UNIT-5

Human Resource Management

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit the learner will be able to:

- ✓ Discuss the importance of Planning in Recruitment Process
- ✓ Assess the benefits of trainings and its needs.
- ✓ Develop a Training Programme

Unit 5

Human Resource Management

Staff recruitment and selection is important in hospitality service organizations. The ability to attract and recruit people who have a 'natural' affinity with customers' is particularly important for frontline staff, and whilst staff performance can be improved by customer care programmes, the essential qualities are related to the individual's personality and commitment to providing good service.

Careful recruitment and selection is also important to reduce staff turnover and disciplinary problems and to improve employee satisfaction. You need to take the time to select the right person to match the needs of the job and who will fit in with the rest of your team. Staff recruitment and selection can occupy a large part of a unit manager's time, particularly where there are high levels of staff turnover. Under time pressures, it is tempting to reduce the effort put into recruitment and selection, but this is often a false economy because it creates problems.

Before starting the recruitment and selection process it is necessary to think about the job the new employee will do and the person needed to do it. Many managers in hospitality retail operations make problems for themselves because they fail, when recruiting employees, they do not give importance to careful planning and the needs of the new recruits. The first step involves thinking about the duties and responsibilities of the job and skills. The second concerns with the new recruits, their motives for becoming an employee and their needs in both the early stages of employment and beyond.

Flexible Employees

The demand for hospitality services varies through time. In some cases, these variations can be predicted - different days of the week have different sales levels, for example Monday is quiet and Saturday is busy; January has a low level of sales, but December is busy. It is not unusual for these variations to be dramatically different so 50 per cent of the weekly sales occur on Friday and Saturday, or 50 per cent of annual sales occur in November and December. In other cases, the variations are difficult to predict - changes in weather conditions result in higher or lower than normal sales.

In all cases, you need to be able to call on sufficient staff to meet the demand. That means:

Being able to get more staff in busy times having fewer staff when sales are lower.

Typically, full-time staff numbers have been kept to a minimum and restricted to the more 'skilled' employees, supported by extra employees as needed:

1. **Regular part-time staff:** working regularly for the pub or restaurant on varied number of hours each week depending on the needs of the business.

2. **Temporarily short-term staff:** usually working on a full-time basis for a fixed term - to meet the demands of a busy period or planned staff absence.
3. **Casual staff***:* infrequent employees who work during the busiest periods. In some cases they are used for specific types of demand - banquets or parties.

4. **Agency staff:** these people work for an agency or contractor who supplies staff to meet planned or unplanned shortages.

These varied sources have allowed managers to meet staffing needs whilst limiting the financial commitment to employing staff when demand for the unit's services are low. However there are some difficulties caused by this approach:

- Employee commitment to the service, customers and organization may be lower.
- Employee incomes may vary and create dissatisfaction.
- It can lead to higher labour turnover.
- Skill levels may be low because of limited investment in training.
- Service quality may suffer
- It may lead to reduced productivity and sales per hour
- Customer repeats are reduced because of increased customer dissatisfaction.

One way round some of these problems is to recruit more full- time employees, but create a more flexible workforce through wide skills training.

Irrespective of the manner of the employment relationship – full time, part time and so on - recruitment does not take place in a vacuum. Hospitality retail employers are usually competing with other service sector employers for labour and any one business may be recruiting similar people to those recruited by:

- supermarkets
- shops and stores
- other hospitality employers
- offices
- call centres etc.

The supply of employees, your ability to attract enough staff of the right quality and characteristics depend on the competition from other firms *and* a cluster of factors which influence the total supply of labour in that market.

1. Levels of unemployment and employment represent a major factor in hospitality services labour markets. In areas where unemployment is low, recruitment into hospitality retail organizations can be difficult.

2. The industry profile in the area may result in fewer or more potential recruits being available even within any given level of unemployment. It has been difficult to recruit people into hospitality retail operations where local employment has been based on 'heavy' industry. Understanding the potential difficulties can help you to be more focused in your efforts to recruit people in these circumstances.
3. The rate of participation of the people in the labour market varies between different areas and regions of the country. Where more women and young people participate in employment as well as men, the potential supply of labour will be greater. The participation rate also varies over the year, as some people want to take on a second job to earn extra money for Christmas or summer holidays. Recognizing the ebb and flow of interest in second jobs can help you to attract people for fixed terms to meet particular difficulties.
4. Where people live in relation to the unit and the associated ease of transport to the site will be a factor. Late night working in a remote part of town may restrict potential recruits to those with personal transport. Mapping the major housing estates and transport systems can help build a picture.
5. Educational establishments such as secondary schools, further education colleges and universities can all provide useful sources of part-time, temporary and casual labour. Making contacts with significant staff members in schools and colleges can help to improve communications between you and potential employees.

The Importance of Planning Ahead

The more planned and carefully undertaken the recruitment and selection process, the more likely you are to be successful in selecting employees who stay with you and who make a contribution to the unit. Hurried recruitment invariably leads to difficulties later.

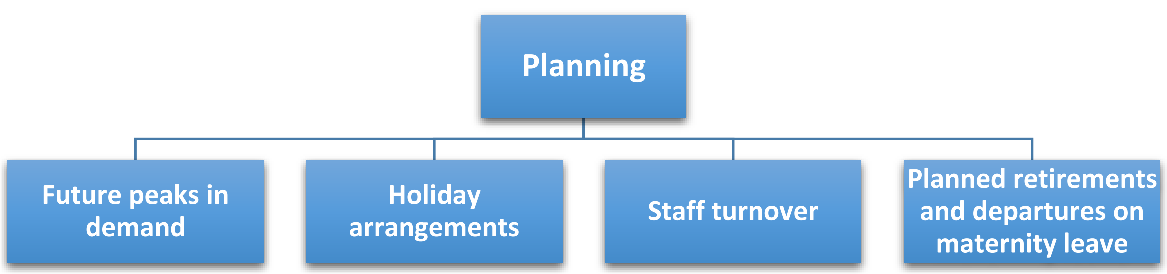

Fig: 5.1

Here are some of the points to build into the plan:

1. **Future Peaks In Demand:** the Christmas build-up, or some other period when sales are above the norm; extra staff is needed.
2. **Holiday Arrangements:** when staff takes planned annual holidays there is a need for staff to cover absent employees.

3. **Staff turnover:** creates an ongoing demand for replacement staff. Often it is more cost-effective to recruit replacement staff in batches to match the predicted loss.
4. **Planned Retirements and Departures on Leave,** etc.: will create some vacancies that have to be filled. They are predictable, and need to be planned into the recruitment process.

