

# How Becoming an Uplifting Service Leader Empowered an Employee to Help a Company Grow from Financial Distress to Luxury Resort Leader

LUX\* Resorts and Hotels are known for their customer-obsessed service, each employee striving to deliver an unforgettable experience for every guest in every moment. But this wasn't always the case.

**Afeef Hussain, Certified Uplifting Service Leader, on the rise of LUX\* South Ari Atoll. In this case study, he explains how service education helped send a new resort straight to #1 on TripAdvisor.**

"I met Ron Kaufman, the founder of Uplifting Service, in 2004 and jumped at the chance to become certified in his methods and techniques. The South Ari Atoll property was ranked 57 out of 165 in the Maldives when I began the Uplifting Service Program with my team in August 2012.

In fewer than three months, all 600 members of our hospitality team had completed four service training courses. A new understanding and common service language emerged quickly, which affected how we treated our guests and colleagues across the property. Today, the number of resorts in the Maldives has grown to 238 and LUX\* South Ari Atoll now ranks consistently in the top 10."



## AFEEF HUSSAIN

LUX\* RESORTS & HOTELS  
Regional Director of Training,  
Development, and  
Quality Assurance



**LUX\***  
RESORTS & HOTELS

“As we prepared to open a new resort, LUX\* North Male Atoll, in February 2019, we applied all we learned with the benefit of our 10-year evolution of service values and standards. Leading Uplifting Service training programs was easy to do as I had many more stories to share on each topic!

Together with other Certified Uplifting Service Leaders, we trained 200 new team members, who completed all core courses during the resort’s one-month pre-opening. As a result of the investment LUX\* has made in Uplifting Service over the years, it took less than six months for LUX\* North Male Atoll to achieve the #1 rank on TripAdvisor for resorts and hotels in the Maldives.

### **The Greatest Impact of The Proven Path: Taking Personal Responsibility – TPR**

By far, the greatest impact on the spirit of our teams and their ability to provide new and creative ways of serving customers came from the Proven Path concept of Taking Personal Responsibility – TPR. I saw firsthand the hugely positive effects of people catching themselves when they were about to blame someone else or some circumstance for why our service fell short. And instead, they would own the result and creatively think of a way to make up for it and ensure it didn’t happen again. People began to use the abbreviation of the course

TPR – so often that it became the internal synonym for a concierge service program at South Ari Atoll called Guest Relationship Officer (GRO). We branded delivering the experience as TPR, which means whoever is responsible for each guest does whatever it takes to ensure they get the best value and experience during their stay.”

**“Today I am Regional Director of Training, Development, and Quality Assurance for LUX\* Resorts & Hotels, but one thing hasn’t changed; I still enjoy taking personal responsibility for our organization’s service excellence and ensuring that we always take an extra step to provide shining value to our guests and to one another.”**

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## **Uplifting Service describes unique characteristics of the LUX\* service improvement program.**

Inside each of our client organizations, the Uplifting Service Leaders we train and certify become partners for cascading service principles and cultivating service behaviors. At LUX\*, we certified Afeef Hussain and other team members to become Workshop Leaders in all departments.

These Leaders delivered a series of courses to teach every team member key service principles, and conducted workshops to apply our service improvement tools. These courses and workshops enabled LUX\* to quickly improve and consistently deliver service that was uniquely valued by guests.

### **Shining Service Standards Become One with the Brand**

During these courses and workshops, all team members were introduced to The 12 Building Blocks of an Uplifting Service culture. By explaining an abstract concept in accessible and tangible ways, it became clear how individual behaviors create and sustain the culture. This sense of personal commitment and individual ownership allowed LUX\* to go far beyond standard procedures and create “shining service standards” that ensure LUX\* is constantly improving and refining.

### **Unique Initiatives Can Be Applied in Every Industry and Organization**

Remarkable in the LUX\* program is the company-wide initiative to push service training deep into the fabric of the organization. For example, Uplifting Service education is featured in all new staff orientation programs. And LUX\* went further than our proven “Six Levels of Service” approach, creating its own branded “seventh level of service” for guests, and for each other, which is referred to with pride as “LUX\* Shining”.

Epitomizing this deep internalization is the LUX\* Innovation Challenge, which calls on team to innovate while focusing on annual themes, including: increasing the loyalty of guests, increasing the loyalty of team members, increasing revenue, improving productivity, reducing waste, and enhancing the team member experience. Teams in each resort as well as head office and sales offices generate new ideas, create plans for implementation, and pilot test the best of their ideas. At the end of each year, teams convene to present the results of their new ideas to a LUX\* Innovation Contest jury. Winning ideas are then rolled-out across all resorts, with runner-up ideas deployed at selected locations.



## WHY UPLIFTING SERVICE?

LUX\* embraced Uplifting Service principles and philosophy with unrelenting focus on personal mindset, team learning, and practical application.

### CHALLENGES

- The South Ari Atoll property (prior to rebranding as LUX\*) was ranked 57 out of 165 properties in the Maldives.
- The luxury island tourism industry often distinguishes itself through ornate flamboyance and excess. LUX\* wanted to offer something different; lighter and brighter, less deluxe with more delight.
- The global economy was soft when Uplifting Service was introduced. LUX\* was feeling the direct financial impact. The company needed a distinctive spark to attract more guests and earn a higher room rate.

### APPROACH

- Uplifting Service Leaders were certified across all levels and departments of the organization, delivering training on service principles and conducting service improvement workshops.
- Employees were educated to understand that service is taking action to create value for others, while “shining service” delivers unexpected moments of deeply authentic delight.
- The 12 Building Blocks of Service Culture were widely taught and personally embraced.
- LUX\* created a branded seventh level of “LUX\* Shining service standards”, treating every guest, and each other, as cherished VIPs.
- Individuals were given personal responsibility and took ownership to provide shining service experiences for guests and for each other.
- The annual LUX\* Innovation Challenge embedded the spirit and practice of new ideas across all resorts.

### RESULTS

- South Ari Atoll ranked #8 out of 238 resorts in Maldives on TripAdvisor, up from #57.
- The brand new LUX\* North Male Atoll achieved #1 rank on TripAdvisor for all resorts and hotels in Maldives.



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