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## Creating A Hospitality Leadership Development Training Program For a Country Club

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Creating A Hospitality Leadership Development Training Program  
For a Country Club

By

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>PART ONE</b>	3
Introduction	3
Purpose	3
Statement of Objective	3
Justification	4
Constraints	5
<b>PART TWO</b>	6
Characteristics of Employment in the Club Industry	6
Labor Intensive	6
High Levels of Labor Turnover	7
Quasi-skilled Nature of the Jobs	8
Low Status of Employment	9
Transferability of the Skills	10
Importance of Training	10
Value of Training	11
Quantifying Training	12
Barriers to Training	13
Importance of Effective Leadership	14
Role of Leadership in the Hospitality Industry	16
Leadership Approaches and Theories	17
Existing Leadership Training Program in the Hospitality Industry	19
Raffles International	19
Conclusion	22
<b>PART THREE</b>	24
Introduction	24
Methodology	24
Employee Survey obtained from Club	24

Personal Communications	25
Journal Articles and Books	25
Internet	26
Hospitality Leadership Training Program Blueprint	26
Training Program Structure	26
Human Resource Management Polices/Practices	28
Skills and Training	29
Promotional Aspect	30
Employee Commitment	30
Job Design and Empowerment	31
Conclusion	31
Recommendations	32
Leadership Development Training Manual	32
Recommendations for Country Club General Managers	33
References	33

## **Introduction**

Generally the hospitality industry is not known as a leader in providing employee training. Seasonal business demands, high employee turnover and many other factors play a role in their ability to provide employee training. According to Jafari and Fayos-Sola (1996), the tourism industry's success will continue to depend on training the workforce. The hospitality leadership development training program is part of employees' training and is a critical ingredient to creating a quality experience for employees and guests. Employees are a central part of service delivery and well trained employees are able to deliver high quality as they are more satisfied at work. The increased emphasis on training and development of such programs has been fueled by labor issues which are the most obvious problems facing the industry in recent times. Effective leadership enables the organization to be more successful, ability to adjust to the evolving economic pressures and to increase employee satisfaction.

## **Purpose**

The purpose of this paper is to design a hospitality leadership development training program for a medium sized country club.

## **Statement of Objective**

This paper will present a set of guidelines for creating and implementing an effective hospitality leadership development program for the country club and subsequently implemented for other hospitality and tourism organizations. The leadership development training program aims to attract the employees to retain in this trade. Therefore there is clearly a need for the hospitality and tourism industries to understand what constitutes effective leadership and how it can be achieved. Different definitions of leadership and important theoretical models will be discussed.

The body of empirical research studies of employee motivation in the country club hospitality settings will be discussed. This hospitality leadership program will be created by identifying the needs of the country club and employees by obtaining feedback to insure that this program is of value. With the research and a hospitality leadership development training program presented, a hospitality organization like a country club will be able to implement the necessary steps to reassess their existing training programs and human resource programs.

### **Justification**

Even though training practices were well documented, relatively little is known about training in the hospitality and tourism organizations specifically. Herman and Eller (1991) contended that the field has been slow to see the value of training and has not considered training as a priority because the industry eliminated it when times are difficult. Any comprehensive training was completed usually on the job and without guidance. According to Janes (2000), employers also note that staff recruitment and a desire for guest job satisfaction are reasons why training has grown in importance in the lodging industry. Future of tourism and hospitality professionals need to be skilled in a variety of areas and training is growing in importance as more organizations find it a greater priority today than in the past. As labor force issues threaten the success of hospitality organizations, the implementation of a hospitality leadership development training program to develop human capital within the organization is critical. There are benefits for both the organization and the employee. Organizations benefit from the reduced turnover, increased productivity and improved dedication. The employees will develop skills, self-esteem and job satisfaction.

## **Constraints**

This study takes a theoretical approach into understanding the factors that have given hospitality and tourism organizations such as hotels, resorts and country clubs the benefits of having a hospitality leadership development training program for their employees. The research will be conducted using personal communications from the selected hospitality and tourism organizations, employees, academia and secondary sources.

## **PART TWO**

### **Characteristics of Employment in the Club Industry**

Clubs make up a unique segment of the hospitality industry. A private club is a place where people with a common bond of some type like similar interests, experiences, backgrounds and professions to congregate for social and recreational purposes. It is not open to the public and the member pays entrance and membership fees to be part of the club once his/her nomination has been accepted. The clubs are usually member owned or owned by a proprietor. The goal of most private clubs is to deliver the best service that is not found in any public facility with its best furnishings (Perdue, 2007). The Singapore government is also currently working through the Singapore Tourism Board, Spring Singapore supported by the Workforce Development Agency (WDA) with the local institutes of higher learning to develop more tourism and hospitality related programs (Asiatraveltips.com, 2006). Therefore it is important to look at the insights of the club and hospitality industry in order to develop an effective hospitality leadership training program in view of the uniqueness of this industry in comparison to other industries.

#### **Labor Intensive**

The hospitality industry is in need of high manpower and labor in comparison to other industries. There is a certain amount of capital invested in the industry to generate more jobs. According to Bull (1995), it is largely due to the nature of the guest services and the late adoption of technology as well as the newer management process. In some cases, the capital required per job created in the industry is actually higher and not lower. Due to the apparent labor intensive characteristics and the personal services involvement in service delivery, the hospitality industry is known as a 'people industry' that requires 'people skills' from the staff.

Kuslivan (1994) commented that the amount of labor needed is also very dependent on the country's development in the area of infrastructure and tourism. As for Singapore, the need for skilled professionals is due to the building of the integrated resorts and the deregulation of the number of lodging establishments by the Singapore government.

