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An entry level managerial training program for hourly hospitality employees

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AN ENTRY LEVEL MANAGERIAL TRAINING PROGRAM
FOR HOURLY HOSPITALITY EMPLOYEES

By

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PART ONE

Introduction

High employee turnover in the hospitality industry has been well documented and studied. In their groundbreaking work, Heskett, Jones, Loveman, Sasser and Schlesinger (1994) discussed in great detail the reasons for this “turnover culture,” and the ramifications if the industry does nothing to improve the statistics. In addition, other labor challenges facing the industry, such as the massive exodus of the retiring baby boomer generation (MME, 2008) and the future of immigration reform in the U.S. (Watkins, 2006), reinforce the imminent labor shortage and worsen the employment outlook for the future of hospitality.

As a response to the high turnover problems and the impending labor shortage, many hospitality companies have developed internal managerial training programs as a way of reducing turnover, recruiting, and retaining talented employees. However, most of these programs are geared toward either employees who are already managers, or potential employees who have graduated from universities with degrees in hospitality management.

What is both surprising and alarming is that little has been done to develop tenured line-level employees, those who work more than two years within the same position. These hourly employees comprise more than half the workforce for most organizations. Additionally, they provide the customer with the products and services, making these employees the closest link to the customer base (McDonald, Hite, & Gilbreath, 2002).

Typically, hourly employees have not been viewed as long-term employees due to the common misconception that they are not interested in career development, but rather, they view their jobs as a stepping-stone to another career or opportunity (Washington, Feinstein, & Busser, 2003). While there are many misconceptions surrounding hourly hospitality employees, tenured

line-level employees pose additional concerns, especially those who work in tipped positions. Common beliefs about why tenured employees do not advance include language barriers, lack of pertinent experience, lack of desire to advance, lack of willingness to work managerial hours (i.e., more than eight per day), lack of desire to manage fellow workers, and the belief that the tenured employee will earn more money as an hourly employee, specifically in tipped positions.

Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to develop an entry-level managerial training program for line-level hospitality employees. An analysis of the current literature regarding training and motivation will be used as the foundation for the proposed training program. In addition, two central issues will be addressed to ensure the success of the participants in the managerial training program: a) The identification and resolution of perceived obstacles employees face when contemplating advancement, and b) the practice of developing internal employees to increase retention, and thereby reduce the high costs associated with middle management turnover.

Justification

Line-level employees with more than two years service are in the best position for career advancement within a company, as they already have the training, skills, and operational experience required to meet the basic job specifications. Where these employees may lack in meeting the job specifications might be in computer skills, leadership skills, organizational experience, finance, and communications skills, or a combination of any of the above.

In addition, corporate hospitality managerial training programs have evolved from being an instrument of necessity to a recruitment tool, particularly marketing to Generation Y (Hanna, 2009). These training programs have become rather commonplace in an effort for companies to

vie for new, talented labor. Corporate hospitality Web sites today post their various training and career development programs as a way to entice recruits. However, as well intended as these initial efforts were, they have transformed into “leadership” campaigns, which have strayed away from their original promise of managerial development (Rees & Porter, 2008).

This paper will delineate operational managerial training for line-level employees from managerial leadership training. The business of hospitality can certainly use more leaders, however, more importantly, employees capable of managing operations at the fundamental level is critical to the ongoing success of the industry as a whole.

Constraints

Even though the training program developed in this paper will be based on specific industry training programs, most of the research is theoretical. As with any research lacking empirical evidence, this managerial training program is based solely on theory and will not be tested.

In addition, hospitality environments differ substantially from business to business. Variables, including unionized or non-unionized hotels, corporate versus non-corporate, small versus large scale operations, new versus established operations, etc., exist that might preclude a business from participating in this managerial training program.

PART TWO

Introduction

A hospitality training study conducted by Conrade, Woods, & Ninemeier (1994) reported that although most lodging companies' training dollars were spent on line level employees, 61% of the training expenditure went towards training new employees how to do their jobs, while the remaining 39% of the training budget was spent on developing existing employees. In addition, Conrade et al. (1994) reported that 81% of the training budget that was left for developing employees was spent on making employees better at their current jobs, while only 19% was spent on actually developing employees for new positions.

There are indications that these statistics have worsened in recent years, according to a 2009 survey conducted by the Council of Hotel and Restaurant Trainers (CHART) together with Maritz Research in 2009 (CHART, 2009). One hundred forty CHART members participated in this study and revealed that 35% of the average training budget dollars were allocated for line-level employees, with only 1% of the actual training content for those employees geared towards leadership and executive development. CHART concluded the research findings by reporting a "severe lack of development for employees after the first 90 days" (CHART, 2009).

In 2008, an estimated \$134.07 billion was spent by U.S. organizations on employee learning and development (Paradise, 2009). However, the CHART survey reported that the individual survey participants spent an average of only \$1.9 million annually on training. The survey broke out the industry segments with quick-serve and fast-casual spending an average of \$3.1 million, casual dining, \$1.9 million, fine dining, \$2 million, and hotels spending an average of less than \$500,000 a year (Berta, 2009). Compared to the total U.S. training

expenditure, the hospitality industry, particularly the hotel segment, was severely lacking in dedicated training dollars in 2009.

