

Maldron Hotel, Cardiff Lane

Staff Cultural Competence Training

July 8 & 17, 2014

Report on Training and Analysis of Participants Feedback

by Livingstone Thompson, PhD

“Maldron Hotel Cardiff Lane, Dublin, was looking for someone who could help us to improve the Culture awareness of our staff. We found the training offered by Livingstone Thompson of Living Cultural Solutions Ltd to be just what we were looking for. They were able to match our expectations and requirements within the context of the training they offer. We have seen very clearly the benefits of this training in the work place, and going forward we intend to make this part of our quarterly planned training programme.”

Conor O’Kane, General Manager, Maldron Hotel, Cardiff Lane, Dublin, Sept 3, 2014

Executive Summary

In a recent survey of 21 hotels in the Dublin area it was revealed that 80% of staff had no training in cultural awareness. Considering the nature and trend of the tourism industry, which is become more global it its reach, this fact of the low level of cultural awareness training is surprising. Therefore the decision by Maldron Hotel, Cardiff Lane to initiate this pilot in cultural training is an important, innovative strategic move. Adding cultural competence to the skillset of staff in the tourism industry is to move ahead of the competition.

The 2hr-minutes training session, ***“Developing a Culture-Sensitive Hotel: Delivering Culturally Competent Service”*** for staff at the Maldron Hotel, Cardiff Lane took place on July 8, 2014 1pm – 3pm & July 17, 2014, 3-5 pm. Altogether there were 19 participants between the two sessions, 7 on July 8 and 12 on July 17. The session was led by Dr Livingstone Thompson of Living Cultural Solutions Ltd (www.culturalsolutions.ie). The report/analysis below is based on written feedback from 18 participants.

Summary Recommendations

- Roll out of training for the whole staff group, within a specified time. This will ensure a whole-organisation involvement in the development culture-sensitive service delivery

- Keep the momentum of the training going. This will create the atmosphere of cultural sensitivity as a core value for the hotel and will generate relevant conversation and cross-learning among staff.
- Partner with other hotels in the area or within the Maldron group, as a way to mitigate cost
- Offer further indepth training in cultural competence for select staff, who could in the future become cultural mentors for the organisation. Cultural Solutions Ltd offers a whole suite of training from 2hours at the lower end up to 30 hours, depending on need, time availability and interest.

Cultural Training at the Maldron

The 2hr session functioned as a pilot that would provide the basis for deciding how relevant the training would be for all staff in the Maldron Hotels. One consideration that would arise was the prospect of the training being recommended for rolling out for the staff across the whole Dalata Group.



Session Aims

The aims of the sessions were to secure:

- **Awareness** and knowledge of values in specific cultures
- **Attention** to effective cross-cultural communication
- **Ability** of staff to interact appropriately in a culturally diverse setting

Triple A Difference

The training purports to bring benefit to the staff and the hotel in terms of:

- **Attitude:** Staff will place the customers cultures at the centre of service delivery, while seeking to foster the creation of a culture-sensitive workplace
- **Attentiveness:** with reference to both colleagues and customers from different cultural backgrounds, staff would be more attentive to different cultural worldviews, norms and values, as well as to the dynamics of intercultural communication
- **Ability:** Staff would develop and know how to develop cultural knowledge and to communicate and act appropriately in different cultural situations.

Strategies

Different strategies were used in the facilitation of the interactive session. These included the following: facilitator presentation, use of video clips, whole group discussions as well as group and individual exercises.

Evaluation and Feedback

At the end of the session participants were asked to give a verbal feedback on the aspect of the training that stood out for them. A variety of things were welcomed relating to content, learning and approach. In addition, there was written feedback in which participants gave their views of the following:

1. To what extent did the workshop meet your expectations?
 - a. 10/10 (Fully)
 - b. 8/10 - 9/10 (To a great extent)
 - c. 5/10 to 7/10 (To some extent)
 - d. 4/10 or less (Not at all)

2. How would you rate the relevance of the content?
 - a. Excellent (10/10)
 - b. Good (6/10 - 8/10)
 - c. Irrelevant (5/10 or less)

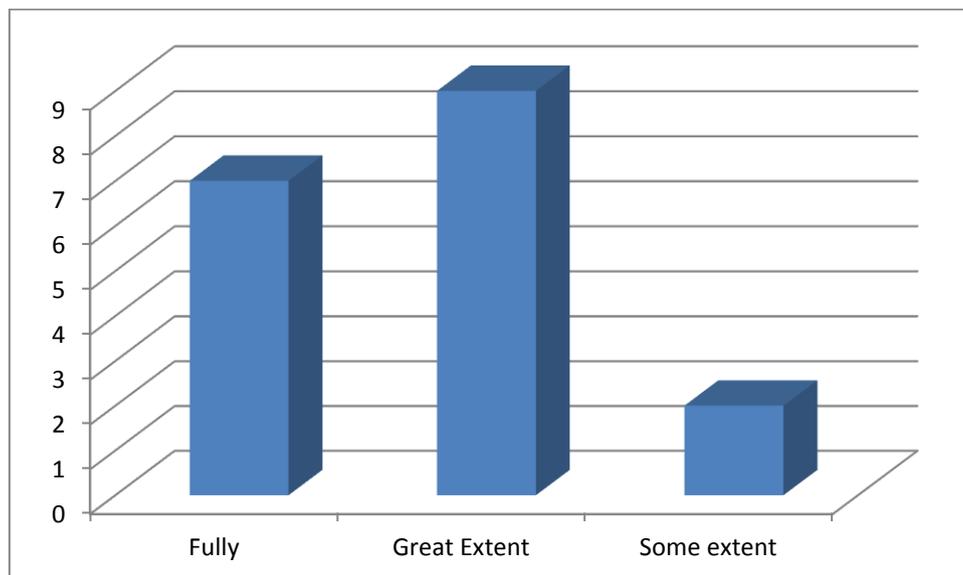
3. What did you find most helpful?
4. What was least helpful?
5. What else would you like to have covered in the session?
6. In what way(s) will you use the learning from this session?