### **High Levels of Labor Turnover**

The high levels of employee turnover in the hospitality industry have been well documented (Hoque, 2000; Jerries, 1999; Woods, 1992, 1997). They cited that estimates of turnover ranging from 70% to 100% and with some establishments as high as 300%. Lucas (1995) noted that the labor turnover tends to be the highest amongst the operational level as well as the lowest grades of staff. The labor turnover rate in Asia is around 30%. According to Khatri, Budhwar, and Chong (1999), the attrition rate in the hospitality industry in Singapore between 1995 to 1997 ranges from 54% to 67.2%. However Singapore's nationwide average labor turnover from 1999 to 2010 was approximately 2.1% as furnished by the Ministry of Manpower (2011). It is evident that attrition rate is definitely much higher in the hospitality industry but similar to other developed countries. Research from the International Labor Organization (2001) indicated that the turnover rate for the operational employees stands at 51.7% in the US. The same study indicated an annual turnover rate of 30% in Asia and 42% in the UK. It also seems that a turnover culture is accepted by both the employees and employers in the tourism and hospitality industry (Iverson & Derry, 1997). This is further supported by Wood (1999) findings where the average tenure in the hospitality industry in United States (US) was 1.5 per year in 1997. As for the United Kingdom (UK), Rowley and Purcell (2001) disputed that a tenure of 18 months to two years has been recognized as normal labor turnover even by the best employers. This implies that the turnover in the hospitality industry is consistent.

The management in the hospitality industry in particular the club managers in this context need to be alerted that the high turnover can possibly lead to other negative impacts on the staff working for the organization. This would lead to the remaining staff leaving the organization if the attrition situation is not being handled well. Some of the negative consequences are increased workload and working hours due to staff shortage, new policies and programs induction deadline delays, higher replacement cost, poor services, wastage of investment in training, low productivity, un-loyal staff and decreased productivity (Iverson & Deery, 1997; Rowley & Purcell, 2011).

Most sources agree that high levels of labor turnover are undesirable. There are several negative impacts such as poor productivity, reduced standards, high replacement costs and training costs (Hoque, 2000; Iverson & Deery, 1997). The direct costs of labor turnover can be quantified where replacement costs are estimated at 33% of salary (Tanke, 2001). Barrows (1990) claims that turnover is a central problem for management. Not only it is expensive but there are many underlying problems that precede the turnover such as absenteeism, tardiness and diminished motivation which are extremely costly.

Employee turnover has serious repercussions for organizations trying to provide quality products and services to its customers. For the hospitality companies that do not train, the turnover will worsen. Therefore clubs must retain their employees to fulfill a good private club's goal to consistently provide good guest services. Appropriate training can definitely assist with reducing absenteeism.

### **Quasi-skilled Nature of the Jobs**

The job nature of hospitality-related jobs is either quasi-skilled or unskilled. Riley (1996) noted that up to 64% within this hospitality field do not require a formal education which implies

that there is little certification needed in the industry. According to the International Labour Organisation (2001), the operational skills can be easily achieved on the job without a certificate. As such, the nature of the work can be picked up quite quickly by the staff that joined the hospitality establishments. Hjalager and Anderson (2001) highlighted that the workers in the hospitality field who do have formal education do not have formal professional training. Woods (1997) noted that given the lack of professional skills, the correlation between the hospitality industry impacted the perception of hospitality jobs of being stereotyped as low status, low paying and have poorer working environments.

### **Low Status of Employment**

The low status of jobs in the hospitality industry is transferred to its workers, culminating in the perception that the employee is often “uneducated, unmotivated, unskilled and unproductive” (Pizam, 1982, p.5). According to Guerrier (1999), there are several factors that maintain the low status of jobs in the industry such as many jobs are seasonal, part-time, low-skilled and lowly paid as well as the unsocial working hours. Also partly the work that has been historically associated with servility is often regarded as dirty, worthless, and women’s work involving cooking, serving, cleaning and clearing up.

In Asia, especially in Singapore and Japan, the hospitality job is often regarded low in status in view of its service nature. Lee and Kang (1998) explained that the hospitality jobs are considered low in social status in the oriental countries where Confucianism resides strongly which is a barrier to the recruitment of highly educated people in the industry. The phenomena is accrued to the teaching of Confucianism that claimed the ‘good sons do not become soldiers, waiters and coolies’ especially in the oriental countries. In the eastern European countries like Poland and Spain, the hospitality jobs do not enjoy high status too even though the job might be

professional or deliberated as a life-time career. However, the management staff such as the hotel and restaurant managers command more respect.

### **Transferability of the Skills**

Guerrier (1999) and Riley (1999) noted the skills of the hospitality employees are considered to be transferable where they could put to good use across the various within the hospitality industry and other occupations such as banking and retailing etc. Baum (1995) pointed out this may clarify some of the intra-industry turnover rate, mobility and poor employment conditions in view of the large pool of available workers that can be recruited.

### **Importance of Training**

Providing employee training seems to be more difficult in the hospitality industry. There are several issues that impact labor practices within the hospitality industry that do not affect or impact other industries. Seasonal fluctuations in the hospitality industry and high employee turnover makes training more difficult to deliver yet even more critical to provide. Therefore it is important to explore the issues of training in the hospitality industry and the challenges posed for the hospitality organizations in order to create effective hospitality leadership development training programs.