Yet, contrary to what the figures suggest, a study by Enz (2001) revealed that hospitality managers in the U.S. and Europe cited human resources issues as their number one concern. These issues included attracting, retaining, motivating, training and developing the industry's work force. With regard to these HR issues, this study revealed that other managerial problems paled in comparison, such as understanding the customer, effectively using capital, aligning stakeholders' interests, using information technology, and valuing brands (Enz, 2001).

There was clearly a gap between the allocated training expenditures of the hospitality industry and the desire to train its employees. For U.S. hospitality companies to remain competitive both nationally and in the global marketplace, these organizations needed to refocus their commitment to training and learning, and move from a survival mode into a prospering mode (Sambrook & Stewart, 2000).

Lack of Research

The scarcity of research about non-salaried employees' career development experiences suggested that this population has been neglected by academia and business organizations for a long time (McDonald, Hite, & Gilbreath, 2002). In their qualitative analysis, McDonald et al. (2002) reported both a complexity and diversity of findings of non-salaried employees' perspectives of career development. They found that the results of their study could be characterized into two groups. The first group of non-salaried employees was found to be happy with their current positions and saw opportunities for career advancement, based on their efforts. The second group was found to be dissatisfied with their work and did not see opportunities for advancement.

Based on this evidence, if hourly employees were declining to participate in career development training because of bad managerial practices, or personal language barriers, for example, were employees still satisfied with their jobs? Because employee job satisfaction was directly linked to profitability (Jackson & Sirianni, 2009), it would seem that more organizations would have a greater interest in understanding the underlying reasons that hourly employees would choose not to participate in managerial training programs.

O'Connell (2009) suggested one possible explanation for this problem was that those employees with higher skills and educational training were more likely to participate in training initiatives than those employees with less skills and education. Although this study's focus was on employees already in managerial positions, it magnified the argument for hourly employee training. Hourly employees typically had fewer skills and education and the relevant outcome of this finding was that those employees with the greatest need for training would receive less of it (O'Connell, 2009).

Purposes of Training and Development

According to Wexley and Latham (2002, p. 2), training and development activities referred to "a planned effort by an organization to facilitate the learning of job-related behavior on the part of its employees." Further, the general purpose of training and development was to increase both knowledge and skill. Wexley and Latham (2002, p. 2) suggested that any training and development effort should have one or more of the following goals: "a) to improve an individual's level of self-awareness; b) to increase an individual's skill in one or more areas of expertise; and/or c) to increase an individual's motivation to perform his or her job well."

Based on these goals, there were three primary strategies available to a training specialist: improve an employee's performance through his or her cognitive abilities, improve behavior, and

improve an employee's working environment (Wexley & Latham, 2002, p. 3). A common example of a training effort with a cognitive focus would have been a new employee orientation, which provided the new hires with specific information. Behavioral training focused on an employee's overt behavior and could have included videos of appropriate working behaviors and role-playing. Altering and improving an employee's work environment would have included job rotation, where an employee was exposed to a variety of working situations and conditions (Wexley & Latham, 2002, p. 4).

Training and Development as a Human Resource Function

Human resource management (HRM) was defined as the utilization of employees to achieve organizational objectives (Mondy, 2008). There are five functional areas within HRM: staffing, human resource development, compensation, safety and health, and employee/labor relations (Mondy, 2008).

A major HRM function is human resource development (HRD), which consists not only of training and development, but also of career planning, organizational development, and performance management and appraisal (Mondy, 2008). Wexley and Latham (2002, p. 9) concurred and described training and development programs as directly related to task analysis, staffing, performance appraisal, and organizational development. Task analysis assured that the employee understood the duties and expectations of the job. Staffing had a direct relationship to training in that the more qualified and well trained an applicant was, the more likely it was that a new hire would already possess the critical skills to perform the job.

Performance appraisal impacted an organization's training and development activities in four ways: performance appraisal was used as a means to determine the training needs of a department or unit, it was the basis for determining the value and worth of a training program, it

was used as a means for identifying employees' weaknesses which could use further training and development, and it improved employee proficiency by providing regular feedback (Wexley & Latham, 2002, p. 9).

Organizational development (OD) was defined as increasing the competence or health of an organization, and involved meaningful and lasting change via a systematic diagnosis (Wexley & Latham, 2002, p. 10). Although OD differed from individual employee development, the OD effort included employee development as part of its larger organizational objective.

Culture of Learning

In a European Union-funded project, Sambrook and Stewart (2000) discussed the importance of learning as a continuous work-based activity to cope with the changing demands within an organization. To survive and prosper in an increasingly competitive global environment, organizations support the potential of their intellectual capital (IC). But, it is not enough to simply train employees. Sambrook and Stewart (2000) emphasized that to create a culture of learning, an organization must create, capture, share, and implement new knowledge. Furthermore, in a culture of learning, as a result of all the members having participated, the organization continuously transforms itself.

Sambrook and Stewart (2000) revealed that organizations without learning cultures experience a multitude of problems around training and learning activities such as a lack of motivation and responsibility among employees for learning, lack of clarity regarding the role of HR professionals, insufficient knowledge sharing, and a lack of financial resources and time allocation. Other factors that inhibited learning included an organizational culture of short-termism, bureaucracy, fear of change, senior management's low opinion of training and lack of people management, poor managerial skills, cynical staff, lack of confidence, fear of exposure,

resistance to change, sheer workload, business pressures, lack of time, limited HR resources, and an antiquated trade union approach (Sambrook & Stewart, 2000).

