



Enhancing Hotel Frontliner Professionalism Through Industry-Standard Grooming Training At Planet Holiday Hotel Batam

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Abstract

This community service program was carried out in response to the increasing demands of professionalism in the hospitality industry, where frontliner appearance significantly affects guest impressions. Grooming is not only about physical appearance but also represents work ethics and service standards. The program took place at Planet Holiday Hotel Batam and involved five front office staff and 20 first-semester students from Batam Tourism Polytechnic. This activity aimed to improve frontliner grooming based on hotel industry standards. The method used was a combination of material presentation, practical demonstration, direct application, and group reflection. Each academic contributed to different roles such as proposal preparation, coordination with the hotel, training delivery, and discussion facilitation. The outcomes indicated a significant increase in participants' understanding, as shown in pre-test and post-test results. Hotel staff reported better awareness of grooming practices, while students expressed increased motivation and comprehension through hands-on learning. The session also promoted meaningful dialogue between academia and industry. Participants were highly enthusiastic, and the training environment was supportive and interactive. This success demonstrates the effectiveness of community service programs in bridging education and industry needs. Moreover, it opens up opportunities for future collaborations, such as structured internships or continuous professional training. The result of this program underscores the importance of experiential learning and cross-sectoral partnerships in preparing competent and industry-ready human resources. In conclusion, practical and collaborative models of community service like this provide a sustainable approach to workforce development and quality service improvement in hospitality.

Keywords: Grooming Training, Frontliner Hospitality, Community Service, Experiential Learning, Industry-Academia Collaboration

INTRODUCTION

The hospitality industry is a service sector with unique characteristics, where the quality of service is highly determined by the competence and personal image of the human resources involved. In an industry that relies heavily on direct interaction between employees and guests, the role of frontliners becomes especially vital, as they serve as the first line and the representative face of the hotel's overall image. Frontliner staff such as receptionists, bellboys, and concierges are the first individuals seen and directly engaged by guests, making the initial impression they convey crucial in shaping guests' perceptions of the





hotel's quality. In this regard, one aspect that cannot be overlooked is grooming — which encompasses physical appearance, personal hygiene, makeup or neatness, as well as gestures and body posture that reflect professionalism and readiness to serve. Grooming is not merely about aesthetics or tidiness; it is an integral part of a service strategy that directly impacts guest comfort, trust, and even loyalty (Kusumarini, 2021).

In the context of globalization and digitalization within today's tourism industry, guest expectations toward hotel services have significantly increased—not only in terms of physical facilities but also in regard to employees' soft skills. Grooming has become a visible and easily assessed indicator of service quality; however, ironically, it is often overlooked by both management and the employees themselves (Oscar & Sumirah, 2019). Research by (Tambunan et al., 2024) states that grooming has a direct impact on overall service evaluation, as guests tend to assess professionalism based on physical appearance before any further interaction takes place. This is further supported by a study conducted by (Pirastyo & Wulansari, 2019) which highlights that raising grooming standards among front office staff significantly increases customer satisfaction, as evidenced by higher guest loyalty and improved reviews on hotel digital platforms. This aligns with previous studies indicating that improved service delivery directly contributes to enhanced guest satisfaction (Sipahutar et al., 2024)(Jeniffer et al., 2024).

Despite this, field realities indicate that not all hotels have a structured, continuous, and industry-standard-based grooming training system in place. Many hotels still rely on informal understanding or one-off orientation sessions without regular updates. Coupled with high employee turnover and the pressures of daily operations, grooming is often perceived as a personal matter rather than an integral part of a professional work system. In preliminary interviews conducted with representatives of Planet Holiday Hotel Batam—a four-star hotel operating in the central tourism and business district of Batam—it was revealed that while the hotel does have general grooming policies, there remains variation in employees' understanding and implementation, particularly among frontliners. This inconsistency in practice can lead to irregularities in service delivery, ultimately affecting guests' perceptions of the hotel's quality and reputation.