It is important to consider the process of recruiting new employees and the time taken to develop an effective performer. Issues such as the time taken to recruit, the number of applicants needed on average, the number of interviews needed, the induction period and training programme all need to be considered. The more time these steps take, the more time you have to plan into the process of planning for the future. Successful recruitment is unhurried and systematic.

Describing the Job To Be Done

Even in the smallest units it is necessary to consider the work to be done by the recruits. By thinking carefully about the job and what has to be undertaken, you will be in a much stronger position to recruit a person who will be able to make an effective contribution.

The Job Description

Start with the job, not the jobholder or the terms and conditions under which they will be employed. The job description should include the following broad headings:

Job title, department and location: give the job a name and position.

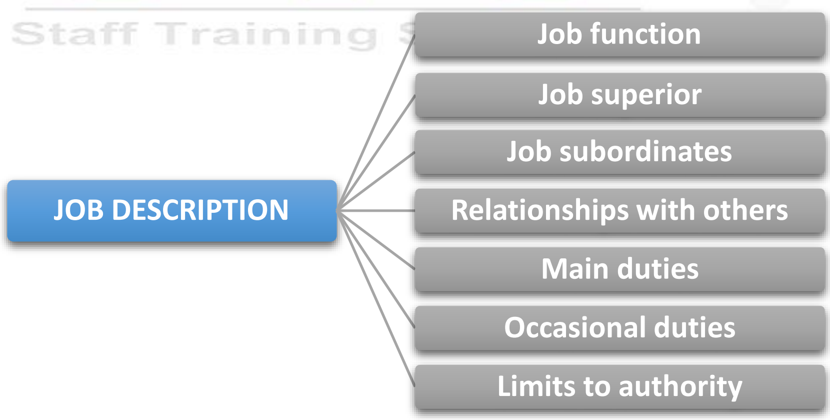

Fig: 5.2

- Job function: what the job is about.
- Job superior: to whom will the jobholder answer?
- Job subordinates: which jobs will the holder supervise?
- Relationships with others: non-hierarchical relationships.
- Main duties: what is to be done?

- Occasional duties: what is done now and then?
- Limits to authority: what the jobholder can/cannot decide.

When preparing these documents it is important to consider the job and what you want the jobholder to do. The main duties are described using active verbs. It is a good idea to show the job description to a current jobholder to check whether the job description correctly describes the job as it is being done now - organizations are dynamic and jobs change.

Describing the Ideal Recruit

Many managers make mistakes in the recruitment of staff because they do not carefully consider the ideal person to be able to undertake the job as outlined in the job description. A well thought out job description helps you to think about the person needed - his or her background and prior experience, education and training, and personality and characteristics.

The following are some of the categories to be considered:

- Physical make-up: age, appearance, build, health, speech, eyesight. (Note: it may be possible to justify a specific sex, e.g. for lavatory attendant, but be careful.)
- Education and training: school qualifications and grades, further or higher education, recognized skills programme.
- Work experience: experience in industry, specific industry or sector, similar type of work, work in related sector with transferable skills, responsibilities for people or money.
- Personality: sociability and extraversion, empathy, honesty, stability, leadership, etc.
- Personal circumstances: requirement to work, requirement to work shifts, requirement to live in/out.

Whilst compiling this list of factors it is important to remember the requirement in law and in practice to offer *equal opportunities.* Openly discriminating on the grounds of gender, ethnicity or religion is illegal. However, a good unit manager works beyond the legislation to ensure that all employees and potential employees are treated equally and fairly.

Thinking about the sort of person needed also leads to thoughts about:

- how you will check the person's qualities and abilities
- the selection process
- The best sources of this type of applicant.

Attracting Candidates

Once you have decided on the duties of the job to be filled and the sort of person required, you need to consider the best source of likely candidates before considering the best processes required to select them. The aim of attracting applicants is to attract a sufficient number to make the appointment of the ideal candidate(s) likely.

- Too many applicants, is as problematic as too few.
- The aim must be to attract suitable applicants.

Candidates will be attracted from the local labour market and the following lists represent some common means of communicating with potential applicants to inform them of job vacancies. As it: with all advertising, the more targeted and accurate the message, the more it will appeal to the most suitable applicants. Vague, misleading and dishonest descriptions of the job or person needed are always counterproductive.

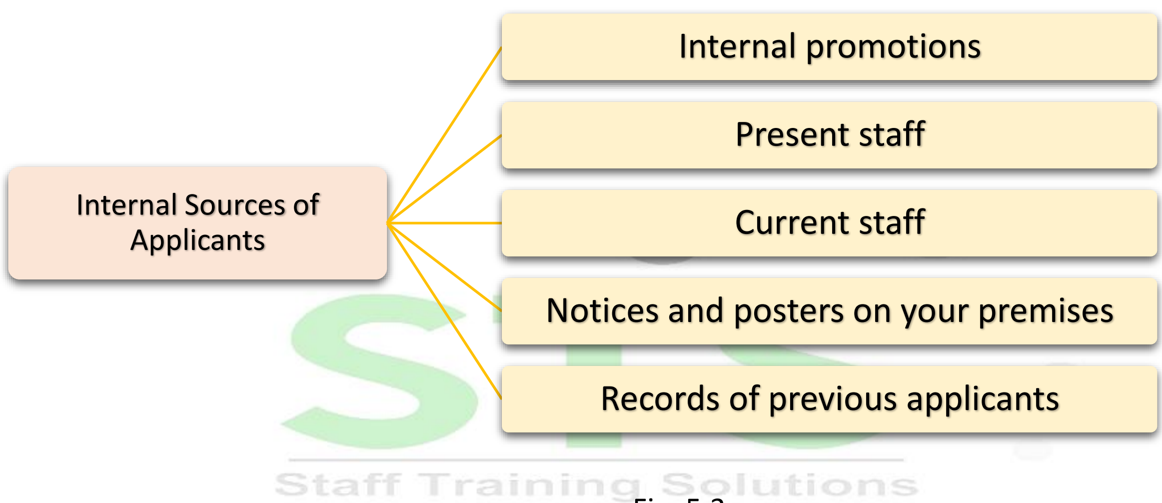

Fig: 5.3

Internal sources of *applicants* come from within your unit and might include:

Internal Promotions -help to build staff morale and show that employees can progress if they stay with you.

Present Staff -who are on temporary, casual or part-time contracts who wish to become full-time employees. As above, this has a motivational benefit, but also you will have a better knowledge of the person than of an external applicant.

Current Staff recommends an individual known to them (family/friends). Again this might lead to a better knowledge of the new recruit. It is cheaper because advertising costs are reduced. However, there is usually an introduction fee to the staff member and a danger of setting up cliques in the workforce.