The Importance of Intellectual Capital

The process of training and managing an organization's IC is known as knowledge management (Conley & Zheng, 2009). In an increasingly knowledge-based global economy, companies have needed to leverage training systems to protect and develop their IC to remain competitive. The government of Croatia has built an entire tourism strategy based on this concept (Pavia & Stipanovic, 2007). In their business model for developing a tourism destination in Croatia, Pavia and Stipanovic (2007) believed that a tourism destination needs to valorize information and IC as the most important of resources for long-term competitive advantage and economic growth. Moustaghfir (2009) concurred and further explained that as IC is leveraged into products and services, which generate value, an organization will sustain a competitive advantage and long-term superior performance.

Intention to Stay

Much has been researched and documented regarding an employee's organizational commitment and intention to stay. Conrade et al. (1994) identified the positive correlation between training, job satisfaction, and intention to stay. In their pioneering work about the service profit chain, Heskett, Jones, Loveman, Sasser, and Schlesinger (1994) concluded that good training will elicit a highly satisfied employee, who, in turn, will deliver excellent service, which will ultimately increase profits. Training quality has also been found to be a direct antecedent to both training and job satisfaction, which was a determinant of intention to stay (Chun-Fang, Ki-Joon, & Canter, 2005).

However, even with the best training intentions within an organization, there was still apprehension amongst hourly employees when they have been offered opportunities to train for career advancement, specifically, managerial positions. In order to ensure that hourly hospitality employees are well informed when making decisions about their options for career advancement, it will be necessary to address both the intrinsic and extrinsic barriers that these employees may face, and can overcome, through a well-executed entry-level managerial training program.

Intrinsic Barriers

Job Satisfaction

As hourly employees have contemplated training for career advancement, they have encountered several intrinsic barriers. Job satisfaction was key to an employee's intention to stay and has been directly linked to an employee's perception of upper management. The more positive the individual's perception of upper management, the greater the employee's job satisfaction (Ruch, 1979). Employee satisfaction was driven by satisfaction of managerial processes relating to an employee's wellbeing. The managerial processes included supervision, benefits, work design and benefits (Rust, Stewart, Miller, & Pielack, 1996).

Motivation to Learn

In their groundbreaking work, Noe and Wilk (1993) investigated the antecedents of continuous learning. They found that motivation to learn was the only attitudinal variable to have a consistent and positive influence on an employee's willingness to learn. A second finding of the study revealed that an employee's perception of their work environment, specifically their social support from managers and peers, influenced their perception of the development activity.

Learning Attitudes

Learning attitudes, including motivation to learn, motivation to transfer, and previous positive experiences with development, had a direct impact on an employee's participation in developmental activities (Noe & Wilk, 1993). Additionally, an employee's awareness of his own developmental needs, together with his agreement of management's assessment, greatly impacted the employee's perception of the training activity.

Motivation to Manage

According to the role motivation theory developed by Miner (1975), there were certain key attitudes and motives that affected an individual's choice to pursue a career in management. These key attitudes include: a) a favorable attitude towards authority, b) a desire to compete, c) a pleasure in taking charge and making decisions, d) a desire to exercise power, e) a desire for a distinctive position, and f) a positive outlook on responsibility and administrative chores. These six motivations applied primarily to bureaucratic organizations, which typically utilize a hierarchy, as in the hospitality industry. Miner (1975) found that those individuals with a positive attitude towards the various motivations were more successful as managers and more effective within an organization. Those managers who had negative feelings toward the previously listed motivations, were found to be ineffective leaders. Miner (1975) theorized that organizations should develop managers by increasing their motivation to manage others, with a training program that addresses each of the six motivations and attitudes.

Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy, an employee's confidence in dealing with challenging situations (Bandura, 1977), had a direct influence on a person's development activity. Through learner attitudes, perception of development needs, and the perception of the benefits resulting from the development activity, self-efficacy was a major determinant of an individual's actual

performance. The level of an individual's self-efficacy greatly impacted his choice of activity, how much effort he applied, and to what extent he persisted in accomplishing a task (Moen & Allgood, 2009).

Work-Life Balance

Work-family conflict (WFC) is a role conflict where time spent at work interfered with time spent with the family and was associated with lower job satisfaction and increased work stress. Studies have shown that when organizations were supportive of employees' family lives, the employees reported lower WFC and higher job satisfaction (Grandey, Cordeiro, & Michael, 2007).

Regarding hourly employees, while increased time at work equated to higher financial resources, it was also equal to a loss of time for personal activities or family roles (Hobfoll, 1989). When line-level employees contemplated career advancement, they equated more responsibility to more hours on the job.

Perceived Limited Cognitive Abilities

Based on the success or failure of previous developmental activities, an employee generalized the previous outcome to future activities. Particularly if the activity was challenging, and the employee was not successful, that employee did not have had confidence in his cognitive ability for future developmental activities (Noe & Wilk, 1993).

Extrinsic Barriers

Lack of Social Support from Management

A lack of support from management and peers resulted in a negative influence on employees' learning attitudes. In addition, those employees who had insufficient resources to successfully complete tasks experienced frustration and became dissatisfied with their work (Noe

& Wilk, 1993). The dissatisfaction resulted in how the employees viewed developmental activities and increased the likelihood that they had an incomplete understanding of their own developmental needs. These unfavorable perceptions resulted in decreased levels of developmental activity (Noe & Wilk, 1993).