In response to this condition, this Community Service (PKM) activity is designed as an academic contribution from the Room Division Management Study Program at Batam Tourism Polytechnic, aiming to address the practical needs of the hospitality industry in enhancing human resource capacity. The training is intended to provide both theoretical understanding and hands-on practice regarding grooming standards within the industry context. This encompasses not only physical appearance, but also work attitude, non-verbal communication, and self-awareness as institutional representatives (Isnanda & Della Sari, 2020). Additionally, this activity serves as a contextual learning medium for students—particularly those in the early semesters—allowing them to directly observe how hospitality theories are applied in real-world situations. This aligns with the experiential learning approach in vocational education, which emphasizes learning through direct experience so that students can develop competencies and professional attitudes from an early stage.

Planet Holiday Hotel was selected as the site for this activity due to its highly strategic and representative position. Located in the Lubuk Baja area, the hotel is one of the primary choices for both domestic and international travelers, particularly those visiting for business, transit, or leisure purposes. With a large number of guest rooms, conference facilities, and intensive front office operations, the hotel has a genuine need to enhance its service standards, particularly in terms of human resource quality. The hotel management has also demonstrated openness and full support for the implementation of this training, despite the hotel's ongoing operational activities. This commitment provides a strong foundation for the effective execution of the PKM program, even within the constraints of a limited one-day timeframe.





Figure 1. Photo with Partners on November 4th, 2025

Furthermore, this training activity is not only intended to provide participants with new knowledge, but also to foster a stronger culture of professional service within their work environment (Ardhana & Susanti, 2025). It is expected that after the training, participants will serve as internal change agents within the hotel, capable of disseminating professional grooming practices to their colleagues (Lubis et al., 2024). On the other hand, for educational institutions, this activity serves as tangible evidence of the role of vocational higher education in addressing the needs of the business and industrial sectors (DUDI), while also strengthening mutually beneficial, long-term partnership networks. Therefore, the implementation of this PKM initiative is not merely a temporary activity, but part of a collaborative and sustainable strategy between academia and industry to build competitive and adaptable service quality in the hospitality sector amid evolving challenges.

COMMUNITY OVERVIEW

Planet Holiday Hotel Batam is a well-established four-star hotel that has long served as a hospitality icon in the city of Batam, particularly in the Lubuk Baja area, which is known as a center of business, tourism, and commerce. Strategically located in the city center, the hotel offers convenient access to key destinations such as shopping centers, the international ferry terminal, entertainment districts, and government offices. The combination of its prime location and comprehensive





facilities makes it a top choice for both domestic and international travelers, whether they are visiting for business, transit, or leisure purposes.



Figure 2. Community Service Team Members and Partners on 2025

Planet Holiday Hotel Batam was selected as a partner in this Community Service (PKM) activity for well-considered reasons. First, in terms of reputation and operational profile, the hotel is a large-scale property that consistently operates in a competitive market, serving guests from diverse local and international backgrounds. This underscores the critical importance of employee professionalism, particularly in frontline roles. Notably, front office professionalism has been shown to positively influence hotel occupancy rates (Syaharani et al., 2024). Second, based on initial communication with the hotel management, it was found that although the hotel has internal grooming standards in place, the management welcomed the initiative for a refresher training session aimed at reinforcing staff understanding of the importance of professional appearance and service ethics. Third, the hotel has demonstrated a strong commitment to collaborating with educational institutions as part of its efforts to develop human resources and foster long-term partnership relationships with the academic sector.

In addition, the implementation of the PKM activity at this hotel offers added value in terms of student learning application. With its accessible location from the campus and its professional working environment, students are able to engage directly in real-world field practice and interact with actual industry





practitioners. This collaboration enables students to gain contextual and applicable educational experiences, in line with the industry-based vocational education approach. Thus, Planet Holiday Hotel serves not only as a technically and operationally appropriate partner, but also as one that shares a common vision in building a learning ecosystem and fostering the development of professional competencies in the hospitality sector.