Bassi and VanBuren (1998) found that of the nine business American organizations categories that studied the customer service category, the tourism businesses spent the least amount on training. VanBuren and King (2000) studied training practices of more than 900 organizations in Europe, Canada, Australia, the United States (U.S.), Japan and Asia. The European organizations spent the highest percentage on employee training in comparison to employee payroll in other countries. The U.S. respondents averaged the most amount spent on training per employee. Asia spent the least amount on employee training in comparison to the

percent of their total annual payroll. Herman and Eller (1991) highlighted that the hospitality field has been slow to see the value of training and not considered training as a priority because the industry eliminated the training when times were tough. The purpose of training is to teach employees new behaviors and skills increasing their skills and knowledge in their job and for the organization to be more successful.

According to Brymer (1984), long working hours, low pay, slow advancement and supervisory challenges are all the common characteristics that contribute to job stress in the hospitality industry. All these posed a stress problem and an important concern for the success of any hospitality organizations. Sarabakhsh, Carson, and Lindgren (1989) noted that by offering educational opportunities and career development programs can reduce stress as well as improving hospitality managers' life satisfaction. Law, Pearce, and Woods (1995) reported that some of the best management practices that were perceived as positive from the respondents to reduce job stress were an approachable management and training.

### **Value of Training**

Mellan (1998) noted the benefits of training to both the employer and employee have been supported by several studies. These studies have assessed the values received by both employers and employees in a variety of organizations (Bergman, 1995; Burke, 1995; Geale, 1995; Senat, 1992). Janes (2000) found that lodging organizations valued training and a perceived value for the employees. The more positively the hospitality establishment valued training, the more the organization would offer to the employees. This implies that organizations who provide more training place greater value on training than other organizations who provide less training. The increase in the value of training promotes and encourages a variety of benefits and the training value must be evident to both the employers and employees.

Employers who provide training indicate improved recruitment, increased productivity, reduced turnover and a more dedicated workforce from the values received from the employee training. This is further supported by Conrade, Woods, and Ninemeier (1994) research findings that 93% of lodging employee respondents stated that training would encourage the employees to stay at a property. Cline (1997) indicated in his study of 500 international hospitality executive respondents that the respondents' exposure of training could improve employee satisfaction. In addition, employees who are provided training indicated that they develop self-esteem, greater job satisfaction and improved wage structures (Goodenough & Page, 1993; Janes, 2000).

Businesses with strong communication systems and training enjoy lower staff turnover. Training reduces turnover by providing the employee with increased job satisfaction, involvement in corporate culture, involvement in decision making, information, organizational stability and a predictable working environment (Perdue, 2007). There are also many intangible benefits that are valuable to the club where training has been proven repeatedly to positively influence the attitudes and behaviors of the staff. Some of the intangible benefits are reduced tardiness, increased potential value of the employee, increased payback to the profession and increased employee achievement etc (Perdue, 2007). There are also costs of not training which are intangible costs to the club such as loss of quality of staff, potential for poor service, member complaints, loss of uniformity of service, potential loss of reputation, high levels of inefficiency, potential accidents, potential lost sales, low perception of managerial effectiveness and loss of managerial effectiveness (Perdue, 2007).

### **Quantifying Training**

Not all hospitality organizations provide training to employees and for those that do provide training vary at different degrees. Overall studies showed that an average of 40% and

83% of employees received training in organizations that provided training. The amount of training identified varied to a large extent as some employees indicated that they were of no use. Generally formal training in larger organizations with an employee size of more than 50 tends to be more quantified as it is much easier to access the information. Even though formal training is averaged around from one to several days, the average amount of employee training is estimated from 21 to 90 hours (Bishop, 1991; Colarelli & Montei, 1996). As the hospitality organization is comprised of various sized organizations, the training hours range may vary. Moreover the unique complexities of the industry make it difficult to identify the ideal number of training hours for the employees.

### **Barriers to Training**

According to Carder (1993) and Janes (2000), some organizations found that organizational change, competition, organization culture, product expansion or problem, technological changes and guest demands to improve quality fuels the need for training. Janes (2000) found that the top five reasons why hospitality or lodging organizations failed to provide employee training were namely a lack of time, high employee turnover, high business demands, cost and lastly a lack of resources. As such, the barriers must be examined before providing training. Janes (2000) also noted that 63% of the general managers/lodging property owners that they would provide more training if the barriers were reduced. Therefore hospitality organizations will not experience the value of training unless the barriers are reduced. An organizational commitment to training starting from the top management must exist in order for training to work effectively. Borchgrevink, Brymer, Kacmar, and Susskind (2000) surveyed 386 employees in hospitality and non-hospitality settings. They found that the employees perceived organizational support as a critical factor that would affect the employee commitment and

satisfaction. They are interrelated which in turn affect the turnover intentions by the employees. Simons and Walsh (2001) examined the impact of satisfaction and commitment in a sample of 7,409 employees at 84 hotels. They found out that both predicted turnover intentions and the actual employee turnover rates. But the commitment was more predictive of discretionary service behavior and guest satisfaction levels. Therefore there is a considerably evidence on the link between employee commitment and turnover in the hospitality industry.

Employees tend to place greater value on training activities organized by the organizations where the management is more supportive of training efforts. If the management is not committed to the training efforts, the effectiveness of the training would be reduced as there is a direct relationship on the commitment by the management and employees. Employees are impacted by this lack of commitment and their pre training motivation is influenced by the management attitude (Anderson, Fredrickson, & Dybiec, 1995; Facticeau, Dobbins, Russell, Ladd, & Kudisch, 1995; Forrester, 1995; Ford & Noe, 1987; Guthrie & Schwoerer, 1994)

Hospitality organizations must have an understanding of the training design and delivery. Since costs and resource knowledge are barriers identified to providing training, hospitality organizations must explore ways to make training a possibility.