The table at the end of the report shows the responses of 18 participants, on which this analysis is based.

Satisfaction

With respect to the subject and the approach taken, **all participants** expressed delight and satisfaction with the session. 89% of the respondents felt that their expectations were met fully or to a great extent. The others said theirs were met to some extent. Opinions are indicated in Fig. 1 below.

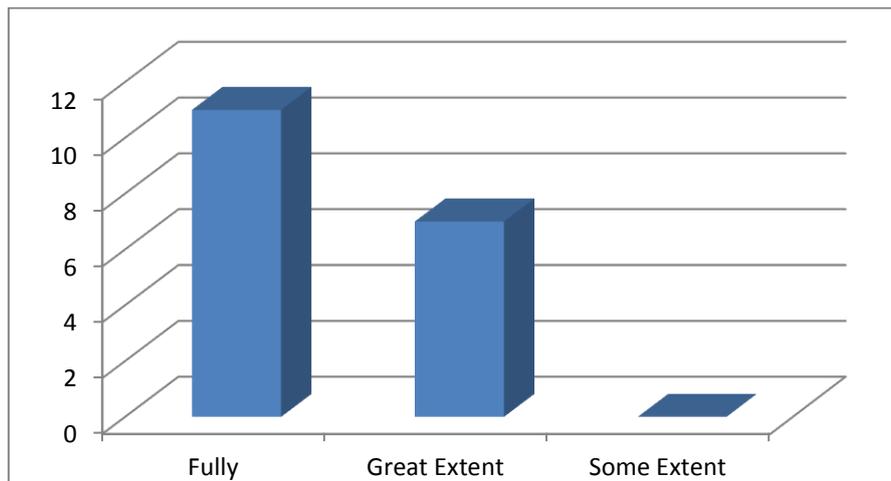
Fig. 1 – Expectations Met



Relevance

In response to the perceived relevance of the content for their respective areas of work in the hotel, the responses of participants were extremely positive. Every **participant** felt that the content was relevant for his or her work. The opinions of staff are indicated in figure 2 below. In-session conversation revealed that this kind of training was not a core element in previous training. The presence of individuals from a variety of cultural backgrounds made it possible to facilitate the build-up of cultural knowledge and understanding between staff.

Fig. 2 – Relevance to Work



What was most helpful?

Participants also responded to the question of what they found most helpful. A number of things were found to be helpful and these are outlined in Table 1. The responses indicate the multifaceted nature of the training and ways in which it connected with the interests and expectations of staff. From the point of the view of the facilitator the excitement of the staff and interest shown in the session was particularly noteworthy, since it was a management decision for staff to attend the session.

Table 1 – What was most helpful?

Q 3 – What did you find most helpful
A small thing for you might be a big thing for another person
WRAP to improve cultural competence
Better understanding of different cultures and mutual respect
Learning about people’s culture
Italian gestures; information on specific cultures; WRAP
The video about gestures
How important it is to understand and respect other cultures
Great lecture supported by good material
To make you think about background of guests
Learning about different cultures
Cultural values and explanations
Whole training was helpful
The extensive knowledge of the speaker
The same task can have different meaning to other people
Understanding how we perceive people of various cultures; prejudice and norms

All different countries have different norms
Awareness that we have to let go our own point of view if we want to understand another

What was least helpful?

The responses (or absence of responses) here correlate to the high levels of satisfaction and perceived relevance. The most significant concern here, which was expressed also in other sections, was the wish for a longer session.

Table 2

Q 4
Everything was helpful and interesting (11 participants)
Theoretical part
The triangles
Lewis Model
More specific examples. Course too general
Course too short for indepth training
Would have preferred more verbal interaction
More focus on customs of different cultures

What else to cover?

The list of things that participants wish to experience is shown in Table 3. The list was, no doubt, stimulated by the content of the session and the wish of staff for deeper engagement with the subject. Participants seem keen to make the application in several areas of their work and to respond to problems or challenges they have faced or believe that they will face. The fact that the training is once-off and lasting only 120 minutes are constraining factors on the number of things that could be covered in the session.

Table 3 – What else would you like to have covered?

