly. Some of the economic factors that affect the hospitality industry are taxation, inflation, exchange rates, utilities, and other indicators. These factors define the economic atmosphere in Ghana and determine the value of the foreign exchange travelers bring into the country. Whether these economic factors influence the economy negatively or positively, it goes a long way also to affect the hospitality industry.

In the case where there is an economic boom, people would be willing to travel more, and this would increase the revenue of the hospitality sector. In a case where there is a recession, people would cut down travel expenses. The industry would also cut down prices, and this would affect their profitability. In 2018, there was panic concerning the economy due to the frequent depreciation of the local currency. Many people feared that there would be an economic meltdown (My Joy Online, 2018). Dr. Said Boakye, the IFS Senior Research Fellow, had to address this fear of a potential collapse due to the currency's performance. He stated that the depreciation of the cedi was a deliberate policy from the Bank of Ghana; hence there was no need to worry (My Joy Online, 2018). If this fear was not addressed, it could have led to a decrease in demand because people would have been anticipating an economic meltdown.

Because the hospitality industry has a financial obligation to more than twelve agencies, including Ghana Tourism Authority, Food and Drugs Board and Ghana Revenue Authority, the increase in utility bills like water and electricity affects the cost structure of the firms in the industry. The increase in the utility bills currently takes up

45% of their operational cost (Mohammed, 2017). According to Adams Mohammed (2017), tourism operators in Ghana are not happy about the increase in utility fees.

1.3.3 Social Factors

Social factors focus on the social environment and also identifies emerging trends (Oxford College of Marketing, 2018). Social factors such as age, culture, gender, and lifestyle affect the hospitality industry. Since the hospitality industry is service-based, it is heavily determined by the needs of the people. The variety and richness of the Ghanaian culture affect the hospitality industry through the ways it welcomes customers, the aesthetics of the hotels and dress code of the employees.

According to the Ghana Statistical Service (2017), there has been an increase in foreign tourists in Ghana, but the visits are geared more toward business and professional purposes rather than holiday or recreational purposes. Also, the number of visits by Ghanaians overseas has decreased over the years. Due to the importance of family and funerals in the Ghanaian culture, 40.5% of domestic tourism was due to visiting family and friends while 30.7% of domestic tourism was attributed to funerals (Ghana Statistical Service, 2015). All these affect the hospitality industry in Ghana because people would have to cater for their accommodation and food during these trips.

1.3.4 Technological Factors

The hospitality industry has started to incorporate technology into its daily activities. These activities include digital booking, online marketing, advertisement and many more. The use of technology especially mobile phones has made things simpler in this industry because it has made information readily available online. The introduction

of booking platforms like Jumia travel, booking.com, Travelocity, breakfast in bed and many more have made the booking and the accessing of information easy.

Also, the introduction of social media platforms like WhatsApp, Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram has made advertisement of travel destinations and communication of services easy for service providers. Social media serves as a platform for clients to give feedback, reviews, and recommendations to service providers. The adoption of technology into the hospitality industry has benefitted both customers and service providers.

1.3.5 Environmental Factors

Changes in environmental factors strongly affect the industry. Most of the environmental factors cannot be controlled. In case of an earthquake or flood, the industry is directly affected. Due to this, it is important for firms in the industry to be prepared and trained to handle any of these factors.

In 2014 when there was an Ebola outbreak in Liberia, Guinea, and Sierra Leonne, all in West Africa, this affected the Ghanaian hospitality sector. According to Bruce Potter, the Vice President of Ghana Hotel Association, the Ebola outbreak in some of the West African countries led to a 20% decrease in room occupancy in Ghanaian hotels (Vanhooymissen, 2014). Though Ghana had no threat of Ebola, the fear of being affected by the disease caused a decrease in the number of international tourisms hence leading to a decrease in the revenues of all businesses in the industry.

1.3.6 Legal Factors

The Legal factor is concerned about the laws and regulations that govern the environment in which the organization is located. Legal factors include the Labour Act Law, health and safety regulations and laws that regulate the industry. The regulatory body that oversees the hospitality industry in Ghana is the Ghana Tourism Authority. They have rules and regulations that govern all aspects of the industry ranging from the requirements that need to be met, the activities of the companies, the Labor Act Law, and Income Act Law. Companies in the hospitality industry cannot operate without the licenses of the Ghana Tourism Authority.

The industry is also supposed to adhere to the requirement of some other agencies like the Fire Service, Environmental Health Division, the Police Service, Food and Drugs Board, Ghana Tourism Authority, Ghana Water Company, Electric Company of Ghana, and Ghana Revenue Authority. Aside from meeting the requirements of these agencies, dealing with them individually can be difficult at time because some of these agencies come for inspection and this at times interrupts the daily activities of the hotel.

1.4 Porter's Five Forces

In addition to the PESTEL analysis, Porter's Five Forces would be used to analyze the industry further. Porter's Five Forces is a framework that is used to analyze the intensity of competition in an industry. This framework was developed by Michael Porter in 1979 (Mindtools, 2018). The industry is analyzed based on these five forces: the bargaining power of buyers, bargaining power of suppliers, the threat of new entrants, the threat of substitutes and rivalry among existing competitors.

1.4.1 Bargaining Power of Buyers

The bargaining power of buyers in this industry is dependent on the number of competitors, the differences in the services offered, the availability of information and the prices. The availability of many competitors in the industry has given buyers many alternatives hence lowing their switching cost. Also, buyers have strong bargaining power when they engage the services in large volumes. A group of buyers tends to negotiate prices of rooms when purchases are in large volumes.

The introduction of technology has also made information easily accessible to all, and this has increased customers' price sensitivity. Thus, potential customers can compare competitors' prices found online to the rates the company has to offer. All these factors show that buyers have high bargaining power in the hospitability industry, and this leads to a reduction in the prices hence affecting the profitability of the sector.

1.4.2 Bargaining Power of Suppliers

The bargaining power of suppliers examines whether suppliers have power in the industry. The bargaining power of suppliers in the hospitality industry is dependent on the number of suppliers, availability of suppliers for immediate purchase and switching costs. The number of suppliers in this industry has a significant impact on the cost structure. Since the industry is labor intensive, aside from utilities, labor also takes up its cost, and these costs are mainly cost involved in hiring, training, and motivating employees. The switching cost in the hospitality industry is low because there are many options available in the industry and some companies also undergo backward integration to cut down the bargaining power of suppliers. Thus, the bargaining power of suppliers is

strong, and this causes the cost component of their service. This results in reducing the profitability of the industry.