### **Importance of Effective Leadership**

Research suggests that leadership enables organization to be more effective and successful to be able to adjust to changing economic pressures and to increase employee satisfaction. There is a need for the hospitality and tourism industries to understand what constitutes effective leadership and how it can be achieved. According to Bennis and Naus (1985), managers are people who do things right and leaders are people who do the right thing. There are many definitions and important theoretical models. Although many authors find it

difficult to agree on what leadership is, there is general agreement that effective leadership is the most critical factor for propelling organizations to forward in a complex and competitive industry. What is more important is how the accumulated knowledge about leadership can be deployed to make industry leaders to be more effective and to lead winning teams.

Leadership is also defined by the following terms:

1. Leadership is the behavior of an individual...directing the activities of a group toward a shared goal. (Hemphill & Coons, 1957, pg. 7).
2. Leadership is articulating visions, embodying values, and creating the environment within which things can be accomplished (Richards & Engle, 1986, pg. 258).
3. Leadership is the ability of an individual to influence, motivate, and enable others to contribute toward the effectiveness and success of the organization. (House et al., 1999, pg. 184).

However, most definitions share similar outcomes that they involve an influence process where a collective task performance is facilitated. There are also many ways that effective leadership can assist in operations in an internal level to maximize the integration of departments and the sharing of information. As for the external level, it would be to capitalize on the organization's strength to operate globally.

Leadership is more about taking responsibility than having leadership qualifications. The substance of a leader is measured by how much they develop leadership qualities within their followers. To build a big team, a good leader sacrifices their own opportunities for the sake of the people that he or she is developing. Leadership is instrumental in a team's development and contributes to the organization's success. Teams can be a powerful force for performance and

organizational direction. Mullins (1998) commented that much of hospitality work is team-based.

### **Role of Leadership in the Hospitality Industry**

Research findings have supported the view that effective leadership is important in the hospitality industry (Boey, Logarta, Saunders, & Shaw, 1997; Pitteaway, Carmouche, Chell, Qu, & Tse, 1996; Tracey & Hinkin, 1994; Worsfold, 1989). The difficulties of recruiting and retaining hospitality and tourism staff have amplified the need for effective leadership (Boey et al., 1997; Qu & Yee, 1996). Pittaway et al. (1998) contended that strong leadership is needed to increase effectiveness and profitability due to the labor intensive nature of the hospitality industry as well as the speed of the change that occurred. This is further supported by Tracey and Hinkin (1994) who advocated that cost cutting measures are unable to guarantee the increase in efficiency of hospitality organizations. These measures are also unable to improve on the quality of customer service and job performance. Therefore the organization's success is definitely dependable on the effectiveness of the industry leaders.

Even though the high turnover is inevitable in the hospitality industry due to several factors beyond the managers such as long hours and low pay etc. Research findings by Qu and Yee (1996) suggested that poor leadership also plays a major part in staff turnover. The results gathered from their survey from the staff in 18 Hong Kong hotels, indicated that one of the main reasons that employees leave their job was because of the leadership. The results are consistent with other research findings that effective leadership is core in maintaining the employees' job satisfaction and the productivity of hospitality organizations.

In the club context, there is a discerning move for the general committees to recognize the need for more managers to take the wheel and to move away from micro management and

being micro managed. This is being practiced by the Club Managers Association America (CMAA) management to leadership (The quarterly newsletter of the Club Managers' Association of Singapore). Even though this leadership management style might be in its infancy in Asia but this leadership trend will start to transform modern club management and club governance. It is very important in Asia like Singapore that the general managers must be seen to have the ability to lead the change process through strategic leadership and facilitation at the committee level. They must also be seen to lead through excellent communication and leadership skills at the employee level. This is critical in view of the many long serving staff at the private clubs who might not accept the change.

### **Leadership Approaches and Theories**

There are many leadership theoretical models such as the Blake and Mouton (1969) leadership model classified as the behavioral approach. Blake and Mouton (1969) developed the model of leadership called the managerial grid which consists of two dimensions, a concern for production and a concern for people. The horizontal axis of the grid represents concern for production and the vertical axis represents concern for people. Each axis consists of a nine-point continuum from one (low) and nine (high). Managers or leaders who scored low for both of the axis imply poor management and minimum effort to maintain their jobs. The middle road leaders scoring a middle score (5,5) and the grid score implies that he/she has a moderate concern for people and production. The ideal manager according to this model is one who demonstrated a high concern for people and production scoring full marks (9,9) on the managerial grid. The country club manager (1,9) emphasized a concern for people at the expense of the productivity.

Next which is the Fieldler's contingency model of leadership effectiveness where the group performance is a function of the interaction of the leader and the situation. Central to this

model is the leader's style or orientation where it is measured by the 'Least Preferred Co-worker Scale' (LPC). Leaders who have a high score indicate that the leader is relationship oriented where a low score suggests that the leaders are more task oriented. The three factors that determine the control over the employees as per Fiedler (1967, 1978) are the nature of the leaders relationship with the group members, the degree of structure in the tasks being performed and the leader's position. The best control of influence is where the leaders' relations with the members are good, the task is highly structured and the leader has strong position power.

