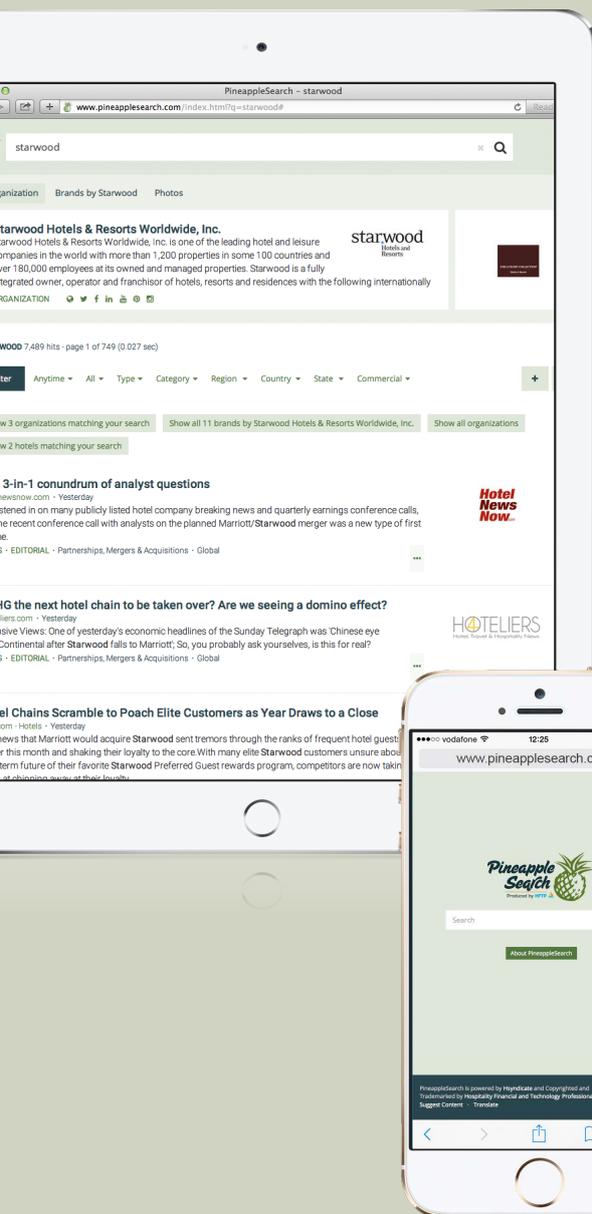




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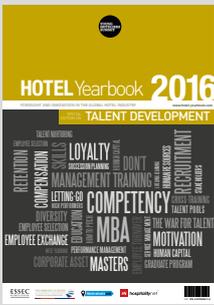
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**The Hotel Yearbook 2016 –  
Special Edition on Talent Development**

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## WELCOME

Dear readers,

Welcome to *The Hotel Yearbook 2016 – Talent Development*, the first time that we are publishing a special edition dedicated to this specific theme – one that is crucial for the future success of our industry.

The global hotel business runs on one vital fuel: people. And not just any “people”, but individuals who have a certain rare personality that makes them naturally want to serve others by working in this intensely service-oriented industry

Hotel companies know that such people do not grow on trees. They must be identified, hired, trained, motivated, nurtured – and retained. Some companies do this extraordinarily well. Others struggle to find and keep good people. But one thing is certain in 2016: all companies, the good ones and the less good, will be facing increasing competition in this “war for talent”, because the demographic landscape is changing. On the one hand, there are fewer young people to choose from these days, thanks to lower birth rates. This means that when it comes to hiring young graduates, hotel companies will face increasing competition from completely different kinds of organizations – banks or retail companies, for example – that have recognized talent that they want, too. And on the other hand, the new generation entering the workforce these days consists of young people whose values and attitude toward work are different than the previous cohort. What does that mean for the hotel business?

To address these issues, *The Hotel Yearbook* has assembled editorial contributions from authors in some 20 different organizations around the world, from hotel groups to consulting firms to schools. They cover a wide range of topics that managers in the hotel business ought to be thinking about.

This edition of *The Hotel Yearbook* has two generous partners, and we'd like to thank them both for their excellent support:

The **Young Hoteliers Summit** is a unique, completely student-run gathering of talent development officers from many top hotel companies and enthusiastic students from some 40 hotel schools worldwide. They come together to exchange points of view and to solve an annual challenge related to developing and retaining talent in the industry.

The publication's other partner is **Hsyndicate**, whose reach within the industry and close connections with opinion leaders and senior decision makers worldwide enable us to tap into a very rich vein of the hotel industry's best thinkers, doers and visionaries, both as writers and advisers. With its outstanding network, Hsyndicate makes it possible for the publications in *The Hotel Yearbook* family to reach a much wider readership than ever before.

We wish you a thought-provoking read!



*Woody Wade*

Woody Wade | Publisher

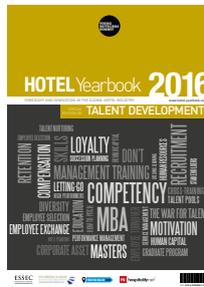


*Henri Roelings*

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# Grow your talent: The gardener's approach to talent management

by *Gisle Sarheim* 

Another way of looking at talent development is through the metaphor of cultivating a garden. Hilton's Gisle Sarheim expands on this idea, and takes you on a step-by-step journey through the duties incumbent on us as managers if we want to guarantee a productive growing season.



From the *Collins English Dictionary*:

**cultivation** (*,kʌltɪ'veɪʃən*) n. (Agriculture)

1. The planting, tending, improving, or harvesting of crops or plants
2. The preparation of ground to promote their growth

It all seems so straightforward: plant a couple of seeds, sprinkle some water, and sit back and watch it grow. Like some hobby gardeners, many managers and executives have a utopian view of what it means to grow something – in this case talent. Often two ideas are at the core: 1. Great talent grows on its own, or 2. It's someone else's responsibility (such as HR, talent management, training manager etc.)

This type of talent development by chance often yields a poor crop. "Candidate didn't work out as planned." "The good one picked up and left prematurely (some loyalty that was...huh!)" "Recruiter did a poor job." "Their heart wasn't in it." All these are excuses we managers use to shift blame – and more often than not, to the talent. This puts "an arm's length" between us and the problem, rather than accepting our part in a process gone wrong, and preventing the cycle from repeating itself.

As I was preparing this article, my outline read like a Management 101 handbook, filled with buzzwords and

meaningless statements; Investing in Human Capital, Unlocking Talent, Partnering for Success, Developing Capability, etc. Distilling experience into buzzwords is like wearing Prada at a soup kitchen. It may look nice at first, but in the trenches of the workplace sometimes simple is more meaningful. The world of the gardener provides interesting insight into cultivating talent.

### **Prepare the soil**

Another vacancy! The mere thought of having to go through the recruitment process yet again is gruelling. Endless interviews, candidates who can't remember which company they are applying for, resumes that read like burnt toast... we have all been there. However, if you jump straight into making a headcount requisition, and start the search process, you have probably made the first mistake. The first step is to ensure that you have fertile ground for your new hire. Why did the previous employee leave? How is the mood in your team? Before onboarding new talent, ensure that your house is in good order. Try to resolve internal issues before going to the market – recruitment does open a door to the outside world. Through interviews and recruitment processes, candidates get a glimpse of what it might be like to work for your company, team, and yourself... and great talent will quickly sniff out if things are astray. Top talent wants to grow and develop – can you deliver?

### **Pick the best (and the right) seeds**

Hiring the best fit is essential in winning the war for talent. A good gardener knows not to go for the cheapest seeds, of which only few might sprout. The cost to the company of not sourcing the right talent can be extremely high, far more than ensuring competitive pay and benefits. Sourcing quality talent is also difficult. Explore as many options as possible; word of mouth, networks, at-source (universities), referrals, LinkedIn, etc. – in addition to HR's recruitment platforms.

### **Don't fall asleep in the garden shed**

HR is there to help, but only you know what a perfect fit for your team really means. Like seeds, not all talent is suited to all soils or climates. A team is an ecosystem requiring balance to function optimally – and a smart manager searches for equilibrium between the parts.

### **Plant**

Once you have selected your best seeds, planting these seeds – i.e. onboarding your talent – is the most important step to ensure your talent can grow from zero to hero within a reasonable time, and become a valuable part of your ecosystem.

Key elements of this process:

1. The welcome
2. The team embrace
3. Navigating the ins and outs of the organization
4. Learning essential skills, and
5. Mastering key functions of the role.

Onboarding is not the role of HR (beyond sorting out the practical matters) – it is a core investment you as manager

make in your new talent. The first few weeks on the job might be when your talent will be most excited and motivated to excel – leverage this opportunity get the foundation right.

### **Fertilize and water**

Talent does not easily grow on its own. Just like a plant, it needs constant tending, including fertilizer and water. The watering happens daily, and enables talent to experiment, make mistakes, and develop. A work environment where individuals are afraid of making mistakes paralyzes personal growth and development. Some companies “overwater” their talent. In an effort to instill a dynamic culture in an organized manner, employees are showered with positivity through employee recognition weeks, team events, etc. This will have little impact (and might even be counter-productive), if the underlying culture is predicated upon a highly supervisory mind-set with limited individual praise for a job well done.

Fertilizer is the personal investment managers make in their employees. It includes coaching to help your talent excel, and facilitating a pathway to growth. We don't fertilize every day, as too much prevents the plant from growing strong. However, it should be regular and systematic to enable the talent to locate its inner strengths, and progress.

### **Deal with weeds**

You may have inherited a team or made an unwise hiring decision. A weed in your ecosystem is crowding the team. Resentment is brewing, team dynamics are off, and more time is spent on conflict resolution (internally and maybe externally) than growing your talent. There are weeds in your garden, and if left unattended the effect of these will inhibit your team's development.

This calls for a swift and decisive leader. You are not doing favors by allowing the situation to persist. It can be as simple as finding a better opportunity for an individual – a change of role that better aligns skills, abilities and perhaps even character traits. Occasionally, separation is the better outcome and the individual needs to consider a different line of work. Whatever is the most suitable solution, pursue it. Probation periods exist for a reason. At the end of probation, make a decision to end or extend it...but do not let weeds grow in your garden.

### **Prepare for the frost**

Every company will experience winter, when the economy and perhaps the company's profits will decline, calling for often radical counter-measures to satisfy shareholders. These are precarious times when training budgets are likely cut, talent management is put on the back burner, focus returns strictly to the bottom line, and employees may fear lay-offs. Distrust festers and talent might relocate to greener pastures. Wise managers keep their eyes on protecting the investment they have made in their team's talent. Business cycles are a reality, and should be looked upon as opportunities.

↓

## A METAPHOR FOR TALENT DEVELOPMENT

When times become difficult we prepare for the frost. A team built from great talent adapts to the new environment and seeks opportunities to leverage and redeploy skills to drive value for the company. This could begin with a joint analysis by the team of making an inventory of skills and abilities, and looking for opportunities within the company to add specific value. For your talent, this can result in diversification of skills, and new and enriching experiences.

### When the birds come

There are few things more frustrating than seeing the fruits of your labor – the talent you have grown – get gobbled up by birds. It will happen in the war for talent. You hired right, nurtured, trained, coached – and then opportunity came knocking. It can in fact pay off to acquire top talent from another company known for developing its people. There is no way of stopping this, but a few basics may tip the scales in your favor:

1. Ensure competitive remuneration (if you don't pay, they won't stay)
2. Nurturing will pay back (the time you invest in your people will build trust and loyalty for the long term), and
3. Don't fight it.

The last is probably the hardest. Support your talent when opportunity comes knocking – they will respect you for it. Sometimes experiencing another company through interviews and recruitment processes can be enough to value what one might already have. In fact, help your talent ask the right questions such as “What are you, company X, going to do for me?” If separation is unavoidable, make sure you have a friend for life.

### Harvest

Harvest is probably the hardest part for a successful leader. You have grown your talent into a magnificent bloom, knowing well that if it stays too long on the bush it will eventually wilt. The urge for most managers is to try to keep the status quo intact. You have someone who is knowledgeable, dependable, trustworthy and effective. You have a choice; let the talent decay by keeping it locked in a role they eventually grow out of, or help your talent progress to a new role, perhaps a new function, or if the company cannot provide a viable future, help them move on. Eventually even the most talented and dynamic person will lose motivation, productivity will slip, and the situation can become poisonous to other colleagues. Your team needs to believe that hard work pays off, and that there is a future ahead... so get your talent moving when the time is right!

The reward for cultivating talent is immeasurable.  
Grow your talent!

■

**Gisle Sarheim** is Vice President Development - Hilton Grand Vacations, Asia Pacific, at Hilton Worldwide, based in Singapore. With his previous roles, based in London and New York, he has covered most of the world's hotel investment markets around the globe, as well as emerging hotel markets across Africa, Middle East and the Asia Pacific region. Gisle also serves as Secretary of the Board of Directors of the Hospitality Asset Managers Association (HAMA) Asia Pacific.





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# The hospitality industry's intense eye on human capital: A hot topic in strategic circles

by **Thomas Mielke**  & **Andrew Hazelton** 

**It should not be big news to anyone working in the hospitality industry that there has always been an intense struggle for sourcing the right talent, write Thomas Mielke and Andrew Hazelton of AETHOS. So why has human capital crept back up on the agenda of most hospitality company boards?**

*This article was originally published on AETHOS' website and is reprinted with permission.*

At the recent Global Restaurant Investment Forum in Dubai, Marc Blazer, Chairman & CEO of Overture Investments and co-owner of Noma, was heard saying, "I am not in the investment management business, I am in the talent management business". This comment nicely sets the scene and actually summarized the key takeaways from a number of different industry events AETHOS attended across the globe as of late. Whether it was the HR in Hospitality Conference in Scottsdale, Arizona, the International Hotel Investment Forum in Berlin, or the Global Restaurant Investment Forum in Dubai, one thing was clear: human capital is back on top of everyone's agenda.

Operators and owners both agree that the way organizations handle human capital has a tremendous impact on their profitability and often comes to define them. So it should be no surprise that the best practices for recruiting, training, mentoring and supporting people have been among the prevailing themes at the conferences.

Of course, it should not be "big news" to anyone working in the hospitality industry that there has always been an intense struggle for sourcing the right talent. So, why has human capital crept back up on the agenda of most hospitality company boards? Arguably, three major factors help to explain the current interest:

Firstly, investors have increasingly come to realize that their role is not purely that of a "bank", providing the monetary funds to continue expansion. Equally, business leaders have awoken to the fact that their role is not purely that of strategists steering the company in the right direction. In fact, the role of investors and business executives has become that of creators and guardians of a company culture that creates a sense of shared purpose and branding that drive people towards a common goal and ultimately towards success.

Secondly, the hospitality industry – once again – is undergoing a major transformation and consolidation. Big hotel operators are looking to merge with competitors that have complementary brands (as reflected, for example, by the Accor-FRHI deal) or to acquire smaller start-ups in order to rapidly gain access to new market segments (as portrayed by Carlson-Rezidor's acquisition of German Prizeotels) while restaurant start-ups and smaller F&B concepts are quickly being acquired by "bigger fish" to create and capitalize on synergies (see Casual Dining Group's recent shopping tour of Las Iguanas and La Tasca). Such heightened M&A activity comes with its operational challenges, so business leaders must better have quick and useful solutions to HR-related issues such as: How do you successfully integrate two companies with rather distinct (and often dissimilar) corporate cultures? Whom to keep and which talent is dispensable?

Thirdly, and in line with the increased M&A activity, the hospitality industry is continuing to attract cross-border investment interest. Specifically, Asian capital is backing much of the recent transaction activity: Whether this is Chinese Anbang Insurance bidding for Starwood Hotels & Resorts, Fosun's acquisition of ClubMed or Hong Kong's CTS Metropark Hotels Co. Ltd. successful take-over of Kew Green Hotels – Asian money is (currently) everywhere. However, leadership and communication is vastly different in these Chinese, American, French and British companies – so, for a "successful marriage" to last, both parties involved in such M&A activity will want to make sure that adaptation is at the heart of their every doing.