Notices and Posters on your Premises - customers or customer contacts may be a source of potential employees. Relatively inexpensive, though there may be issues about the impression created by ongoing staff turnover. Also some units discourage customers to be employees; others see it as a benefit.

Records of Previous Applicants - it is not unusual for the recruitment process to attract more suitable candidates than there are vacancies. It is a good idea to keep the details of these applicants on record so that you can contact them when another vacancy comes up. Consistent interest in working in the unit might be an indicator of future stability.

External sources of *applicants* come from outside your unit and might include:

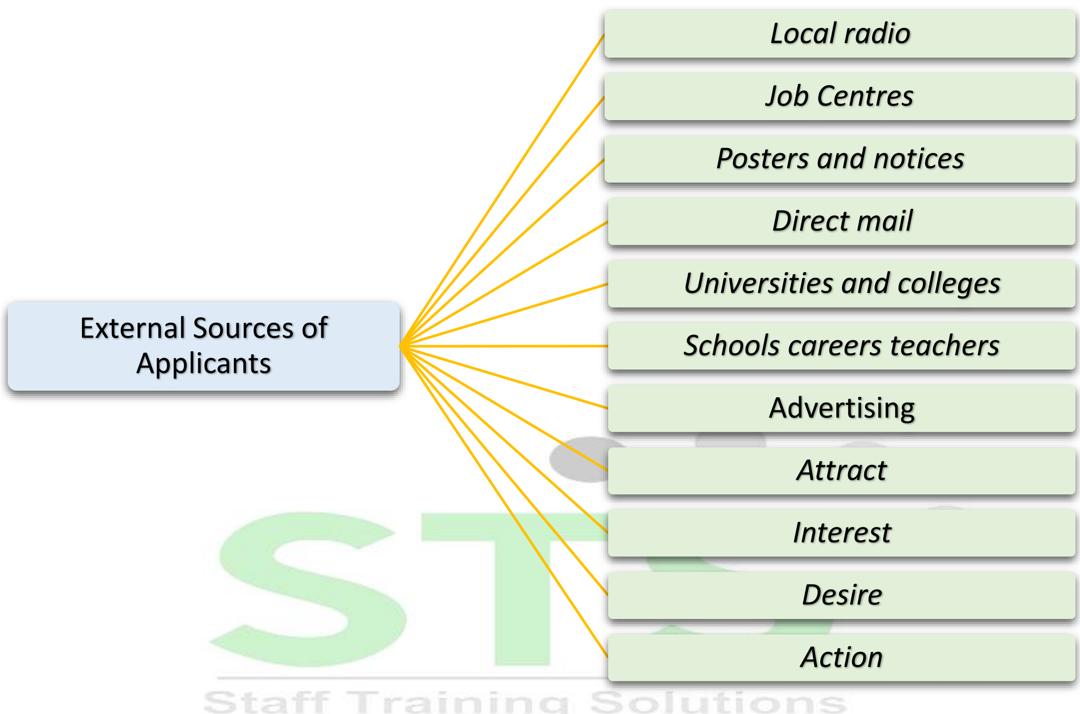

Fig: 5.4

Newspaper *advertising* is in local newspapers, though some management and skilled craft jobs may recruit from a national labour market. The main benefit is that the advertisement will be seen by a large number of people who might be interested in the job. These can take the form of box advertisements, or classified ads. The former are more expensive and best reserved for a major recruitment campaign.

Local Radio gives a good coverage and could be used for a major recruitment campaign - say, opening a new unit - but is likely to be too expensive for ongoing recruitment for one unit.

Job Centres and other state employment agencies can provide a permanent, generally low-cost source of applicants. Commercial recruitment agencies are used in some cases, but are usually regarded as too expensive for most frontline staff.

Posters and Notices in shop windows or local clubs are usually low cost and visible to people who live in the immediate area.

Direct Mail *shots* to local housing estates: These are again local to the unit and relatively cheap. Often used for openings and re-launches.

Universities and Colleges in your locality are a good source of employees. Students on hospitality, leisure or tourism programmes are worth prioritizing, but most students provide a valuable source of potential recruits. It is worth contacting course leaders or careers officers, and the Student Union.

Schools Careers Teachers are also a good source of recruits both for young people finishing their schooling and looking for permanent employment and for continuing students requiring part-time, casual and temporary employment. Work experience sessions can also be a good source of recruits – many courses have two- or three-week periods to gain work familiarization. Hospitality retail managers can use these sessions to promote careers in their organization.

Time spent cultivating contacts with significant people in these local organizations will prove to be a valuable investment for the future. This is a particular need in hospitality retail organizations experiencing rapid staff turnover. As we have seen, high staff turnover is expensive but a fact of life in some units, and ensuring that you have a strong supply of potential labour is important.

Advertising

Many of the sources of external recruitment available to you as unit manager will be from outside the unit. In some cases, material will be supplied from head office, and you will not be able to spend much money on advertising - perhaps only a display advertisement in the local newspaper. However, whatever the medium, you are advised to consider there are some general pointers to successful job advertising.

Attract the attention of the potential applicant. Usually this would boldly show the job title (Kitchen Assistant). Make sure that this key factor is prominent and cannot be missed.

Interest the person once you have attracted their attention. Tell *them* about who, what, where of the job and the name of the company. Briefly describe the purpose of the job and where it is located, and provide a brief outline of the person needed; the salary, and the opportunities for advancement. You want to both attract suitable applicants and discourage those who are unsuitable.

Desire. You are trying to make the advertisement stimulate a desire in the reader to do something about following up the advertisement. It is here that many go wrong. In some cases the advertisements are just plain boring, in others there is a strong temptation to oversell the job but provide inaccurate information. You must stimulate a desire in the reader by providing accurate information.

Action. Provide instructions as to how the advertisement needs to be followed up - a telephone number or an address so they can apply for an application form. An obvious point, but this is a common error in many advertisements.

Getting Information from the Candidates

The application form needs to be structured in a way that is simple to fill in and allows candidates to communicate the information that you require to decide on their suitability:

- name
- address
- gender
- age
- education and training
- past work experience
- other interests
- personal circumstances
- names and addresses of references.

The application form must be laid out so that the information needed for the decision to progress with the application is easily seen, and most importantly, has been provided by the applicant.

A clear layout which asks the candidate unambiguous questions is essential. A common mistake is that application forms do not allow sufficient space for applicants to fill in all their details, and it contains vague questions.

Short Listing the Candidates

The applications received need to be considered so that you can decide on those applicants who match, or nearly match, the staff specification. The applications can be sorted in a systematic way by comparing each application with the staff specification criteria using a matrix. This allows you to see how each candidate compares with the requirements outlined in the staff specification, and also allows comparison between candidates.

