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FORMING A CUSTOMER-ORIENTED MODEL OF RESTAURANT SERVICE WITH A FOCUS ON QUALITY, FOOD TRADITIONS, AND CONSUMER EXPECTATIONS

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The article explores the essence of customer orientation as a crucial factor in improving the quality of service in the hotel and restaurant industry. It analyzes modern approaches to shaping the customer experience based on the integration of principles from service marketing, consumer psychology, quality management, and digital technologies. Special attention is given to the implementation of personalized services, the development of employees' emotional intelligence, and the use of consumer data analytics for flexible response to their expectations. The significance of a customer-oriented approach as a component of the competitiveness of hospitality establishments is revealed. Examples of innovative customer interaction practices are presented, including the use of online platforms, feedback systems, gamification, and social media. The importance of forming a service culture based on trust, respect for the customer, and continuous improvement of service standards is substantiated. The article concludes on the advisability of a systematic approach to implementing customer orientation as a strategic direction for the development of hospitality enterprises amid a dynamic market and growing competition.

Keywords: customer-oriented approach, service quality, hotel and restaurant business, service culture, customer loyalty, multicultural service, customer experience.

ФОРМУВАННЯ КЛІЄНТООРІЄНТОВАНОЇ МОДЕЛІ РЕСТОРАННОГО ОБСЛУГОВУВАННЯ КРІЗЬ ПРИЗМУ ЯКОСТІ, ТРАДИЦІЙ ХАРЧУВАННЯ ТА СПОЖИВЧИХ ОЧІКУВАНЬ

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У статті розкрито сутність клієнтоорієнтованості як одного з ключових чинників підвищення якості обслуговування в готельно-ресторанному бізнесі. Клієнтоорієнтованість розглядається як цілісна стратегія, що охоплює всі рівні взаємодії із споживачем — від першого контакту до постсервісного супроводу. Проаналізовано наукові підходи до трактування цього поняття у працях вітчизняних і зарубіжних дослідників, зокрема підкреслюється зв'язок клієнтоорієнтованості з формуванням позитивного клієнтського досвіду, зростанням лояльності гостей, зміцненням репутації закладу та забезпеченням його конкурентоспроможності. Акцентовано увагу на важливості індивідуального підходу до кожного споживача, персоналізації послуг, мультикультурного підходу до сервісу, а також впровадженні систем управління клієнтським досвідом (Customer Experience Management). Визначено, що клієнтоорієнтована модель управління є не просто елементом сервісної культури, а стратегічною необхідністю для підприємств, які прагнуть успішно функціонувати в умовах ринку, орієнтованого на потреби споживача. Обґрунтовано доцільність інтеграції клієнтоорієнтованих практик у щоденну діяльність готельно-ресторанних закладів як інструменту сталого розвитку та формування позитивного іміджу бренду. Отримані результати можуть бути використані для вдосконалення системи обслуговування, підготовки персоналу та формування ефективних комунікацій із клієнтами.

Ключові слова: клієнтоорієнтованість, якість обслуговування, готельно-ресторанний бізнес, сервісна культура, лояльність клієнтів, мультикультурний сервіс, клієнтський досвід.

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STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM IN GENERAL TERMS AND ITS CONNECTION WITH IMPORTANT SCIENTIFIC OR PRACTICAL TASKS

The research problem lies in the need to reconsider approaches to customer orientation as a key factor in the successful functioning of hospitality establishments under modern conditions. Despite the existence of general service standards, practice shows that a formal approach to customer service does not ensure long-term relationships with clients. Therefore, there is a need for deeper scientific understanding of customer orientation as a systemic component of service, integrating both operational and emotional-psychological aspects of guest interaction. This issue is relevant both theoretically and practically, as it is directly related to building customer loyalty, increasing the competitiveness of establishments, and developing a culture of service in the hospitality industry.