Time Pressures and Costs

Limited time available after working hours was a deterrent to participating in developmental activities, especially if the hourly employee had two jobs. In addition, if the training location was far from the working location, an employee was less able to participate (Brown & McCracken, 2009). Training costs, both out of pocket for expenses such as gas and food, and out of paycheck, as a result of missing work, greatly impacted an employee's decision to participate in training activities (Brown & McCracken, 2009).

Language Barrier

Communication satisfaction played an important part in motivating employees (Chun-Fang, SooCheong, Canter, & Prince, 2008). This was especially problematic for those employees for whom English was not their first language. Hispanics, as a group, have been the biggest minority employee in the hospitality industry since 1993. In addition, one out of six foodservice employees spoke a language other than English at home (Walker & Miller, 2010).

For these employees, managers needed to be acutely aware of cultural differences and gave clear and precise instructions so as to avoid confusion. The implementation of a feedback loop was of high value for managers, so that they could better maintain their communication efforts with employees (Chun-Fang et al., 2008).

Development of the Entry-Level Managerial Training Program

Trainability of the Individual

Wesley and Latham (2002, p. 77) defined trainability as a function of an individual's ability and motivation, where ability referred to the individual's aptitude or skills in performing tasks. Personality characteristics such as "self-confidence, persuasiveness, sociability, decisiveness, and assertiveness" defined a trainable individual (Wexley & Latham, 2002, p. 77).

Motivation was defined as the variables that influence an individual's effort, persistence, and choices, along with an individual's need for achievement or competence. An employee's involvement in his job was an important antecedent to his learning ability during the training, as well as his motivation to transfer that learning (Wexley & Latham, 2002, p. 77). Research conducted by Noe and Schmitt (1986) revealed that if an employee personally agreed with the assessment of his skill weaknesses, he was more likely to be satisfied with the training program's content, compared to those employees who disagreed with the assessment of their weaknesses.

Motivation to Transfer

It was not enough to simply train an employee without supporting their motivation to transfer that knowledge, or newly learned skill, once they have participated in a developmental activity, as motivation to transfer preceded the transfer of training in the workplace. Before even attending a developmental program, trainees were motivated, or not, to transfer what they've learned, depending on their pre-training individual attitudes (Gegenfurtner, Veermans, Festner, & Gruber, 2009).

There were several aspects to consider before even developing a training program. The way that the entire program was framed and presented to an employee determined the extent to which a trainee was motivated to transfer the learning. Before even starting the program, the organizational normative and accepted behaviors within an operation helped or hindered the entire process (Gegenfurtner et al., 2009).

During the training program, the trainee's transfer motivation was shaped by the instruction, its conditions, and consequences that emerged during the training. Following this, when the employee returned back to work, the individual factors in response to the program determined if and how trainees were motivated to initiate and complete the lessons learned. Upon completion of the training, the perceptions of the employee's management and peers either facilitated or inhibited the employee's motivation to transfer and utilize that training (Gegenfurtner et al., 2009).

Length of the Program

With the recent cutbacks across all departments in the hospitality industry, executive management implemented cost cutting strategies by keeping training programs short. Unfortunately, the length of a training program did matter when the goal was to affect behavioral change because the longer the program, the more significant the behavioral change (Cole, 2008). As behavioral change was a common goal within managerial training courses, to ensure training effectiveness, any future training program should be tested with a control group to determine if there is sufficient time to produce the desired effects (Cole, 2008).

Assurance of Social Support

Support of an employee's training activities, from both his peers and supervisors, was critical to the success of the training program. The support of these groups provided reinforcement to what was being learned, as well as the transfer of that learning to the job. It was also imperative that the supervisors were fully aware of what was learned during the training so that the supervisors could help the trainee to meet the objectives of the training (Wexley & Latham, 2002, p. 115).

Conclusion

Before Implementing the Training Program

While an introductory managerial program would be very useful for hourly employees with several years in the same position, unless a culture of learning is in place and cultivated within an organization, there will be no motivation to execute, nor a motivation to transfer the skills learned in the program. A continuous learning environment was described as “one where knowledge and skill acquisition is a major responsibility to each employee, supported through social interaction and work relationships, [with] formal systems that reinforce achievement and provide opportunities for personal growth, and innovation and competition exists both within and outside the organization” (Wexley & Latham, 2002, p. 117).

Other factors, such as managerial support, self-efficacy, job satisfaction, clear communication, and length of training all contributes to the success of the program before it even begins. The challenge in developing the training program is very small compared to the challenges faced in revitalizing an organization to embrace and cultivate a culture of learning. No matter how well an entry level managerial training program is put together and how highly qualified the trainers are to administer the program, it will not succeed unless the foundations for learning are securely supported and in place.

Leadership Versus Management Training

In a paper by Rees and Porter (2008), the subject of the re-branding of management education and training under the heading of leadership was addressed. Due to the overlap of leadership and management, managerial training has been marketed as leadership training, implying that leadership is a higher level of organizational activity than management (Rees & Porter, 2008). There were several unfortunate outcomes due to this misconception, and in

addition to ignoring the concept of strategic management, marketing leadership training created a market pressure for people to aspire to be leaders instead of managers.