METHODOLOGY

This Community Service (PKM) activity was held on Tuesday, November 4, 2025, starting at 12:00 PM (WIB) until completion, and took place within the operational environment of Planet Holiday Hotel Batam, located at Jl. Raja Ali Haji, Sei Jodoh, Batam, Riau Islands, 29432, Indonesia. The event was conducted in an offline (in-person) format and was centered in one of the hotel's meeting rooms, which had been specially prepared by the management to ensure the smooth execution of the training. The activity proceeded in a conducive and professional atmosphere, with full support from the hotel management and enthusiastic participation from trainees representing the Front Office unit. The role of the front office is crucial in ensuring guest satisfaction and comfort, and therefore should be prioritized (Wijaya et al., 2024) as well as in managing guest complaints and suggestions (Dhabitah et al., 2024).

The Community Service (PKM) activity conducted at Planet Holiday Hotel Batam was designed to be holistic, interactive, and applicative, tailored to the needs of the partner institution and the characteristics of the participants, most of whom were active frontliner employees in the Front Office unit. The activity was delivered in a single, compact yet efficient session that emphasized participatory learning methods and hands-on practice. This initiative was not merely conceived as a one-way training session, but rather as a collaborative space involving industry practitioners, academics, and students, aimed at enhancing the service competencies of hotel employees.





Figure 3. The Team Conducted a Briefing for The Participants on 2025

One of the key approaches applied was the integration of direct on-site verbal instruction with simultaneous practical demonstrations, considering that the training context prioritized the development of real-world skills over purely theoretical understanding. This aligns with findings indicating that training effectively enhances workers' skills (Supardi et al., 2024)(Putri et al., 2024). Accordingly, the delivery of material on grooming standards in the hospitality industry was accompanied by live demonstrations, covering aspects such as hair neatness, uniform compliance, nail hygiene, the selection of professional facial makeup, appropriate use of accessories, as well as body posture and facial expressions when interacting with guests.

During the training, participants were not merely passive listeners but were actively engaged in simulations and hands-on grooming practice sessions on-site. In these sessions, participants were guided to review their own appearances and make adjustments based on the facilitator's guidelines and feedback. This method proved highly effective, as participants could immediately observe and experience the differences between their appearance before and after the training. Additionally, an open discussion was held on daily work experiences, challenges in maintaining professional appearance during working hours, and practical solutions that could be implemented without disrupting routine tasks. The students



involved were also given the opportunity to assist in the practical and simulation processes, while simultaneously learning through direct interaction with hotel staff.

SUSTAINABLE RESULT AND POTENSIAL

The implementation of the Community Service (PKM) activity at Planet Holiday Hotel Batam was evaluated not only based on its technical success on the day of execution but also as the culmination of a systematic series of processes—from planning to post-activity follow-up. Each stage was carried out with active support and contributions from the team of participating lecturers. The roles of each lecturer were assigned based on their respective competencies, duties, and responsibilities, as agreed upon in advance.

In the initial stage, the primary focus was directed toward planning, proposal development, and both technical and administrative coordination. In this regard, Arina Luthfini Lubis played a central role in preparing key documents, including the activity proposal, training instruments, and all reporting formats required for institutional administrative purposes. She also organized the structure of the training materials, ensuring they were grounded in both literature review findings and the specific needs of the partner institution, thereby establishing a strong academic foundation for the activity.

Meanwhile, Supardi assumed a leading role in external communication and logistics, particularly in coordinating with Planet Holiday Hotel Batam. Through intensive communication with hotel management, Supardi ensured that the schedule, required facilities, and participant selection were mutually agreed upon without disrupting the hotel's operations. Effective coordination at this stage served as a fundamental foundation for the smooth execution of the activity on the event day.

On the day of the event, the entire team of lecturers was present on-site and actively contributed according to their respective roles. The activity commenced with opening remarks delivered by representatives from both the hotel and the campus, followed by a technical briefing for the participants. Andri Wibowo, a lecturer with expertise in hotel operations, served as the lead trainer for the grooming session. He delivered the material through oral presentation,





interspersed with live demonstrations illustrating professional appearance standards in the hospitality industry.