It is encouraging to see that industry players are again paying closer attention to talent management and recognizing the strategic value it brings to the table. However, discussions should not be purely centered around hiring, training and



ANDREW HAZELTON



THOMAS MIELKE

retaining the best possible candidates – we have had those discussions in the past and while those have been productive it would be important for other talent management issues to be broached in board rooms and at conferences around the world. For example, it would be beneficial to hear more about the value proposition of diversity in attracting top talent and informing better decision-making by guarding against “group think”.

Think about it: If you were to map out the people you know at work, how likely will it be that you will come up with a highly diverse list of individuals of different ages, gender, socio-economic, ethnical or cultural backgrounds? Is your organization providing equal opportunities to abled and disabled employees? How about any prevalence of Ivy League school graduates? Sure enough, the hospitality industry provides employment to individuals from a plethora of backgrounds and its workforce is an extremely international one. However, does it give enough opportunities for individuals to move up the ranks? Are there glass-ceilings not only for women but also for other groups? And, does the industry do enough to capitalize on an aging workforce while keeping the Millennials engaged?

Keeping in mind the heightened M&A activity and the international buy-out or take-over activity that the hospitality industry is currently witnessing: How well do you think your organization would fare if it were made up of like-minded individuals not used to being challenged or questioned by a different perspective? By individuals who predominantly come from the Western world and, although having gained international work experience, who have first and foremost made their careers in European or American institutions with belief systems quite distinct from their Asian counterparts?

What companies and industry leaders should really talk about and address is how modernization (in emerging markets) does not necessarily mean Westernization; how growth does not necessarily need to be managed in the same old ways by the same old people; how leadership values in one country may differ to another and how talent management programs may (and should) be vastly different from one region to another. In short: Copy-pasting tried and tested processes (or “plug-and playing” successful business leaders) may not always work. Embracing diversity is key and finding and retaining those individuals who are adaptable and open to change with an ability to constantly re-invest themselves. The conversation should hereby steer away from the typical gender-focused diversification. Instead, it should be focused on incorporating as many diverse perspectives as possible.

■

*As founding partner and Managing Director of AETHOS Consulting Group, **Thomas Mielke** has a track record in successfully placing senior executives at leading hotel, restaurant and real estate hospitality companies across EMEA. He is passionate about organizational advisory, learning and development, and has authored numerous articles on leadership, corporate governance, emotional intelligence, and managerial core competencies that predict job performance.*

***Andrew Hazelton**, is founding partner and Managing Director at AETHOS Consulting Group. An experienced recruitment consultant, he has over a decade of retained executive search experience in a variety of industries, including hotel, restaurant, gaming, real estate, finance, and technology. He has authored a number of articles on executive selection, general HR trends and compensation for the hospitality industry.*

# Getting the most out of your leadership development

by **Tim Tobin** 

**Despite how important it is to develop leaders, it has never been more challenging, writes Tim Tobin, Dean of Choice University. It must be relevant and match the company's organizational realities, with consideration given to the needs and preferences of the leader.**

Leadership matters. In fact, some studies have found up to 70% of employee engagement is attributed to leaders. And many organizations consider people to be their greatest differentiator. With that in mind, it is more important than ever to get leadership right. And yet, too many times, great individual contributors with strong technical skills are promoted into a leadership position with little attention given to preparing them for these complex responsibilities. Those leaders' success is left to chance.

Despite how important it is to develop leaders, it has never been more challenging. There are a number of what I like to call "operational realities" facing leadership development:

- From an organizational perspective, leaders have ever-increasing responsibilities and limited time.
- Too often, organizations are operating with limited resources dedicated to developing their leaders.
- Further, in some organizations, employees are not co-located.
- When it comes to leaders, not all leaders have the same development needs.
- And, when it comes to development options, there are so many options available that it is difficult to discern which is the right one and which will provide the greatest value.

These challenges are only projected to increase. The good news, though, is that with some insights, you can turn these operational realities into opportunities. This article focuses on two key questions. The answers will provide the insights needed to get the most out of your leadership development:

First, what is most important to ensure effective leadership development?

Second, what are the most exciting leadership development approaches on the horizon?

## Effective leadership development

Effective leadership development takes into consideration the unique needs of its leaders coupled with the needs, and strategy, of the business. A leader's needs may be based on specific skills or a matter of preferred learning style. Whether we look to the past, present, or future, there are three truths that continue to stand the test of time and form the basis of effective leadership development:

**Leadership truth 1.** All great leadership development must begin with self-awareness. It is critical for a leader to understand what they need to work on in order to get the most out of the limited time for development. This can be accomplished through existing performance management and a human capital review processes, or it can occur through a variety of other assessment tools such as simulations, personality profiles or 360 assessments.

**Leadership truth 2.** You must meet a leader where you want them to be, not where they are. First, development only occurs when a leader steps out of their comfort zone. Second, we have already discussed the notion that the best leadership development takes into consideration the unique needs and learning style of the individual leader. Where this becomes even more important is that as leaders progress, their development needs to become more acute. This individuation is why executive coaching can be so effective.

**Leadership truth 3.** Adults learn best by doing. I often ask leaders to describe the activity that has had the greatest impact on their development. Ninety percent of responses have something to do with a non-classroom based activity. Don't get me wrong. There is a time and place for instructor-led learning. In fact, I have found classroom-based learning particularly useful for first-time leaders or those early in their career. It helps



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*Tim is the author of “[Your Leadership Story: Use Your Story to Energize, Inspire, and Motivate.](#)” He received his Doctorate of Education in Human Resources Development from George Washington University and his Bachelor’s degree in Psychology from the University of Delaware.*

to establish a strong foundation of knowledge. However, as leaders progress in their career and gain additional experience, their development should include some combination of stretch activities, immersion experiences, coaching and mentoring. When leadership development is part of ongoing activities, it helps create greater interest, applicability and accountability by the leader.

### **Leadership development horizon**

Let’s look to the horizon to understand the newest, most exciting possibilities with leadership development. In our fast paced, incredibly networked, digital age, we must introduce new ways to develop leaders. What are the cutting edge approaches to leadership development? There are three practical, future oriented approaches deserving of attention:

**Horizon approach 1.** Leadership development will occur more via social collaboration. We are living in the new sharing economy. Through various technologies, we have greater access than ever to information and each other. We must take advantage of the knowledge and expertise in the world around us and expand our capabilities to learn from one another. For example, this can take the form of peer mentoring and mentor circles or communities of practice. The more we can interact with individuals with a different perspective than our own, the more likely we are to develop novel solutions and advance our individual and collective thinking.

**Horizon approach 2.** Leadership development will occur via micro-learning. Time is limited for our personal development. As a result, it is more important than ever to access information in more consumable forms. This explains the popularity of TED Talks. I have seen similar enthusiasm and success with executive book summaries. These shorter formats are the future of learning. One or two hour online seminars will become

obsolete, to be replaced by shorter – less than 5 minutes – videos, podcasts, and summaries quickly providing essential information.

**Horizon approach 3.** Leadership development will become more holistic and integrated. Rather than focus on singular competencies, leadership development will focus on the whole person. Learning on the go and in the moment will significantly increase. For leaders of the future, much of their development will occur on the job. Leadership development will become continuous rather than a discrete event. For example, you should expect to see more stretch assignments, job rotations, and immersion experiences. For this apprenticeship model of learning to happen effectively, leaders must be given new information about the new skill or task, provided opportunity to practice it, and given feedback. Along these lines, we will see more “leaders as teachers” and “leaders as coaches”.

### **Conclusion**

Developing leaders is important, but it does not have to be expensive or sophisticated. It must be relevant and match the organizational realities with consideration given to the needs and preferences of the leader. The future of leadership development is bright. We will make better use of each other and our available resources to incorporate leadership development into everything we do. With these approaches, the possibilities for developing leaders is unlimited. When done well, it will help leaders achieve their greatest potential and reinforce the company’s culture.

■

# Hospitality asks different questions of its leaders

by *Chris Sheppardson* 

**One of the key points to understand about hospitality is that it is a meritocracy at heart, writes Chris Sheppardson, founder of the Chess Group of companies in the UK. Those that lead need not just good education and strategic understanding but the ability to understand customers and how to lead multi-craft and talented teams.**

In many industries, a good education and the ability to work hard and climb up the corporate ladder can be enough – but not in hospitality. In fact some will argue that the concept of climbing a ladder is almost old fashioned in understanding. The argument is that the increase in communications and the global nature of the industry means that the level of competition has increased in all areas. At the same time, management structures have flattened so that success in a career means that one has to be able to handle the increase in competition and to rise above it through a greater understanding, and ability to create a difference. Today it is completely transparent what each person brings to a role and what the calibre of their work is. There is no place left for the political animal who does not really deliver beyond the superficial or the person that does not consistently improve.

In this era, there is a real focus on constant learning and self-improvement. It is not enough to just rest on one's laurels and think that one has made it to security. The world moves on at such a pace that there is no place for complacency. Mistakes may be forgiven, even understood, but it is expected that all today will have a work ethic that also includes a mental approach to constant learning – and this is driven by technology.

The increased speed of communications of information flow means that everything is in a state of flux and we all need to constantly have our fingers on the pulse of what is going on within the business.

This does raise a number of questions and a number of themes:

## **1. One has to re-invent oneself three times during a career**

It is a strange concept that many struggle with. In fact one of the almost sad features of the last decade is that some have adapted to the modern world and some have not. Some have really struggled to adapt to the demands that are asked of them in today's business world – we have seen increased burnout – but the real skill is how an executive learns to adapt and change his or her skills for the modern era. In simplistic terms, a Managing Director learns to become a Chairman, or a Food and Beverage Director in a hotel learns how to move into restaurants but, of course, life is more complex than this. Often executives need to change far more radically and need to be able to learn new skills.

Learning new skills is about the ability to be open minded and a desire to learn in order to improve. This means that executives, at every level, need to be prepared to learn new skills with each passing day, month, and year.



***Chris Sheppardson** founded the Chess Group of Companies in 1998 with a belief in the importance of individuals and in the principle of cultural fit within organizations. He is presently Managing Director of EP Business in Hospitality and Chess Partnership, providing a business which works closely with the hospitality industry, to support the growth and development of both people and organization.*

## **2. Globalization naturally asks questions of businesses**

Today everything is accessible. Each person can be accessed through LinkedIn, Facebook, emails, mobile technology and the web. It is the same with business which means that many small and medium sized companies can compete in the global market that could they could not access even a decade ago. It also means there needs to be a greater understanding of customers from all regions and backgrounds.

## **3. It is harder than ever to be heard**

As there is more competition, it is harder to be heard and to gain recognition. In today's modern world, those that have heard best are those that are able to stand out from the crowd by building real and lasting value in all that they do. Whether as an executive developing a career path or as a business leader, one has to have clarity on how one defines one's offer and communicates it to market.

Of course many will translate this as a need to be unique and that can lead to all kinds of problems. One of the criticisms of the present day is that it is the age of the B and C list celebrity who tries to make noise, be different and to stand out through behavior that is extreme. A desire to be noticed and to stand out is the core underlying theme for most of the TV reality shows, from Big Brother to X Factor, and fame found by those that do engage the audience is often relatively short lived.

No, the answer is not being different for the sake of it, but difference through genuine expertise and substance. One has to be prepared to be a student of the discipline and to learn, learn and learn. Real understanding and depth of knowledge is the ultimate safeguard in a career. It allows for a real understanding of the key themes and influences that take place and how to develop operational answers to meet the new demands.

■

# Internships: an employer's booster

by **Stéphanie Pougnet** 

In such a labor intensive sector as our hospitality industry, performance depends on human capital. Ironically however, in our industry, staff turnover rates are double and tenure rates are half those of other sectors. To better develop and retain human capital, Stéphanie Pougnet, PhD, believes we should look at the benefits of internships.



By alternating school and workplace, learning and producing, interns construct their experiential capital. Here, we explain how internships are also beneficial to employers, by enhancing the employee-employer fit.

With the purpose of showing that internships contribute to companies' performance, we conducted series of studies in various industries in France, in the restaurant sector in the US, and in four 5-star hotels in Hong Kong.

The results show that whatever their position, (in)formal mentors-employees involved in internship matters show higher job satisfaction, organizational commitment, innovative and flexible behaviors and job performance levels than the employees not committed in internship.

*After a year spent at The Hong Kong Polytechnic University ending with the launch of a Tripartite Master's Program in Global Hospitality Business, **Stéphanie Pougnet**, PhD, assistant professor, is back at Ecole hôtelière de Lausanne, EhL, HES-SO // University of Applied Sciences Western Switzerland where she teaches management and conducts researches on human capital. Having worked in insurance, energy and restaurant industries and co-created an online sportmania business, she consistently aims to help employers better attract, develop and retain talent.*



When based upon a well-organized Work-Education Relationship, internship systems build a tacit social contract which binds the intern, the tutor-teacher, the mentor-employee, and the whole employing organization altogether. More strongly than other employees, mentors-employees involved in internship matters feel more empowered, enjoying vertical job enrichment and task variety and believe that they benefit from stronger organizational support.

**7-step internships virtuous circle for employers**

To make their employees more satisfied, committed, innovative and performing at work, employers should manage internships like a 7-step virtuous circle. First step is to invite mentor-employees to take part in the recruitment and selection of their interns. Second step is to analyze the results of the integration checks that might be done by the tutor-teacher, the mentor-employee and the intern, who should meet face-to-face or online in a third step to share on their mutual expectations and the final outcomes of the internships. In a fourth step, reflective workshops among interns and to which mentors-employees may participate would help benchmarks of best practices. Fifth, interns should be coached by their mentors-employees to be employer-brand ambassadors aiming at attracting talent to their company. A sixth step involves the evaluation by mentors-employees of both the job performance of the intern and the performance of the internship. An awarding ceremony recognizing mentors-employees' contribution constitutes a seven step in the virtuous circle of internship.

To have mentors-employees participating to this 7-step framework, employers must give them more resources or relieve them from constraints, so that interns should not be

regarded as an adjustment variable for work overloads in understaffed teams. Anticipating mentors-employees' sources of power might be helpful to make internship matters better fit the company's requirements and not only fit individual isolated interests.

**How internship power resources affect the company's performance**

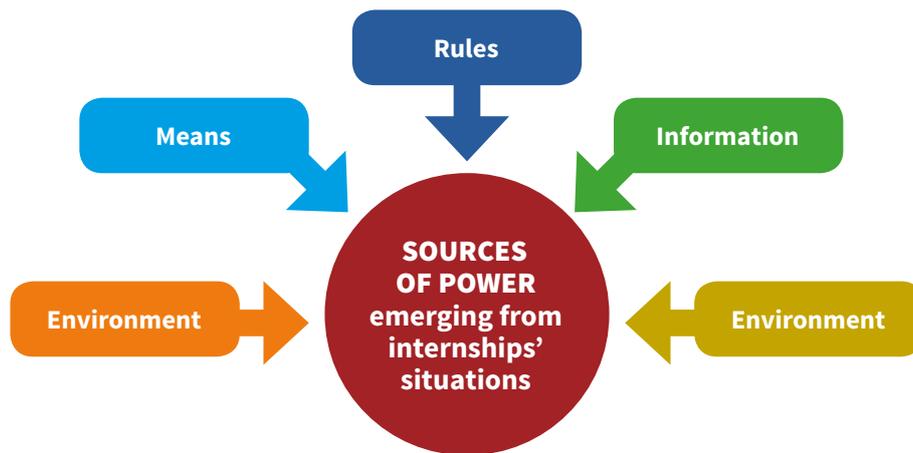
There are five power resources that can emerge from internships situations, relating to expertise, rules, means, environment and information.