The path-goal theory by House (1997) builds on the previous theories and incorporates the findings from the trait and behavioral theories. This leadership theory takes interest in how a leader influences the subordinates' perceptions of work goals and the link or path found between these two sets of goals. Effective leaders help the staff to achieve their goals and leaders can only be effective only when the staff perceive them as clarifying pathways to valued goals (House, Shane, & Herold, 1996). Greenberg and Baron (1997) mentioned that leaders do this by enhancing their staff's perception that increased effort will improve performance and the good performance will lead to valued rewards. House described the four different types of leadership behavior as directive, supportive, participative and achievement oriented (House & Mitchell, 1974). A leader can adopt different leadership styles depending on the staff and work environment.

The other new leadership theories are transformational and charismatic leadership. These leadership theories focus more on the emotions, values and seek to explain why the staff made certain sacrifices and commit themselves to achieve more than what was requested. Thus the charismatic and transformational leader is being seen to influence the staff more in terms of quantitatively and qualitatively that is different from the previous leadership theories (House &

Howell, 1992). The differences between charismatic and transformational leadership are often unclear. Some leadership theories focus either on charismatic leadership such as House (1997) or transformational leadership like Bass and Avolio (1994). However Hunt (1999) uses the two leadership theories interchangeably. A number of hospitality studies have highlighted the importance of concepts of transformational leadership. A study by Greger and Peterson (2000) was conducted on six top lodging operators where they were interviewed on their views on leadership. The study showed that the people in the hospitality industry seek for transformational leadership. The key component identified by the executive officers was vision where they perceived effective leaders to be future oriented and able to communicate their vision to their employees.

In summary, hotels and the country clubs are bureaucratic organizations (Hornsey & Dann, 1984) and tend to prefer a classic management style which focuses the traditional managerial functions of planning, organizing, leading and controlling. However, with the new environmental demands and changing employee needs, they see a need for effective leadership in the rapidly changing industry. According to Strauss (1999), training in leadership should be an important aspect of hospitality education and at times is seen to be more important than developing technical skills.

### **Existing Leadership Training Program in the Hospitality Industry**

#### **Raffles International**

Raffles International also known as Raffles Hotels & Resorts is an award-winning, luxury international hotel company since 1887. It started with the opening of Raffles Hotel, Singapore. The portfolio currently comprises nine luxurious properties, from secluded resorts to chic hotels in key locations around the world: in Singapore, Cambodia, China, UAE, Saudi Arabia,

Seychelles and Paris. This international hospitality company has been well known for producing good management trainees and hospitality leaders within the Singapore context through their leadership training program. One of their leadership training program such as “Raffles International Total Performance Management System (TPMS)” has been very successful since 2001 (Training Manual. Raffles International Limited, 2001) where hospitality industries could adopt. It is also a good foundation to develop any hospitality leadership training program. Individual development plans of each employee are linked to competency assessment and the development of goals and activities to strengthen individual competencies.

Employees are required to understand the foundation of organizational success which is the competencies of the organization’s leadership and its employees. The organizational success is dependable on the degree to which the corporate culture fosters and maximizes competence. Examples of competencies are skills, knowledge, behaviors, and/or attitudes etc. There are continuous improvements where the management keeps defining the competencies needed and assessing their individual employee’s competencies. The management recognizes the benefits of using competencies where the organization is able to target training and development dollars. The organization is also able to build a global culture and focus on the change efforts necessitate by rapid changing business environment. In addition, it is also a common standard for selecting and retaining the right people as well as focuses employees on critical behaviors. Lastly it reinforces the organizational capabilities and basis of manager-employee performance dialogue.

The TPMS becomes a communication vehicle between managers and employees to achieve high performance. It is also a process where employees are aligned with the organizational strategy and goals. TPMS is recognized as part of the organization’s human capital management where they select the staff for training and development, implement

performance management, total rewards, talent management and career development. In summary, the organization's people strategy is to attract, retain, reward, train and develop employees. Their human resource vision is to be the employer of choice. As part of their key competencies leadership development program, the human resource department is focused in facilitating to identify the learning, training and development needs of Raffles employees. They are also active in tracking the employees' progress in achieving competency development targets and encourage the employees to achieve these.

They have a master competency development guide for their employees to develop the core, managerial and leadership competencies. Examples of developing the employees' core competencies are employees being results-orientate, customer focus and working in teams. Employees are also trained to develop the managerial competencies such as change management, decision making, influence and relationship building. The organization is also committed to train employees in developing the leadership competencies such as entrepreneurship attitude, visionary leadership, strategic thinking, shareholder value and establishing focus in the tasks assigned. In addition, their leadership training program uses competencies as foundation for talent management where they classify the employees' talents by performance and potential through a performance/potential grid. Their talent management program for the employees look into the high potential identification and development of employees as well as succession planning.

Whereas the Four Seasons training program has their new employees go through two days of classroom orientation, one day of shadowing and then they begin to learn the specific standards of their job. They use a series of training checklists to ensure that all areas are covered in the training. It allows the Four Seasons property to make corrections where needed for future

new employees training. Also it could allow them to revisit the training of the new employee in question if needed. At Ritz Carlton their most talented employees have designed training certification for every position. It is a structured process that typically takes about twenty one days to complete. Every department has a departmental trainer whom takes the employee through the training certification.

### **Conclusion**

From the research it is evident to show that there are benefits for both the hospitality organization and employee in the development of a hospitality leadership training program. There is much evidence to indicate that there are many processes not in place to retain and reduce attrition in a hospitality setting like a country club. Excessive labor turnover will increase the operating costs for the enterprise and may have a negative effect on the organization's profitability to provide good customer/member/guest satisfaction. High turnover rate may also negatively affect productivity. Some researchers have observed that the turnover can be utilized by the management to effectively shed inefficient labor. The key to provide effective hospitality leadership training is to first reduce or eliminate the training barriers for each organization. The final two keys are ensuring organizational culture that is committed to training as well as training design and delivery. Umbreit (1992) argued that in order to contribute to high quality service and a competitive advantage in hospitality industries, there need to be a greater emphasis on the understanding and development of leadership in the training curricula.