Selection

The aim of the selection process is to continue the process of finding out about the candidates so that the judgement whether to recruit or not is based on as sound information as possible. Usually, the selection of staff to work in hospitality retail units occur after a simple interview with the manager, but there are alternatives that might be worth considering.

One-to-one Interview

The unit manager, or a deputy, interviews the candidates one by one on his or her own. The process takes less management time, but the weakness is that just one person's judgement is involved. It is possible for the interviewer to miss an important aspect of the interviewee's qualities or to apply personal prejudices.

Two or more Interviewers

The interview is conducted with one or more interviewers – unit manager plus deputy. Here the purpose is to bring in a wide range of perceptions and skills on which to base the selection. In some cases, one person is asking questions whilst the other person observes and makes notes. This method is more costly for management time but results in some safeguards against individual prejudices.

More than one Interview

In some cases, where there are many suitable candidates, managers may conduct a first round of interviews from which a short list of candidates is selected for a second round of interviews - frequently on another day. This form of selection is costly of management and candidate's time. Usually this approach is applied in the selection of skilled staff or management personnel. The benefit is that more applicants are seen, and the selection is ultimately made on the basis of candidate's performance on two occasions.

Role Plays

Here the intention is to invite the candidate to deal with a situation, or give a performance, which helps to reveal more about the person in non-interview situations. Popular examples involve asking the person to deal with a customer complaint in which the manager acts as the disgruntled customer. In other cases candidates are invited to sing a song or tell a joke. The organization of role plays and the evaluation of performance usually involve more than one manager. This approach is more costly, because candidates go through an interview process as well as the role plays. The key benefit is in providing a wider set of behaviours and information about the candidate.

Personality/ Aptitude Test

Personality tests and aptitude tests both aim to supply further information about the candidates upon which the decision to recruit can be made. Personality tests vary but there are some issues involved. For example, it is possible to measure the various dimensions of *extraversion and introversion* and the dimensions of *stability and instability* through personality tests. Similarly, aptitude tests are designed to measure a person's general abilities and suitability for certain types of work. The problem with both these sets of measures is that, whilst they both appear to be 'scientific', these tests are not foolproof predictors of future work performance. It is possible for performance to be affected by other factors external to the individual, and it is also possible for a person who is familiar with the tests to give answers which are not true reflections of their personality or abilities. However, used in support of other selection techniques they can be a valuable aid to decision-making.

References

References supplied by previous employers or character witnesses are an important part of the selection process. The most common practice is to follow up references after the selection interview, though some managers do ask for references before the interview. In the latter case, existing employers may be unaware of the applicant's intention to apply for a position with another firm, and this can cause difficulties. However, information from references can be useful when making a selection between candidates. Whilst references are generally invaluable some caution needs to be shown, because references can be subject to bias.

- In the majority of cases, employers are loath to give explicitly damning criticism of employees
- In some cases, they may even provide overly complimentary comments about an employee whom they wish get rid of.
- In other cases, the negative feelings created when an employee leaves may lead the employer to be unfairly critical of the employee.

Selection Interviews

As shown earlier, the selection interview aims to obtain more information about candidates so that you are better able to make a satisfactory selection. In many ways people feel more comfortable with the judgements that they make in an interview than is justified by experience. There are several flaws with the interview: You are making judgements about people after only a short time. People give performances in a formal interview and these may not be a true reflection of their work performance.

The formal situation may make people nervous and limit their performance. The interview relies on subjective judgement and may involve the 'halo effect' or a prejudice. Some of these difficulties can be addressed through having several colleagues in the interview process, and by making the judgement through a wide range of sources of information.

Prior to the Interview

1. You have identified and invited all other managers who will be involved in interviewing process.
2. You have identified the interview process, test and role plays to be used in the selection of applicants.
3. Make sure you have read through all the candidate's application forms and identified issues that need to be explored with each candidate.
4. You have identified a quiet room for interview that will be free
5. You have allocated sufficient time for each interview.
6. You have invited the candidates to attend at the appropriate time.
7. You have considered the room layout and style of the interview

During the Interview

1. Stick strictly to the time allocated - poor timekeeping creates a bad impression.
2. First introduce yourself and other interviewers, and help the person to relax.
3. Explain the interview and selection process, particularly as to when they will hear the result.

4. Adopt a relaxed and friendly manner.
5. Start with easy general questions.
6. Ask open-ended questions - these encourage interviewees to talk.
7. Listen carefully to answers and pick up on issues that arise.
8. Always create the impression that you are interested in the candidate and are genuinely concerned to give the candidate a fair chance.
9. Provide an opportunity for the candidate to ask questions.
10. Recognize that the interview is a two-way process and that you want to leave each candidate with a good impression of the organization.
11. Close the interview on time and in an orderly manner, and ensure that the candidate understands what will happen next.

After the Interview

1. Make notes about the candidate - again a scoring system can be used to help make the selection.
2. If more than one interviewer is involved confer with the others to decide on the candidate to be selected.
3. If you have not called for references earlier, arrange for references - when these have arrived; confirm the candidate (or reconsider in the light of the references).
4. Write to successful applicant confirming the appointment and providing joining instructions. The selection and recruitment process has to be conducted in a fair and legal manner.

Once the selected candidate starts you need to plan an induction programme so that the employee is eased into the new job and helped to be quickly effective.

New Employee Induction Programmes

An induction programme: helps the new employee to feel part of the organization.

The benefits of providing induction training to the unit are that it:

- helps reduce customer service problems.
- increases productivity levels as new employee become effective more quickly
- demonstrates statutory duties for safe and hygienic working practices.

All new employees, irrespective of whether they are working full time, part time, temporarily or on a casual basis, need an induction programme.

When planning the induction programme it is necessary to consider the information and experiences needed to help them settle in and how to give the information. Generally, induction programmes are best planned over a period of time. It is a mistake to provide too much information on the first day. Good induction programmes occur over the first few weeks.

On the First Day of Work

It is important to remember that all new recruits are likely to feel nervous about starting a new job, and the main aim is to put them at their ease. Too much pressure and inadequate preparation for work stresses are key reasons for staff turnover. Make sure the new person knows where the main facilities they will need are located. It is a good idea to provide the new recruit with a 'buddy', to help them fit in and show how things work. A basic programme on health and safety practices and basic hygiene is also useful at this stage. Though practice varies, induction is most effective when the new employee is timetabled as surplus to requirements for the first few days. The recruit may be working alongside a more experienced employee, but it is important to reduce the immediate work pressure in this early learning phase.