1.4.3 The Threat of New Entry

The threat of new entry examines how easy it would be for new firms to enter into the industry. The threat of new entry is determined by barriers to entry and the retaliation of existing companies. The hotel industry is capital and labor intensive, and fixed cost takes the most significant proportion of cost (Cheng, 2013). Though the industry is capital intensive, internationalization increases the threat to entry. Due to the growing economy and market of Ghana, the chances of international hotels springing up in Ghana is high. Internationalization serves as an advantage to international hotel brands because expanding and moving to new locations would increase their economies of scales, and this implies a decrease in cost and an increase in profitability. This makes the threat of entry high.

1.4.4 Threat of Substitutes

The threat of substitute in the hospitality industry in Ghana is dependent on the product or service performance, switching costs, and product or service price. The existence of hostels serves as a substitute for hotels. Tourists that are in the country for a longer stay might choose between a hostel or a hotel. Thus, this makes the threat of substitute moderate, and it affects the prices of the services in the industry.

1.4.5 Rivalry Among Existing Competitors

The rivalry among existing competitors is dependent on the price of the product, and how identical the service or product is to rivals. Having identical services or products with rivals tend to make competition tough because there is no differentiation between

the prices or the products or service. It is important to note that distinction in terms of the service or product is necessary. This makes the competition aggressive because every competitor wants a share of the market. In the hospitality industry prices are mostly similar, hence players in the industry cannot compete on prices but instead services. The introduction of Airbnb and HomeAway has led to the industry sharing its market share with these accommodation alternatives (Killion, 2018). The rivalry among existing competitors affects the prices.

1.5 Effects of the Industrial Analysis and External Environment on Tenack Beach Resort.

With the hospitality industry constantly increasing and also being one of the highest revenue earners for the country, this serves as a big opportunity for Tenack Beach Resort to take advantage of this opportunity and also use their hotel to boost tourism in the Western Region. With Tenack Beach Resort been located around the tourist site in the Western Region, taking advantage of the increasing number of tourist activity and also promoting tourism in the Western Region would serve as an opportunity for Tenack Beach Resort to grow. According to Ghana Statistical Service (2017), there has been an increase in foreign tourists in Ghana, but the visits are geared more toward business and professional purposes, this means that the hotel has to start building its conferences and business centers to satisfy this new customer need. With high competition and an increase in entrants by international hotel brands, it essential for Tenack Beach not to compete based on pricing but rather compete on their service quality, uniqueness and other features or packages they have to offer.

Summary of the effects of the Industrial Analysis and External Environment

External Environment

Increased tourist activity in Ghana

Political Stability

Inflation

High Operational Cost

Industry Review

Capital and Labour Intensive

Customers have high bargaining power

High competition

Tenack Beach Resort

High Operational Cost

Tenack has taken advantage of the increase in tourist activities

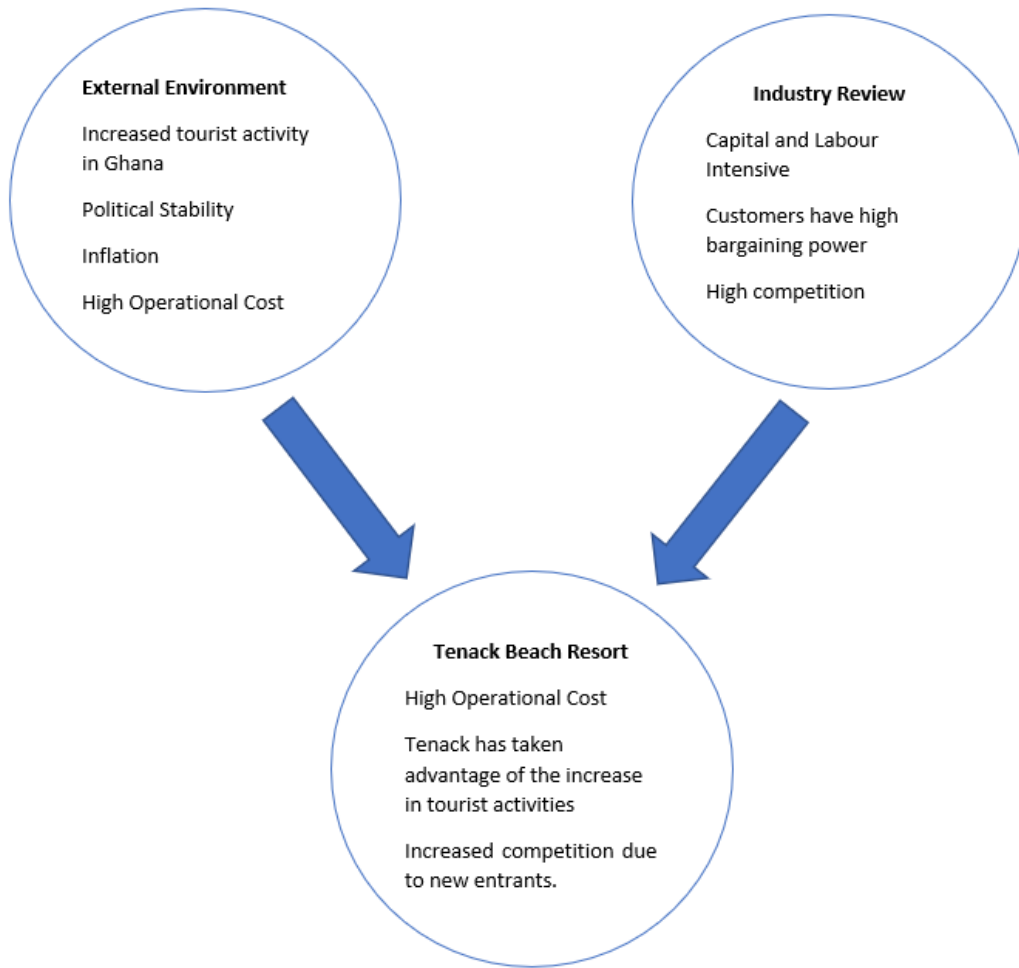Increased competition due to new entrants.

Figure 1: The implications of the external environment and industry on the resort

CHAPTER 2: PROJECT NEEDS AND ANALYSIS

2.1 Needs Assessment

According to Grimsley (2017), a needs assessment is a process used in determining and addressing the needs or gaps between an organization's current state and where it envisions itself in the future. In determining the needs of Tenack Beach Resort, qualitative research was used. Qualitative research focuses on obtaining in-depth knowledge and understanding of specific situations and experiences that are important and enlightening (Rubin & Rubin, 2011). Qualitative research was suitable for this research because it observes the opinions, experiences, feelings, and behaviors of people. A semi-structured interview, observational shadowing, and internet research were used in gathering information about the hotel.