The profitability of a country club thrives on its members and members are the sole reason for the existence of the club. It is imperative that the club managers constantly meet the members' expectations and to exceed them. General managers and the management have to recognize that the existence of a professional development program is a process and the

operational processes required to be in place to meet the members' expectations. It must also be the intention of the club managers to enroll their employees on a leadership development training program. It is pertinent for the club managers to take proactive steps to address the employees learning needs and the importance of the hospitality leadership training. It is definitely pertinent to identify and develop future club leaders to improve the manpower development in any country clubs. The leadership training program adopted by Raffles International can be used as a good foundation and guide for the development of a hospitality leadership training program for the club managers.

## **PART THREE**

### **Introduction**

The hospitality industry definitely faces a paramount issue of retaining and recruiting talent. The need for manpower in Singapore to sustain the growth in the hospitality industry is pertinent with the increase in the number of hotels and tourism establishments. According to J.Leong (personal communications, April, 10, 2012), general manager of The Pines Club Singapore stated that the development of the leadership training program is essential for any country club to retain talents and to reduce the attrition rate. Good leadership practices have to start from the management.

The development of the hospitality leadership training program blueprint will allow the organization to develop future club leaders to improve the manpower development. The hospitality leadership training program blueprint aims to look at developing a training system model for the hospitality industry in particular of a country club setting. It will also look into the employees' feedback, influences, training needs, design, delivery, evaluation of training results and training action. Job design and empowerment will also be discussed. Competency training and leadership development programs will be incorporated. With the factors identified, further recommendations can be suggested to implement the hospitality leadership training program in the country club.

### **Methodology**

#### **Employee Survey obtained from Club**

In order to derive factual information of the industry and the feedback from the employees on the leadership training programs and human resource, the survey results from club 'A' in Singapore was obtained in 2009 in one of my club consultancy projects. The questions

that were raised ranged from the present employment of the employees and their evaluation on the existing organization's training programs. Some of the examples on the questions posed included the relevance of the organization's existing training program towards their employment, monthly remuneration and perception of the staff toward the ideal management leadership.

In terms of the questions pertaining to the relevance of the employees' existing training program and their perception toward the ideal management leadership, the survey looked at the desirable leadership traits that the employees expect from the management and the leadership training programs that are of value to them. The answers from the employees will give an indication on how they perceive the leadership training programs relevant and valuable to them, the ability for promotional advances in the organization. These answers also indicated indirect correlation as to whether they are satisfied with their job, the organization and their peers etc.

### **Personal Communications**

In view of the vibrant and the revolving changes in the hospitality trade, personal communication with industrial leaders are essential to give a more current perspective of the industry as compared to journal articles and books. The insights and viewpoints were sought from the general and operational managers and leaders, human resource practitioners as well as educational academia. The respective representatives looked at hospitality leadership training and recruitment from different angles which enabled the study to be more holistic and current.

### **Journal Articles and Books**

Academic books and journal articles were used extensively as these resources gave empirical studies and research materials that assist to substantiate and support the findings presented. Newsletters from the various club managers' association in Asia and USA were used

to support on club leadership. There is a strong correlation on the types of leadership approaches and management traits that to retain good employees in their organization.

### **Internet**

Research was also conducted from the internet to provide more current information such as statistics, Singapore's government policies and current news and affairs. The websites included news web pages, database websites, government regulation websites etc.

## **Hospitality Leadership Training Program Blueprint**

### **Training Program Structure**

There has to be a structure in place for developing effective hospitality leadership training programs which comprise of training design, training delivery and evaluation of the training results. The design of training programs is the heart of all training efforts. Without clear and accurate defined learning objectives, any well thought training methods or written content would fail. The hospitality leadership training program has to address the individual, departmental, organizational and the club members' needs. Otherwise the organizations would feel that the training is not worthwhile. To best understand how to meet the needs of the employees, formal and informal needs assessments must first take place. Obtaining feedback and identifying the employees' needs help to insure a training program is of value. The organization must also be a source of information to base training design. Global organization information on the country club such as organizational goals, strategies and priorities is crucial for designing effective training. Departmental information is also valuable to identify the goals and priorities within each department. There must also be a formal process for securing information from the respective employees regarding their specific job and general skills to be obtained. All these information directly relates to deciding the focus for leadership training.

Next, feedback can be garnered from the members where they would be able to provide critical information to compare if the needs identified by the country club are similar to the members' focus. According to Milkovich and Boudreau (1998), certain tools may be more appropriate to use depending on the resources available to conduct the needs assessment within the organization. Examples of such tools are performance appraisals, performance documents, advisory committees, past training program evaluations, skills test and etc. The learning objectives for the hospitality leadership training must also be driven by training needs. These objectives will guide all training activities and ideally to portray what the trainee needs to be able to do.

In order to deliver an effective meaningful hospitality leadership training program, formal and informal training methodologies are needed to be deployed. Examples of informal training would refer to on-the-job training (OJT) and formal would be instructor led classroom training. There are often limitations regarding the training method to be used such as budget, time to prepare the training, time allocated for delivery of the training program and the expertise.