ANALYSIS OF RECENT RESEARCH AND PUBLICATIONS

Recent research and publications emphasize the growing importance of customer orientation as a strategic approach to enhancing service quality and ensuring customer satisfaction in the hospitality industry. In particular, the works of Philip Kotler and Kevin Lane Keller highlight customer focus as a foundational principle of modern marketing strategies. Scholars such as J.C. Narver and S.F. Slater underline the direct correlation between market orientation and business profitability. Ukrainian researchers, including N. Ryabokon, V. Martynovych, and N. Sytnyk, explore the implementation of client-oriented practices in domestic service enterprises and their role in building long-term customer loyalty. Overall, the academic discourse confirms that customer experience management and service personalization are key drivers of competitive advantage in the hotel and restaurant business.

IDENTIFICATION OF PREVIOUSLY UNRESOLVED PARTS OF THE GENERAL PROBLEM TO WHICH THE ARTICLE IS DEVOTED

The article addresses previously unresolved aspects of implementing customer orientation in hospitality, particularly the integration of emotional and psychological components into service strategies. While much attention has been given to operational standards and service quality metrics, insufficient focus has been placed on how empathetic communication, anticipation of guest expectations, and personalized approaches directly influence customer satisfaction and loyalty. The study highlights the need for a more holistic understanding of client-oriented practices that go beyond technical service delivery and emphasizes their strategic importance in building competitive advantage.

DEFINITION OF THE RESEARCH PURPOSES

The purpose of this research is to explore the role of customer orientation as a fundamental factor in ensuring high-quality service within the hospitality industry, to identify key principles and mechanisms that enhance emotional interaction with guests, and to determine how customer-focused strategies contribute to customer satisfaction, loyalty, and the long-term competitiveness of hotel and restaurant enterprises.

SUMMARY OF THE MAIN POINTS

In today's rapidly developing service sector, a customer-oriented approach is becoming increasingly important as a strategic tool for achieving a stable market position. This concept is particularly important in the hotel and restaurant service industry, where customer impressions and emotions are shaped not only by the product, but also by the atmosphere, the quality of staff interaction, service design, and flexibility in meeting the cultural and individual requests of guests.

Successful hotel and restaurant establishments are increasingly adopting a customer-centric approach that takes into account the social, gastronomic, psychological, and cultural expectations of consumers. In this context, the combination of service quality, business process flexibility, and attention to detail that builds customer loyalty is of particular importance.

A customer-oriented approach is not just about satisfying consumer needs, but a systematic approach to building long-term relationships with customers, which includes personalization of services, consideration of individual needs, emotional comfort, feedback, and readiness for change. It is implemented through the concept of service design, which allows you to anticipate guests' expectations even before they contact you.

In the hotel and restaurant environment, a customer-oriented approach is closely linked to concepts such as service hospitality, emotional intelligence of staff, gastronomic authenticity, and consistent quality. Understanding the multicultural context of service is becoming increasingly important, especially in large tourist centers, where customers expect tailored services without losing the individuality of the establishment.

In the 21st century, a customer-oriented approach has become not just a market requirement, but a determining factor in the successful operation of hospitality businesses. In the hotel and restaurant business, where contact with customers is direct and constant, the level of service largely depends on the establishment's ability to create an individual, emotionally appealing experience of interaction with guests.

The concept of customer-oriented approach emerged at the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries in response to the growing need for personalized service, which, in particular, manifested itself in quality standards, the development of effective logistics, and the development of flexible service formats — both in stationary and mobile establishments. The stages of change are reflected in Table 1.

Table 1.

Evolution of management approaches

Time period	Approach	Characteristics	Orientation
Late 19th – early 20th century	Classic	Centralization, hierarchy	On structure
1930s–1950s	Behavioral	Motivation, human factor	On employees
1950s–1970s	Systemic	Interrelationships with the environment	On integrity
1970s–1990s	Situational	Flexibility and adaptation	On changeability
Late 20th century	Market-oriented	Competition, marketing	On profit
21st century	Customer-oriented	Personalization of service	On consumers

A customer-oriented approach involves shifting the focus of a company's activities toward a deep understanding and complete satisfaction of each customer's needs. This is not just a set of service procedures, but a comprehensive strategy that covers all levels of management and interaction with guests.