For gathering data, a semi-structured interview was used, and this involves asking open-ended questions which aid in obtaining in-depth responses. The questionnaires formulated were used as guidelines during the interviews. This was to ensure that all relevant questions were answered, and the interviews were guided in a manner that participants would provide concise answers. Participants were not restricted in terms of sharing their experiences and opinions of the hotel. Furthermore, an observational shadowing was used, and this was aimed at gaining more insight into the environment, activities, and behaviors of participants especially the employees of the hotel. Finally, internet research which involved reading online reviews of the hotel was used in acquiring more information about the company.

For this project, 22 people were interviewed, and among them 18 percent were management, 23 percent were employees, and 59 percent were customers. For the management, a semi-structured interview was conducted with them. The interviews were conducted to understand the business, and the challenges the hotel is experiencing. A one on one interview was conducted with each manager, and the interview was focused on understanding the processes involved in their department and also the challenges the department is facing. For the employees, a semi-structured interview and observation was used in the research.
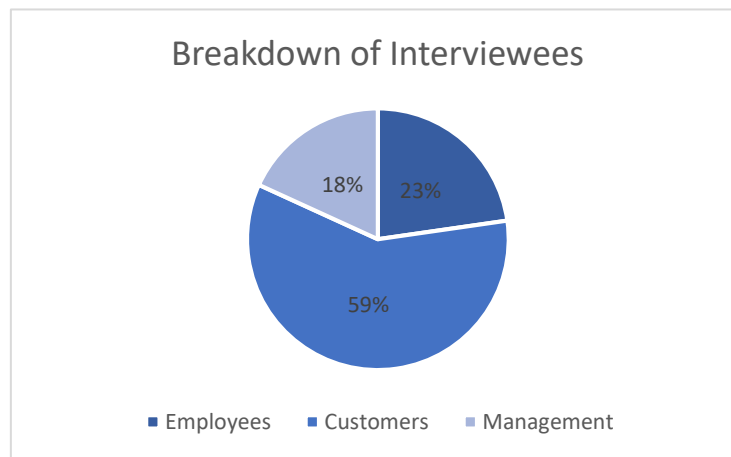
Figure 2: Classification of Interviewees

2.2 Findings from The Semi - Structured Interview.

Currently, Tenack Beach Resort is undergoing restructuring and expansion through the provision of more facilities like pool, conference rooms, children's playroom, and an indoor restaurant. The restructuring and expansion of the hotel are aimed at increasing its star ratings as well as a retaliation to the new competition that keeps increasing in the area. According to the management, the exploration of the oil and the construction of the Atuabo Gas Plant has brought about the need for accommodating and feeding workers involved in this project. The hotel has taken advantage of this opportunity, and this has improved the revenue of the hotel tremendously.

However, the number of walk-ins is low; management attributed this problem to the location of the hotel and the unavailability of conference rooms and pool. Though the revenue of the hotel has increased due to the Atuabo construction, management stated that most of the income was channeled towards maintaining and expanding the hotel in terms of building conference rooms and pool to stay relevant in the market. When asked about the pressing need of the hotel, the management stated that they needed to improve their services first and then build a strong marketing presence. Management noted that the kitchen needed urgent attention because of the increased complaint about the delays in food and inconsistency in taste due to shifts. The waiters also confirmed that they received food complaints almost every day. Line managers also complained about employees' attitude towards work. They stated that employees especially the room cleaners had to be monitored before they produce quality work.

From the research, it was observed that customers visited the hotel for relaxation or holiday purposes, business and retreat. Sixty-two percent of the customers interviewed visited the hotel for vacation purpose, twenty-three percent of the customers visited for business purposes, and fifteen percent visited for a retreat. The management stated that since the hotel did not have conference facilities, the management only accommodates customers that come for conference purposes and link customers up with neighboring hotels that provide conferencing facilities. Since the research was conducted during the holiday season, there were a lot of people visiting for holiday purposes and fewer people visiting for business purposes. From the interview, most customers expressed that they loved the hotel because it was away from the city and the hotel was quiet and refreshing.

Figure 3: Customers reasons for visiting the resort

2.3 Findings from Observation

From observing, the hotel was mostly less busy in the mornings and busy at night

due to the return of the workers of the Atuabo Gas Plant. The walk-ins were extremely

low during weekdays, but on weekends the number of walk-in guests was quite high.

Food delays was also a problem observed in the restaurant; customers could wait for

about 45 to 60 minutes. Though waiters were friendly and hardworking, they lacked

formal training, and they were slow in cleaning and clearing of food area after customers

were done eating. The kitchen was very busy during breakfast and super. It was observed

that every food had to be cooked from scratch and at times when a particular food was

ordered at different time intervals, the cooks had to cook the food all over again. The

maintenance culture of the hotel is poor because many repairs needed to be done.

2.4 Findings from Online Research from Trip Advisor

From Trip Advisor (2019), customers mostly complained about the delay in food

time and the inconsistency in the taste of the food. This was not surprising because

management had already stated that. A customer rated the hotel as bad because before his

first visit the standards of the hotel especially the restaurant was excellent, but his second

visit was not impressive. The customer stated that if the kitchen is not improved it would

affect the business. Customers also complain about the simplicity of the rooms and the furniture.

2.5 Proposed Solution

For Tenack Beach Resort and Hotels to obtain an upgrade in its star ratings and also be ahead of its competition while making profits, it is essential for the hotel to improve on its services since restructuring and expansion of the hotel are already ongoing. To achieve its strategic plan of upgrading its star ratings, an improvement in the hotel's service delivery through specific operational interventions is urgently required. In improving the services of the hotel through specific operational interventions, this would involve improving the services at the restaurant. In improving the services of the restaurant, a service design blueprint would be created. For the restaurant's service design to be effective, key performance indicators would be created to help management measure performance.

2.6 The Rationale for Selecting the Company

Tenack Beach Resort and Hotels is a two-star hotel located at Beyin in the Western Region. The hotel currently has sixty rooms, and it still has plans of expanding. In line with its vision of being a global brand, the hotel's strategic plan for the next three years is to increase its star ratings. This involves increasing the number of rooms, investing in other facilities like pool, conference rooms, spas, gym and many more. Increasing the star ratings of a hotel also involves upgrading its service delivery and providing an exceptional experience to its customers.