Some mentors-employees may build on their handling of internship matters to strengthen and widen their professional expertise. We observed that some mentors-employees may either protect the gained expertise to remain the sole expertise owner, which is an individualistic attitude, or share this expertise with the intern and other employees through knowledge management tactics more directed toward the company's overall performance.

If mentors-employees come to create rules and regulations for interns, they may progressively gain credibility to also produce policies and procedures for other kind of staff, and therefore be empowered. In this case, mentoring an intern can become a procedure through which a company may assess and develop leadership potential.

A mentor-employee might be given the opportunity to allocate means to interns they are in charge of, and also get resources





and tools from the school the interns come from, e.g. access to academic databases. A tool that did not exist in some of the companies we investigated until it was created for interns because it was required by their schools was the integration check. At the Ecole hôtelière de Lausanne for instance, such integration checks are aimed at evaluating how well an intern had been socialized within the organization. Integration checks enable mentors-employees to benchmark others' best practices to make their interns get a more realistic job preview to better and faster understand the company's strategy, structure, culture and environment. Successful integration checks created for interns can be extended to all newcomers, to improve all socialization processes.

Interactions between mentors-employees involved in internships and their company's stakeholders may also be a powerful source of performance. The visits and meetings that should occur between tutor-teacher, mentor-employee and intern, as well as events and activities organized by the school –e.g. graduating ceremonies, admission juries, and job fairs – create opportunities for a company to keep in touch with the talent pool it wants to attract.

Another vital source of power for companies is the information collected through meetings organized in schools among mentors-employees from different companies that are in competition.

**How to get the best of internships**

To make internships a booster for talent attraction, development and retention, employers should invest in mentors-employees and interns.

Management of internships should constitute a specific key performance indicator (KPI) in the staff appraisal process, not to be diluted with other management responsibilities towards other kind of staff. The ability of evaluating an intern's performance at work should be part of this KPI. Evaluation-grids created by

schools to measure interns' job performance and potential for future employment prospects, and which are filled during visits or online interviews between tutor-teachers and mentors-employees should be benchmarked. Taking part in filling them should be an opportunity for all employees who got informally involved in internships matters to be recognized by their employers. Mentoring teams instead of sole mentors should therefore be considered. Many employees who invest their time and energy in coaching, training, socializing, evaluating and guiding interns might feel some lack of organizational justice if only the "official" mentor is awarded for the internship. As we noticed in some companies investigated, some recognition of their involvement can be formalized through a personal gift and an awarding ceremony. If these gifts and awards cannot be taken for granted, are of reasonable monetary value, and change from one cohort of interns to another, then people will not get involved in internship only to get an extrinsic reward but instead, they will do it to share their tips and tricks of the trade and to make the whole team more efficient at work.

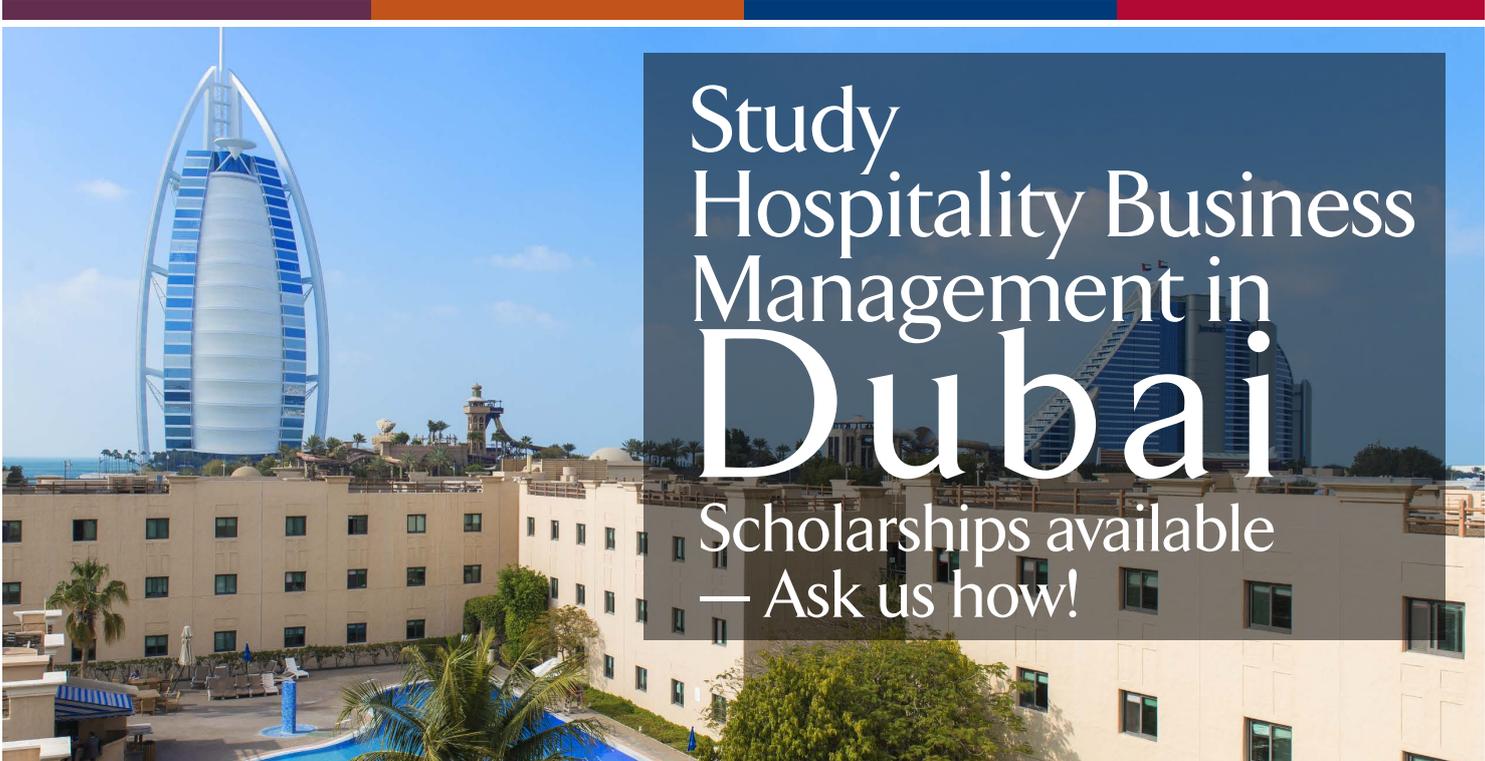
Interns themselves can help their companies better attract and retain talent by organizing open days, tours and visits, spreading some viral buzz around the job opportunities that schoolmates should take. Relying on interns as brand ambassadors is a way to better gain future applicants' trust in testimonials of job incumbents from same generation. For small companies, exchange and cross-internship can be organized among establishments, to both enrich the interns' and their mentors-employees' experience while better managing the headcount.

Through internships, both interns and employees involved develop a trade expertise and a professional identity. Investing in internship definitely mean investing in your human capital with high return on investment guaranteed.

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# The changing face of hospitality management education

by **Peter O'Connor** 

**Hotel schools have changed immensely in the last two decades. Essec's Peter O'Connor provides an overview of the evolutionary process they have been going through – and where it is likely heading.**

As a hotel school graduate myself, and someone who currently runs one of Europe's leading graduate-level hospitality management programs at Essec Business School, I have watched with both personal and professional interest the developments in hospitality education over the past three decades. What, and how, we teach our students has changed dramatically, leading to a much needed increased professionalization of the sector.

With no disrespect to our Swiss colleagues, most of which have now evolved considerably, what we once termed the "Swiss hotel school model" is now thankfully effectively dead. While the latter's overemphasis on operational skills once served its purpose, future managers in today's fast-paced business environment need a very different set of skills, ones in which chef's whites have largely been replaced with iPads and laptops.

Thankfully, most quality hotel schools have figured out that a hospitality management program should be less about preparing students to work as under-prepared waiters in a suit, and more about helping them develop the competencies they need for their roles as future managers. As a result, a whole host of new subject areas, including leadership, revenue management, distribution, corporate and social responsibility, innovation and much more have evolved to replace the vast numbers of hours previously spent honing operational level skills of limited future value.

In addition, the way in which these courses are organized has undoubtedly changed for the better. In most schools, the old-fashioned talking-head approach is getting far less emphasis, being supplemented and superseded with more interactive action learning, group work and experiential-based approaches. This not only increases the quality of the learning experience for participants, but also helps translate the knowledge gained into skills and competencies that can immediately be used in the real world.

And many candidates are finding as well – particularly if they want to move beyond the hotel unit level – that what they learned in their undergraduate degree is no longer enough. As a result, many choose to do one of the many different graduate-level programs now available on the market. Rather than offering "more of the same", most of the better-quality graduate programs now allow participants to focus their learning on

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the topics most relevant to their chosen future careers, either through offering significant quantities of elective courses or by streaming the curriculum towards particular subject areas. Entering as generalists, graduate participants generally leave as specialists, better equipped to start their chosen career in the business end of the hospitality sector.

But even with the growing prominence of graduate degrees among hotel personnel, the need for further development opportunities continues. Skill sets change rapidly, as witnessed by the now critical role of strategically and tactically managing distribution, an issue that was relatively minor a decade ago and which many managers fail to adequately understand. Hotel companies, increasingly divesting their real estate assets and turning themselves into pure providers of management services, need to keep developing managers so as to have suitable skill sets available as they sign additional management contracts. As they no longer own the physical buildings, human capital becomes their critical asset – one that they need to invest in, nurture and develop.

As a result, many of the large chains run varying forms of management development programs to help enhance the skill sets of their personnel. In the past, this usually involved bringing together high potential participants from geographically dispersed locations to a central location to deliver some sort of what were invariably called “training” programs. While this approach does have some merits in terms

of team building and group dynamics, both the expense and the disruption to normal operations involved mean that flexibility and modularity are fast becoming the name of the game.

For example, many chains now leverage the growing portfolio of excellent intensive short courses such as those run by Cornell, EHL, Essec or Hong Kong Poly, using these modules as integral building blocks that can be mixed and matched with company-provided internal components to create a semi-customized program that gives participants the desired skills and competencies, while at the same time being delivered in a far more flexible way. Technology also has its role to play. Online learning, and in particular MOOCs (Massive Online Open Courses) are increasingly being incorporated into such programs, or thanks to their relatively low cost and flexibility in delivery, being pursued individually by candidates wishing to pursue their own professional development.

As the business environment becomes increasingly complicated, now more than ever the hotel sector needs people with the right skills and competencies to show the way forward. Thankfully, for once, our sector, and its hotel schools, is moving in the right direction, providing both its future and its practicing managers with appropriate life long learning opportunities to continually develop and enhance their careers. Having once been in the dark ages, hospitality education has finally moved very firmly into the light!

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# Hospitality education – a third paradigm

by Jeffrey Catrett 

**As the hospitality industry enters the era of the experience economy, hospitality education finds itself facing a third major paradigm shift in order to meet the needs of today’s consumers, writes Jeffrey Catrett of the Institut Paul Bocuse in Lyon. Just as vocational technical education, suited to the needs of an artisanal cottage industry in the 19th and early 20th century gave way to management education suited to the industrialized service economy of the late 20th century, he argues that a new design-based paradigm is now needed to meet the demands of an experience economy requiring rapid innovation and creativity.**

Over the last thirty-five years, a debate has raged among hospitality educators whether practical technical training or management studies should dominate. The early European founders of hospitality education who created both hotel and restaurant apprenticeship as well as the first schools of higher education specifically dedicated to hotel-keeping have maintained the importance of practical instruction even as they included more management courses, while the Americans and British have tended increasingly towards the adoption of business school curricula adapted to hospitality cases.

In recent years, however, the industry has shifted away from classical palace hotels and one-size-fits-all chain products in favor of experience-based boutique and lifestyle offerings. Perhaps it is time for a third approach to hospitality education, silencing the old argument between technique and management in favor of a new pedagogy suited to the demands of innovation and creativity.

Hospitality education has closely followed developments in the history of the profession. The modern hotel and restaurant industries trace their roots to the industrial and social revolutions of the late eighteenth century as the emerging middle classes sought the comforts they associated with the trappings of aristocracy. Early, humble offerings gave way to increasing luxury as industrial wealth accumulated throughout the nineteenth century. By the turn of the twentieth century,

the great palace hotels had reached a level of sophistication demanding an increasingly skilled workforce provided first through apprenticeships and trade guilds and then through the new schools created for developing future hotel and restaurant managers. Recipes were codified, services standards set, and rudimentary bookkeeping systems developed, yet hospitality remained relatively artisanal and craft-based with hospitality education focusing on mastery of the various set pieces associated with luxury and fine living. In much of continental Europe, hotels remained essentially restaurants with a limited number of rooms.

As post-industrial society began to liberate services from servitude in the middle twentieth century, the great industrialized hotel chains developed, particularly in North America and the UK. Hotel management became increasingly complex with a need for more sophisticated marketing, human resources management, operations management, and financial management. Hospitality education shifted accordingly, adopting the applied social science approaches of business schools. Housed in university settings, US and UK hospitality schools attracted business-qualified faculty who provided scholarly rigor and research grounding but who lived in a world of academic status which viewed all forms of technical training with disdain. Hospitality education based on tradition and artistry was successively pushed aside. At its worst, business-based hospitality education began to pride itself on preparing



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students for industries more lucrative and more glamorous than hospitality, creating doubt as to the raison d'être of the curriculum, yet those who sought to preserve the human strengths and aesthetics of the industry through vocational technical drilling seemed even less attuned to the times than their management-focused counterparts.

In 1998, Pine and Gilmore suggested that the post-industrial economy was now giving way to an economy based not simply on services but on experiences. What first seemed like a minor anomaly in the world of hospitality – the development of psychographic focused boutique hotels and concept restaurants – has become a major driving force in the industry threatening the viability of the big hotel brands. The information revolution has created a fragmentation of customer tastes and a search for the unique and different while forging the social networks, blogs and crowd-sourced criticism necessary to reassure consumers in their choice of one-offs and small providers. Condé Nast and Trip Advisor readers' choice polls feature unique getaways and non-chain products in little-explored destinations. Everyone is now a gastronome. In the hospitality industry, as in most other industries, innovation rules the day, as customers bore easily and endlessly seek out the new and the different.

While applied social science is able to monitor and report on these changes, it is unequipped to help managers forge

innovative solutions relying as it does on data which is by definition already passé. The old vocational approaches have the advantage of being tradition-based and aesthetic in nature, but are even more woefully mired in past practice. How does hospitality education prepare the managers of tomorrow to create new and ground-breaking holistic concepts adapted to evolving – and fragmented – customer tastes? To what extent can practical training approaches provide a base in tradition and develop rigor and detail orientation without trapping students in outdated methodologies? How can future managers acquire the competencies necessary to manage effectively without letting scientific constructs limit creative freedom?

Clearly, hospitality education is called upon to adopt a third new paradigm which will probably envelop the technical and managerial but which will also be by necessity design-based and creative. This shift will be as difficult for scientific researchers as the management shift was for vocational technicians a few decades earlier. Hospitality educational institutions will need to develop a whole new design and project-based pedagogy and methodology to adapt to the needs of the evolving marketplace. If not, just as hoteliers were at risk of giving way to management specialists a generation ago, hotel managers will risk giving way to designers and fashionistas in the new era.

■

# ICON-ic opportunities in Hong Kong

by **Tony S.M. Tse** 

**When a hotel management school operates its own hotel, opportunities for teaching both technical skills and soft skills abound. With the Hotel ICON, Hong Kong Polytechnic University has created a magnificent laboratory for developing the talent of its students, as the school's Tony S.M. Tse reports.**

The Hong Kong Polytechnic University is one of eight government-funded universities in Hong Kong, and its School of Hotel and Tourism Management (SHTM) has an enrolment of 2,200 students in doctoral (PhD and D.HTM), Masters (MPhil and MSc) and undergraduate (BSc, BA and HD) programs. SHTM has positioned itself as a global center of excellence in hospitality and tourism education and research, with a mission to serve the industry and academic communities through the advancement of education and dissemination of knowledge.