A customer-oriented approach as a modern concept of service management is of considerable scientific interest to both foreign and Ukrainian researchers. In the classic works of F. Kotler, consumer orientation is seen as a basic principle of marketing strategy, which includes studying the needs of the target audience, creating value propositions, and building long-term relationships with customers [1]. K. Legi interprets a customer-oriented approach as a service philosophy that takes into account individual consumer expectations and emphasizes the importance of empathy and flexibility in communication [2]. Narver and Slater, in turn, emphasize the need for systematic collection and analysis of market information to predict changes in customer behavior and make relevant management decisions [3].

Customer-centricity also occupies an important place in the national scientific. Thus, M. Tyshina considers a customer-oriented approach as a comprehensive approach to service quality management, which involves not only compliance with service standards, but also the individualization of services, taking into account the psychological and sociocultural characteristics of guests [4]. O. Ryabokon expands the interpretation of this concept, defining a customer-oriented approach as a management system that combines the emotional intelligence of staff, service design, and constant communication with customers based on feedback [5].

Summarizing scientific approaches, a customer-oriented approach can be defined as a comprehensive management concept focused on long-term interaction with customers, based on the principles of personalization, responsibility, and openness to feedback.

To effectively implement a customer-centric strategy in the hospitality industry, the following key principles must be adhered to:

Anticipating expectations: creating pleasant surprises for customers as a tool for increasing loyalty.

Personalized approach: segmentation of the target audience, prompt response, individual solutions.

Conscientiousness: keeping promises, providing high-quality services.

Empathy: emotional understanding of the customer, attentive attitude, sincere communication.

Care: attention to details that shape the overall image of the service.

Feedback: encouraging reviews and comments for the purpose of improvement.

Dealing with negativity: responding constructively to complaints as a tool for customer retention.

Each of these principles strengthens the relationship with the customer, building trust, emotional connection, and lasting brand loyalty.

In the restaurant service industry, a customer-oriented approach takes on a practical dimension, which is evident in the details: from attentive service to flexibility in placing orders. An important aspect is the development of a menu that takes into account the food preferences and restrictions of guests — vegetarian, gluten-free, seasonal, and ethnic preferences. For example, in many modern establishments, part of the menu is formed using local products, adapting dishes to the expectations of a specific target audience — healthy eaters, gourmets, or even tourists seeking an authentic gastronomic experience.

In the modern restaurant industry, service design is no less important. It encompasses ease of ordering, interior design, loyalty programs, digital interaction with customers (online menus, reservations, chatbots), as well as clear communication from staff based on emotional empathy.

The development of catering services demonstrates another dimension of customer centricity—flexibility to the context, location, and format of the event, as well as the customer's needs. When providing off-site services, the successful implementation of an event depends not only on technological preparation but also on the ability to anticipate and respond flexibly to customer preferences. For example, for an outdoor wedding ceremony, it is important to anticipate weather risks, equipment availability, serving format, and catering for guests with children or special diets.

Special attention must be paid to maintaining the quality of food and service outside of a stationary restaurant. Customer-oriented catering is based on perfect logistics, an individual approach to food presentation, event design in a style consistent with the customer's wishes, and careful selection of staff with mobile service skills.

The quality of products and services is not only a technical standard but also a tool for building trust, especially in the context of off-site service, complex logistics, or a multicultural environment. In particular, high-quality raw materials, reliable suppliers, organoleptic consistency of dishes, compliance with sanitary standards, proper storage and serving — all this forms an impression of the facility's professionalism.

In the hotel and restaurant industry, service quality is closely linked to the ability to meet not only functional but also emotional customer expectations. Integrating customer centricity into service models allows you to create an exceptional experience for guests.