Currently, the hotel is constructing its pool, conference rooms, and gym and this is halfway through its plan of obtaining an additional star. The next half of obtaining an

additional star is to improve their services and create an exceptional experience for its customers. Based on this information and knowledge acquired from studying operations management and competitive strategy, an operational intervention was introduced to improve the service delivery of Tenack Beach Resort and Hotels. The study would also give an in-depth knowledge of how operations management works in the service industry. An improvement in service delivery through operational interventions will lead to an upgrade in their services as well as an additional star in terms of their ratings.

Another rationale for selecting the hotel is that the hotel needs to be relatively new so that the impact of my work would be greater than if it was a bigger company. Selecting Tenack Beach Resort Hotels was also due to my interest in the hospitality industry of Ghana.

CHAPTER 3: LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 Hotel Ratings

Hotels are ranked differently around the world, and they are represented with various symbols. In the UK, the Automobile Association and the Royal Automobile Club rate hotels by awarding them with stars. Although the symbols used to rate the hotels are different, the system of measurement is similar across countries. The English Tourist Board also rates hotels by using the crown system. In the United States of America, hotels are evaluated using the American Automobile Association and Mobil. The American Automobile Association uses the diamond to rate hotels while the Mobil uses the star system to assess hotels. In China, hotels are also measured using the star system but are evaluated by the China National Tourism Association. Ghana also uses the star system in rating its hotels. The star system of rating hotels is a popular system as compared to that of the diamond or crown system. Though this system of ranking hotels might be similar in various countries, factors used in classifying these hotels might vary around the world. Since there is no universally accepted standard of rating, a five-star hotel in the US might differ from a five-star hotel in China. This may be attributed to the fact that hotels in China do not have the same facilities, amenities, service quality, aesthetics or requirements of a hotel in the US even though they might have an identical rating (Travel China Guide, 2019).

For countries that use the American Automobile Association (Diamond rating), below are how the hotels are rated.

One-diamond: Hotels that are given a score of one-diamond are budget-friendly, and they offer the essential amenities like a bed, cupboard, sanitary facilities, and restaurant services with limited food options.

Two-diamonds: Hotels with two-diamonds are also budget-friendly, but they are slightly higher in price than the one diamond hotels. They offer additional facilities like WIFI and room services.

Three-diamonds: Hotels rated at three-diamonds have large rooms, swimming pools, gyms, enhanced aesthetics, and decoration.

Four-diamonds: Hotels rated as four-diamonds have classy and upscale aesthetics and decoration, and 24 hours service with attention to detail.

Five-diamonds: Hotels rated as five-diamonds provide luxury to their customers, they customize their services for their clients, they offer quality services, and their aesthetics are impeccable and extraordinary. Hotels with a five-diamond rating are expensive because of the luxury they provide.

For countries that use the Star rating, below are the requirements needed to gain the various stars in China.

One-star: One-star hotels are budget-friendly, and they are supposed to be clean and meet the basic requirement like a simply furnished room, a small restaurant, and a reception.

Two-stars: Hotels with two-stars are budget-friendly accommodations. Two-star hotels should have above twenty rooms. They are required to have hot and cold water in their bathrooms, have restaurants, and provide free toiletries.

Three-stars: Hotels rated as three-stars should have large rooms, swimming pools, gyms, WIFI, air condition, 18 hours room service, enhanced aesthetics, and decoration. Rooms

provided should have a flat television screen with satellite channels. Three-star hotels should provide banquet halls, conference halls, and buffet and bar services until midnight.

Four-stars: Hotels rated at four-stars should have a classy and upscale aesthetics and decoration, 24 hours room service, swimming pool, laundry services, and business facility. Hotels are required to pay attention to detail; the restaurants and bars should be made available to clients until 2 am.

Five-stars: Hotels rated as five-stars should provide luxury to its customers. Five-star hotels are required to personalize their services for their clients. They should offer butler services, flowers, transportation services and many more. They also are required to provide quality services, world-class fine dining, and impeccable and extraordinary aesthetics. Five-star hotels are expensive.

Ghana has adapted the star rating system in classifying its hotels. Though some of the requirements might be different, the standard of quality is quite similar to countries that use the star rating system. Though the ratings are different in various countries, they have similar standards that need to be met to have a particular rating. In all, ratings serve as a standard for the measurement of quality. The ratings inform customers of the standard of quality to expect and informs service providers the necessary facilities, systems and code of conduct that need to be available to have a rating. Ratings do not only focus on facilities and technology but also focus on some other essential components like the systems, culture and overall the operations of the hotel. In hotel management, the operations are one of the most important factors needed in delivering services.

3.2 Operations Management and Its Importance in The Running of a Hotel.

Operations Management is the set of activities that create value in the form of product or service by transforming inputs into outputs. For a business to continue to exist, it must produce goods or services, it must market to make sales, and lastly, it must track its financial performance to see how it is fairing. Operations Management is essential in the production function of business because most of the firm's revenue is spent on the operations or production function. Hence Operations Management creates an avenue for companies to increase their profits while reducing their costs.

Operations Management is essential in the running of hotels because it helps hoteliers create and design quality services. It also allows managers to create key performance indicators (KPI) that will be used in measuring productivity. Through the creation of KPI's, managers would be able to measure outputs of workers, and this would inform them on how to improve the productivity of the hotel through changing the amount of input or the output while keeping the other factor constant. Operations Management also leads to the creation of competitive advantage.

Operations Management is vital in the running of hotels because it helps hoteliers create and design quality services for customers. In operations management, one of the decision areas is quality management. This area of study allows managers to develop a total quality management system that identifies and satisfies customer needs. Total quality management refers to the management of an organization so that it excels in all the areas of its production or service delivery to satisfy its customers (Heizer and Render, 2011). In creating services that satisfy customers, there is a need to use the total quality management tools. These tools help the organization know whether they are delivering

quality products or services by measuring or studying the processes involved in providing

services. Some of these tools are the cause and effect diagram, Pareto charts, scatter

diagram and process diagram or flow chart. For this research, the focus is going to be on

process diagrams or flowcharts. Process diagrams are diagrams that graphically describe

the processes or systems in an organization. Service blueprints, value fulfillment, and

customer journey maps are some of the process diagrams that can be used in obtaining

quality.