During the simulation and hands-on practice sessions, the discussion and reflection segment was facilitated by Zahara Fatimah, who guided participants in exploring personal experiences, fostering collective awareness, and encouraging active engagement throughout the session. The discussion was warm, open, and constructive—serving as a two-way interaction space between participants and the trainer, which successfully fostered a renewed understanding of grooming, not merely as physical appearance, but as an integral aspect of service ethics. Upon completion of the activity, the lecturer team did not conclude the process abruptly; instead, they proceeded with internal evaluation, visual documentation, and the preparation of a final report as a form of accountability and to ensure the sustainability of the initiative.

The Impact of Pre-test and Post-test Results on Competency Improvement

As part of the activity evaluation process, the service team conducted a measurement of participant competencies before and after the training using pre-test and post-test instruments administered to two main groups: students and hotel employees as program partners. The results of this assessment revealed a significant improvement in participants' understanding of grooming concepts, professional attitudes, and awareness of the importance of appearance in the hospitality industry. This difference serves as a critical indicator that the training effectively provided a positive and constructive impact on the development of participants' competencies.

For the student group, the average pre-test score was 65%, indicating that prior to the training, their understanding of grooming was largely theoretical and had not yet extended into professional practice. However, after participating in the program and observing firsthand the implementation of grooming in the field, their post-test scores rose sharply to 88%. This demonstrates that direct student involvement in the community service program, particularly through observing real practices in the industry, effectively transformed their conceptual understanding into more mature and practical competencies.





Meanwhile, for the group of hotel employees who participated in the training, the average pre-test score was 72%, indicating that they already possessed basic knowledge related to grooming. Nevertheless, the training successfully provided a refresher and reinforced the material in greater depth, resulting in an increase in post-test scores to 90%. This suggests that the training not only delivered new knowledge but also reactivated a sense of professional awareness that may have been overlooked during the routines of daily work.

This score improvement is presented in the following infographic as visual evidence of the effectiveness of PKM implementation:

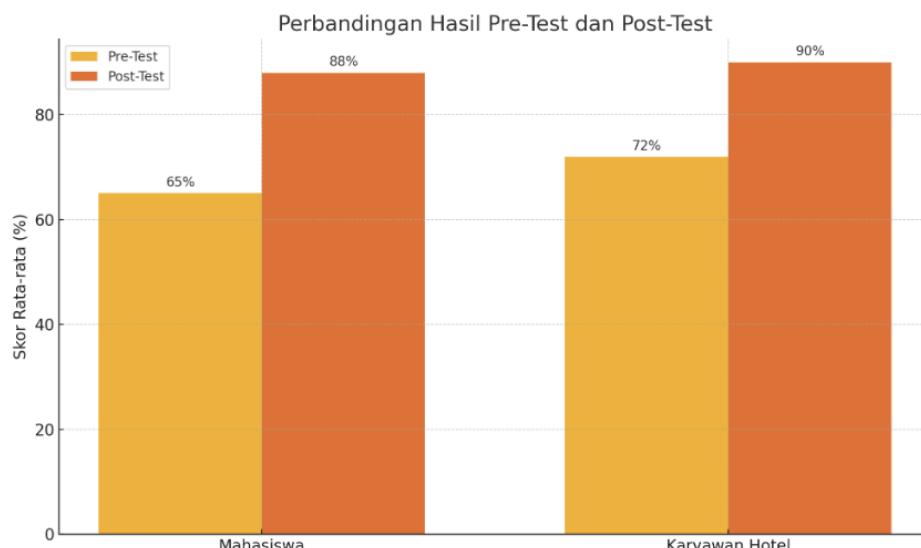


Figure 4. Comparison Results of Pre-test and Post-test on 2025

This improvement demonstrates that a training model based on hands-on practice in the actual workplace, combined with participatory and reflective approaches, is highly effective in driving meaningful changes in participants' knowledge and behavior. From both academic and industry perspectives, this activity has successfully created a balanced and sustainable impact.