The staff plays a special role: their professionalism, friendliness, and ability to empathize directly influence the perception of service. Investing in training, developing soft skills, and forming a customer-oriented corporate culture is a prerequisite for implementing a customer-centric strategy.

In addition, the use of technology (CRM systems, mobile applications, feedback systems) allows for more effective communication with customers and timely adaptation of services to individual requests.

Figure 1 provides a visual representation of the impact of a customer-oriented approach on service quality.

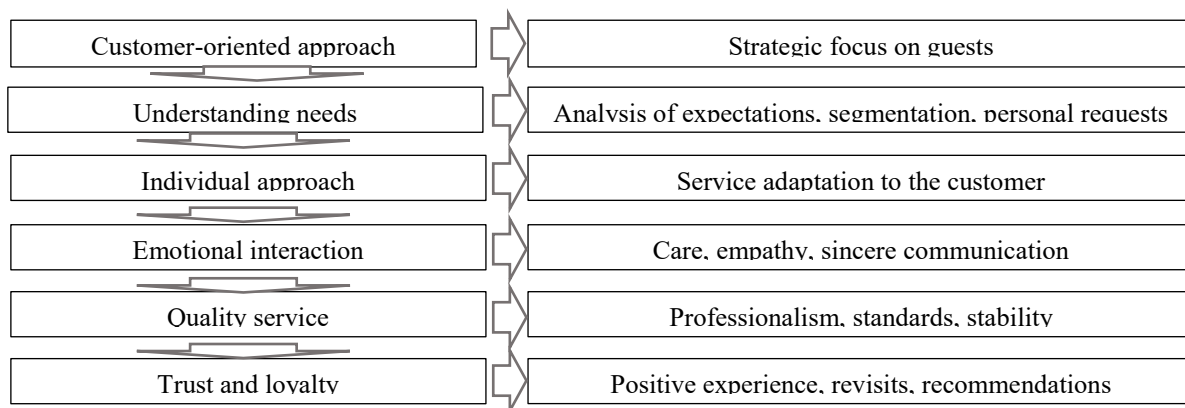


Fig. 1. Impact of a customer-oriented approach on service quality

It is also important to consider the authenticity of culinary traditions, both in domestic cuisine and when creating ethnic or fusion menus. Knowledge of national gastronomic customs allows not only to recreate culinary identity, but also to create a unique atmosphere for guests seeking a gastronomic immersion. Therefore, quality in hotel and restaurant service is considered a multi-level category: it encompasses technological perfection, cultural awareness, gastronomic innovation, and, above all, a sincere desire to create a unique guest experience.

CONCLUSIONS FROM THIS ARTICLE AND PROSPECTS FOR FURTHER RESEARCHES IN THIS AREA

A customer-oriented approach is a key element of high-quality service in the hotel and restaurant business. Its effective implementation requires a comprehensive strategy that takes into account both the technical aspects of service and the emotional and psychological factors of interaction with guests. Applying the principles of anticipating expectations, individual approach, conscientiousness, empathy, care, openness to feedback, and working with negativity contributes to increasing customer satisfaction, growing their loyalty, and forming sustainable competitive advantages for the enterprise.

The integration of customer-oriented practices with modern approaches to catering organization, quality management, food culture, and traditional cuisine allows for increased flexibility and adaptability of service to the individual expectations of guests. Thus, a customer-oriented approach becomes a multidimensional concept that permeates all areas of the establishment's activities – from menu formation and ethical attitude to the product to the organization of space and staff communication.

Further research will focus on an in-depth study of effective methods for forming a customer-oriented culture among hotel and restaurant staff, developing tools for assessing the level of customer orientation and its impact on the financial results of the enterprise, analyzing digital solutions for personalizing service, as well as researching the intercultural aspects of customer experience, taking into account the food traditions of different peoples of the world.

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