Measuring the transference of training is a critical element in training success. DeCardenas (1996) studied the transfer of training and found that a good training program requires organizational support, relevant content focused on training needs and experiential methodologies. Transference increases with management support and the creation of a good learning environment. Training evaluation not only provides information for future training needs but also impacts the effectiveness of the training program. Kirkpatrick (1994) set up a formal approach to training evaluation and he stated the three reasons for evaluating training. The four levels of evaluation are the reaction level of evaluation of the participants, the learning, participants' behavior and lastly are the results. The three reasons for evaluating training are the

training program justification, training contributions to the organization and the gathering of information on future training. He also mentioned that a person's success in training is based on the person's desire to change, the information shared on what and how to do the job, and the reward given in the work environment if change occurs.

### **Human Resource Management Policies/Practices**

There is a strong link and relationship between human resource management systems, policies/practices and organizational effectiveness through their effects on employees attitudes and behaviors in both service and non-service organizations (Becker & Gerhart, 1996; Bowen, 1996; Browning, 1998; Ferris, Hochwater, Buckley, Harrell-Cook, & Frink, 1999; Ferris, Arthur, Berkson, Kaplan, Harrell-Cook, & Frink, 1998; Guest, 1997; Huselid, 1995, Peccei & Rosenthal, 1997; Redman & Mathews, 1998; Wood, 1999; Worsfold, 1999). It is argued that human resources management systems and practices have a direct impact on employee and group attitudes, behaviors and performances which in turn affects organizational performances (Becker & Gerhart, 1996). Human resource practices also have indirect effects on employee attitudes and behaviors through organizational/service culture which then influence organizational culture (Zerbe, Dobni, & Harel, 1998).

In the tourism and hospitality industry, there are a number of empirical studies that found support for a positive relationship between human resource systems, policies and practices and some measures of organizational performance. For example, reporting a case of a successful hotel in Edinburgh. Maxwell (1994) noted that the practice of strategic human resource management was a crucial determinant of service quality and commercial success. In another case of a luxury hotel, Haynes and Fryer (2000) discovered that a number of progressive human resource management practices such as training, communications, empowerment and

performance appraisals were associated with positive effects on a hotel's establishment. These are employee satisfaction, customer satisfaction and financial performance. In another study by Hoque (1999) reported that a bundle of human resource management practices in UK hotel industry contributed to competitive success. In addition, in a study of 386 hotels, restaurants and retail store employees, they perceived organizational support significantly predicted job satisfaction, and job satisfaction and organizational commitment which in turn influenced the intent to quit (Bryner, Borchgrevink, Kacmar, & Susskind, 2000).

Internal marketing efforts are assumed to result in employee satisfaction, job involvement, work motivation, employee commitment, maximum employee effort on behalf of the organizations and customers, increased job performance, service-oriented behaviors and lower turnover which in turn should improve service quality, customer satisfaction and loyalty (Berry & Parasuraman, 1991; Bowen, 1996; Caruana & Calleya, 1998; George, 1990). The tools of internal marketing to achieve the above are very similar to the functions of human resource management like communication, training, motivating and developing, rewarding, satisfying, educating or training, attracting, hiring and retaining employees (Quester & Kelly, 1999).

### **Skills and Training**

Chiang, Back, and Canter (2005) highlighted that training is one of the most important aspects of retaining happy staff. There is a correlation between relevant and extensive training provided for the employees to job satisfaction and their intention to stay in their jobs. This is further supported by Kang and Gould (2002) and Jenkins (2001) that lack of training and development opportunities will be a drawback for the staff to stay and retain in the trade. There are also many instances in the country club context where a new staff is being placed in the job without proper induction and training which resulted in a lot of unwanted frustrations. According

to J.Leong (personal communications, April, 10, 2012), he strongly believes in proper induction and training for all staff to start on the right ground and to encourage more commitment to the organization.

### **Promotional Aspect**

Annual promotional exercises such as annual appraisals are being conducted on a yearly basis by most hospitality establishments. The human resource personnel will look at contributing indicators such as performance, length of service, contributions to the company, length of service etc. In Singapore, the average number of years that a staff in a single position is averaged between 2 to 5 years (J. Wee, personal communications, April,10, 2012).

### **Employee commitment**

Research has shown substantial links between employee commitment and their intentions to remain with the company and to expend effort on the company's behalf (Mitchell, 1997). Simons and Walsh (2001) examined the relative impact of satisfaction and commitment in a sample of 7,409 employees at 84 hotels. They found that both constructs predict turnover intentions and actual employee turnover rates, but that commitment was more predictive of discretionary service behavior and guest satisfaction. Therefore there is considerable evidence for the link between employee commitment and turnover in the hospitality industry. Kinicki, Carson, and Bohlander (1992) surveyed 876 employees from two hotels. They found that employees' perception of managerial commitment to positive HR practices affected employees' commitment to the organization and their motivation levels. This is a great implication for the management to consider tracking the impact of human resource policies on employees' commitment levels.

## **Job Design and Empowerment**

Hackman and Oldham (1980) job characteristics framework proposed that employees with high growth need strength will respond to job attributes in specific ways. These employees will attend to job attributes such as the skill variety demanded, the perceived importance of the job, the level of autonomy provided, the level of feedback provided, and the opportunity to interact with others to yield perceptions. These in turn are expected to drive employee motivation and satisfaction. Hospitality research on motivation is vital for understanding and practical for the management.

## **Conclusion**

The country club industry is regarded as an important sector of the hospitality industry and a source of employment. With the increasing standardization of the physical hospitality product, differentiation and market advantage will become increasingly dependent on service quality factors. As such, it is definitely essential to know what the employees and new staff think about the industry in order to provide a basis to attract and retain the best possible workforce. The general manager of a country club has to implement the necessary steps to reassess its existing training programs and human resource programs. The needs of the country club and its employees' feedback are crucial in developing an effective hospitality leadership training program that is of value to attract the employees to retain in the club industry as well as the organization.