In order to fulfill the mission, SHTM has developed a teaching and research hotel, Hotel ICON, which has been in operation since 2011. With an educational purpose in mind, Hotel ICON has been developed to accommodate daily student flows and observations and large-scale student internships. Such facilities as a 500-seat ballroom, three fine- and all day-dining restaurants, an executive lounge, a health club and spa, a heated outdoor swimming pool, and 262 guestrooms provide students with hands-on practice in the full range of hotel operations.

One of the most important benefits to students of Hotel ICON has been the structured internship program it has facilitated. Up to 150 student interns have the opportunity to participate in 10, 24, or 48-week internship programs each academic year. Accommodating 150 student interns in a medium-sized hotel is in itself a substantial commitment to education and training, given that the hotel assigns one trainer to three trainees, creates tailor-made training programs and provides a stay-in experience to each intern. However, the most significant internship factor that makes Hotel ICON a teaching hotel lies in the working relationship between the student interns and their supervisors. These supervisors are no ordinary hotel associates because, in addition to their regular hotel duties, they embrace coaching and training SHTM students.

The internship reports made by students after they have completed their internships are reviewed carefully, and those submitted to date clearly reveal one important theme: the interns' perceived relationship with their supervisors/trainers is most conducive to their sense of satisfaction and the perceived success of the internship experience. Student interns rely heavily on their supervisors' coaching and support, and the manner in which they are taught affects their perception of the experience. The following extracts from students' internship reports illustrate the supportive workplace relationships which go a long way towards creating a fruitful learning experience:

My colleagues are nice and patient, and they are willing to teach me the things that I need to learn and give me advice on my work. Besides teaching me relevant knowledge and skills, they are concerned with my attitude and personal development. I also share my difficulties with them.

Hotel ICON supervisors are well aware that they must play the role of coaching in addition to their regular operation role. In fact, many of them were attracted to the hotel by their knowledge that their job would not be simply to make a profit for the organization but also to coach student interns.

Can students tell the difference between a supportive coach and a supervisor who just wants to get things done? Of course they can, as the following comments make clear.

They are mentors and not just trainers because they provide personal guidance to different aspects for the interns, including future career path, personal development and attitude towards study and work. Even though I sometimes make mistakes, they are willing to teach me and give me a second chance to do things right. Trainers view training as a part of their daily routine, and they assign a certain amount of time to teach interns new skills or concepts. Trainees in Hotel ICON feel they are treasured



*Tony Tse, is Assistant Professor and Program Director (Industry Partnerships) at The Hong Kong Polytechnic University's (PolyU) School of Hotel and Tourism Management. Tony holds a Bachelor of Social Science from the University of Hong Kong, an MBA from Macquarie University and a PhD from Southern Cross University. He has an extensive professional background in marketing, and currently teaches in hospitality and tourism programs at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels. Tony has been involved in the planning and development of PolyU's teaching and research hotel since its inception.*

and respected, and that they are here to learn but not to be treated as cheap labor.

While most of the internships available at Hotel ICON are 10 or 24 weeks in duration, the hotel also works with the SHTM to offer the Elite Management Program, a special 48-week full-time internship with a strong management focus. This program is offered to a few select students, who undergo training in two phases.

They acquire operational experience in the hotel in the first phase and managerial experience in the second. More specifically, during the 16 weeks of Phase One, students gain experience in six major divisions: engineering and environmental, finance and administration, rooms, food & beverage, human capital, and sales & marketing. In Phase Two, they choose one of these divisions and then work alongside the respective managers for the remaining 32 weeks of the program. Customized training programs and schedules are designed by the respective division heads. Acting as a management trainee, each student "shadows" a department manager, sits in on all related meetings and shares the manager's workload. Students are also assigned special hotel projects to accomplish on their own, and their findings form part of their performance evaluation. Past projects have included:

- an evaluation of guest comments on the top 10 hotels on TripAdvisor and identification of the key influential factors therein
- identifying the differences between good and excellent service
- comparing the loyalty programs in competing hotels
- recommending menu engineering and a pricing strategy for the hotel's fine-dining restaurant.

The student trainees' findings may have significant implications for hotel operations, as the following examples show:

One student trainee challenged the practice of treating VIPs as more equal than others by remembering their names and searching in advance for information about them in Tatler and LinkedIn. She questioned why she, as a young, perhaps slightly innocent-looking person would receive less attention than other guests in the hotel. She advocated for serving all guests with the same degree of passion and sincerity, based on her belief that passionate service should come from the heart, naturally and without discrimination.

Another trainee was such a fast learner that, after the induction period, he was able to mentor three other student interns in the hotel's spa operation to provide the same high standard of warm and caring service. His passion for that operation drove him to study the spa and health club services of hotels in the competitive set and come up with such ideas as a tea + spa package targeting the young female market segment, reaching out to Internet bloggers and creating a weekend spa market segment.

A third student trainee developed a service attitude during her Hotel ICON experience that she refers to as a "moment of truth in reality". She realized that although pleasing every guest and achieving a high level of guest satisfaction are usually the goals of customer service, in reality many practical issues get in the way of delivering that ideal customer service. Demanding – and sometimes unreasonable – guests are not uncommon, and thus fulfilling the expectations of each and every guest is not always possible. Based on textbook theories and her own experience, this trainee came to the conclusion that it is far more important to be fair to all guests and to show that the hotel values them, but that a line should be drawn when it comes to unreasonable demands.

These are the kind of soft skills and mentality that the Elite Management Program has inculcated in trainees in addition to technical skills in hotel operations.

# Millennials and your bottom line: Keeping a different generation on track

by Gene Ference 

**When managing Millennials, it is critical that you understand what drives them and how to maximize their ROI to your organization, writes Gene Ference of Ference Leadership and Strategy. At the same time, you need to get them to buy in to your goals – and help them develop. Gene’s article helpfully sets out a number of practical tips and suggestions for maximizing your effectiveness as a leader with Millennials on your team.**

How important are Millennials to your business? To running your hotel effectively and efficiently? A great deal, according to many. But Millennials are different from past generations. And your challenge is to keeping them on track. If you don’t think it through, you may be losing a valuable asset. An asset that could mean the difference between peak performance with optimum profits and average performance with ordinary accomplishments.

Who are these Millennials? More and more is being written about them. Born between 1980 and 2000, Millennials have grown up experiencing times of rapid change, globalization and economic turmoil. The average Millennial will have 30 unique jobs or roles in their lifetime of work. As one of the largest generations in history, Millennials are poised to reshape economies and the way business is conducted. To say reshape is no understatement.

In the United States and Canada alone, Millennials are estimated to be nearly one hundred million in number, with smaller but significant populations in Europe, the Middle East and Asia. And Millennials are now a significant segment of the hospitality industry. That is why it is critical that you understand what drives them and how to maximize their ROI to your organization while concurrently getting them to buy in to your goals and help them develop.

As a group, Millennials have characteristically been treated as special and important. They comprise a generation marked with celebrating events, abundant praise and an affinity for technology providing them with constant feedback. Millennials believe they are experts in multitasking and can manage numerous tasks all at the same time. They are the first generation of digital gurus and their affinity for technology has influenced their attitudes, behaviors and beliefs.

To a large extent, technology shapes how Millennials conduct their lives. On the job, they are able to access information instantly whether it be job related or attending to personal needs. They constantly reach out to peers and others for instant communications. Millennials find social media, texting and playing games on their phones hard to resist. However, as technology is available at all times, employee training in the proper use of social media and mobile platforms for job-related communications will always be necessary. For everyone, today’s hi-tech devices can provide 24/7 continuous “networking”; the challenge is to what extent do employees use these capabilities directly to enhance work performance? On the job, Millennials believe multi-tasking saves time, but many fail to realize the distractions from on-the-job responsibilities can lead to sub-standard performance.

Sometimes described as entitled, self-obsessed narcissists with unrealistic expectations of working life, they have also been described in positive ways as confident, self-determined, self-directed, self-expressive, open to new ideas and overtly passionate about being connected with fellow team members. They have a deep-seated desire to have control over their tasks, direct their own lives, develop their skills, be accountable and live life with purpose – often for a cause larger than themselves.

All this begs the need for providing organizational direction, beginning with clear understandings of vision, mission, core values, guiding management principles and day-to-day leadership expectations. For general managers and executive teams, Millennials present a new challenge: Just how do you keep Millennials on track?



***Gene Ference, Ph.D.** has developed *Deliberate Cultures* in the luxury hospitality industry since 1980. He is President of *Ference Leadership and Strategy & Center for Survey Research* – a global organizational development company – and is an active member of the *International Society of Hospitality Consultants (ISHC)*.*

### **1. Physical attributes: work environments that Millennials expect**

Design office space to promote teamwork. Millennials enjoy opportunities for collaboration and sharing ideas with colleagues. Team projects accomplished through small group meetings encourage relationship bonding and building of new friendships.

Provide for healthy staff dining. Millennials eat smarter than previous generations. No longer are staff dining rooms “canteens”. Millennials expect and seek wholesome healthy meals to include salads, energy drinks and a varied menu with plenty of fresh vegetables. The selection of foods should be enticing and engaging and the environment clean and welcoming. Physical amenities should be available such as a large flat screen TV with a channel featuring average occupancy, VIPs and daily events. To ensure current communications, provide daily up-dates with guest comments, letters and other relevant information.

Encourage wellness. Millennials look for daily opportunities to pursue personal wellness programs. Provide fitness and health related programs and where possible offer gym facilities for exercise routines and encourage the use of hiking and bike trails in off hours.

### **2. Satisfaction factors: the degree to which employees achieve total satisfaction in their jobs**

Seek motivational balance. Termed extrinsic motivators, comprehensive programs to include adequate and fair wages, salaries, and benefits are expected in today’s societies. Unfortunately, this baseline does not serve to motivate, at least in the long run; however, these elements can demotivate when not present. Without a healthy baseline, providing for further motivations is complicated and problematic.

Vital to motivation are the intrinsic values of the task itself – fostering learning, assisting co-workers, delighting customers and developing pride, team affiliation and community. Providing continuous positive feedback is expected by Millennials, and communication of this type has a direct effect on their intrinsic motivations.

Encourage Millennials to proactively cultivate their own resources to aid them in closing performance gaps. Internet reference-searches and online interactive programs can help them put their best professional self forward. Furthermore, consider suggesting a fellow employee who could serve as a mentor providing guidance on work-related issues and personal challenges.

Ensure on-the-job variety. Every day is a different day, bringing new challenges. Competing with oneself to do better than yesterday is an excellent motivational mantra in itself. Help Millennials by continuously revisiting standards and follow-up by establishing both daily and weekly goals that are measurable. The defining factors in service excellence are the degrees to which each employee engages each guest in great service and what each guest perceives their experience to be. Creating a valued experience often means the degree to which a guest is surprised and delighted.

Millennials seek a balance of personal life and career advancement. They believe in working hard as well as playing hard, and a culture that appreciates work-life balance very much appeals to them. They expect a more flexible work environment than previous generations coupled with a “fun” place in which to work.



Align infrastructure. Ensure vision, mission, values and standards are all aligned. Teams pay a steep price for not keeping the hotel's guest promise in the forefront of everything they do. Ensuring continuous alignment of purpose in the eyes of every employee extends success into the future rather than just tomorrow or the present quarter. Remember: what employees believe shapes what they achieve.

Provide for gratification and recognition. Reinforce how important their position is and how they make a valuable contribution to the hotel and guest experience. Recognize their accomplishments among their coworkers. Reward programs demonstrate recognition, encourage Millennials to stay job focused, and increase their job satisfaction. Millennials seek opportunities for career development and advancement.

Communicate supported causes. Millennials want to work for a company that supports various charitable initiatives. They appreciate being informed about events that the hotel supports outside the work place, such as campaigns and benefit programs, charitable foundation funding and volunteer work. Communicate often and clearly.

### **3. Engagement drivers: the degree to which employees are motivated to go above-and-beyond their prescribed job responsibilities by advocating continuous commitment to connecting interpersonally with others.**

Be transparent and earn trust. Transparency is a must. Crystal clear, continuous communications regarding performance expectations are expected by Millennials. Feedback highlighting constructive specifics regarding strengths and shortcomings is appreciated. Short, performance-feedback sessions conducted on a weekly basis are valued as Millennials seek continuous opportunities for growth and development. This enables them to see beyond the horizon and plan for long-range career opportunities. Checking that all staff members walk-the-talk with actions consistent with words will certainly increase transparency and levels of trust.

Review engagement fundamentals. Several business research studies reveal that more than 50% of employees are not engaged at work and nearly 20% are actively disengaged. Remember: when expectations exceed employees' capabilities, the result is anxiety; when expectations fall short of their capabilities, the result is boredom. Make sure that Millennials are not demotivated by false or unrealistic expectations.

Become an employer of choice. This makes it easier to attract new talent and hire the right employees. The next full-time task is to take care of them and be careful not to demoralize! Effective leaders become engagement advocates, constantly promoting greater commitment to performance excellence. Additional information about engagement advocates is available on [FerenceLeadershipAndStrategy.com](http://FerenceLeadershipAndStrategy.com) which features an article published on Hotel News Now entitled Empower Luxury-Setting Advocates for Success.

Conduct employee surveys. Before administration of the survey, reinforce the message that all surveys are anonymous and confidential. After the survey, provide all employees with feedback on results. Millennials expect to be kept in the loop with opportunities for action planning to improve performance shortcomings. No feedback, or silence, means bad news. Moreover, without communicating results, Millennials lose their enthusiasm when it is time for the next survey.

Establish a learning environment. Learning should be an everyday event. All employees in direct service-contact positions have continuous opportunities to "read" the guest, learn personality types and "wow" them by going beyond expectations. Managers and supervisors can stimulate Millennial's mindsets by invigorating a conversation with leading questions, engaging in focused dialogue and facilitating the exchange by making it easy for them to speak up and express themselves when they have a problem.

### **Insightful learning exercises:**

- a. A simple exercise that increases awareness is to hand out blank 3 x 5 cards in a meeting. Have employees write down, What is our hotel's purpose? Collect the cards and read them aloud. What they tell you may surprise you as well as others.
- b. On a blank sheet of paper, have meeting attendees list, in their opinion, what key behaviors could further develop professional potential within their team? Collect the responses, share the results and have a productive discussion.
- c. In a meeting, have employees contribute specific stories about how a guest's experience was improved. This can also be extended to how employees helped each other in challenging situations. Make sure everyone involved receives a sincere and heartfelt thank you. Millennials love to receive recognition, both in a group and independently.

Growth for a hotel is all about delighting guests with their experience, followed by repeat referrals and repeat business. Internally, the ultimate goal, of course, is to help each employee reach their ultimate potential. Understanding the Millennial generation is at the heart of future success. Like Star Wars, Millennials need to "feel-the-force" through their own values, beliefs and attitudes. Today seeing variances in work styles of different generations is not enough. Rather, managing employee expectations and organizational culture to leverage the best of all age groups will benefit your hotel and employees to be the most productive in achieving levels of sustainable peak performance.

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# The challenges of retaining Gen Y employees

**Nabil M. Ramadhan**  interviewed by **John Fong** 

Much has been written about Gen Y: their many positive qualities as well as those that pose challenges to hospitality managers responsible for developing them. On behalf of the Hotel Yearbook, John Fong of the Emirates Academy of Hospitality Management in Dubai sat down with Nabil M. Ramadhan, Group Chief Human Capital Officer at Jumeirah, to learn how this renowned luxury group is handling the integration of Gen Y staff.

**John Fong: Gen Y has been studied in depth by sociologists who have concluded that these young people are very different in terms of attitudes and behaviors. Have you seen that to be true in your experience? Can you share some specific observations?**

**Nabil Ramadhan:** I certainly feel that Gen Y does exhibit different behaviors and attitudes across both work and personal life, compared to previous generations. Gen Y tends to be more independent, expressive, and financially savvy. They are strong multi-taskers, high achievers, seek a work-life balance and are not afraid to challenge societal or organizational norms when they discover faults or a better way of doing things.