3.3 Service Design Blueprint

A service design blueprint is a pictorial operational tool that helps companies in

understanding the processes that are involved in delivering their services. G.Lyn

Shostacks created this tool in 1984. G.Lynn Shostacks describes the service blueprint as a

tool that helps companies explore all issues or problems that come about in producing or

managing their services (Shostack,1984). According to Lovelock and Wirtz (2007), a

service blueprint is an instrument that helps to depict the sequences of an operating

system to create the value proposition that has been promised to its customer. The

diagram can be used to design or redesign the processes that are involved in delivering

quality services. According to Lovelock and Wirtz (2007), the critical elements of a

service blueprint are physical evidence, customer actions, the front of stage interaction,

back of stage interaction and support process.

3.3.1 Components of Service Blueprint

The physical evidence: These are the communication channels or the physical evidence

that the customer experiences when they are using the service. The physical evidence in

the case of a restaurant would be the ambiance of the restaurant, the furniture, the menu

and many more. In the case of an e-commerce company the physical evidence would be the webpage, and any other medium of communication the company uses in delivering its service. Physical evidence is seen at the top-most part of the blueprint because that is the first-time customers come into contact with the service or company.

Customer Action: These are the actions or the processes a customer has to go through to experience the service. For a hotel, some customer actions that would be recorded in the blueprint are walking to the front desk, making enquires of room, making payment, inspecting the room and many more. This component of the blueprint is essential because it helps the company understand the behavior of the customer. This component also helps the company understand the needs of the customer. The actions of the customer are detailed and in a sequential manner that is from a start point to an end point.

Front of stage interactions or visible contact employee action:

These are all the visible and tangible interactions the employees go through in delivering the service to the customer. The component would include the face to face interaction between the employee and the customer. This component is essential because customers judge the service quality in this component. The interactions a front-line employee has with customers creates a moment of truth in the mind of the customer and this moment determines whether the customer would use the services again. In the case of a hotel, some of the fronts of stage interaction would be the point where an employee welcomes a guest, when an employee carries the luggage of a guest, when a customer is making enquires, and many more.

Back of stage interactions or invisible contact employee actions: These are all the systems that are put in place or all the steps the employees take in delivering the service.

At this stage, the customer does not see or know the process that goes on in providing the service. Some of the invisible contact employee actions are the preparation of a meal and washing of customers' attires.

Support processes: This is represented at the bottom of the service blueprint. Though it is described at the bottom of the blueprint, it is an essential component in the service blueprint. This component includes all the actions, equipment, technology and systems that need to be in place to deliver the service. These actions are mostly implemented by employees that do not have any contact with customers. Support processes include training given to employees, the equipment used in delivering the service, IT infrastructures, WIFI and many more.

3.3.2 Importance of Service Blueprint

Service blueprint helps companies in identifying the pain points of customers. The creation of a service blueprint helps companies understand the process their customers go through to experience the service. This process helps them identify and understand some pain points customers go through. Some of the pain points can be delays or long waiting periods. The identification of pain points helps companies put in place measures that check or solve the pain points and in doing this enhance customer experience. Arnold Palmer Hospital uses tools such as process charts to help them graphically spot problem areas or pain points in their services, and this helps them to suggest ways to improve the service (Heizer, J. et al., 2010).

The service blueprint helps the company understand the processes that are involved in delivering their services. Since the blueprint is pictorial, it helps employees understand the process that is needed in providing the services and when they or their

department's inputs are required in the process of creating the service. Since it is pictorial and easy to understand, it makes it easier for new employees to be trained quickly thereby knowing when their inputs are needed in the service delivery process.

Also, the use of service blueprints simplifies the creation and redesigning of services. According to Hossain M. et al. (2017), blueprinting can be used to redesign existing services by analyzing the current processes or experiences customers go through. Since it is graphically represented, it is easy to design a service or redesign a service by understanding and studying the processes that are involved in delivering the services. Improvement can be made in the process by focusing on the processes or procedures that need adjustments. Service blueprints help companies in controlling and cutting down costs and time involved in every step of the process. Service blueprints allow designers to establish time frames in the delivery process. Since time is an essential factor in the delivery of services, the blueprint enables designers to use time as a tool to measure quality.

According to Shostack (1984), every service has a standard execution of time and customers are willing to tolerate a delay in a particular time frame. When delay exceeds their tolerated time frame, customers begin to lower their perception of quality about that service. Due to this, it is essential to study the industry and the behaviors of customers when creating the blueprint. Companies can cut down cost by cutting down on time and some processes that are not needed in the delivery of the service.

3.3.3 Disadvantage

Service blueprint can be confusing when mapping different experiences in one blueprint. It is crucial to outline one customer need or process at a time to avoid confusion and

complexity. Also, the creation of blueprints can be tiring and time-consuming since designers are supposed to map a customer's need or customer segment at a time.

3.4 Customer Journey Maps

Customer journey maps can also be used in designing quality services. Customer journey maps are also graphical tools that help companies in understanding the process customers go through in experiencing their services. A customer journey map shows only the actions of a customer or the visible aspect or front of stage interaction the service. The journey map highlights more on the emotions, perceptions, and motivations of the customer at each stage of processes involved in experiencing the service. They can also be used to describe the processes customers' desire to experience in meeting the service. Customer journey map may help companies understand the processes customers go through.

According to Temkin, the five steps needed in mapping a customer's journey map are collect internal insights, develop an initial hypothesis, research customer processes, needs, and perceptions, analyze customer research and map the customer journey (Temkin, 2010).

Collect internal insights: This is a stage where the firm takes notes of all the processes the customer goes through. For the firm to write down all the processes the customer goes through; the firm must know the processes. Firms can collect internal insights through organizing surveys and focus groups that will help the firm understand the experiences of customers and observing the experiences of customers.

Develop initial hypotheses: In this stage, a hypothetical journey map is made. This involves making assumptions about customers' journeys. Creating a hypothetical journey map helps the firm build a prototype that can help them improve their processes.

Research customer processes, needs, and perception: Researching customers' needs and perceptions help companies understand the customer better. Firms need to broaden and conduct in-depth research to enable them to create processes that are beneficial to their customers. Some companies use mystery shopping to identify the processes that need improvements. According to Richardson, a framework that can guide companies in obtaining the needs processes, needs and perception of customers are by researching their actions, motivation, questions, and barriers (Richardson. A, 2010). Actions involve the activities or steps customers take in each stage of the process. Motivation involves the feelings customers are feeling at this stage and their motivation for continuing to the next stage. Questions are the dilemmas or issues customers face in moving to the next step of the process. Barriers are the structural obstacles that customers face in moving to the subsequent processes. Researching based on this framework would help the company understand the processes, needs, and perception of its customers.