Training and Development

Training and staff development are important aspects of your Work inhospitality setting. Many branded hospitality retailers recognize that staff training is a key business technique that impacts on service quality delivery, customer satisfaction, sales growth and profitability.

All employers have an obligation to ensure employees work in safe environments with co-workers who understand safe working practices. Similarly, employers are obliged to ensure that employees work in a way that is hygienic, and handle food in a manner that reduces the risk to customers.

Training must go beyond these base-level legal obligations. Training *all* employees has direct impacts on business performance. Recent research for the Hospitality Training Foundation shows that training leads to:

- improvements in productivity
- improved sales per transaction
- reduced wastage
- lower levels of staff turnover
- improved service quality
- improved customer satisfaction
- improved employee satisfaction
- increased employee flexibility.

Apart from the benefits directly gained from training, it is also important to recognize that a *failure* to *train employees is notwithout cost.* If you allow people to learn the job by trial and error there is bound to be lots of error. This will involve problems in service quality, employee dissatisfaction, higher levels of wastage, lower productivity and reduced employee flexibility.

All training must start with a clear understanding of the aims and objectives of what you expect to achieve from the training activity. Adopt a systematic approach that focuses clearly on the needs of the person to be trained, the materials needed, and how the training will be evaluated.

The Benefits of Training

Estimating the benefits of training - particularly in the context of potential contributions to improved business performance - is clearly difficult to gauge. This is not surprising given the variety of forms of training undertaken within the hospitality industry and because other variables impact upon training activity, for example, the quality of the training provided the existing skills and capabilities of trainees, and the duration of training programmes.

In addition, it is self-evident that a wide array of influences impact upon the business performance of an organization, for example:

- economic climate
- levels of investment
- marketing and promotional activities.

The main benefits of training are listed below:

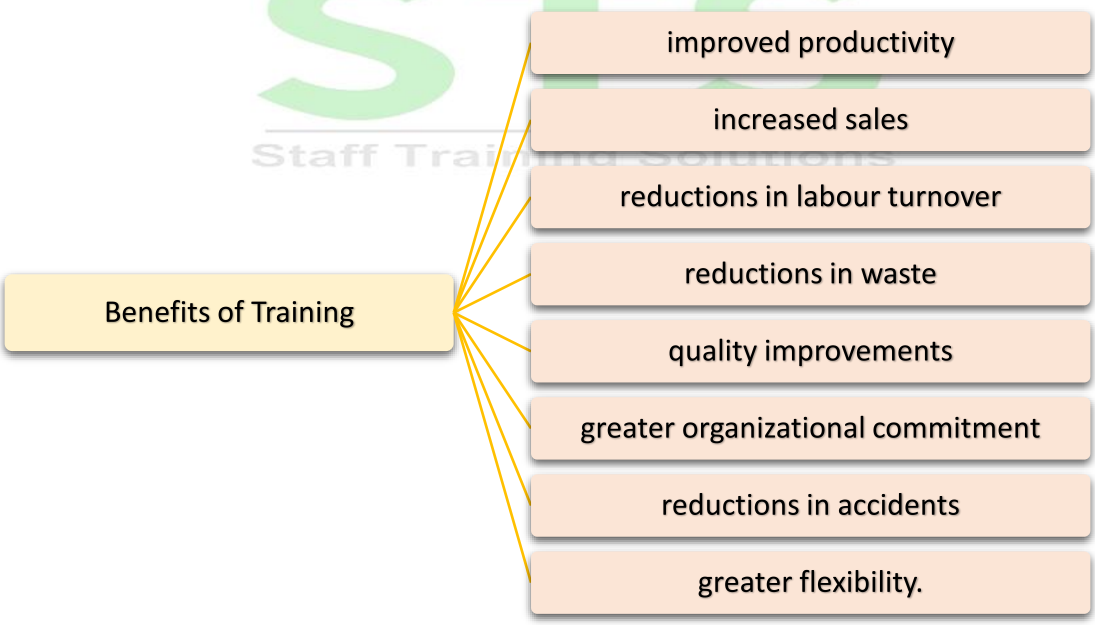

Fig: 5.5

When considering the aims and objectives of employee training it is important to remember that training:

- primarily changes individual behaviour. Through changes in behaviour direct benefits are about employee performance

- improves employee performance, which may then lead to desired financial benefits, that is, reduced costs, increased sales and improved profitability.

Identifying Training Needs

The identification of training needs usually flows from your staff appraisal process. Essentially you are attempting to identify the knowledge, work skills and social skills that employees need for both their present and future jobs. There are several broad areas that need to be considered:

- where individual performance of staff is not up to the standard you require
- where an identified business objective requires all staff to be trained to be more effective - say, to improve productivity or to increase up-selling
- new staff need induction training
- when planned changes require new skills or knowledge
- when individuals or teams will be changing jobs in the future and training builds their personal development.

It is good idea to consider all the types of jobs .Make list of these and then think about the relationships between them.

1. Consider flexibility, to what extent is it desirable to have people specialized in different departments?
2. Does specialization lead to rigidities in the workforce? Is it desirable to train staff to be functionally flexible and who can then be employed in different roles?

Once you have listed the job types, make a list of the duties to be undertaken in each job. This process of drawing up *jobdescriptions* helps you think carefully about the range of tasks to be undertaken and, flowing from this, the skills, knowledge and social skills needed to undertake them.

Next compare the performance of individual jobholders against the requirements of the job both as needed now, and for the future.

1. Consider changes that may be needed because of expansion, new equipment, new products or new services.
2. Think about the personal development of existing employees and the implications for training and development and further education.

Bring together all the training needs you have identified and arrange these in priority order bearing in mind their importance to your overall unit objectives and the ease with which they can be achieved. In some cases, short training activities during a quiet period may help you to address problems that can be of great benefit.

Contrast and compare the training needs and resources needed against the resources available to you. Obviously, there may be extra resources you can call on and a prior investment in building a base of staff or managers who are 'trained to train' will help because they give you a better resource base. Most importantly, the more people are trained to train others, the fewer constraints there are on delivering training.

The Training Plan

The plan of action flows from the identification of training needs and priorities. You have to make judgements about whether an identified need has to be met immediately and, bearing in mind the comments about the costs of not training mentioned earlier, you need to consider the implications of delaying the delivery of an identified training need.