It is pertinent for the general manager of today's country clubs to stem out poor human resource practices to mitigate the poor management of the industry. The hospitality leadership training program should work hand in hand with good human resource management practices to integrate with the country club's business strategy to develop more professional

staff. Labor should not be seen as a cost but as an asset. When the country club is not able to capitalize on skilled and quality staff, this will probably have a negative effect on the service quality, member satisfaction and loyalty as well as the ability to gain competitive advantage through the personnel. It is also evident through the research presented that the progress in human resource management practices in the hospitality industry is desirable and attainable for the benefit of the employees, the country club and its members.

### **Recommendations**

#### **Leadership Development Training Program Manual**

With all the factors identified and the important ingredients for an effective leadership development training program, I am able to develop the actual leadership development training program manual for the identified potential employees. The ideal training duration estimated to last a period of six months and to be conducted once a week on a Saturday afternoon. Internal trainers would be the identified such as the management, various key managerial positions, human resource key personnel and external professional trainers to make this training program meaningful and valuable for staff. The training manual would comprise of three parts. Part one will contain all information of the organization such as the mission and vision statement, corporate culture, organization structure, company's philosophy and objective of the training manual. Part two of the manual would be the focus of a master competency development guide for the employees to develop the core, managerial and leadership competencies as identified that is important for a country club's success. Employees will be educated on the various core competencies necessary to develop their leadership capabilities. The various leadership theories and approaches would also be included in part two of the training manual to expose the potential employees to understand leadership better. Part three of the training manual would focus more

on the evaluation of the effectiveness of the leadership training in the different assessment modes such as a summative assessment on the theories and contents learnt in the manual. This is also followed by peer assessment by the managers and selected colleagues where the employee is allocated to for on the job training. Role play simulation case studies will also be deployed in this training manual for the employees to resolve as a club professional. The employees will be awarded a certification and a recognition pin at the end of the leadership training by the country club. Upon the completion of the leadership development training program, a promotion or career progression path must be mapped for the employee.

### **Recommendations for Country Club General Managers**

There are a number of measures that can be undertaken by the general manager of a country club to retain and attract the quality staff through the hospitality leadership training program. In terms of better human resource practices which are an important part of the training program, internal marketing is another approach that stresses the proper management of human resources and employee attitudes and behaviors for organizational success. The human resources management can implement the principles of good internal marketing to the employees to influence organizational effectiveness indirectly by impacting on employee attitudes, behaviors and performances. For example, employees should be viewed and treated as important internal customers and their needs to be identified and satisfied in order for them to provide excellent service to the members in the country club.

The human resource model can be refined in the country club where the top management involvement is essential. Human resource policies should be integrated into the business strategy and contributing to the country club. The critical role of managers should be of essence as the human resource practice is pertinent to the core activities of the business. The line managers can

be involved as deliverers and drivers of the human resource policies. There are also certain key levers where managing culture would be more important than just managing the procedures and systems alone. There should be restructuring and job design to allow more responsibility and empowerment. In addition, there should also be more integrated action on the training, reward and development of the employees. The human resource practices should also be aligned for operational excellence.

The management could provide and sponsor certifications for their staff through external bodies as it will increase the employee skills and knowledge. The staff will also feel valued by the organization and more committed to the management for the opportunity to develop them.

The general manager should also pay more emphasis on work-life balance and retention strategies. Employees who feel that their work-life is out of sync will consider leaving and not displaying corporate citizenship towards their employers (Deery, 2008). Perhaps, the management can adopt some good government pro-work-life programs such as flexible schedules and family day events or programs etc. Therefore the work can be redesigned to enhance employee involvement.

Emphasis should also be placed on the area of induction and training. A contributing factor to employee turnover in hotel seems to be the one-dimensional focus of their orientation programs. Many researchers observe that with the exception of few large scale and multinational establishments, there is very little evidence of orientation and training for new or existing employees, especially at the managerial level in the tourism and hospitality organizations (Annastassova & Purcell, 1995; Baum, 1995; Boella, 2000). It is also debated that employers are reluctant to invest in training and development due to tight budgets and high turnover (Boella, 2000; Pizam, 1999). It is important to note that it is crucial for the employees to have the

knowledge and skills to deliver excellent service and induction (orientation) as part of the human resource management in the country club industry. Employees encounter feelings of stress and uncertainty when they accept a new job or role and with a new employer. Therefore the orientation programs should deal with both the emotional and the informational needs of new hires.

Due to very little opportunity for career progression and promotion for many employees, it will deter them from retaining in this trade (Iverson & Deery, 1997). The quality employees are genuinely concerned on their careers prospects and efforts should be made to retain them through incentives or promotion. The lack of promotion and development opportunities are important reasons why many of the quality employees leave the country club or even the industry. It is also interesting to note that according to Buick and Muthu (1997), it was concluded that from a survey of hotels in Scotland that the development of internal labor markets and career development are increasingly gaining importance.

Another important recommendation would be for the country club to implement a good recognition program to recognize the good performance of their employees regularly instead of waiting till the annual appraisal. Employee recognition programs should not be a popularity contest, but should be the responsibility of every manager and supervisor. It should be ongoing, consistent, and it should encourage the empowerment and innovation by employees.

In conclusion, the leadership development training manual and the strategically proactive practices such as building a competency model for future leadership create future competitive advantage to retain the best human capital. Building the internal capabilities is the ultimate goal of innovative human resources professional.

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