Analyze customer research: At this stage, the firm analyzes all the research collected. Analyses help firms know their customer's needs, motivation, and feeling. In examining the research, firms would notice recurring themes from customers, and at times new ideas may pop up due to the different perceptions' customers have. All these themes must be taken seriously by the company because they are the processes and experiences customers go through. In analyzing customer's research, the company gets to know the pain points of their customers and the processes that need improvement or maintenance.

Map the customer journey: At this stage, all information collected during the analysis are transformed and represented graphically. Information is mapped out visually to understand the needs of the customer. Each process helps the firm understand what the customer goes through in experiencing the service. In creating journey maps, one persona is used. This implies that if the needs of customers contradict, it is crucial to map out the personas on different maps.

3.4.1 Importance

The customer journey map has the same advantages as that of the service blueprint. Customer journey maps help companies in controlling and cutting down costs and time involved in every step of the process. It also helps the company understand the processes that are involved in delivering their services. Customer journey maps help companies in identifying the pain points of customers. The creating of a customer journey map help companies understand the process their customers go through to experience the service. The customer journey map helps the company respond quickly to the changing taste and demand of its customers.

3.4.2 Disadvantage
The customer journey map fails to include the back of stage interactions and support process that is needed in attaining quality service.

CHAPTER 4: SOLUTION AND IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The problem that would be tackled in this project is the delays in the restaurant. Apart from the fact that the complaints from the restaurant was persistent and needed urgent attention, management disclosed from the interviews that the restaurant was the hotel's primary source of revenue and improving the restaurant services had the potential of increasing the hotel's revenue. Since the restaurant is the primary source of income for the hotel, it is vital to address this problem quickly before it starts to affect the hotel's revenue significantly. In identifying the causes of the problem, interviews and observation were used.

For this project, a service blueprint was used in mapping out the processes of the restaurant because the service blueprint focuses on the customer experiences as well as the company's experiences. Using the Service Blueprint would improve not only the front of stage interaction but also improve the back stage and support processes of the company as well. Using the customer journey map would limit the impact and scope the project can attain because the customer journey map would only focus on the customer's action and the front of stage interaction.

A service design blueprint was designed to understand further and spot the roots of the delays. A service design blueprint is a pictorial operational tool that helps companies in understanding the processes that are involved in delivering their services and also spotting fail points in their service delivery. Currently, Tenack Beach Resort has no documentation of the process's customers go through in experiencing their services. Creating a service blueprint for the Tenack Beach Hotel would inform the company of the processes involved in the restaurant experience.

Also, the service blueprint would help the company understand the processes and also identify some pain points and fail points their customers experience in the restaurant process. The goal of the service blueprint is to improve the Tenack restaurant experience of its customers. To understand the processes customers go through, and also spot the problem areas, it is important to document the current process. Below is the current service blueprint of the restaurant. These processes or activities were obtained through observation and interviews, and then the processes were mapped out.

Below is Tenack Beach Resorts current service blueprint for its restaurant.
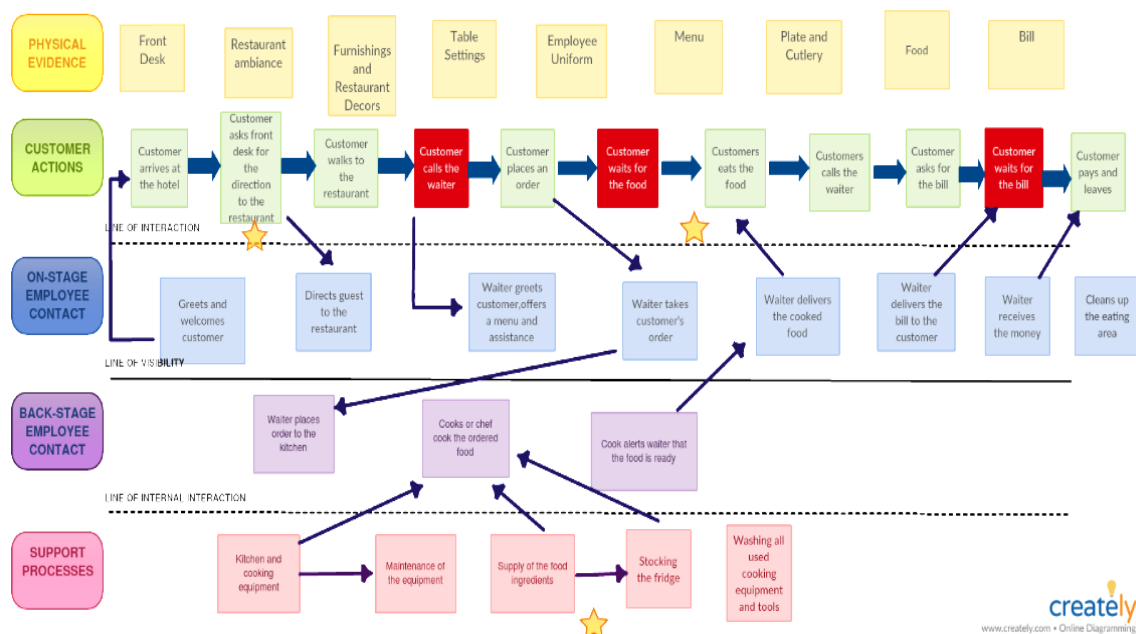
4.1 Current Service Blueprint

Figure 4: Current Service Blueprint for Tenack Resort

4.1.1 Fail points

The fail points in this diagram are represented in the colour red. The fail points in Tenack Beach Resort's restaurant service are the time spent on waiting for the food, customer calling waiter for the menu and the time spent on waiting for the bill.

4.1.2 Opportunity for improvement

Opportunities for improvements are represented with a star.