In my own experience, I have seen these characteristics displayed in Gen Y's concern for saving, which today can start as young as their early twenties, and translates to a greater concern for the perks and packages associated with their jobs. Their multi-tasking abilities are evident in their ability to effectively juggle and complete multiple projects at a time.

**Fong: What would you say Gen Y is particularly good at, especially seen from a hospitality perspective? How are they at interacting with Jumeirah guests, for example?**

**Nabil Ramadhan:** Gen Y is particularly talented at devising

more efficient methods to perform tasks integral to day-to-day operations within the hospitality industry, as they are the first generation that has grown up with modern technology, the Internet and hence, they are digital natives. The existence of media platforms enabling Gen Y to connect with the outside world on an unprecedented level has also given rise to increasing cultural acceptance and open-mindedness when confronted with controversial topics. With regards to their ability to interact with hotel guests, I've noticed on several occasions, be it during events or even a simple greeting, that Jumeirah's Gen Y colleagues adapt their service style to better suit the culture of the guest they are serving.

**Fong: Compared to 10 or 15 years ago, when new hires would have likely been members of a generation with a different profile, has Jumeirah changed its recruiting/onboarding practices, specifically in order to accommodate (or work better for) Gen Y's personality, or way of working?**

**Nabil Ramadhan:** While Jumeirah's recruiting and onboarding procedures largely remain the same, the tools that we use for recruitment have certainly evolved with the times. For example, LinkedIn is now widely used by our company to recruit and select talent together with promoting the various positions available within our organization. I have noticed as well that



***Nabil M. Ramadhan**, Group Chief Human Capital Officer for the Jumeirah Group, joined the company after a 14-year career with some of the UAE's top organizations, most recently in the post of Chief Operating Officer of Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC) Authority.*

*In his role at DIFC Authority, Nabil M. Ramadhan was responsible for the overall Operations division, including human capital, real estate, security, information technology, procurement, administration and operational excellence. Before joining DIFC Authority in 2006, Nabil held a number of roles including at Dubai Properties as Director of Human Resources, at Dubai Technology and Media Free Zone as Head of Human Capital Services and, at the start of his career, for Emirates Group in the performance development department.*

*In his post at Jumeirah, Nabil reports to President and Group CEO Gerald Lawless and oversees the 14,000 employees of the hotel group. Since joining Jumeirah, Nabil has successfully implemented a HR strategy built on five pillars – implementing a performance driven culture, a global resourcing strategy, a robust HR operating model, a UAE national development program, and a system for embedding the Jumeirah culture.*

*He holds a B.Sc. degree in Industrial Engineering from the University of Arizona, USA, and is a graduate of the Mohamed bin Rashid Leadership Programme. He is also a board member of Indemaj, the independent non-profit organisation that supports the development of quality education in all UAE Government Schools, especially in rural areas.*

our younger colleagues and even graduates of The Emirates Academy of Hospitality Management are being recruited by other industries such as banks, who value their knowledge of customer relations and interpersonal skills (banks are into “relationship banking” these days).

Already open to different sectors, Gen Y is further encouraged by such opportunities to switch between the industries that value their skills, causing significant turnover issues for the hospitality industry. As a result, Jumeirah places great emphasis on demonstrating to our new colleagues that the opportunity for change and different experiences is available within our company. With our portfolio of hotels, resorts, residences, restaurants, retail, spas and even the education business, there is almost certainly a place for enough mobility and diversity to keep our colleagues engaged and motivated to build their careers with us.

**Fong: What about training? Do you see that Gen Y has any particular generation-specific gaps in their education, or upbringing, or way of working that you need to address in terms of internal “top-up” efforts?**

Nabil Ramadhan: I have not observed any generation-specific gaps requiring special attention thus far. That said, our organization is constantly vigilant and, as more Gen Y

colleagues enter the workforce, we may need to make some minor adjustments. There is a perception that Gen Y may be fairly high-maintenance. In the work place, this translates to a desire to be independent yet also receiving ample feedback and praise from superiors, which is something managers have noticed and are beginning to adapt to accordingly.

**Fong: In what ways do Jumeirah’s seasoned managers have to adapt their management style if they want to be effective managing Gen Y members in their teams? Have you found that this is something they can easily do, or does it also entail special training? Do you see “generational conflict” as an issue in the company... or perhaps in certain specific situations?**

**Nabil Ramadhan:** Gen Y members are very tech-savvy, high-performing and seek self-fulfillment. Additionally, they are unafraid to challenge superiors, rejecting the command-and-control management hierarchy that is ingrained within the typical hospitality organizational culture. As such bold attitudes are rarely found among Generation X and other groups that make up the majority of Jumeirah’s seasoned managers, I believe there is a potential for “generational conflict” not just within Jumeirah but across any industry that hires Gen Y. Given these differences in approach, seasoned managers have to be open to Gen Y’s speak-your-mind philosophy, taking their

comments and criticisms as opportunities for improvement rather than confrontation. Gen Y provides a new, fresh perspective on the industry, and also represents the primary customer market of the current and future hospitality industry; thus, it is essential that their voices are heard and ideas are respected by managers. While mentoring programs could be implemented to develop relationships and ease conflict, I don't believe these differences entail special training, but rather time, tolerance and mutual understanding.

**Fong: How do you see people with typical Gen Y profiles growing with the firm? When the time comes, will they themselves manage people well? Looking ahead a few years, will their management style fit well with Jumeirah's needs?**

**Nabil Ramadhan:** Jumeirah prides itself on providing excellent, personalized and unique service, as demonstrated through its philosophy of "Stay Different". I strongly believe that Gen Y's affinity for creativity and independent thinking fits well with Jumeirah's ambitions. One of our goals is to expand our hotel portfolio while maintaining our signature service. In order to "Stay Different" and maintain guest loyalty, Jumeirah will require managers and staff like that of Gen Y who are willing and eager to challenge the status quo. Although it's difficult to predict how well they are able to manage people, given Gen Y's adaptability, one could argue that they will adapt to industry changes and adjust to suit the times accordingly.

Looking ahead, Jumeirah recently launched a new contemporary lifestyle brand called "Venu" which is designed to appeal to the modern traveler whose expectations revolve around their own lifestyle – clean, contemporary, cool and effortless. Venu is inspired by the spirit of Dubai: bold, ambitious, energetic and cosmopolitan, infused with a can-do attitude and a powerful blend of style and substance – not too dissimilar to the characteristics of Gen Y. Hence, we are already on the lookout for potential Gen Y colleagues who would like to embark on this journey together with us.

**Fong: Have you found that Gen Y characteristics are stronger in recruits from certain cultural backgrounds compared to others, or is it more of a "universal" profile?**

**Nabil Ramadhan:** Gen Y can be perceived as independent, creative, goal-oriented, high-maintenance and adventurous. These characteristics are quite strongly exhibited in recruits from Western cultural backgrounds. Gen Y members from Asian cultures, which are historically more collectivist and risk-averse, are more reserved than their Western counterparts, but still clearly exhibit the aforementioned Gen Y characteristics. Increasingly, thanks to the cross-cultural appeal of social media and the democratization of information brought about by the Internet, these historical differences are being evened out. As a result the profile is becoming more universal.

**Fong: Thank you, Nabil, for this interesting conversation!**

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# Guest delight and genuinely hospitable employees

by **Daphne Dekker** 

**Guest satisfaction is not enough to retain guests, writes Daphne Dekker of Hotelschool The Hague. Even satisfied guests defect at a high rate. Guest delight, on the other hand, has been strongly related to guest loyalty, retention and positive word-of-mouth. The good news is that if guests feel delighted, it is most often because of the actions of hotel staff. So how do you develop this crucial ability to delight guests?**



Due to the rapidly changing environment, the urge for hotels to stay ahead of competition is now stronger than ever. Guest are becoming more demanding towards the quality of service as guest behaviors and preferences are changing based on increased accessibility to information, a wide array of choices, price-cutting and intense promotional campaigns. With ever-increasing competition, service providers seek to develop loyalty and positive (electronic) word of mouth (WOM). Most hotels measure guest satisfaction as a way to get insight into the experiences of their guests. This, of course, provides some interesting insights; however, recent studies suggest that guest satisfaction is not enough to retain guests. Various researchers have shown that even satisfied guests defect at a high rate. Guest delight, on the other hand, has been strongly related to guest loyalty, retention and positive WOM.

***Daphne Dekker**, is Professor of Hospitality Personality and Behavior at Hotelschool The Hague in the Netherlands. Her research has focused on the link between hospitality and stereotypes and personality, guest delight (the WOW experience), and hospitality and emotional labor.*

### **What is the different between guest delight versus guest satisfaction?**

Guest satisfaction is a perception of the performance of a hotel in relation to prior expectations. It is a cognitive process in which a guests compare their experience with what they had expected. These expectations can then be met or even exceeded. Guest delight, on the other hand, goes further than that. Guests are delighted when they get an emotional response to an experience that they never even thought of, and feel surprise and joy. Research has shown that simply satisfying expectations is not enough to stay ahead of competition, but that hotels should focus on guest delight.

### **Genuine hospitality and guest delight**

It is of course good to know the power of guest delight; however, a more interesting question is how to achieve guest delight? Research has shown that it is usually not the hotel's great pool, or its excellent food that will cause guests to feel joy and surprise, but the way they are treated by the hotel's employees. Various studies have confirmed that behaviors of hotel employees is strongly related to guest delight. For example, by analyzing the content on review sites, Vincent Magnini of Virginia Tech has shown that when guests write about guest delight, this is most often linked to behaviors of hotel employees.

Looking into this in more detail, we see that some of these behaviors are scripted behaviors – such as using someone's name when checking out – but most of the behaviors were characterized by genuine hospitableness. In another study, we interviewed hotel guests about delightful experiences. Most of the behaviors that were mentioned by people were not scripted behaviors, but behaviors that were characterized by being real, genuine and helpful. For example, one of the hotel guests related, "I had a broken arm in a cast, and I ordered a steak. I was planning to ask my wife to cut my steak in small pieces, however, then I noticed that this was already done in the kitchen." Another example: "After I checked out of the hotel, I had to rush to the airport. When I was sitting in the taxi, a front office employee of the hotel called me and she recommended me to take another route, because there was a traffic jam on the normal road". Over 400 examples have given us a good overview of what employee behaviors are causing guest delight.

### **The relation between personality and genuine hospitality**

Between 2013 and 2015, hotel schools in the Netherlands, along with the industry, conducted a study (RAAK "Hospitality Pays Off") looking into the relationship between personality, employee behaviors and guest delight. The outcomes of this project help suggest which employees should be selected for front line positions.

Within the field of psychology, there are various theories related to personality. The theory that is most often used is the Big Five theory, which says that individuals differ from each other on five dimensions: extraversion, openness, emotional stability,

conscientiousness, and agreeableness. The dimension of extraversion ranges from extraversion to introversion. Some people who are very social and talkative most likely score high on this dimension. Others who are more quiet and like to spend time alone more likely tend to score towards the introversion side of the dimension. We found that front line employees scoring high on extraversion and emotional stability (calm instead of nervous) show more genuine hospitable behaviors. A tool was developed that helps hotel managers look for these specific personality characteristics when selecting front line staff, as these individuals are more likely to show genuine behaviors that cause guest delight.

However, just selecting these "hospitality talents" is not enough. We also found that employees with the "right" personality reveal their behaviors if they get enough freedom to do so. If a hotel has tangled all processes and interactions in strict standard operating procedures, the natural strength of these individuals will not become manifest.

### **So what do you need to do to develop this in your staff?**

For managers, the critical question is this: Is this sense – this ability – something an employee must be born with, or can you develop it in your staff? Our results conclude that it is a combination of the two. In a nutshell, here are three practical steps to make this a reality:

- Select the right front line staff: those that are emotionally stable and extraverted.
- Once you have selected these individuals: let them demonstrate their natural and genuine hospitable behavior.
- Trust your employees and do not strangle them with strict standard operating procedures regarding interactions with guests. This would only cause them to be inhospitable and unhappy at their job.

This way, you improve your chances of delighting your guests – and your chances of staying ahead of the competition.

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# Employer branding: When HR meets marketing

by **Olivier Bracard** 

**A new concern for our industry is employer branding, writes Olivier Bracard of hosco. Companies wishing to recruit new talent need to make sure that their brand is known and its values are understood. A number of options are available for hotel companies to improve their exposure in this arena.**

Employer branding is a rising concern for human resources departments and recruiters in the hospitality industry. At hosco, we have observed external initiatives from top hospitality employers, and we have also experienced a sizeable increase in demand from our own clients for branding services and support for recruitment purposes.

Why? With today's rapid industry growth – yet persistent competition for top candidates due to talent shortage – key players in hospitality understand now more than ever that they need to take action to attract talent to their brands. In a service industry like ours, attracting the very best talent is key for companies seeking to differentiate themselves from competitors. Emerging technology is enabling companies with limited resources to develop their visibility, whereas before, recruitment-related travel to schools and universities was very demanding in terms of resources.





**What’s happening now: less reach, more resources**

Current marketing initiatives being taken by head offices of major brands include on-campus presentations, partnerships with hotel schools, sponsorship of events, such as the Young Hoteliers Summit, and even the development of dedicated competitions such as AccorHotels Take Off and the Hyatt Student Prize. While the quality of these initiatives is generally high, their reach, when compared with the resources involved, is being challenged by more digital-based strategies.

**Where we are going next: digital branding solutions**

More and more employers are looking at social media platforms, including hosco, to structure online communication strategies to better reach, interest and engage top hospitality talents. Through branded profiles, video interviews and featured articles, a brand is able to share its true DNA – what it stands for and how it stands out – as well as its career opportunities and its long-term vision. This strategy allows talents to hear not only from the brand’s HR management but also from its CEO and other leaders, and the digital component means the message is available at all times.

Digital employer branding allows the reach and engagement of these initiatives to be maximized through both online suggestions and relevant notifications. It also allows for it all to be measured. Key metrics in terms of reach include profile views, views on posted jobs and views on shared news. Engagement is measured through new followers, new likes, comments and shares. The bond created between the employer and talents is strengthened every day through continuous interaction.

**Employer branding: a trend in hospitality that is here to stay**

What this means is that traditional corporate structure in the hospitality industry is changing to respond to the challenges and trends of our industry. The marketing department has effectively developed a strong foothold within the HR department of many hospitality groups, and we see this as a positive and lasting trend. We are excited to be at the forefront of the movement.

■

***Olivier Bracard** co-founded hosco in 2011 with Carl Julien, whom he met at the Ecole hôtelière de Lausanne (EHL). After graduating in 2007, Olivier joined Jones Lang LaSalle Hotels (JLLH) in Spain, where he oversaw hotel financial valuations, feasibility studies and management negotiations for close to four years. During his time with JLLH, Olivier was asked to help recruit junior talents from several hotel management schools, and after realizing how time-consuming the process was, he imagined a central meeting point for top talents and recruiters in the industry: hosco was born. At hosco, Olivier manages the Marketing, Industry, School and Talent Search divisions and is in charge of the recruitment and management of hosco team members, department budgets, sales and investor relations.*

# How “human” is human capital management technology?

by **Bernard Ellis** 

**Every new innovation in front-of-the-house technology seems to be greeted with the fear that it will take the human element out of guest service, seen by many as the last true differentiator in our commoditized industry, writes Bernard Ellis of Infor. This does not have to be the case.**

When property management systems were first introduced, the question was how can a front desk agent who is peering down at a monitor, or a restaurant server typing into a hand-held device, properly interact with guests in a personal, welcoming manner? Of course, now it's the guests who are more likely to not look up from their devices while interacting. And I don't know about you, but I feel more confident when the restaurant server writes down or enters my order, instead of putting on a no-hands show of remembering it, only to get the order wrong, or at best come back needing reminders.

