

1 nigh in hotel, 4 simple CX lessons

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Last week I travelled to Dublin, in Ireland, and stayed in a so-called 4 star hotel, the Talbot Hotel Stillorgan.

Arrived and went to reception. Only one customer was waiting, whilst the person behind the counter tried to answer the phone (which didn't stop ringing), deal with couriers dropping parcels, and assist customers. 15 mins had gone by when my turn came up *"I didn't do anything for a couple of hours, and now everything seems be coming at the same time"*, the guy said. First, a greeting would be nice, and second it's not really my fault that Armageddon arrived at 7:00 PM on a Thursday.

Went up, unpacked and came down for dinner at the bar. There was no customer waiting, only a few sitting at tables already served. Two waitresses ran around, in and out of the kitchen. What appeared to be a manager was checking receipts behind the counter. No one bothered to even acknowledge my presence. 5 mins later, the manager asked *"can I help you sir?"*. Well, first a greeting would be nice, second I'm standing here not because I need help but because when I have nothing to do, I sit in bars staring at people.

In the morning, no hot water was running in the shower. Eventually I called reception to explain the situation. *"It's cold outside sir, so it might take a while"*. I left it running for 10 mins whilst I shaved, and eventually decided to take a cold shower, as I had a plane to catch and a long journey to the airport. Again, first a greeting would be nice, and second Ireland with 7 degrees centigrade, is not really the north pole, is it?

Came down to check-out and, at reception, the same person who had answered the phone 30 mins earlier didn't even bother asking if eventually the hot water had come. *"Check-out sir?"*. I have a feeling that I'm repeating myself... first a greeting would be nice, second I'm standing in reception, with my luggage, at 6:30 AM. Would it be because I want to ask where the gym is, or because I want to check-out? Leave it for you to guess.

Asked about the bus to the airport, and was told I should leave the hotel, turn right and it was a short walk to the bus stop. After 10 mins walking on the dark, cold and rain I could not find it and, to avoid losing my flight, decided to call a Uber – which cost me 3,5 times more than the bus. Turns out that

the bus stop wasn't to the right, rather I should have turned left coming out of the hotel. Reception gave me the wrong direction.

This hotel clearly has very little regard for its customers and their experience. I won't bother returning, but I did take the time to leave a review on TripAdvisor, and a bit of advice in here....

1. Smile and greet. Little things and small gestures matter more than one may think. A greeting and a smile not only starts the engagement on the right foot, but also makes up a lot on the overall experience.

2. Plan and prepare. It is obvious that one person in a hotel reception will struggle to take calls, deal with couriers and assist customers simultaneously. A plan helps being one step ahead and avoid chaos.

3. Empathise and take ownership. If things go wrong don't make excuses or try to deflect responsibility. Actively listen, acknowledge and concur, apologise, provide a solution and fulfil your promise.

4. Turn disappointment into delight. What could be a (sometimes unavoidable) negative moment is an opportunity to show the customer how much you care. Act fast and go the extra mile to win the customer back.