Sustainability Potential

The Community Service (PKM) activity conducted at Planet Holiday Hotel Batam not only produced immediate positive short-term impacts but also opened up significant opportunities to be continued and further developed into more



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systematic and sustainable forms of collaborative programs. The success of this initiative has laid a strong foundation for expanding partnerships between Batam Tourism Polytechnic and the hospitality industry as part of the implementation of the Tri Dharma of Higher Education in an inclusive manner that aligns with the needs of the present era.

From the perspective of the industry partner, Planet Holiday Hotel Batam demonstrated strong commitment and openness toward efforts to improve human resource quality, particularly in terms of service delivery and workplace professionalism. The grooming training conducted was proven effective in refreshing and reawakening staff awareness regarding the importance of appearance and representative work attitudes. Moving forward, the hotel has expressed interest in developing similar training sessions on a regular basis, both for new and existing employees, as well as exploring more advanced training topics such as service communication, work ethics, and deeper aspects of hospitality behavior.

Meanwhile, from the academic perspective, this activity serves as a model of experiential learning that is highly valuable for vocational education students. The involvement of students in the training provided a powerful learning experience, as it allowed them to directly observe how theoretical concepts taught on campus are applied in real-world professional settings. This initiative can be further developed into structured internship schemes, teaching-industry programs, and guest lectures featuring hospitality practitioners in the classroom. Activities like this help narrow the gap between the world of education and the industry, fostering a more integrated and harmonious relationship (Lubis et al., 2025).

Furthermore, this community service activity also opens the possibility of establishing a formal Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) or Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) between Batam Tourism Polytechnic and Planet Holiday Hotel Batam in the form of sustainable collaboration. This could include internship programs, applied research, the development of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), and joint training initiatives. Such collaboration can serve as a role model for the synergy between vocational education and the service industry, not only producing job-ready graduates but also contributing to enhancing the competitiveness of the local hospitality sector.





With the solid foundation established through this community service program, there is significant potential for the sustainability and further development of the initiative toward improving the quality of human resources in the tourism industry in Batam and its surrounding areas. In terms of commitment, needs, and enthusiasm from both parties, all elements support the continuation of this activity beyond a one-time initiative, allowing it to evolve into a long-term collaborative movement between educational institutions and the business sector.

CONCLUSION

The implementation of the Community Service (PKM) program focused on professional grooming training for frontliners at Planet Holiday Hotel Batam has shown significant results in improving participants' understanding, awareness, and competence regarding the importance of appearance as part of service quality in the hospitality industry. This activity not only addressed the needs of the industry partner—who faces challenges in maintaining consistent visual service standards amid demanding work routines—but also provided valuable learning experiences for students as future professionals in the hospitality field. The practical and hands-on approach employed—through direct material delivery, on-site grooming practice, and reflective discussion—demonstrated the effectiveness of experiential training methods in shaping professional character aligned with industry standards. The post-test score improvements across both participant groups serve as key indicators of the intervention's success, further reinforcing the relevance of collaboration between vocational education institutions and the business sector in building a more responsive and industry-aligned learning ecosystem. This initiative also paves the way for sustainability through future thematic training, industry-based curriculum development, and long-term strategic partnerships aimed at strengthening human resource capacity in the tourism and hospitality sectors in Batam and its surrounding regions.

SUGGESTION

Based on the outcomes and evaluation of this community service (PKM) activity, it is recommended that similar training programs be developed in a sustainable manner with broader subject coverage and extended duration, allowing each topic





to be explored more comprehensively and applicatively. The focus of such programs should not be limited to grooming alone but can be expanded to include other areas such as service communication, emotional management in the workplace, and the enhancement of soft skills that support overall service quality in hotels. Furthermore, involving participants from various hotel departments would generate a more widespread impact in cultivating a professional work culture. From an academic perspective, these programs should continue to engage students in real-world learning experiences as a form of experiential learning that strengthens their readiness for the workforce. Educational institutions are also encouraged to establish formal partnerships with the industry through Memorandums of Understanding (MoU), so that such initiatives can be more systematically planned and sustained, ultimately producing systemic benefits for both vocational education institutions and their industry partners.

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