Rees and Porter (2008) uncovered four potential dangers to marketing leadership training as opposed to managerial training: the failure to match people to situations, a failure to understand the difference between process and task leadership, the lack of career paths for people to become leaders instead of managers, and the absence of the development of critical managerial skills. This paper will generate a managerial training program with a focus on developing strategic managerial skills, of which leadership will be among the various aptitudes.

PART THREE

Introduction

In addition to representing over one quarter of U.S. service workers, the hospitality industry is also subjected to the highest national employee turnover rates, from 32 to 300 percent. Reported costs associated with this turnover range from \$3,000 to \$10,000 per hourly employee, to \$50,000 and above for managers (Moncarz, Zhao, & Kay, 2009). Over the years, the proliferation of research regarding employee retention and turnover in the hospitality industry, combined with the willingness of companies to make the recommended changes in business practices, suggest that those companies who are financially successful can attribute much of their success to their employee retention and development activities (Honking & Tracey, 2000).

Clearly, the lack of priority in training and developing hourly employees, particularly those employees with more than one year in their current position, is troubling for the industry. The previously mentioned CHART study concluding, “a severe lack of development for employees after the first 90 days” (CHART, 2009), is yet another in a long line of justifications, for dedicating resources to training and development.

Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to develop an entry-level managerial training program for line-level hospitality employees. An analysis of the current literature regarding training and motivation has been used as the foundation for the proposed training program. Two central issues are addressed to ensure the success of the participants in the managerial training program: a) The identification and resolution of perceived obstacles employees face when contemplating advancement, and b) the practice of developing internal employees to increase retention, and

thereby reduce the high costs associated with middle management turnover.

Rationale

Mostly through trial and error, this succession planning was built around experience and intuition, rather than the well-researched strategies for career advancement. With the benefit of hindsight, along with the body of research sighted in the literature review, this entry-level managerial training program for hourly employees is based on past experience combined with current research.

The revolving door of middle management.

For hourly employees, a constant source of frustration is middle management turnover. Even if managers are employed as long as two years, which is the average length of employment for hospitality workers (US Department of Labor Statistics, 2008), there are still many hourly employees with longer tenure who must deal with the constant changes in management temperament and policy. This scenario is especially true for unionized hospitality organizations, where the average length of an hourly employee can be as high as 10 years, as unionization has been shown to reduce turnover and increase tenure among workers (Abraham, Friedman, & Thomas, 2008).

A revolving door of middle management is also problematic for those persons in senior managerial positions. Constant changes in food and beverage middle management, for example, can result in inconsistent food and beverage costs and budget allocations. Middle management turnover creates tension and uncertainty among hourly employees. Furthermore, middle management turnover incurs costs at the recruitment and training level, as cited above by Moncarz et al. (2009).

Training new managers.

As an observation, it has always seemed inappropriate for new managers to be trained by hourly employees. This is both awkward for the new manager and the employee, as each person experiences role confusion that may result in tension in the future, as the employee will feel superior with the knowledge he is supplying to the new manager. In addition, the manager's new understanding of the operation will be limited to the views of the employee who is training that manager. While this type of training is not the norm, a certain amount of learning that a new manager will experience is derived this way. For example, a new Director of Housekeeping will need to be shown certain procedures on his first day and may not have the benefit of learning the operation from the previous Director of Housekeeping. In addition, the hotel General Manager (GM) typically does not train the new Director of Housekeeping and because there is no one else above the new Director of Housekeeping, he will rely on the housekeepers for a certain amount of instruction and departmental procedure. This scenario could potentially play out in all of the departments of a full-service hotel: Food and Beverage, the Front Desk, Sales and Marketing, the Rooms Division, Engineering, etc.

Promoting hourly employees into managerial positions.

As a strategy for both retaining highly qualified employees and ending middle management turnover, an entry-level training program for hourly employees in the hospitality industry has been previously been developed. While most of the candidates were from the Food and Beverage side of operations, this training program could be adopted, with minor changes, throughout a typical full-service hotel and be applied to the various departments.

Each of the candidates who were selected to participate in this training program faced different obstacles towards becoming a manager. For this reason, the training program was customized to each participant's strengths and weaknesses. Because a hotel has many

departments with different requirements, this training program would need to be issued in three segments: a) a customized segment addressing individual needs and competencies, b) a more generalized segment addressing departmental needs, and c) a universal segment addressing the hotel's and/or the organizational requirements.

Assumptions

This training program works under the assumption that the organization embraces a culture of learning. Typical elements of a culture of learning within a hospitality organization might include regularly scheduled career development programs either in-class or online, regular recognition of well-performing employees and public celebrations of those awarded, tuition reimbursement programs, interdepartmental task forces for operational improvement, and training and development programs offered during the employee's working hours.

Other indications of a learning culture within a hospitality organization would be how well the direct supervisors and peers of an employee support that employee's learning efforts. A supervisor or manager who supports the trainee through scheduling, constructive feedback, and positivity, demonstrates to the subordinates that the manager fully supports not only the employee, but also the culture of learning within the organization.

