

CHAPTER 6

Training and Developing Employees to Serve

**HOSPITALITY PRINCIPLE: TRAIN YOUR EMPLOYEES,
THEN TRAIN THEM SOME MORE**

The how and why of every operation may be clear as day to you, but it's clear as mud to a brand new employee. You wouldn't believe the number of employees who say "I never could figure out exactly what they wanted me to do." They usually say that on their way out the door.

—T. Scott Gross, *Positively Outrageous Service*

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading this chapter, you should understand:

- The importance of training and development to hospitality organizations.
- The principles and methods used by hospitality organizations to train and develop their employees.
- Methods used by hospitality organizations to measure the effectiveness of training.

KEY TERMS AND CONCEPTS

external training
 internal training
 mentoring
 coaching
 apprenticeship

on-the-job training
 cross-functional training
 classroom training
 simulation
 audiovisual training

computer-assisted instruction
 training at home
 employee development

Heskett, Sasser, and Hart tell the story about a bellman at a Sheraton Hotel who when confronted with an unusual problem implemented an ingenious solution.¹ A departing guest had locked his car keys in his trunk while checking out. The car was parked in the middle of the driveway that handled all the arriving and departing traffic and, if not immediately moved, would bring the entire check-in/check-out process to a halt. The bellman called for a floor jack, which he had had the foresight to store away nearby, jacked the car up, and rolled it away from the middle of the driveway. He told the guest he had called for a locksmith, estimated how long it would take for the locksmith to arrive, and promised to keep the guest informed as events unfolded. The traffic problem was solved, the guest's car problem was promptly addressed, and the guest was spared the embarrassment of being the cause of everyone else's delay.

Teaching such resourcefulness to new employees is difficult, but every new employee in the area learned from the bellman's example what a Sheraton employee is expected to do to solve a guest's problem. The bellman had the big picture: He knew that a creative solution was expected of him, and he delivered one.

Len Berry and colleagues identified in their extensive research five key factors that customers use to judge the overall quality of service.² Of these five, four are directly related to the ability of the service employee to deliver service in the way the customer expects, and the fifth, on tangibles, addresses the appearance of the service employee. The first four factors are reliability (the ability of the organization and its employees to deliver service consistently, reliably, and accurately), responsiveness (the willingness of the organization's employees to provide prompt service and help customers), assurance (the employee's knowledge, courtesy, and ability to convey trust), and empathy (the employee's willingness to provide caring and individualized attention to each customer).

While the hospitality organization's service product, environment, and nonhuman components of the delivery system are clearly important in forming the guest's impression of the guest experience, guestologists know that the individual hospitality employee delivering the service can make or break the organization's relationship with the guest in each and every encounter, or moment of truth. Service marketing scholar Mary Jo Bitner sums up the research on this subject: "First and foremost, customer satisfaction depends directly and most immediately on the management and monitoring of individual service encounters."³ Everyone remembers a truly bad service experience that was caused by an indifferent, uncaring, discourteous, or ignorant employee. One awful experience can overshadow the rest of the outstanding experiences that the customer may have had with the organization. The customer may never return. In addition, that customer may tell everyone within hearing about the one bad experience, so no one who hears will come either and, even worse, this customer may create a blog or Web site and describe the bad experience. Disney estimates that each guest has seventy-four service encounters in a

single visit to its theme parks.⁴ Disney managers know how important it is to manage every one of these encounters, by selecting and training the right people to provide the consistent quality of guest service that customers expect.

The impact of a negative experience on the organization's reputation can be devastating. The disappointed guest won't come back and will spread the bad word. Excellent hospitality organizations recognize the value of investing time and money on employee training and development to prevent service disasters. Engineers can design an efficient service delivery system for a great service product, and the human resources department can select the right people, but those efforts are not enough. Companies that consistently deliver high-quality guest experiences also extensively and continuously train their employees.

EMPLOYEE TRAINING

In the United States alone, roughly \$100 billion is spent annually on organizational training. Although this figure translates to about \$800 per employee on average, the best organizations spend a lot more. The Ritz-Carlton hotel company, for example, provides a minimum of 310 hours of training for new employees within their first year. They also pair new employees with mentors to ensure that the former understand how to do their jobs successfully.⁵ Overall, they spend 10 percent of their payroll cost on training.⁶ The Ritz-Carlton knows the value of ensuring that employees have the ability, skills, and knowledge to deliver the high-quality service that their customers expect.

Hospitality organizations face the special challenge of training not only in the required job or task skills; they must also teach the server how to solve inevitable problems creatively and how to interact positively with guests. A car going down the assembly line doesn't care if the auto worker has a bad attitude. The customer facing the bartender at a private club, the front desk agent at a hotel, or the ticket seller at an amusement park certainly does. Guest service employees must be trained to do the required job task consistently for each guest in real time with a sense of sincere caring, with many people looking over their shoulder. This is a major training task. It goes far beyond the simple requirements of training someone to mix a martini, check in a guest to the proper hotel room, or receive money and make change.

We shall describe three exemplary training programs, to show how outstanding organizations train their employees.

Training at Starwood Hotels

Starwood Hotels and Resorts Worldwide has an extensive portfolio of hotel brands—Sheraton, Le Méridien, Four Points by Sheraton, The Luxury Collection, Westin, Element, W Hotels, Aloft Hotels, and St. Regis—and uses a correspondingly extensive training program to ensure that they deliver the proper service product for each distinctive brand. For Starwood Hotels, the service product is all about being “on brand,” and so employees must fully understand what that means.