The first opportunity observed that needs improvement is the stage where the front desk directs the customer to the restaurant. Another opportunity for improvement is the time between customers waiting for the food and customers eating the food. Lastly, another opportunity for improvement is found between the stages of supplying the food ingredients and stocking the fridge.
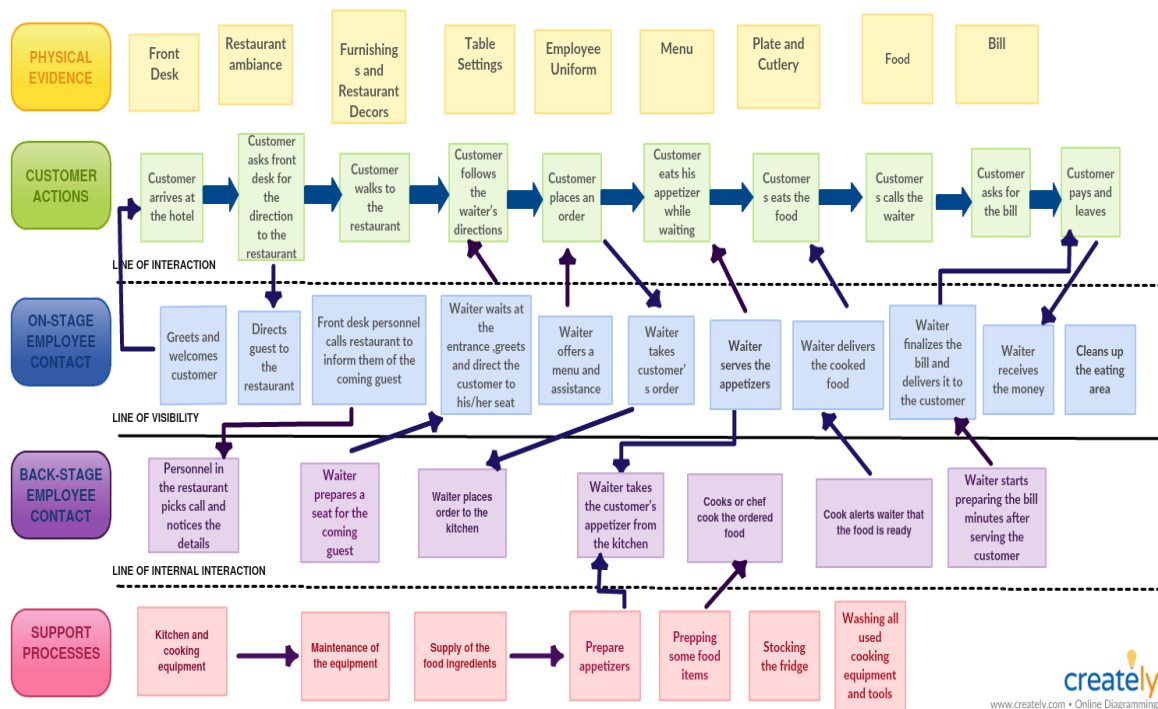
4.2 New Service Blueprint

Figure 5: New Service Blueprint for Tenack Resort

4.2.1 Solution for Fail Points

In decreasing the time customers spend on waiting for the food, a new activity which is prepping food was introduced as seen in (Figure 5). Prepping food would cut down time spent on cooking food from scratch. Foods that can be made in advance should be made and stored correctly. Food items like fish should be cleaned and their scales removed before storage. Chicken and meat can be marinated overnight and stored correctly.

Also, in decreasing the time customers spend on waiting for the bill, a new activity was introduced to ensure that customers get their bill seconds after they request for it. Since the hotel currently writes all its bills in the VAT receipt book, waiters are required to write down all ordered items with their respective prices right after they serve the customer.

4.2.2 Opportunity for improvement.

Instead of the front desk personnel directing the customer to the restaurant, the new service design blueprint introduced another activity in which the front desk personnel calls the restaurant to inform them of the guest arriving. This would give the waiters a heads up, and this would help waiters prepare a table for the coming guest. Another activity has been introduced, and this involves the waiter waiting at the door to direct customers to their prepared seat upon their arrival. The serving of appetizers has also been added in their service. The serving of appetizers is aimed at engaging customers taste buds and also occupying them while they wait for their food. The cost of the appetizers would indirectly be included in each plate and the appetizers served would be homogeneous.

4.3 Implementation Plan

The restaurant manager and the head chef would take ownership of this solution. The head chef would oversee the implementation, measurement, and revision of the solution. The head chef is in charge of ensuring that food items do not run out and foods that can be prepped are prepped and stored correctly. The head chef is also in charge of ensuring that appetizers are prepared in bulk and the appetizers would be adequate for the day. The restaurant manager would oversee that all calls linked to the restaurants are picked and incoming customers details are noted, and their seats are made available. Also, the restaurant manager is in charge of ensuring that there is always a waiter available to wait at the door to direct incoming customers. The restaurant manager is also in charge of ensuring waiters start billing customer right after their food is served; this is aimed at cutting down time. For the service blueprint to be effective, it is important that in handing over the solution, the staff, especially the ones that work at the restaurant, are trained and made conversant with the service blueprint, how the service blueprint would work and when their inputs are needed in the delivery process. The project would be handed over to the hotel by July; staff would be trained before the solution is implemented in August.

For the Service blueprint to be effective, it is also important to measure and track performances. To improve the services, it is essential to measure the performances of the waiters, chefs, and cooks. The customers and management would do the measurement. With customers measuring customer experience at the restaurant, it would provide feedback for improvement, and it would also allow the management to identify whether the service blueprint has improved the customer's experience or not. Since time is one of

the main factors' customer complains about, it is important to measure the time food

arrived. Customers measuring the time food arrived would indicate to the management

whether the implementation of the service blueprint has cut down food arrival and

improved customer service. Customers continuously measuring performances using

Figure 6 would help management track their progress and indicate to management the

effectiveness of the service blueprint in the restaurant. Figure 7 is a measurement tool for

management; these tools are meant to help heads of department or management track

their performances. For managers at the restaurant, feedback from customers would be a

vital input in their performance measurement. The performance measurement for

management Figure 7 compares actual performances to targeted performances. The

comparison would help management know areas where they need more effort for

improvement.

Performance measurement for customer experience

	1-10 minutes	11-20 minutes	21-30 minutes	30 - 40 minutes	40 minutes and above
Time food arrived					
	Excellent-5	Very Good-4	Good-3	Average-2	Poor-1
Rate the food					
	Excellent-5	Very Good-4	Good-3	Average-2	Poor-1
Rate the services of the waiter					

Any complaint about the food?

Figure 6: Customer Feedback Form

Performance measurement tool for management

Department	Metric	Actual Performance	Target Performance
Restaurant			
Food complaint	Complaint per meal		**4.5**
Waiter complaint	Complaint per waiter		**4.5**
Time food arrived	Average time food arrived per day		**25 minutes**
Number of customers served	Number of customers served per day		
Reception			
Number of calls answered	Number of calls answered per day		**All calls should be answered**
Complaint at reception	Complaint per day		
Time spent in checking in	Average time spent in checking in per day		**5 minutes**
Time spent in checking out	Average time spent in checking out per day		**5 minutes**
Room			
Complaint about room	Complaint per room		
Time used in cleaning room	Average time spent in cleaning room per day		**30 minutes**
Staff			
Number of training session	Number of training session per year		**3 per year**
Absenteeism	Number of staffs absent per day		

Figure 7: Key Performance Indicators for Management

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Recommendations

With difficulty Tenack Beach Resort faces in attracting highly skilled personnel, it is

important that the hotel continuously train their employees so that they can match up to

the skills of other qualified staff. Regularly organizing training sessions for employees

would also lead to an increase in quality service delivery.