Layout of the Entry-Level Managerial Program

As any manager can attest, certain employees emerge as natural leaders over a span of time. Whether these employees have superior leadership qualities or stand out for their command of departmental knowledge, these star employees are not necessarily noticed right away. Instead, they emerge as dependable allies within an organization or department slowly, over time. As their abilities become more visible within their department, or throughout other departments, these employees set the tone for their coworkers regarding morale, service

standards, professionalism, attendance, and a variety of other operational issues hourly hospitality employees face on a regular basis.

A good senior manager can quickly ascertain among the employees who has the potential to be a leader and candidate for succession planning into management. Once this has been determined, it is only a matter of time and readiness to mentor and cultivate this employee into a potential managerial position.

Customized Individual Training

Testing for trainability.

Once these potential candidates into management are determined, the hourly employee will undergo a series of observations before officially offering him a succession plan. In the early stages, a manager will need to go over the employee's personnel file to do a background check and ensure that the employee is in good organizational standing. In addition, the manager will also need to check for any patterns of absence. If the organization conducts performance appraisals, the manager should comb through these documents to look for any indication that the employee has made a preference for participating in career advancement training.

After the employee has been deemed a viable candidate, the manager should keep a closer eye on the employee's temperament in a variety of situations over the course of three to six months. This period of observation could be eliminated if the manager has a long-standing working relationship with the employee and has already made this assessment over the course of the same three to six month time period. If the hourly employee meets all of the initial observational prerequisites, then a formal offering for managerial training can be made via a performance appraisal.

Once the employee accepts the offer for career advancement training, a variety of trainability and aptitude tests should be conducted. Several are available on the market for the hospitality industry and can be administered over the phone or online (Chrysalis Corporation, 2008). One common test is the personality testing that Ritz-Carlton conducts before granting interviews to managerial candidates. There are several other high-end hospitality companies who conduct this psychological training to determine if the candidate fits into the service culture of an organization. Depending on the type of hospitality business, an appropriate skill measurement or cognitive ability test would be administered to the hourly employee.

Determining training priorities.

Based on the results of the trainability testing and competencies, a list would need to be generated which would outline the critical skills necessary for the employee to master before advancing through the training. These might include computer skills, such as word processing, spreadsheets, email, etc., English as a second language tutoring, anger management, cash handling, and basic accounting procedures.

Depending on the employee's level of mastery of the skills outlined above, some of these skills could be developed simultaneously with the departmental training. Much of the timing on the various aptitudes would also depend greatly on the employee's level of interaction with the guests of the establishment. For example, at the front desk, upon check-in, a manager trainee would need to have excellent mastery over anger management before dealing with an irate guest. Conversely, a manager trainee in the back of the house in food and beverage could be working concurrently on his command of the English language while training for inventories, ordering, and purchasing.

Personalized Departmental Training

Using the job description as a guide.

Together with the skills measurement and aptitude testing results, the departmental managerial or supervisory job descriptions should be used as a guide to outline the employee's training agenda. The manager would first assess the employee's preliminary observed strengths and weaknesses and then compare them to the trainability test results. The next step would be to analyze the employee's strengths, weaknesses, and abilities against the departmental managerial job description. From here, a course of action would be designed that would define the employee's developmental activities for the duration of the training period. If there were any adjustments needed to be made to the job description, this would be a good time, before presenting the plan of action to the employee.

At an agreed time, the manager and hourly employee would go over, in great detail, the employee's test results, strengths, weaknesses, and training plan. Together, the manager and employee would agree upon a timeline of events and specific goals that the employee would need to reach. In addition, the manager would specify the activities that the employee would conduct on his own, along with the activities conducted during the employee's shift that would be arranged by the manager.

Building on small successes.

A sure way to motivate the employee early on in the process would be for that employee to experience small successes rather quickly. Tasks based on improving the employee's self-efficacy are especially good for improving his motivation to learn. A partial list of examples of these tasks in a full service hotel might include learning how to conduct inventory measurements in F&B and housekeeping, learning how to manage ordering and purchasing schedules in F&B and housekeeping, learning how to write Banquet Event Orders in the sales department,

assessing the cleanliness and readiness of a room for inventory in housekeeping, handling guest complaints at the front desk, and learning the cash handling procedures in accounting.

For the first three to six months, the most intensive training would be delivered, as the manager would have to monitor and shadow the employee to ensure that all of the procedures are being followed. In addition, the employee will need this support and encouragement in learning the newly assigned tasks. The support of the manager also demonstrates a culture of learning to the remaining staff, and paves the way for future employees to step up into management. As fellow employees closely watch this process, the actions of the manager are critical at this point and must be presented in a positive and professional manner, ensuring the future success of the training program.

Regular and consistent assessments.

For each block of the employee's training, a minimum of at least a weekly assessment needs to be made. Oftentimes, new managers are left on their own, without support or follow-up to guide them along through their training process. These new managers become easily frustrated, and most often leave the organization. To ensure the manager trainee's success, it is critical to make contact with the employee on a regular basis, preferably daily, to answer questions or provide feedback. These assessments do not necessarily have to be formal and written, but should be recorded in the employee's training plan. Regular communication with the manager trainee also keeps them on the right path and breaks any bad habits before they might begin.

Once the trainee has mastered a new task, or has completed an assignment, new goals can be set along with a new timeline. The flexibility of the training program works as an advantage here in that as each new trainee comes to the job with different strengths, each trainee can work

on his own weaknesses until he has mastered the new tasks. This aspect of the program also gives the trainee a sense of autonomy along with a sense that his individual needs are being both considered and met.