Again a written plan may seem formal, but it is an investment in time that is well worth making;

1. Decide the timescale of the plan. You may have a broad plan covering twelve months, but there may well be shorter-term objectives - say, to increase average sales per transaction. A realistic target helps you to evaluate the training.
2. Plan the resources needed and available to help you achieve your plan, and budget for them - remember you need to make the policy and plans work.
3. There is no point in being overambitious. Be realistic. Even if you have identified more training activities than you can resource, do not try to do everything; start with what you can and must achieve.
4. Set down the numbers to be trained and the various targets to achieve.
5. Remember to include induction training, and the training needs of new staff. Where staff turnover is high, or where you are recruiting new employees for an anticipated busy period, you must allow time for new employee training.
6. Against each item on the training plan, identify where, when, how and by whom the training will be carried out.
7. Where appropriate fix dates against the training events.
8. Build in processes of monitoring and evaluation - has the training been effective?

Carry Out the Training Programme

It is likely that there will be a number of different training needs identified in your unit. Some will be aimed at all or a significant group of your staff, in other cases, you may want to train individuals.

- In some cases the sessions might be short sessions taking no more than 20 minutes.
- In others, the training may require a series of different sessions building an integrated set of skills - you may want to train the individual in how to complete a different task in each session.
- In yet others, you may want to train the person in knowledge and social skills.

It is essential that you plan these sessions very carefully and remember that you are intending to achieve specific outcomes:

1. What do you expect the trainees to be able to do after the session? Remember this is likely to be expressed in active verbs - make a *Manhattan,* wash down the counter, change the till roll, etc.
2. Decide where and when the training will take place - in the workplace before service, during service but in a quiet period or during normal service. Remember that it is easier to learn knowledge, say, recipes or legal issues, away from the pressures of service. Learning a skill requires practice, so this may be best done during service, though you may need to work alongside the trainee, and issues about planning the time period and choosing the right sessions may be relevant.
3. Draw up a list of the training events and stages needed, and the time each will typically take.
4. Specify the subjects to be covered.
5. Decide on the learning and teaching methods to be used – will the training involve materials, say, when you are training a person to make a cocktail? Highlight and list the materials you will require. Will you be using a video or on-line service?
6. Identify who will carry out the training.
7. Identify the means by which you will assess the trainee's achievement of the objective set. Will this be via demonstration, or observation whilst doing the job? Will it involve tests?

Remember, the means by which you assess the trainee will be a by-product of the objectives set.

Evaluating The Training Undertaken

When the training programme has been completed you need to evaluate its impact on the objectives that you set:

- Were you able to carry out the entire plan? Were there difficulties and problems? How might these be overcome in future?
- Consider the elements of the training programme that worked best and worst. What can you learn from this?
- Consider the training undertaken in detail. Were some techniques more successful than others?
- What are the priorities for the next period? Can you now concentrate on things that you identified but were not able to achieve in the earlier period?
- Finally, using the objectives set out earlier, what business benefits have been achieved through the training activities?

Developing a Training Programme

Training is an important management function and is required to develop and ensure quality performance.

In the hospitality industry, some hotel organizations take training seriously; others talk about it extensively but have no real programme in place. Those that have developed, instituted, and continued to update their training programmes consider them great assets in human resources management. They give the management team an opportunity to develop qualified employees who can perform jobs according to predetermined standards. A good training programme ensures that errors will be reduced because the procedures have been explained and demonstrated.

Planning and developing a training programme for front office employees includes identifying the tasks performed by the front office staff, preparing step-by-step procedures for each task, determining who will train employees, administering the training programme, and reviewing the steps in the training process.

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Identification of Tasks and Job Management Skills

The tasks performed by each employee are usually identified through the job description.

The job description is based on the job analysis, which lists, in chronological order, the daily tasks performed by the employee. For example, the front desk clerk performs the following tasks on the day shift:

- 6:00 a.m. Enters start time with PMS.
- 6:05 Talks with night auditor about activities on the 11:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. shift; checks the front desk message book for current operational notes.
- 6:10 Obtains **cash bank,** a specific amount of paper money and coins issued to a cashier to be used for making change, from controller; counts and verifies contents.
- 6:30 Reviews daily report concerning occupancy rate and daily room rate.
- 6:35 Obtains function sheet (list of activities and special events, receptions, and the like) for the day.
- 6:37 Obtains housekeeper's report for the previous day.
- 6:40 Calls housekeeping and maintenance departments to determine the communications list (a log of unusual occurrences or special messages that the front office personnel should know about) from the previous shift(s).
- 6:45 Calls restaurant to learn specials for lunch and dinner.
- 6:50 Reviews expected checkouts and reservations for the day.
- 6:55 Checks out guests until 9:30 a.m.

All of the tasks identified in the job analysis must then be broken down further into specific skills to build a sound training programme. This may seem like a very laborious procedure. It is! But the first step is always the most cumbersome. Using the job analysis for each of the jobs in the front office ensures that all tasks required to deliver hospitality to the guest are included in the training programme.

Preparing Step-by-Step Procedures

Step-by-step procedures for each task help the trainee understand how to perform tasks correctly. This procedure also helps the trainer prepare and deliver training sessions more efficiently.

If a hotel front office has a PMS, the operator of the computer terminal must learn to enter data or commands sequentially. **Documentation,** written instructions on how to operate computer software, accompanies all property management systems. Documentation can be used as a basis for developing the step-by-step training procedure for using the PMS, and it can serve as a model for preparing step-by-step procedure for other tasks.

A step-by-step procedure to complete a guest checkout on the PMS might include the following:

1. Inquire about the guest's accommodations.
2. Enter the guest's room number.
3. Inquire about late charges.
4. Confirm method of payment.
5. Print a hard copy of the folio.
6. Allow the guest to review the folio.
7. Accept cash or credit card or bill-to-account.
8. Enter amount of payment.
9. Enter method of payment.
10. Enter department code.
11. Check for zero balance.
12. Give the guest a copy of the folio.
13. Inquire if additional reservations are needed.
14. Make farewell comments.

Each of these procedures can be further subdivided as necessary. For example, as part of step 6, the new desk clerk could be trained to point out major sections of the folio and charges incurred by the guest so that the guest is aware of all the charges that make up the total. The guest can then ask questions about any of the charges at this time, rather than after the bill is produced, thus eliminating extra work for the controller's department.

Management Concepts

In addition to task performance, other, less tangible skills need to be included in a training programme for front office employees. Stress management, time management, and organizational skills are some of the areas that need to be discussed. Although these skills are often covered in seminar formats, they cannot be considered in isolation. These skills are better understood when integrated into the training programme as a whole, so they can be applied to task performance. For example, the employee being trained to check out a guest should be made aware that this process may occur under stressful conditions: he or she could be in a situation in which there are long lines, many guests questioning charges, and pressure from other guests to keep the line moving. Remaining calm under these circumstances does come with experience, but the tenets of stress management will help even the new employee handle difficult situations? Self-control and concern for the guest's welfare are paramount.