In tackling the problem of inconsistent taste in food, the restaurant should start

documenting all recipes on the menu. The documentation should include all the

processes, ingredients and procedures involved in preparing the food. After documenting

all these recipes, cooks should be trained to be conversant with the documents.

5.2 Limitations of The Project

During the project, these limitations were encountered:

The location of Tenack Beach Resort prevented frequent visits. Traveling to the hotel was

an 8 hours journey, and this made it difficult to travel to the hotel frequently to do more

extensive observational research to observe how the hotel is run critically.

5.3 Conclusion

With increased competition in the hospitality industry, many hotels have had their fair

share of struggles to be the number one option in their customer's mind. Due to this

competition, pricing is no longer an essential but rather quality services and experiences.

As a hotel, it is important to improve your services and stay relevant in the market. It is

expected that, with the implementation of the new service blueprint, Tenack Beach

Resort will experience a significant increase in patronage of their restaurant. Coupled

with the already ongoing infrastructural upgrades, this could easily further increase

patronage and profitability of the hotel.

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APPENDIX

Management

- What are the strengths and weaknesses of the hotel?

- What problems is the hotel facing?

- What do you think the hotel needs urgently aside buildings, or infrastructure?

- State the operational problems or improvements that need to be done in the restaurant, rooms

- What is the revenue stream or financial performance of the company like?

- Who is your target market?

- What complains do you tackle more

- How do you measure performances?

- Which areas of operation need immediate attention

- How do you measure quality as a company?

- Are the operations of the company more digital or manual?

- Is there a maintenance system or policy in the company?

- How are the employees managed and how are their performances measured?

- How do you measure customer satisfaction?

- How many employees are in the hotel?

- Do you have structures or policies that checks defects in the operations of the company?

Employees

- What problems is the hotel facing?

- What department do you work in?

- What challenges does your department face?

- How many times in the year do you receive training?

- What do you think the hotel needs urgently aside buildings, or infrastructure?

- What complains do you tackle most?

- How are your performances measured?

- How do you measure quality?

- What would you like to change in the hotel and why?

For Customers

- How did you get to know about the hotel?

- What do you think about the services of the hotel?

- What do you like about the hotel?

- How would you rate the hotel from 1-5?

1. poor 2. average 3. good 4. very good 5. excellent

Please explain the reason why you gave them that number

- How would you rate the services of the restaurant?

   1. poor 2. average 3. good 4. very good 5. excellent

- How would you rate the food the hotel provides?

1. poor 2. average 3. good 4. very good 5. excellent

Please explain the reason why you gave them that number

- What do you think about their rooms?

- Would you recommend this place for family and friends? Why would you do or not do that?

- Are there any additional services you would recommend for the hotel?

- Is there anything in the hotel that you would want to be change or maintain?

Project Dashboard

The project was carried out to improve the service delivery of Tenack Beach Resort and Hotels. After the research, it was observed that the services of the hotel needed improvement. In improving the dining experience of the hotel, a new service blueprint was created. This service blueprint has cut down waiting time, pain points of customers and also increase the efficiency of the employees that work at the restaurant.

Below is a diagram of the hotel's new service blueprint.
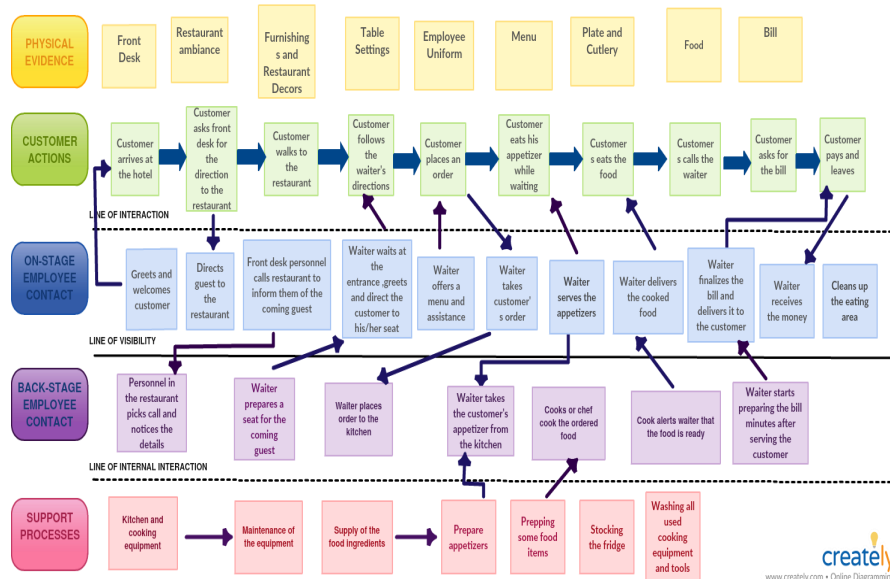
To check the effectiveness of the service blueprint, it is essential to measure and track performances. Customers and management would do the measurement. Customers would measure their dining experience while management would measure the performances of employees. Ratings from customers would serve as feedback, and this would indicate the areas that need improvement and the areas that need to be maintained.

Below is a table for measuring customers experiences.

	1-10 minutes	11-20 minutes	21-30 minutes	30 - 40 minutes	40 minutes and above
Time food arrived					
	Excellent-5	Very Good-4	Good-3	Average-2	Poor-1
Rate the food					
	Excellent-5	Very Good-4	Good-3	Average-2	Poor-1
Rate the services of the waiter					

Any complaint about the food?

Performance measurement tool for management

Department	Metric	Actual Performance	Target Performance
Restaurant			
Food complaint	Complaint per meal		4.5
Waiter complaint	Complaint per waiter		4.5
Time food arrived	Average time food arrived per day		25 minutes
Number of customers served	Number of customers served per day		
Reception			
Number of calls answered	Number of calls answered per day		All calls should be answered
Complaint at reception	Complaint per day		
Time spent in checking in	Average time spent in checking in per day		5 minutes
Time spent in checking out	Average time spent in checking out per day		5 minutes
Room			
Complaint about room	Complaint per room		
Time used in cleaning room	Average time spent in cleaning room per day		30 minutes
Staff			
Number of training session	Number of training session per year		3 per year
Absenteeism	Number of staffs absent per day		