Hotel and/or Organizational Training

Aside from the training that new employees receive as part of their new hire orientation, not much follow up occurs to update the employee on a regular basis regarding changes within the company or organization. Occasionally, the company may have a hotel-wide meeting about benefits or expansion, but these are relatively few, and most often, not all employees show up.

Job rotation or cross training.

As part of the manager trainee's program, it is mandatory that the trainee understands how each department of the organization works together. Interdepartmental job rotation, or cross training, is an excellent way for the trainee to understand better the demands of each department and subsequently, how the trainee can work better together with other managers to ensure a superior guest experience. Ideally, if there are many trainees throughout the hotel from different departments, the senior managers could organize the timing of the job rotation schedule. Full mastery over each department is not the goal, but rather a general understanding of the challenges faced within each department is sufficient data for the employee to bring back to his own department. Job rotation in a hotel is also the precursor to gaining shifts as the Manager On Duty (MOD), which usually is rotated between departments on the GM's days off or when the GM is away on business. Seeing as a hotel is open 24 hours, their needs to be an MOD on all shifts of a full service hotel, or at least on call for emergencies. The more managers the GM has to choose from for these MOD shifts, the more flexibility in scheduling the managers have for days requested off, peak and slow seasons, vacations, etc.

Another benefit of job rotation for manager trainees is the perception that something special is going on for the trainee. When an employee from a different department is being trained by a manager, the “home” employees take notice and there becomes an understanding that because the manager trainee is receiving this special attention and training, he must be exemplary, and therefore, looked to as a leader. This training is of much help when the manager trainee eventually becomes the MOD, as the employees will have already seen the manager trainee as a person of expertise.

Integrated and Generalized Training

If there were more than one manager trainee, it would be advantageous for the GM to organize integrated training sessions with the help of the senior managers, so that general training sessions could be conducted for all of the trainees. General hotel training sessions might include advanced computer systems training, MOD training, emergency procedures training, cash handling and access to the hotel safe, budget adherence and P&L statements, state and local regulatory compliance, ordering, purchasing and inventories for the various departments, HR management and paperwork, new hire policies and paperwork, leadership training, and overall hotel scheduling. If the hotel were under a unionized contract, these manager trainees would also benefit greatly in understanding their union’s policies and grievance procedures.

Regularly Scheduled Communication Among the Trainers, GM, and/or the HR Department

At the very least, the senior managers need to meet with the GM on a regular basis to discuss the progress of the manager trainees. Typical hotels hold weekly staff meetings, and a good time for a manager trainee update would be at the end of these weekly meeting with either all department heads present, or only those who have participating employees. If more than one department is conducting manager training, then all department heads, or senior managers need

to meet regularly with the GM, or with the HR department. Because many hotels do not have an HR department, these duties usually fall upon the GM and the department heads.

Regardless of the hierarchy and HR set-up, the GM should require standardized reports that all departments use for the managerial training program. In addition, the program should be set up in three segments as previously outlined: a) a customized segment addressing individual needs and competencies, b) a more generalized segment addressing departmental needs, and c) a universal segment addressing the hotel's and/or the organizational requirements. Consistent and standardized, this program can be rolled out across all hotel departments and be monitored on a regular basis.

The standardized program benefits the senior management, and therefore, the organization, in many ways. For example, if one departmental manager goes on vacation, the manager trainee still receives consistent training, as the remaining senior managers, GM, HR department all know the status of the employee's training. In addition, the GM or HR department can monitor the individual programs and ensure compliance with company or union policies.

This standardized program would be the basis for justification of pay increases, or introduction into a salary with benefits, versus hourly pay. And finally, a well-organized and standardized program will be observed by the remaining employees, which might motivate more employees to participate, or, at the very least, strive to be recognized for participation in future training programs.

Completion of the Training

There are several approaches to take for promoting the trainee into management and, with any of these, all options would have to be explained in the initial phases of the program. If the

manager trainee was deemed strong enough to handle the managerial position on his own, and an opening became available, the trainee could be promoted directly into that position. If the trainee was still not strong enough to handle the position after the allotted training period, the training could either be extended, or the trainee could advance into a supervisory role, still monitored by the sitting manager (see Table 1). Then, once the employee is strong enough and the position becomes available, he could be promoted into the official managerial position. Regarding pay, in this instance, depending on the responsibilities involved, the employee could receive a pay increase, although not to equal the manager's salary, but still within budget.

Special case of the unionized employee.

Unionized employees face special challenges when facing managerial promotion. The most often cited reason for not participating in managerial training is that the employee fears a loss of job security as a manager. This is especially true for employees who have many years in the same position, as they have, no doubt, experienced the revolving door of middle management, and probably have seen a few managers fired in the process. Over time, these unionized employees see the middle management position as unstable and not secure, compared to their "guaranteed" positions. Often, the pay raise is not enticing enough for the employee to make the leap into a less secure, salaried position.

For these cases, supervisory positions can be created within the union structure, as a platform into management. By promoting these unionized manager trainees into a supervisory position for the period of one year (see Table 1), these employees begin to gain a sense of security and after this amount of time, are more mentally and emotionally able to make the leap into a salaried position.