To be fair, the first generation of costly self check-in kiosks were a notable hospitality technology flop—hotel guests strongly preferred to be received by a person, even if there was a line, and even long after they became accustomed to checking themselves in at the airport. But now that guests are likely to have entered their own reservation in the first place, it has become natural to handle the check-in process too. Besides skipping the line, people are also seeing they're more likely to be made aware of all the choices available and get exactly what they want through a self-check in experience.

Moving to the back-of-the-house, human capital management (HCM) technology's image is going through a similar evolution. While employees certainly appreciate timely, correct paychecks, any other exposure to HCM technology has historically been viewed as impersonal, reducing the employee to a number.

Human resource professionals don't necessarily disagree with this assessment. After all, the role of the HR professional can mirror these contrasts. Most choose the profession out of a love for people and a desire to improve the employee experience. These professionals seek out the opportunity to help people grow, manage through difficulties, and generally benefit from a better workplace environment.

But HR professionals often find that when it's time for a lay-off they are positioned front-and-center to manage it, walking the same people to the door whom they worked so hard to recruit, select, and train. All the humanity, the “touchy-feely HR stuff” they are passionate about must be put aside until business improves, and for now, the priority is to avoid litigation. The logical, and usually accurate, perception to follow was that reducing exposure was also the priority of the first HCM tools that were put into their hands. But today's HCM technologies have grown beyond just being tools to process payroll and track compliance. New innovations in employee self-service, learning management, and talent science are automating more of the hire-to-retain interaction than ever before. But just as hotel guests have come to accept that technology can actually improve service delivery, HR professionals and the employees they serve must now go through a similar change of mindset to recognize that HCM technology can in fact improve a hospitality company's humanity. Here are a few examples to illustrate how HCM technologies have the potential to increase the human element of human resource management:



***Bernard Ellis** is Vice President of Industry Strategy, Hospitality at Infor. He is responsible for defining the go-to-market strategy of the entire Infor product suite for the hospitality industry vertical, including product positioning, messaging and partner relationships. He also directly oversees product management of hospitality-specific solutions, and ensures the alignment of all hospitality sales, marketing and product management objectives. Prior to Infor, Bernard held executive positions with IDEaS, a SAS Company, SynXis, now part of Sabre Hospitality, and Micros-Fidelio. He received a Master of Professional Studies (now MMH) degree from the Cornell School of Hotel Administration, and a Bachelor of Arts degree from the College of William and Mary.*

### **Example 1: Talent science**

Talent science, a relatively new genre of HCM technology, relies on a combination of Big Data and performance metrics to help hospitality companies make the best hiring decisions. Initially, this type of application sets a baseline through an assessment of all current employees. By examining the incumbent population with a behavioral assessment, each employee's behavioral style and characteristics – essentially their core preferences – can be identified. At the same time, the organization is asked to identify its top performers in each position, and the behavioral characteristics of those employees form the basis of a benchmarking profile for all future hires in those positions. Skills can be taught through training programs, but it is the intangible attributes, ranging from discipline and ambition to flexibility and attention to detail, that provide hospitality human resource professionals with a complete picture of what makes an individual employee successful.

Hospitality HR professionals are then able to more objectively identify best-fit candidates by comparing future applicants against this baseline performance profile. Essentially, talent science applications establish a prediction model that allows HR managers to rely on science, rather than gut instinct or resume scanning, to make hiring decisions. Every position within a hotel calls for a unique set of characteristics, which is why individual profiles for each job type are necessary. Talent science identifies the right mix of each behavioral dimension, whether it is sociability or emotional consistency, and allows hospitality companies to hire applicants that demonstrate similar behavioral dispositions.

So how can such automation and objectification of the hiring process possibly improve upon the human element of assessing job applicants? Talent science doesn't just narrow down the applicant pool to the best fits for the position, it also identifies the degree of the fit, as well as exactly what characteristics made the applicant fall short of being a perfect fit, and suggests interview questions that will facilitate probing those issues deeper. As a result, HR professionals not only have more time to focus on interviewing the most favorable candidates, but those interviews are more focused on each applicant's strengths and weaknesses. The right talent science solution will also identify if an applicant might in fact be better suited for another open position. After the employee is on board, managers benefit from the behavioral insight on how to coach that particular employee, and even what a suggested career path would be. Talent science also humanizes the organization through increased diversity, by offsetting the unconscious biases of hiring managers who, in the absence of an analytically driven profile that recommends the best fit for a position, will tend to just hire people like themselves.

### **Example 2: Learning management systems**

Learning Management Systems are technologies used to administer automated training courses to employees. One fear is that, without being able to observe how well a trainee is absorbing the material and keeping up with the class, human resource professionals could be setting the trainee up for failure. Another fear is that, with the unprecedented five generations sharing today's hospitality workplace, computer-based

training will give younger workers an unfair advantage. In fact, learning management systems can address both issues with even more humanity. Since automated learning is self-paced, trainees can spend more time on topics that are less familiar to them, without being embarrassed in front of their new boss or co-workers. Furthermore, a good learning management system can be designed to assess how well concepts have been absorbed, and privately repeat or extend that section to fill any gaps for that trainee. As with Talent Science, managers can still receive guidance on what training subjects were more troublesome and warrant increased oversight and proactive coaching, versus waiting for the employee to exhibit those problem areas on the job, in front of guests.

Many hospitality professionals are also concerned that automated training will bring about such a homogenization of service delivery, that it will suppress the unique charms of each employee's personality, and for multi-property organizations, especially international ones, that guests will lose the sense of place conveyed by each property's distinct culture and destination. This fear assumes that technology can wield that much power over an employee's approach to work. This article was written in August, and as anyone who works for a global company knows, August is a month when otherwise subtle variations in how different Western cultures approach work and leisure can be seen in sharp relief. Specific flash points include differing opinions on how long should vacations be, and how much should one be expected to check in with the office while on holiday. Anyone trying to set up a meeting with Europeans knows that if it doesn't happen by the end of July, that you'd might as well start singing that old Happenings song: "See You in September." But, try to get a full quorum of Americans at a July meeting, or at any other point in the summer really, and it will also be close to impossible, with someone crucial always out that week. The question is, why aren't these differences resolved by all of the connected technology that we now – and I use the word loosely – "enjoy?"

Technology has supposedly made the world a smaller place, some say to the point of melding all of our distinct cultures into a single generic society that can be described in 160 characters or less. But in my experience, while everyone now has those devices, it's much more common for Europeans to carry separate work and personal phones, and to switch off the work one on weekends and holidays without hesitation. Americans tend to carry one phone, and don't manage to disconnect as cleanly from work, but likewise, they probably don't disconnect as cleanly from home when they're at the office either. The point is that when it comes to the different ways we view work and its boundaries, technology hasn't actually managed to change it, at least not completely. So, it's doubtful that an occasional encounter with a learning management system will do so, either.

### Example 3: Employee self-service

Employee self-service technology basically takes away most of the reasons an employee would visit the human resources office, such as to learn about and select their benefits options, or to pick up and complete tax forms when something changes. Doesn't that take away the human element by definition? Perhaps, but it also makes life easier for employees who are struggling with multiple jobs, childcare issues, and other life responsibilities, to be able to do these things on their own schedule, perhaps with the assistance of family or friends who have a better command of the language. Or better yet, perhaps the system can actually be used in the employees' native language. And, many things are actually less comfortable for an employee to do in person, such as to file a grievance, or request information on employee assistance plans, which can be achieved with much greater privacy via employee self service solutions. But for those needs that do warrant a face-to-face conversation, HR professionals now have more time to spend, without the concern of a crowded waiting room outside, filled with the watching-eyes of impatient people only there for routine administrative transactions.

So, to progressive human resource professionals who feel that HCM technology diminishes their role, and strips the human element from their work, hopefully these examples have started to convince you that in fact, the opposite is true.

■

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# Human resource management: Back to the future

by **Christina Norton** 

**Christina Norton, an expert in resource development at RMS (Revenue Management Solutions), writes that now is the time for a rethink of HR – and for the “scientist-practitioner” to take center stage. This person should be in a position to apply meaningful metrics and thus prove the strategic value of the entire discipline.**

As world economies continue along the theory of progression, the booming tertiary service sector is at the mercy of their least tangible asset and most valuable resource—their employees.

Harvard Business Review’s July/August 2015 issue titled “It’s Time to Blow up HR and Build Something New”, is a proclamation to improve the HR role and elevate its strategic significance. Numerous perspectives on what HR could and should be in the future are hypothesized. In “People Before Strategy: A New Role for CHRO”, the authors proposition HR leaders to emulate the evolutionary success of the Chief Accountant that rebranded the role to become what is arguably the most valued member of the executive team, Chief Financial Officer (CFO). Similarly, the Personnel Manager has morphed into various translations of Chief Human Resource Officer (CHRO). The authors allude to a critical difference in the advancements of these two roles when it comes to strategic decision-making. The CFO sits to the right of the CEO, while the CHRO is grateful to be included in the meeting.

The hospitality industry is a long established player in the business of providing intangible products and services, and very savvy when it comes to translating these abstractions into concrete concepts that drive the bottom line. For many hospitality businesses, their success comes down to the creation of memorable experiences customized for each individual client. This achievement is largely dependent upon the fluid orchestration of countless variables that involve expensive resources – people and infrastructure. To help address these challenges, we rely on Human Resource

Management (HR) to improve the performance of individuals and teams through organizational systems and policies to support strategic objectives.

So why does the tech industry generate all the buzz surrounding best practices in people management?

Are HR leaders in technology firms more scientific? As the world is pushing for more graduates in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM), position descriptions for strategic HR Directors are calling for the “scientist-practitioner” who can demonstrate value by employing advanced metrics to support strategic decisions across core HR activities.

But trends, and what we consider “progressive” approaches, often trace back to earlier versions of addressing the same needs with less perfect tools. This mainstream adoption of scientific approaches can be linked back to the origins of Human Resource Management in the discipline of Industrial/Organizational Psychology (referred to as Occupational Psychology in the UK). During WWI, there was an urgent and immediate interest in applied psychology and mental testing for military selection and placement. Post war, Industrial Psychologists were employed in management disciplines to further scientific applications of their psychological research on human performance in organizational contexts. This growing body of research informed HR interests: selection and placement of employees, assessments to predict and evaluate performance, employee-management relations, and motivation strategies, to name a few.



*Christina Norton's insights stem from her role in resource development at RMS (Revenue Management Solutions), a revenue management solution provider for global retail and restaurant chains. The former Program Director for the Master in Hospitality Administration at the Ecole hôtelière de Lausanne, Christina studied hotel administration at Cornell and has a Master's degree in education from the Open University.*

When describing the future of Human Resource Management (HRM), there is a great deal of noise around the use of data... especially Big Data. Gartner, Inc., an information technology research and advisory company, coined the defining dimensions of Big Data with 3V's: volume, velocity, and variety. Big Data is not just about terabytes of data; it is also about the type of data (e.g. structured or unstructured), and the rate of changes in the data. Better than merely describing the past, we can employ predictive analytics to pave the way for our company's desired future state. Modeling Big Data is like having a scientific crystal ball that gives quantitatively-supported results to strengthen recommendations and proposed solutions.

Let's look at one of the critical aspects of people management – performance. Business analytics (BA) enables us to tackle Drucker's caveat, "If we can't measure it, we can't manage it". Not only can we capture actual performance metrics with descriptive analytics, we can model "excellence" using predictive analytics to forecast future outcomes. For example, the task of identifying the type of talent to attract and develop can be validated using historical data from past experiences. Equipped with predictive analytics, we can pinpoint the qualities and skills needed to groom our high potentials into future leaders. The third dimension of business analytics (aka the final frontier...for now) encompasses prescriptive analytics. As the term implies, prescriptive analytics goes beyond predictions to include decision options and the consequences that result from each possible choice of action. KPMG describes how HR can leverage insights from Big Data to make better strategic business decisions in their "[Case for Evidence-Based HR](#)".

#### **HR: a trained "insider" who curates leaders**

When searching the web for the most admired (large) companies in people management, technology companies dominate, along with international giants such as Philip Morris and Proctor & Gamble. Further down the list, the hospitality industry is represented with the likes of Disney, McDonald's, Starbucks, and Marriott International. The Great Place to Work Institute evaluates companies for Fortune's annual ranking on best places to work according to what employees' value most: trust, respect, camaraderie, pride, fairness, and credibility. These values relate to an organization's culture as it is created by its leaders.

Seth Godin's blog on "pattern matching" describes the HR genius as a trained insider who finds useful patterns and matches them to the appropriate context. The future HR leader recognizes and defines the issues that analytics can solve. Business analytics can manage "numbers" and "things" so that people can spend the bulk of their time on meaningful work that leverages their strengths and what they value most. HR is the driver of organizational culture that truly does start at the top. With the future HR scientist-practitioner at the helm, the hospitality industry will capitalize on what it is known for, curating charismatic leaders that transform resources into service excellence.

■

# EXPO2020 Dubai: Overcoming the HR challenge

by [Angela Anthonisz](#) & [Ashil Shah](#) & [John Fong](#)

**Dubai will be hosting the World Exposition in 2020. With just four years to go, a trio of professors from The Emirates Academy of Hospitality Management, Angela Anthonisz, Ashil Shah, and John Fong, throw the spotlight on the HR challenges that Dubai has to meet in preparation for this seminal event.**

The fact that Dubai has won the bid for EXPO2020 has fuelled much of the local optimism in recent times. There is a sense of momentum on both the consumer and commercial side, as confirmed in Merrill Lynch's projections that EXPO2020 will boost Dubai's economy by USD 23 billion. For a destination that relies heavily on the service sector as part of this economic growth, it is no surprise that the hotel industry will continue to expand and diversify, creating significant demand for qualified and experienced employees.

EXPO2020 is forecast to create 277,000 new jobs, out of which 40% (well over 100,000) will be in the hospitality sector. To fill these positions, we will have to overcome the stigma attached to careers in the hospitality industry in terms of long working hours, low pay and limited development opportunities. Conditions in Dubai have improved in recent times as evidenced by the increasing number of students undertaking their Bachelors and Masters in hospitality management – our institution being a prime example. However, with McKinsey predicting a global shortage of labor by 2020, Dubai as a destination, and the hotels that operate here, will need to develop more innovative strategies if they are to manage the global talent pool in an increasingly competitive and unpredictable business environment.

## Recruitment and retention

The labor model in Dubai has not changed much over the years. Since the country's inception in 1971, the UAE has welcomed expatriates from all around the world, and Dubai's population comprises close to 200 nationalities now. Expatriates from the Indian sub-continent and the Philippines make up a majority

of the workforce, and in many instances they become the "face" of the organization, serving hotel guests. A number of these individuals have left their families in their home country, coming to Dubai in search of a better salary so as to support their families back home. Given this motivation, salary becomes a key factor in deciding which employer to work for. For this reason, staff recruitment becomes a challenge, and if salary becomes the only competitive factor, there would naturally be a price war when it comes to recruiting talent.

It is well documented that employee engagement in hotels plays a significant role in terms of the customer experience, particularly in luxury hotels where there is an expectation that staff are well trained, knowledgeable and competent. Delivering this experience requires an investment in human capital and a commitment to recruitment, training and retention of employees – but with Dubai's tight labor market, where employees wouldn't think twice when switching employers for a mere \$100 a month more, how do we create staff loyalty?

The key to success in the coming years is likely to be reflected in the level to which we integrate our HR processes into our strategic plans and to start to think more creatively about how we recruit, retain and incentivize our staff. Every investment in developing a solution to the potential problems that will be faced by the HR department needs to be aligned to the company strategy.

As Deloitte (2015) point out in their assessment of future "game changers" for the hospitality industry: "High employee turnover continues to plague the industry, impeding company competitiveness and brand consistency. Many operators lack robust strategic plans to retain their critical employees, and many are unprepared for the intensification of staff turnover that is likely to accompany economic recovery."