Mastering time management is another important skill that enables employees to perform particular tasks at required times. For example, various departments depend on front office employees to convey messages to guests and other departments on a regular basis; otherwise, a great deal of confusion results for all concerned. Organizational skills help employees deal with their workloads systematically rather than jumping from one task to another without completing any of them. Completing paperwork on a regular basis, rather than allowing it to mount into an intimidating pile, is one example of how time management and organizational skills can improve performance.

Steps in the Training Process

The recommended steps in the training process include preparation, delivery, trial and error, and follow-up.

Preparation: "Get Ready"

The trainer must plan the details of the training session. The first step is to prepare behavioural objectives for trainees. These objectives will identify what trainees should know when the session is over and will allow the trainees to achieve expected changes in behaviour. They will assist trainees in building their knowledge base as they develop skills. Behavioural objectives should define what the trainee should be able to do, how effectively he or she should do it, and when the task should be complete. For example, a behavioural objective for a training session on guest check-in might be: "The trainee will be able to perform the guest check-in procedure for a guest with a prior reservation on the PMS with 100 percent accuracy in five minutes." This focuses the trainer on the task of training a desk clerk in completing a check-in for a guest with a reservation, not a check-in for a guest without a reservation. The trainee must also have already mastered the step-by-step procedure for operating the registration module on the PMS. The goal of 100 percent accuracy in five minutes may be unrealistic to achieve during the actual training session because practice is required. The desk clerk will have to practice to achieve the speed.

In addition to preparing behavioural objectives for each training session, the trainer must know how to present the new skill to the trainee, relate the skill to other parts of the employee's job, review the presentation area and scheduling for the session, and supply ancillary materials, such as audiovisual presentation equipment and printed matter.

Presenting a skill requires the trainer to demonstrate the step-by-step procedure with the needs of the trainee in mind. This is not the time to show off how quickly the trainer can check in a guest. The trainer must be patient and consider the task from a beginner's point of view. First, the trainer must explain what the trainee is expected to learn. Next, he or she must repeat key instructions, particularly when demonstrating complicated equipment. The trainee must also be informed about where he or she can find assistance if help is needed (in printed instructions, with the user-friendly "help" program on the terminal, or from another employee). Trainers should always explain slowly and check that the trainee understands all explanations as he or she goes along.

The trainer should also be sure the materials needed to deliver the session are in order. Have DVDs, CDs, and videotapes been ordered and received? Have they been previewed? Does the VCR work? Has the room been scheduled for the satellite or **PictureTel** reception, the use of telephone lines to send and receive video and audio impressions? Have **telephone initiation and reception agreements,** contracts between senders and receivers of PictureTel concerning specifications of the telephone call and who pays for the call, been set? Have the coordinates been set for the satellite dish reception? Has the printed material required for training and follow-up been duplicated? Are enough copies available?

These preparations are all essential to providing a professional presentation. They allow in-depth training to take place without interruption and provide the trainee with a means for review after the session is over.

Delivery: "Show Me"

When demonstrating skills, the trainer must consider the presentation from the trainee's point of view. For example, present the skill with the trainee to your right or left so that the trainee can observe as it is presented. The trainer must speak clearly and distinctly. Mumbling or talking too quickly will only confuse the trainee. The trainer must consider not only what he or she says but also how it is stated. If the trainer's tone of voice implies that the trainee is incompetent, he or she will alienate the trainee. Instead, the trainer should encourage the trainee's efforts, offer praise when a skill is mastered, and always be patient.

Every industry has its own jargon. Trainees should learn the jargon during training. For example, *house count, reg card, no-show, sleeper, full house, late arrival* are all terms used in the industry. Even if the trainee has had previous experience at another lodging property, it is still necessary to review these terms, to be sure that the trainee understands each term as it is used at the establishment where he or she will be working. For example, at a former job, the term *late arrivals* may have referred to guests who arrive after 9:00 p.m.; at the current establishment, however, *late arrival* may refer to anyone arriving after 4:00 p.m.

The presentation should be broken down into logical, sequential steps. The step-by step procedure that was previously prepared will allow the front office manager to present the material in an orderly fashion. Trainees will understand such straightforward instructions as "Press this key on the keyboard to activate the registration menu" more easily than they will understand "Here is the registration menu . . . Oh, wait a minute. Let's go back to the reservation menu to see something . . ." Printed material that outlines the procedure will help the trainee to learn the skill with practice.

The trainer is encouraged to think out loud, explaining every step and its importance as the skill is demonstrated. The trainee can then logically follow the demonstration. If there are questions, the trainee will feel more comfortable asking them. This communication process also encourages the trainer, who can observe whether the trainee is picking up on the skill. The more the trainee is involved in the process, the more likely learning will occur.

After training is complete, a front office manager should watch how the employee performs on the job. If skills are performed correctly, it is a good indication that the training has been successful. Conversely, if the employee is confused or makes mistakes, it is possible that a trainer wasn't stopping to make sure that the trainee was following along. As with anything else, being a good trainer comes with experience.

Methods of Presentation

The methods a trainer selects to train an employee will depend on the particular topic being presented. Clerical and computer skills are usually taught by demonstration and on-the-job training. Maintaining customer relations is usually handled with role-playing, videotaping and subsequent analysis of role-playing, or viewing and analysis of commercially prepared videos or cable network programs.

Fig: 5.6

Skill Demonstration

In **skill demonstration,** the trainer demonstrates specific tasks required to complete a job. The trainer will perform a skill in a sequential manner and provide the trainee with an opportunity to practice, with the benefit of the trainer's being there to offer constructive feedback.

On-the-Job Training

On-the-job training is a process in which the employee observes and practices a task while performing his or her job. This method has been a mainstay of training in the hospitality industry. The planning and development of a training program and the organization of training sessions must be incorporated into on-the-job training if they are to be successful. This method trains the new employee to perform tasks on an "as-needed" basis: the employee learns a skill only when he or she has to use it on the job. With this method, however, the demands of the business come first, and training takes a backseat.

A consequence of failing to follow through is that the employee is never taught the correct procedures for performing a task. When this occurs, it means that the ground on which a good training program is founded—planning, development, organization, delivery, and follow-up procedures—has been undermined. The consequence is an employee who does not have all the skills necessary to do the most efficient job.

Role-Playing

Role-playing gives the trainee an opportunity to practice a customer service situation by acting out the role before actually being required to do the job. The front office staff must often act as a sounding board for complaints and as a problem solver, even when the problem had nothing to do with the front office. Experience has taught us that, sooner or later, every front desk clerk will have a customer with a guaranteed reservation when there are no vacancies, a customer who has been given a key to a room that has not been cleaned, or a customer who must wait a long time to gain admittance to a guest room.