Q 5 – What else would you like to have covered?
More opportunity for participants to speak of their culture
Each person to talk more about their concepts of culture and prejudice
More on how to greet and say goodbye to people of different cultures
Japanese greeting and exchange of business cards
More about Lewis Model
More about gestures and behaviours in different countries
More examples relating to hospitality
Need more examples
More information about different gestures and cultures from around the world
More about African cultures
More details about different cultures, different nationalities

It was very interesting, I could have listened to the speaker for further two hours; so maybe extend the length of the course
More information of various cultures; more examples of cultural etiquette in various regions
I want to know more about more nationalities
More on Asian cultures

Using the Learning

The value of the training and its impact on the delivery of service by the hotel will be indicated by use made of the learning. The list below (Table 4) gives an idea of how staff saw the immediate application of the learning. It might be useful at a later stage to check again with staff to see the extent to which the use of the learning is being sustained. In order to ensure this, management might consider (a) training for all staff and (a) further training to respond to need for more indepth focus on the issue.

Table 4 – Use of Learning

Q 6 – In what ways will you use the learning
Applying what I learned
I will use it at work and in personal life. Have an open mind to other cultures
In resolving guests complaints and understanding foreign habits
Will be open minded with every culture
Will be more open to other people’s way of seeing things
I will know that what I consider normal can offend other cultures
I will be more open minded and respectful in interaction with other cultures
To focus more on recognising and being aware of different cultures
To give guests better experience
Tips of how to understand my colleagues and guests and interact better with them.
Very important and great for professional and personal life
In relation to customers and colleagues
Some interesting facts were shared which I will use in the workplace
Have a better outlook on meeting and interacting with various guests and staff from various cultures
Customer service
I’ll try to use if communicating with guests so they feel more comfortable during stays

Conclusion

The pilot session has given an indication of how participants see the relevance of the content and how immediate use can be made of the learning. The feedback has also given a sense of what was immediately useful and of other areas of interest for future sessions.

There is substantial justification to offer the training to all Maldron staff and the following should be considered:

Recommendations

- Consider the roll out of training for the whole staff group, within a specified time, as this will ensure a whole-organisation involvement in the development culture-sensitive service delivery.
- Keeping the momentum of the training going will create the atmosphere of cultural sensitivity as a core value for the hotel and will generate relevant conversation and cross-learning among staff.
- As a way to mitigate cost consider partnering other hotels in the area or within the Maldron group
- Consider further training indepth training in cultural competence for select staff, who could in the future become cultural mentors for the organisation. Cultural Solutions Ltd offers a whole suite of training from 2hours at the lower end to 30 hours, depending on need, time availability and interest.

Appendix 1

Table 5- Raw Data

Form	Q 1	Q 2	Q 3	Q 4	Q 5	Q 6
1	B	A	A small thing for you might be a big thing for another person	Everything was helpful	More opportunity for participants to speak of their culture	Applying what I learned
2	A	A	WRAP to improve cultural competence		Each person to talk more about their concepts of culture and prejudice	I will use it at work and in personal life. Have an open mind to other cultures
3	a	A	WRAP to improve cultural competence	Everything was helpful and interesting	More on how to greet and say goodbye to people of different cultures	In resolving guests complaints and understanding foreign habits
4	A	A	Better understanding of different cultures and mutual respect		?? communication and cooperation	Will be open minded with every culture
5	C	B	Learning about people's culture		We covered all we needed	Will be more open to other people's way of seeing things
6	B	B	Italian gestures; information on specific cultures; WRAP	Theoretical part	Japanese greeting and exchange of business cards	
7	B	A	The video about	The triangles	More about Lewis	I will know that

			gestures		Model	what I consider normal can offend other cultures
8	A	a	How important it is to understand and respect other cultures	Lewis Model	More about gestures and behaviours in different countries	I will be more open minded and respectful in interaction with other cultures
9	A	A	Great lecture supported by good material		More examples relating to hospitality	To focus more on recognising and being aware of different cultures
10	B	B	To make you thing about background of guests	More specific examples. Course too general	Need more examples	To give guests better experience
11	B	B	Learning about different cultures	Course too short for indepth training	More information about different gestures and cultures from around the world	Tips of how to understand my colleagues and guests and interact better with them.
12	A	A	Cultural values and explanations		More about African cultures	Very important and great for professional and personal life
13	A	A	Whole training was helpful		More details about different cultures, different nationalities	In relation to customers and colleagues
14	b	B	The extensive knowledge of the speaker	Would have preferred more verbal interaction	It was very interesting, I would have listened to the speaker for further two hours; so maybe extend the length of the course	Some interesting facts were shared which I will use in the workplace
15	C	B	The same task can have different meaning to other people	More focus on customs of different cultures		
16	B	B	Understanding how we perceive people of various cultures; prejudice and norms		More information of various cultures; more examples of cultural etiquette in various regions	Have a better outlook on meeting and interacting with various guests and staff from various cultures
17	B	A	All different countries have different norms	Everything was helpful	I want to know more about more nationalities	Customer service
18	B	A	Awareness that we have to let go our own point of view if we want to understand another		More on Asian cultures	I'll try to use if communicating with guests so they feel more comfortable during stays