

The Eyes of the Customer:

The Hyatt Regency (Santa Clara)



Lobby and Lounge

Thursday, June 10, 2010 (5:00PM – 6:00 PM)



Bruce Yodis
June 14, 2010

I decided to go to the Hyatt Regency lobby since they have a lounge – what better way to enjoy the guest experience than with a pre-dinner cocktail. As I walked up to the front door of the hotel I was greeted by one of the valets and greeted by the bell person as I walked into the lobby of the hotel. I already felt like a guest at the hotel.

Once in the lobby I paused to scan the lobby area. It was one big open area with many functions. Off to the left was a rounded set of stairs that let up to the meeting and banquet rooms as well as the convention center access. Next to the stairs were a small business center and a sitting area where people were either on their cell phones, typing on laptops, or reading the newspaper. Straight ahead was the front desk; actually it was three separate desk areas instead of one big closed in area. People were checking in to the hotel at this time of day. Just to the right was the lobby lounge which provided seating at the bar, all around it with chairs and tables, or out on the patio. There were already people there drinking, snacking, or just watching the news or sports on the bar televisions.

I decided to have a seat in a chair in front of the bar where I was in a good position to see everything going on in the lobby. I was quickly asked if I would like something from the bar, so I ordered a Manhattan. When the drink came the server also left me a small bowl of peanuts. It was a personal size so I knew no one else's hands had been in it. I felt this was a nice touch and a good alternative to the standard shared bowl of bar snacks. The bartender was friendly and treated me like the other guests even though I had told him I would be paying cash and not charging it to a room. I felt very comfortable sitting there and felt like I was being treated as a guest of the hotel.

As I sat there observing and enjoying my Manhattan, I observed that this was a very busy lobby

with a lot going on. People were checking in to the hotel, others were just coming in to ask questions at the front desk, and others were coming or going to the different meetings, conferences, conventions going on, or headed out to their cars. There were quite a few people sitting reading the paper, working on laptops and iPads, or just talking on cell phones. There were also people meeting at the bar to relax, meet up with friends, or catch a glimpse of the news or basketball game. I felt like the lobby was a very functional space and the nerve center of the hotel.

As I sat there I also thought about the five senses and what I was experiencing. The lobby area had a very businesslike atmosphere with dark wood paneled walls and dimmed lighting that gave me a calm feeling; which was perfect because I was trying to relax. I also noticed that because the lobby was so busy there was a constant din going on from people talking. You could hear people at or around the bar, the TVs, people walking through the lobby, those on cell phones, and even the front desk. However, with all this going on it wasn't loud or annoying due to the size of the room and some of the textures used in the space. There was a sound absorbing carpet on the floor, wood walls, and upholstered furniture. There were very few hard surfaces for the noise to bounce off of. The air was fresh as there was no smoking in the lobby or lounge area which I felt really helped to enhance my experience. And of course, the Manhattan was delicious. So much so, I had to order another one when the server came around and asked if I would like anything else.

While waiting for the drink I got up and walked around the lobby. I went over and looked at the posted events for the day; which I noticed there were eight different meetings and conferences going on. A hotel worker was walking by and asked if he could help me with anything. I asked a couple of questions which he very graciously answered for me. I then walked up to the front desk

and asked for a brochure but was told they didn't have brochures for the hotel. But he was very friendly (or good at up selling), so he informed me that they just use the web for providing information about the hotel but he did have a package on wedding and event planning at the hotel and he could get me one of those. I declined the package but asked a few questions concerning event space and room prices. He answered as best he could and then I went back to the Manhattan that was waiting for me.

All in all, I felt very comfortable in the lobby and felt like it was a great way to just relax after a long day. All the staff treated me in a very friendly manner but were never overly pushy or in the way. I also noticed that the other guests in the lobby looked mostly relaxed and enjoying themselves. There were people there to serve them but only when they wanted it. I even had a couple of short conversations with a few of them.

I thought it would be somewhat uncomfortable being there by myself. I thought I might be under-dressed, but it turns out I was dressed better in my Dockers, polo shirt, and brown leather shoes than most people in the lobby and lounge. I was expecting something a little colder and grander in appearance but it was a much more comfortable and calming atmosphere. Is it what I was expecting? Not really, but I did experience what I was hoping to experience – comfort and relaxation.