There is a need to “future proof” your company by engaging with employees from Day 1 and encouraging them to become “owners” of the business. As we mentioned in our previous article, financial opportunities and incentives such as performance bonuses, lock-step salary options and commissions are now quite common, but these need to be developed to keep up with the demands and expectations of our employees. For Dubai, this doesn’t just mean considering the needs of the millennial employee but considering what resonates with an increasingly multi-cultural workforce. What about immediate recognition of staff performance via mobile apps? How about giving instant incentives via social media platforms that recognize individuals and informs their social network simultaneously? As we head towards 2020, companies need to move away from the “one size fits all” attitude to managing, retaining and training employees. Cultural awareness will be critical, and thinking about hiring people in terms of attitude and personal motivations is likely to become more important than considering skill sets.

As part of overcoming this challenge, some forward thinking organizations in Dubai have looked at innovations in the recruitment process by embarking on a program aimed at high school students. For example, EAHM has embarked on a pilot program with a 5-star hotel, Jumeirah Creekside Hotel, to essentially “adopt” students from Dubai-based high schools and provide them with work experience through short placements and internships. The hotel will continue to offer these opportunities while the students complete their Bachelors program at EAHM, arranging rotational job experiences during holidays, allowing them to understand how methods and theories learned in class can be applied in a real work environment. It is anticipated that this program will benefit all stakeholders, with the employer seeing a number of benefits including overcoming the negative perceptions of working in

hospitality, facilitating career progression that reflects student experience and qualifications, and enhancing their talent management strategy in the run up to EXPO2020. Students will equally benefit in terms of being involved with an organization that will help develop their skills, building their confidence and ultimately moving into jobs that are appropriate to both their experience and qualifications. ■

**Angela Anthonisz** is a Senior Lecturer at the Emirates Academy of Hospitality Management. She is currently undertaking her PhD with the University of Derby in the UK, focusing on the impact of mega-events on the sustainability of the hotel industry. Angela previously held positions as Course Leader and Academic Program Manager for Hospitality and Events Management Degree and Masters Programs in both the UK and Switzerland.



**Ashil Sandeep Shah** is the Assistant Manager, Business Development and Consulting at The Emirates Academy of Hospitality Management (EAHM). Ashil is a graduate of The University of Manchester, first entering the UK’s retail industry with the H&M Group and the Arcadia Group. He has a keen interest in the hospitality industry in the UAE and its tremendous opportunities for growth.



**Dr. John Fong** is the Director of Marketing & International Relations at The Emirates Academy of Hospitality Management, overseeing advertising, branding, corporate communications, online/offline media, international relations and student recruitment for EAHM. He is also an Associate Professor of Marketing at both the undergraduate and postgraduate levels.



# Finding and developing talent in emerging markets

by **Rita Levy** 

**Is there a difference between recruiting in the developed world and recruiting in Africa and other emerging markets? Yes, says Rita Levy, an expert in executive search, recruitment and training. She shares with us an overview of the key differences – and how they must be addressed.**

Life is made of coincidences: this is how I started recruiting for the hospitality sector in Africa. It led to the beginning of an amazing (ad)venture and is a daily ongoing discovery. 54 different countries and 1 billion people make for a puzzle of 54 different cultures, languages, approaches. So, what are the specific challenges? Opportunities?

I never considered social media as a threat in the recruitment sector: posting ads on websites and social media is very often self-serving publicity. The real work consists in targeted and direct search. This is even more the case for Africa, where so much starts from scratch. Good recruiting involves careful analysis and identification of the client's needs. Reaching out to the real talent and motivating them for these opportunities is what the job consists of.

As examples of such assignments, there is for instance, the Kenyan citizen, with more than 10 years experience in the United States, coming back for a GM position to Kenya, or the Rwandan national, working in Mauretania, and now as Engineer in Djibouti.

What is the real difference between recruiting in developed countries and recruiting in Africa and other emerging markets? The challenge consists in building a “PR” network: PR standing for Persistence and Resilience, two very important qualities you need if you want to work and be successful in Africa.

Interviews take place via Skype: the lack of “physical presence” is not an issue. In-depth analysis of voice, professional

expression and attire in front of the camera, as well as the use of vocabulary speak volumes!

How will this change in the future?

## **1. The transfer of the diaspora vs hiring expat profiles**

The “traditional international expat” is slowly but surely being replaced by African candidates with international experience, who are returning to their roots. A clear flow of returning nationals is leaving developed countries for these emerging markets, which offer more and new opportunities.

More and more African countries reinforce this trend by putting a “quota” on the number of expats allowed.

## **2. Labor migration**

Regional intergovernmental agreements, such as the East African Community (Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, and Rwanda) or the West Africa Economic and Monetary Unions (uniting 16 countries) create labor migration and “movement of people”. Borders are no longer borders and make place for professional enrichment.

Labor migration over different African countries is a new trend that is developing constantly. Unforeseen political situations (e.g. terrorism in Tunisia) or the Ebola outbreak in West Africa also provoke a constant and new flow of “international” African relocations.



***Rita Levy**, is the founder and Managing Director of Brussels-based Work4Stars. She studied law at the State University of Ghent (Belgium) and started her career as a lawyer at the Bar of Kortrijk. During those years, she embarked as well on a political career, holding a post, among others, as a member of the Kortrijk City Counsel. Leaving Belgium, she was appointed as the first Attaché to the Flemish Community at the Belgian Embassy in Washington, D.C. and then pursued an international career as a consultant in business development in Mexico and Argentina. Her international network and people qualities were the reason behind the next step: moving into executive search, recruitment and training, working in Brussels, Paris and Barcelona.*

### **3. Stress resistance and crisis management**

Sadly enough, several countries in Africa must deal with terrorism, political insecurity, and health hazards. Daily life can be composed of huge traffic problems, all kind of delays (construction, administration), not to mention climatic challenges.

The candidate – for that precise location and that particular position – will have to be stress-resistant and handle crisis management on an almost daily basis.

How to protect the safeguarding of hotel guests when a revolt is literally going on “next door” – as I saw it handled by GM’s placed in Bangui and Ouagadougou? It does not necessarily come in the job description!

### **4. Education development**

It is and remains difficult to find workers who possess the “soft skills,” so often a prerequisite for success in a customer service environment. This is where HR has to look at the future and not be just about administrative bureaucracy.

The Education of the Y and Z generation is not only a priority, it is a MUST!

Important international hotel groups such as Accor, Marriott, and Hilton (not an exclusive list), have their own hospitality academies and send potential managers to training courses. Other local groups start with a small training facility in their own

properties, whereas some private owners make topic-specific collaboration agreements with well-known hotel schools.

The hospitality industry as a whole in Africa is faced with a disturbing lack of professional hotel schools, training models and skill certifications. Local governments should step in and take an active pivotal role, so important for the future. Instead, they remain too often too absent.

### **5. Talent pipeline approach**

As to the conclusion: research shows that employment in the hotel sector in Africa will grow substantially in the coming years. As the hotel development contracts, development activity, and openings increase, so will the need for professional profiles.

Looking forward, the message is this: assess future talents long before they are needed. The standard filling-vacant-job approach has to be completed with a pro-active pipeline of talents. In hospitality, where it is the norm to build a successful career by changing positions every two to three years, this is a constantly evolving world.

“Every now and then a generation is called upon to be great. You can be that great generation.” - Nelson Mandela

# Not learning from an error is an error

by **Priyanko Guchait** 

Hospitality organizations are faced with the possibility of errors every day, writes Priyanko Guchait of the Conrad N. Hilton College of Hotel and Restaurant Management at the University of Houston. But organizations that value growth, change, experimentation, innovation, and learning – that is, entrepreneurial companies as opposed to bureaucratic companies – tend to have more positive attitudes towards errors. He explains in The Hotel Yearbook’s upcoming edition on Talent Development how to assess employees’ error management skills.



“To err is human, to forgive is divine.” The famous quote by Alexander Pope, an English poet known for his satirical style, is in fact ironic when related to the hospitality industry. Individuals often do not forget the errors which occur as part of their overall guest experience.

Hospitality organizations are faced with the possibility of errors every day and are very familiar with the negative consequences these can produce, such as stress, accidents, loss of time, faulty products, quality and performance problems, negative word-of-mouth, customer dissatisfaction, increased costs, and loss of revenue.

***Dr. Priyanko Guchait**, is an Assistant Professor at the Conrad N. Hilton College of Hotel and Restaurant Management at University of Houston. Dr. Guchait has more than 25 peer-reviewed journal articles, conference proceedings and magazines, including the International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management, Cornell Hospitality Quarterly, Journal of Services Marketing, International Journal of Human Resource Management, Journal of Knowledge Management, Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research, and International Journal of Hospitality Management. Dr. Guchait teaches courses in human resource management, organizational behavior, leadership, statistics, and data analysis. His research primarily focuses on error management and teamwork.*

Therefore, taking a proactive approach to mitigate these is often attempted in organizations by the use of sophisticated technologies, rigid systems, and strict policies focused on controlling employee behavior. However, the truth is that total elimination of errors is impossible. Although it is difficult to predict what (when) specific errors will occur, they will occur once in a while. In hospitality organizations, however, often times errors occur because of the very nature of the work (high work load, time pressure, and fatigue). Errors may also occur through no fault of an individual, but still the individual may be responsible to resolve the error. Errors can happen anywhere in a hospitality organization: external errors involving customers – both front of house (e.g. servers placing wrong orders), back of house (cooks overcooking meat) – and internal errors involving employees, managers, and department (errors in accounts, finance, and HR departments). Therefore, it is important that organizations not only focus on error prevention but also on error management (i.e., ask the question – what needs to be done after an error has occurred). Error management is an approach that attempts to deal with errors and their consequences after an error has occurred.

Error management is a strategy that focuses on minimizing the negative consequences of errors by early detection and quick error correction, and on preventing similar errors in the future by analyzing the causes of and learning from errors. Research has made it clear that error management in fact predicts organizational performance. Open communication about errors is the most important error management practice, allowing for the development of shared understanding about errors, potential error situations, and effective error handling strategies. This methodology also results in quick error detection and makes it possible to receive help from others in these situations. All these factors result in quick, smooth, and well-coordinated error handling.

Thus, error management is crucial for organizational effectiveness and success, as this approach focuses on decreasing negative consequences (e.g. time loss) and increase positive consequences (e.g. learning and innovation). Organizations which use this approach need to make sure that their employees possess error management skills, as individuals play an active role in the error management approach.

One way to make sure that the employees are effective in individual error management is to assess their error management skills (error orientation). The goal is for employees not to panic, get stressed, blame others, or freeze as errors occur but to correct errors quickly and effectively, learn from the situation, share information so others can learn, and seek feedback and help in error situations.

Therefore, it is important to assess how an individual copes and thinks about errors at work. An individual's error management skills can be assessed by asking questions that focus on eight categories:

1. Error competence: Do they have the knowledge and ability to deal with errors immediately, when they occur, and reduce error consequences?
2. Learning from errors: Do they have the ability to prevent errors in the long term by learning from them, planning, and changing work processes?
3. Error risk taking: Do they risk making mistakes in order to try something new and innovative? Do they have the flexibility and openness toward errors? Do they have an achievement-oriented attitude? Do they take responsibility despite negative consequences?
4. Error strain: Do they get stressed when errors occur? Do they fear the occurrence of errors and react to errors with high emotions?
5. Error anticipation: Do they anticipate errors? Do they have a realistic view that errors will occur once in a while in their work? Do they have the ability to foresee potential errors? Do they have a positive attitude to errors (i.e. errors provide important information that can result in learning and innovation)?
6. Covering up errors: Do they cover up errors? Do they consider errors as a threat?
7. Error communication: Do they share error information with others so that they do not make similar errors? Do they ask for help and feedback in error situations?
8. Error analysis: Do they think about errors? Do they think how the error could have been prevented? Do they think how to correct the error effectively?

Organizations that value growth, change, experimentation, innovation, and learning (entrepreneurial companies as opposed to bureaucratic companies) tend to have more positive attitudes towards errors and are more likely to use the error management approach. Thus, hospitality organizations that value this approach can introduce the issue of errors and error management in their selection procedures. Error management skills can be assessed during the selection process – either by using the self-reported individual error management questionnaire, or by developing situational and behavioral interview questions around the eight categories. Additionally, training programs (awareness and skill-building) can be designed (using training methods such as role playing and simulation) to develop employees' error management skills. Assessing and developing an individual's error management skills is important as it may have an impact on an employees' job performance, organizational performance, and customer/client satisfaction.

■

# Innovative learning methods: Owning responsibility for our failings

by **Pascal Gauthier** 

**Learning valuable new things from unexpected quarters and experiences is one of the outcomes of a good management training seminar. Have you ever taken such a course with a 1500-pound, four-legged co-participant? Pascal Gauthier of the Ecole hôtelière de Lausanne recently did – and gained some important insights into the role of trust in leadership.**

I recently participated in a seminar in which Robert Kegan, an American developmental psychologist and Professor in Adult Learning and Professional Development at Harvard Graduate School of Education, presented his research on adult resistance to change.

He says our opposition to change is a means we use to protect ourselves from our deepest fears – fears that are not always conscious but impact us as they deter our willingness to change.

This led me to think about the resistance to change in general and how this concept could serve to improve training tools.

Let's face it, how often have you heard participants during workshops or training sessions justify the lack of results their exercise generated by arguments such as: "That's because he didn't understand me" or even "She doesn't like me, so obviously it doesn't work."

It is so easy to justify our own shortcomings in training exercises by dispersing the responsibility of failings onto other people involved in the exercise. This is far easier to accept, as it gives us the chance to be only partially responsible and not to carry the full responsibility.

A year ago, I was invited to participate in a session of Equi-Training. I only had limited knowledge of the subject and was interested, and anxious, to participate in such an experience. On the given day, there I was, early in the morning at the training

center, receiving the coach's brief for that morning's theoretical session: this is how horses live in a herd; the leader of the herd is not the stallion but the wisest mare; every member of the herd follows the mare based on the concept of trust.

Then we quickly moved to the practical exercises. By the end of the session, we had to impose a certain number of tasks on a horse, without being able to touch him and only by the power of our presence and our voice.

At this stage, as you can easily imagine, I was thinking to myself: what am I doing here? Even if I used to do horseback riding in the past, how on earth can they ask me to move a 600-kilo horse, as tall as I am, just by the sound of my voice?

To put more pressure on the participants, the trainer entered the paddock, walked towards the horse who is quietly watching and, by clicking her tongue twice and moving her body next to the animal, the horse started to walk, then trot and even gallop. Obviously, I then clicked my tongue, snapped my fingers, yelled, moved... but whatever I tried, the horse simply ignored me. Result of round one: "This task is possible, but I am not good enough." In this round, there is no possible excuse: I can't say that the horse does not like me, that he does not understand my words, or anything else. Someone else did it and succeeded – but I did not!

The coach's first debrief explained what happened: "Generally, you are overdoing it," she says. "You do not know that what



**Pascal Gauthier** joined the corporate management team of the *Ecole Hôtelière de Lausanne (EHL)* in 2013 as *Director of Human Resources*. In this position, Pascal plays a crucial role in the development of the strategy of the organization by structuring the workforce from executive to line levels, implementing modern human resource techniques and fostering internal communication. Before joining EHL, he held the position of *Corporate Vice President Learning and Development* for *Hyatt Hotels Corporation – International Operations*. He started his career with Hyatt in 1987 and was based at property and area levels before moving in 2000 to a divisional role as *Director of Human Resources for Europe Africa & Middle East*. He took the lead of the *Learning & Development Division* in 2010.

propels a horse is the rear part; this is where you have to put the emphasis. If you move towards the head, you are sending mixed signals and confusing the horse. By getting too close to the horse, especially near his head, you are sending him the signal to change direction. When it does not work, you often tend to get closer and even touch the horse...”