The options available to handle such situations are very often not communicated to new employees. Only by trial and error do they learn to find other accommodations at another hotel when the hotel is overbooked, to offer a sincere apology and provide another room to the guest who has been sent to a dirty room, or to suggest a snack in the dining room or provide directions to the patio lounge to a guest who must wait an hour to get into a room. Role-playing allows the new employee to confront these situations before they actually occur. The goal is that when such situations really do occur, the employee will be able to act professionally and offer service with a smile.

If the hotel has the equipment to videotape employees, trainees can be taped during role-playing sessions. The tape can then be reviewed with the employee to provide feedback on his or her performance. The trainer can analyze the employee's eye contact, clarity of diction, talking speed, poise, manner of dress, and posture. This method is very valuable in preparing new employees to handle the stress of a busy front desk or an irate telephone caller.

Commercial Videos

Several commercially prepared videotapes are offered by the Educational Institute of the American Hotel & Lodging Association to front office managers to use in training front office employees. These tapes show customer service situations, enabling the new employee to see how other front office employees handle customer relations. The trainer should preview the tapes and prepare a list of discussion questions to be sure the employee understands the purpose of the tape and can apply on the job what he or she has seen.

Distance Learning

New inroads have been made in **distance learning,** providing educational and training opportunities anywhere, anytime, and at any place, through **Hospitality Television**

(HTV), a commercial hospitality educational organization based in Louisville, Kentucky, that provides satellite broadcasts to hotels, restaurants, and food service facilities. HTV offers training segments on such topics as team building, marketing strategies, customer service, and sales building in food and beverage areas that allow hospitality managers to train their employees while on the job. This training has similar applications for front office operations. For instance, a manager can choose a particular training session and have several different shifts of employees watch it at various times throughout that week. Later on, the manager can use this information as a basis for training sessions.

Trial and Error: “Let Me Do It”

At this stage of the training process, the new employee demonstrates the skill to the trainer, who observes the initial attempt and offers constructive criticism of his or her performance. Here, the behavioural objective is useful, as the trainer can use it to determine whether the employee is performing the skill according to desired standards.

The trainee should be encouraged to perform the procedure as often as necessary to master it and meet the objective. The trainer may offer tips on how much practice other employees needed to learn this particular skill. Also, by encouraging trainees, saying things like, “Many employees must practice this five or six times before they catch on and come up to speed” will let the trainee know that instant mastery of the skill is not expected. The trainer should specify how long the trial-and-error period will last. Additional training may be required.

The step-by-step training procedure will be very helpful to the trainee in performing the skill. The parts of the skill demonstration that were confusing or fuzzy will be clarified through individual effort.

Follow-up: “Check My Progress”

The trainer must follow up with trainees after the programme has been completed. This is a necessary final element in a sound training programme. The trainer may develop a **training tickler file,** a database that keeps track of training sessions and alerts trainers to important upcoming dates for each new employee, listing the name of the training session, date of the session, comments, and date for follow-up.

Administering a Training Programme

Planning the training programme includes making provisions for administering it. Many details must be coordinated. Accurate but flexible schedules for offering training sessions must be set and maintained. Progress charts on employee training should be produced and displayed. Content preparation and duplication of training materials must be completed in a timely fashion.

The responsibility of administering the training programme rests with the front office manager. If this responsibility is delegated to an assistant in the front office or human resources department, details of administration need to be discussed with that person. Effective training for front office positions is not easy to apply in the hospitality industry. The constant flow of people at the front desk, registrations and special events, telephone calls, emergencies, vendor calls, and other demands require the front office manager to be able to balance the needs of the moment with those of the future. However, if quality hospitality services and products are to be available, training procedures for new employees must be well planned and developed.

Cross-Training

Even the most basic training programmes must make provisions for developing employee skills that are useful to the organization. The unpredictable nature of business volume and employee availability in the hotel industry calls for a staff that is very versatile. **Cross training,** which means training employees for performing multiple tasks and jobs, is key.

A front office staff member who is able to perform multiple jobs has rescued many a front office manager during a crisis. Cross training will get a front office manager out of many tight situations only if he or she has planned for it. Through training and maintaining accurate records that indicate which employees can handle other job responsibilities, cross-training can be vital in the hotel business. If cross-training is to be provided, this should be built into a job description and pay rate. However, before planning for cross-training, all managers must be aware that some labour unions prohibit the practice of assigning no contractual duties, and in this case, cross-training would not be viable.

Developing a Trainer

Careful consideration should be given to selecting the individual who will train new employees. This person should have a professional attitude and provide trainees with positive attitudes and enthusiasm for their positions. The selected person should be in management or be a senior staff employee. The trainer must also be very well versed in all procedures pertaining to the employee's job and familiar with training methods.

Knowledge of performing tasks comes with practice after formal training. In a training session, there is no substitute for experience. The trainee will inevitably have specific questions about particular tasks, and the trainer must be able to answer them accurately and completely. Such answers are not always found in policy manuals and training handbooks— they are often learned only through hands-on experience.

The ability to teach is very important. The trainer must be able to plan the session in a logical, incremental fashion. It is also critical that the trainer possess good communication skills. The training session may include demonstrations, discussions, and workshops. The trainer should also be familiar with all front office equipment and know how to prepare printed instructions and how to operate audiovisual equipment. He or she should be familiar with the basic steps of the training process. Finally, trainers should try to empathize with the new employee, perhaps by recalling how inadequate they felt when they were new on the job. Patience is important, as is careful explanation. Trainers who give hurried explanations discourage questions and, as a result, end up with trainees who feel unprepared to do their jobs.

The trainer must also have a professional and positive personal view that supports the organization's goals of providing high-quality services and products, maximizing profits, and controlling costs.

Experienced managers are well aware of the skilled senior employee; who has mastered the skills involved in a job but holds a negative attitude toward the company or the management that represents the company. It is best not to enlist the assistance of such employees in training new hires. Managers are responsible for molding attitudes, teaching skills, and passing knowledge on to their employees. Exposing new employees to an unprofessional, negative attitude during training undermines the purpose of the training sessions. The trainer should represent the company and demonstrate good employer employee relations.

Further Reading:

- ***Debra F. Cannon, Catherine M. Gustafson, (2013), Training and Development for the Hospitality Industry (EI)***
- ***Michael J. O'Fallon, Denney G. Rutherford, (2011), Hotel Management and Operations***
- ***Kaye (Kye-Sung) Chon, Thomas Maier, (2010), Welcome to Hospitality: An Introduction***