Special case of the tipped employee.

Perhaps the biggest obstacle with potential manager trainees is their reluctance to leave a tipped position while training for management. Often, these employees do not want to give up the tipped income while training for management. A “weaning” system can be set up for these tipped employees, similar to the unionized employees. Again, all of these special circumstances and expectations have to be spelled out when the training program is presented to the potential candidate in the early stages of the training.

As with the unionized employees, the managerial training program becomes elongated, or extended for the tipped employee (see Table 1). A tipped hotel employee (a bell person, a server, or a bartender) in the managerial training program could take up to twice as long because the employee would still work his shifts to gain his tipped income. The training of these employees could be set up on the two or three slower days of the employee’s weekly schedule, while permitting the trainee to work two or three of the busier days, in which he would receive the majority of his tipped income. Also, during slower periods of business, the manager trainee, who would usually have seniority, could wait tables or bartend for tips and train for management at the same time. Following the above strategy requires more of a time commitment from the senior manager, as the senior manager must assume some of the managerial duties in case the trainee becomes too busy in the server role. It is a delicate balance, but if the manager trainee experiences the support of the senior manager, the trainee almost always shows increased motivation to finish the training.

In the case of the tipped employee, increased initial observation from the senior manager is required. There are a few special traits that must be exhibited by any potential candidate prior to the managerial training, particularly with tipped employees these traits include a favorable attitude toward authorities, a desire to compete, pleasure in taking charge and making decisions,

a desire to exercise power, a desire for a distinctive position, and a favorable outlook on responsibility and administrative chores (Miner, 1975).

Table 1

Timeline of Managerial Training Events for Hourly Hospitality Employees

| Months | Activity Completed |
|--------|--|
| 3 | Observations by senior manager |
| 6 | Trainability testing |
| 9 | Customized individual testing |
| 12 | Departmental training |
| 15 | Organizational training |
| 18 | Promote employee into management |
| 21 | Extend training or offer supervisory position (union/tipped employee) |
| 24 | Continue supervisory training or offer managerial position (union/tipped employee) |
| 36 | Continue supervisory training or offer managerial position (union/tipped employee) |

Recognition

Recognition of a promoted internal employee is cause for a celebration, but even more so for those promoted into management. Organizations speak often of the importance of “promoting from within,” but those employees at the line level rarely see this in action. Central to the ongoing success of the managerial training program is the recognition of those line level employees who have successfully completed all aspects of the program and have been promoted to a managerial position. This increases morale and works to market internally, not only the success of the employee, but also the success of the program in all departments of the hotel.

Feedback Loop

The cornerstone of all good training programs is the implementation of a feedback loop so that the trainers and the program can be evaluated anonymously. This ensures improvement of the program, as well as constructive criticism to the trainers, which will constantly update and improve the program. All participating department heads, managers, GMs, and HR specialists

can evaluate the program for its successes and failures, as the feedback serves as a metric and justifies the value of the program during budgetary analysis.

The Trainee Becomes the Trainer

Successful manager trainees who have been promoted into management will be the biggest proponents of the program and internal marketers for all hourly employees. Having experienced the challenges firsthand, these former trainees are at an advantage in training new candidates to the program. These former trainees can also serve as a bridge to the senior management, as they have a special perspective on the program. They can become important allies for both the maintenance and the overall improvement of the program.

Recommendations

Before a full launch of this program, it is recommended that a test-pilot program in one or two hotel departments be conducted to work out the details. Every operation is different and set up uniquely. This training program can serve as a skeleton for any operation, but must be customized at every level, particularly for unionized or tipped employees.

In addition, before considering a launch of this program, the hotel, or at least one department, should conduct a financial analysis of the costs associated with middle management turnover. If the hotel has a history of middle management stability, this program may not need to be implemented to its fullest extent. While a training program of this type is still beneficial to the operation, with low managerial turnover, an organization can be much more selective in choosing the potential candidates.

Regarding the timeline of training events, if the manager trainee has completed twenty-four to thirty-six months of training and is still in a supervisory position, senior management needs to determine if the manager trainee is ever capable of advancing into a full managerial

position. If senior management has determined that the employee is not ever capable, then the employee can either stay in a supervisory position or return to his original line-level position. All of these options must be discussed early in the training program and left at the final discretion of senior management. As management is not an exact science, it would be best for senior management to make the call on either keeping or eliminating the supervisory position at the conclusion of the employee's training.

Conclusion

The first impression of building a hotel-wide entry-level managerial training program seems overwhelming. However, compared to the task of building a culture of learning that must exist in order to launch the training program, the actual development of the managerial training program is a small task. The larger, more involved task, is the overhaul of an organization to embrace a culture of learning. This foundation, for the success of any other program, must exist at the organizational level and flow down through the various properties and/or departments. The philosophy and practices of the very top management will dictate the entire organization's beliefs and acceptance of a culture of learning, which in turn, will dictate the success or failure of any program in place to create managers and engaged employees.

The original purpose of this paper was to build an entry-level managerial program for hourly hospitality employees. However, as the literature review unfolded, it became obvious that unless an entire organization embraces a culture of learning, this managerial program would become sabotaged in the very early stages. Perhaps, the more critical program that first needs to be developed in any hospitality operation, is one that teaches all of its employees the importance of life-long career learning.

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