In much the same way, when we give instructions to our staff which are not understood or followed, we often simply do the task ourselves instead of explaining how to do it. The result is obvious – and not promising.

We then came to the second session, where we had to do the same task again. We tried to implement all the things we had learned: where to place the emphasis, how to position ourselves, how to attract and keep the horse’s attention... and suddenly we realized that our message was clearer and simpler – and the horse began to follow our lead.

Controlling our body language suddenly enabled us to communicate without wrong or mixed messages, and the horse simply started to trust our input. Eventually, we even progressed to leading the horse this way: we turned our back to him and when we started to walk, the horse followed us wherever we went. A bond of trust was created and it continued, whichever path we took. But this link was fragile and easily disrupted by external elements. Nevertheless, it did exist. It could be built up and reinforced, and could even be passed between two participants taking turns leading the horse in a series of exercises.

It was an enlightening experience.

Back at the office, I shared my learnings with my CEO, and we both decided to re-organize the exercise for the top management team of our organization. Six months later, our 7 top executives were following the same brief, the same exercises and got hit by the same type of feelings in a training experience.

Their perception was similar: there is no possibility to cheat; the truth is obvious; initially we fail; and then, by controlling the way we position ourselves, we manage to communicate more clearly what we want – and we get the results we desire.

A long debrief, including a detailed review of the videos taken during the practical exercises, allowed us to understand how and why our non-verbal behavior impacts our communication. Each participant had the opportunity to analyze his reactions, to understand his perceptions, the reason for our actions, and the impact they had on others. With the help of the coach and of the rest of the group, we used examples to relate these findings to our daily professional life with our teams. In education, like in hotels, a major part of our work is linked to interpersonal relations, and if they are polluted by elements we cannot manage, the end result suffers.

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# Four Seasons Hotels & Resorts ranked “Best Luxury Hotel Employer” in rankings compiled by the Young Hoteliers Summit

The Young Hoteliers Summit (YHS) Rankings 2016 aim to identify the most desirable employers in the hotel industry as perceived by soon-to-graduate hospitality management students and young hoteliers worldwide. They provide insights into the views and priorities of the future generation and recognize the companies that are at the forefront of employment practices.



YHS acts towards improving professional opportunities for young talent in hospitality. It is the first entirely student focused and student run hospitality summit, designed to reduce the gap between the key stakeholders – industry, academic institutions and students from leading hotel management schools around the world.

The organization designed a survey to find out which hotel companies are perceived as the best employers by students and fresh graduates. A snapshot of the results was presented during the opening ceremony of the YHS 2016 on 14 March 2016.

In 2016, the rankings of the top companies were generated through a survey completed by over 1,800 participants



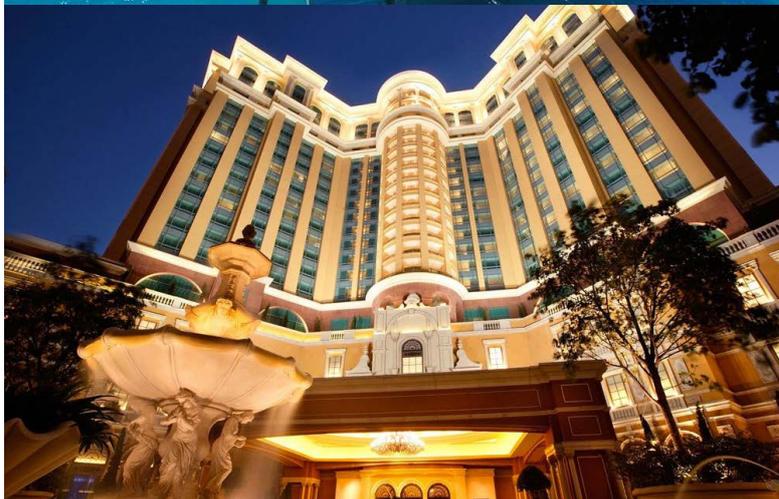
representing 111 nationalities and 156 different hospitality schools. The research focused on a diverse array of employment topics such as sources of information, work-life balance, pursuit of further education and other key factors involved in choosing an employer and job position.

This year, YHS Rankings adopted a new methodological approach to ensure the reliability and future use of this report for brand awareness assessment, as well as evaluating the importance of the different criteria for a career choice. In order to choose the brands to be featured in this study, the authors collected and analyzed STR data by classifying and segmenting hotel brands according to their Average Daily Rate (ADR). An additional filter for all three segments – Luxury & Upper Upscale,



# FOUR SEASONS

## *Hotels and Resorts*



Upscale & Upper Midscale and Midscale & Budget – was also added to increase the accuracy of the results.

YHS would like to congratulate Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts for their 1st place rank in the YHS Rankings 2016 in the Luxury & Upper Upscale segment. Rachel Begbie, Regional Director of Human Resources EMEA, claimed the award on behalf of her company. Ritz-Carlton secured second place, followed by W Hotels. For Upscale & Upper Midscale brands, Disneyland Hotel took first place, while Ibis Hotels ranked first for Midscale & Budget properties.

The report also mentions fascinating insights on career path analysis, student future aspirations, as well as respondents' career preferences. One of the interesting discoveries found in

the analysis of the survey is that salary, career path & evolution and work-life balance are among the top few factors in choosing a future career.

### YHS Rankings 2016



March 2016  
Ivan Susono & Rui Diego  
www.yhsglobal.com

**THE REPORT CAN BE  
DOWNLOADED HERE:**  
[YHS Rankings report 2016 >](#)

# Talent development: Mind the gap & find the opportunities

by **Heather Jacobs** 

Four Seasons is a company renowned not only for the high quality of its properties and management execution, but also, somewhat less gratifyingly, as an employer that offers a very long path to reach a coveted General Manager position. How could this path be shortened? Heather Jacobs, the company's Senior VP International Human Resources, put that challenge to a number of student teams competing at the 2016 Young Hoteliers Summit, and she describes the outcomes for the Hotel Yearbook.

## **Energizing. Compelling. Stimulating.**

These are the first words that come to mind when I reflect on our recent participation as the Industry Challenger in the 2016 Young Hotelier's Summit ("YHS") hosted by the Ecole hôtelière de Lausanne. Over the course of three days, the interactions with top ranked and elite hotel school students from around the world were worth the price of admission alone. Our participation in this program over the past seven years has evolved and it has been both personally and professionally rewarding to see the program content, delivery and caliber of students and participants grow.

***Heather Jacobs** leads the International Human Resources Operations for Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts, a global luxury leader in hospitality. Heather has more than 20 years experience with the brand and has worked in the US, Europe and now the Middle East. In her current capacity, she is based out of Dubai with a primary focus on all hotel and regional offices in EMEA and APAC which covers more than 50 properties and 20,000 employees.*



Growth is the new normal in the hospitality world – how do we grow our brands, how do we grow the number of units, how do we grow our client base, and how do we advance the growth of our employees? The importance of developing talent to fuel the growth and differentiation of a company is not unique to the hotel industry. What is unique to the hotel industry, however, are our diverse business platforms and the opportunity to grow in a variety of professional business streams: from development, finance, sales and marketing, human resources, in addition to hotel operations.

As a company that was founded on and operates in a single line of business in the luxury segment, we have relied on a relatively narrow path to developing our hotel leaders. This formula has worked well for us over the past 50 years. However, considering the pace and ever-evolving world around us, our current formula could be considered long and too narrowly focused on operations in the preparation of our future business leaders. The rapidly emerging trends, from how transactions are done, to the transaction windows, and a redefined understanding of “luxury”, coupled with increasing financial complexities mean that we equally need to rethink and challenge ourselves on how we go about developing talent.

As the 2016 YHS Challenger, we “challenged” the students to help us look at gaps in our development paths and where we have opportunities to reduce the time to get to a position of General Manager. We asked the students to help us find a way to create game-changing career paths that go from university to hotel General Manager... and do so in less than nine years. In and of itself, this may not seem daunting. However, our current road map takes more than 13 years.

Eight teams of ten participants rallied together for less than 24 hours to present back their ideas in a formal presentation that lasted no more than ten minutes. They took a panel of us from Four Seasons on a journey, one that had a variety of ideas, and explored things from “MOOCs” to programmed cross-cultural exposure (including globe-hopping on the “Four Seasons Jet”) to more developed internship programs. The runner-up and ultimate winner won us over with not only their ability to deliver



a succinct and articulate message but with thoughtful and creative content. The winning team gave great insights on a four-step program that smartly covered key areas of people and leadership management, project management, and strategic and asset management. At the same time, they identified corresponding roles in the hotels to capture these leadership traits. It was a forward-thinking yet pragmatic approach to creating management expertise in a shorter amount of time.

While we were the Challenge provider, it is clear the students have appropriately turned the tables and challenged us to shift the paradigm on our talent development programs and have helped us mind the gaps and identify opportunities. This winning team used the following quote from Johann Wolfgang von Goethe which summed it up nicely – “Treat people as if they were what they ought to be, and you help them to become what they are capable of being.”

■



# Dear Graduate – a primer on industry outreach for fresh grads

by **Gisle Sarheim** 

“Talent development” doesn’t necessarily begin only when the talented young person joins the company. Perhaps he or she has the maturity and drive to network with someone already in the hotel business, hoping to land a job. Hilton’s Gisle Sarheim suggests ten rules of the road for our young readers thinking of reaching out to an industry personality for advice on how to get their hospitality management career started.



Hardly a week goes by without receiving a couple of notes from students either in the process of graduating, or having recently graduated. I generally receive these notes through LinkedIn or sometimes directly through my work e-mail, but sometimes I am also approached by students at networking events, or at industry conferences. I generally enjoy these encounters, whether in writing or in person – as I feel we all have an obligation to support the next generation of talent.

It’s also a powerful way to “align with reality”, i.e. understand what goes through young people’s minds, what are their aspirations and ambitions, their thoughts and concerns, and their general impressions of the industry they have elected to work in. It’s also a meaningful way to scout for talent, to spot a glimpse of the fortunate few who possess those magic beans that can grow into a beanstalk of success, elevating your company to new heights.

***Gisle Sarheim** is Vice President Development - Hilton Grand Vacations, Asia Pacific, at Hilton Worldwide, based in Singapore. With his previous roles, based in London and New York, he has covered most of the world’s hotel investment markets around the globe, as well as emerging hotel markets across Africa, Middle East and the Asia Pacific region. Gisle also serves as Secretary of the Board of Directors of the Hospitality Asset Managers Association (HAMA) Asia Pacific.*

However, not every encounter is equal. Many are just looking for a springboard to their first job after leaving school, and if one isn't available, they quickly lose interest. This is a lost opportunity. Likewise, not every outreach will be met with enthusiasm. A poorly drafted message, or one that reads like the script of a telemarketer, is unlikely to result in a favorable response. Again, a lost opportunity – and one that cuts off a relationship before it ever gets the chance to bloom.

Here are 10 considerations worthwhile thinking about before reaching out to industry executives:

**Time is the scarcest resource for people in leadership.** Be considerate and be extremely grateful. The time spent writing or speaking with you could have been used to deal with important business issues – or perhaps spending time with loved ones. Start with acknowledging that you are imposing on their busy schedules. In Japan, it is customary to start every business meeting acknowledging people's presence "despite their busy schedules".

**Consider your motivation for reaching out.** If your sole motivation is to land a job with the company whose executive you are targeting, this will be as clear as if written in bold type. If there is no job available, you may not get a reply, or a brief "Thank you for your interest" will be the likely response. Consider what you can get out of the potential relationship: advice (both in terms of the industry and job hunting), access to that person's network (if they believe in you), a job down the road (because you stood out), or wisdom (perhaps the most valuable of them all).

**Knowledge is power.** The more you know about a person and the company before you reach out, the more likely you will get a response. Do your homework and try to find out as much as possible before making contact. Don't present a monologue on the company (after all the person knows it better than you), but interweave morsels of information that show you have a strong understanding of the company and the person's role.

**The art of elegant flattery.** Business leaders and executives are people too, and sometimes a little recognition can go a long way. However, it needs to be relevant, and customized to the individual. Consider what other people might recognize this person for (visionary, strategic leader, innovator, coach, subject matter expert, turn-around specialist, emerging markets pioneer etc.), and think about how you can acknowledge this person's special capability. Or perhaps relate to a recent article published, an interview, or even someone's long tenure with an organization.

**Culture as a connector.** Company culture is a communal language shared by the citizen of a company that affects the way they behave, talk, relate to each other, dress, engage others, and work (to name a few). A company with a distinct culture might have a clear belief that their way is the right one, and look for similar cultural traits in others. A company that values its traditions, heritage, history, and organizational structure may warrant a more formal outreach – while an upstart with a relaxed approach to work, no hierarchy, casual behavior and

dress-code, opens up for a more casual outreach (while still keeping all other points in mind). In particular, observe the approach to first name basis vs. last name basis.

**Make no mistakes.** It's 10pm, and you are just pushing through yet another e-mail destined for someone that could make a difference. Your eyes are hurting, your head is heavy – but little do you know that by pressing "send" you will alienate yet another person. Why? Because the name is misspelled, the message is convoluted, the grammar is off, and even the company name got an extra "T" before pressing send. Sounds unreal, right? Maybe not. Perhaps as many as 40% of e-mails and LinkedIn messages I receive unsolicited have my name misspelled → move to trash. Definitely, not the type of person I am looking for, or would recommend.

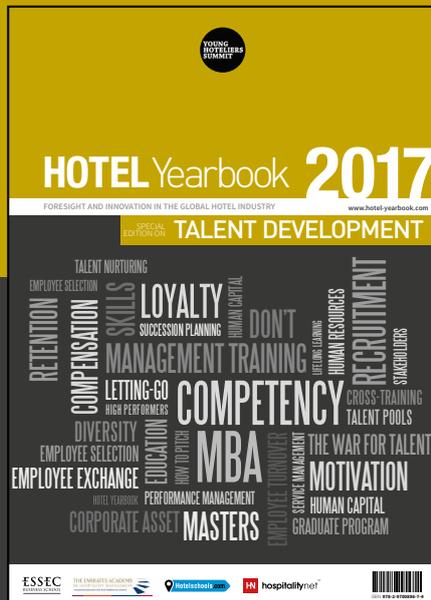
**A hard or soft sell.** The tone and approach of your message needs adapting to the specific circumstances of which you are reaching out. If you are reaching out for the purpose of being considered for a specific job opportunity (one that is available), you want your message to be clear, and you need to highlight what makes you a worthwhile candidate. However, if you are prospecting for a job, a hard sell may turn some readers off. Consider instead how you can best connect with the person, and leverage his/her role within the company or industry.

**Creating commonalities.** The "uncertainty reduction theory", developed in 1975, asserts the notion that when interacting, people need information about the other party in order to reduce their uncertainty. This allows a person to predict the other's behavior and resulting actions, which is essential in the development of any relationship. Identify what you may have in common with the person you are contacting, such as schooling, hometown, people, companies, shared beliefs, etc. Commonalities help reduce uncertainties, and initiate relationships.

**Make it personal.** Start with the basic premise that any relationship can yield something positive, now or in the future. By actually getting to know someone, that person is infinitely more likely to be helpful. Propose a catch up over a coffee, a quick chat, or some other meeting. Don't be afraid to ask if it is OK to stop by the office next time you are in town. The worst that can happen is that the person says no, or is simply too busy. However, it expresses an added dimension of interest, and motivation to initiate a relationship. Remember their time is scarce, so always work around their schedule.

**Find a mentor.** The most rewarding type of business relationship you can achieve is finding a mentor. Most leaders will always attribute some of their success to a mentor who has provided guidance and direction when needed. Most find their mentors through a workplace, but you would be surprised how many leaders are willing to volunteer their time and knowledge, if a personal connection is established and they believe in you. Keep this in mind when reaching out – you might come across someone who can add wisdom to your life, and propel your career forward.

# Next special edition on Talent Development



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• *This edition will be available from October 2016*



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