As in most companies, new Starwood employees receive an orientation. They learn about the brand of the hotel for which they now work, the history of that specific brand and Starwood Hotels in general, and something about the entire line of Starwood brands. This general orientation sets up the next three phases of training, which over roughly the next two years are designed to build and shape employee attitudes, skills, and behaviors. These next three phases deliver what Starwood calls *service culture training*.

The phases are all about teaching employees what it means to be on brand. While the general training strategy may be universal for all Starwood Hotels, the programs are customized to each individual brand. The first phase, delivered within the first few months of employment, lays the foundation. It emphasizes the idea of branding and its link to customer loyalty. Through classroom content, shared experiences, and storytelling, new employees learn each brand's core values. They also learn the brand's success profile, which describes what success looks like for an employee of that brand.

The second phase of training, delivered a few months later, emphasizes how the employee can bring the brand's core values to life. Again, all the training is aimed at making every aspect of employee and customer experiences on brand, including specific words (e.g., employees at Westin are called "associates"; employees at W Hotels are called "talent"), conversational tone, background music, customer interactions, and so on.

The third phase of the training emphasizes how employees should be "living the brand." While the first two phases are delivered mainly through classroom instruction, the third phase takes place in a variety of non-classroom settings. It includes activities in pre-shift meetings, e-learning modules, video content, and self-learning exercises.

Overall, Starwood sees training as essential to its success. In their effort to build world-class brands, Starwood's management recognizes that all employees need to understand the unique culture, approach, and attitude associated with the brands for which they work. They believe that delivering an exceptional service experience unique to each brand will build customer loyalty to that brand, and ultimately financial success.

Training at Disney

Disney uses an extensive training program to teach new employees how to do their assigned jobs and how to deal with guests in a manner consistent with guest expectations about what the Disney experience should be and how employees who deliver it should act. Visitors to Walt Disney World Resort not only assume that employees will be competent at the technical aspects of their jobs but also have high expectations about the level of employee caring, consistency, and enthusiasm. While a street cleaner inside the Magic Kingdom can quickly learn the mechanics of operating a pickup broom and dustpan, learning how to do it the Disney way takes more time. The street sweeper is to many guests the always-handy expert on where everything is, the available extra person to snap a group photo, or the symbol of continuing reassurance that the park is clean, safe, and friendly for all. To prepare that person properly for those multiple roles is an essential training task.

Disney's innovative Traditions training program is made mandatory for all new employees from street sweepers to senior management. The program teaches everyone the company's history, achievements, quality standards, and philosophy; details the responsibilities of new cast members in creating the Disney show; and provides a tour of the property. It becomes the first exposure for new employees to the culture that unites all Disney cast members in a common bond. Here, they are taught the four parts of the Disney mission in their order of importance: safety, courtesy, show, and efficiency. They also receive an introduction to company policies and procedures, a summary of recreational and social benefits available, and an introduction and orientation to each cast member's new work area. Above all, and regardless of their job assignments, cast members learn that their foremost job requirement is creating happiness in guests. A supervisor or mentor then teaches the new employee the necessary job skills. The Traditions training is a combination of classroom experiences, with both instructors and interactive videos at Disney University, which

is later followed by on-the-job training. After a set period of time, the new cast members are evaluated to ensure that the training provided was sufficient to teach them the Disney way and their individual job responsibilities.

Wall-to-Wall Training at Scandinavian Airline Services

Other organizations also appreciate the value of including every employee in a training program. When Jan Carlzon took over the ailing Scandinavian Airline Services (SAS) in 1980, he immediately recognized the deficiencies in the airline's strategy and in its employees' understanding of the airline's mission. He launched a service quality training program for all 20,000 employees that eventually cost several million dollars at a time when SAS was losing \$17 million a year. Because it involved training every employee throughout the airline, this concept became known as wall-to-wall training. Karl Albrecht, the author of *At America's Service*, says, "He [Jan Carlzon] wanted the message [of service quality importance] presented in its original, compelling, unfiltered, undiminished form to every SAS employee."⁷ Albrecht suggests that this was the first time a major corporation used a 100 percent training process to help create an organization-wide cultural change. Every employee, from shop workers to top managers, went through a two-day workshop entitled *The New SAS*.

This program was so successful in creating a total organizational enthusiasm for service excellence that Carlzon initiated a second program in 1983. This follow-up was designed to teach everyone in the organization how to read the company's financial statements. Carlzon believed that if employees could understand these statements, they would better understand where the revenues came from, where the money went, how much it cost to run the company, and how much each employee could influence profit. Carlzon said, "I didn't think I could get a 1,000 percent improvement, but I knew I could get one percent from 1,000 smaller things." The success of these wall-to-wall training efforts at SAS encouraged other organizations to train their entire workforce, including British Airways, which trained all its 37,000 employees.⁸

Hospitality service providers should be trained not only in the skills necessary to deliver the service and interaction expected; they should also be taught the company's cultural values, practices, strategies, products, and policies. This knowledge helps them figure out how to fix a problem when a customer is unhappy. Unless they understand the corporate values and beliefs, they cannot know what the company expects them to do. Because the guest defines the quality and value of the guest experience, hospitality service providers should also learn about their customers' expectations, competitors' services and strategies, industry trends and developments, and the general business environment. Even a cab driver needs to know more than how to drive a car to meet the service expectations of the rider in the back seat.

Berry's Five Training Principles

Len Berry recommends that service companies, including hospitality organizations, should follow five key principles in developing an effective training strategy⁹:

1. Focus on critical skills and knowledge.
2. Start strong and teach the big picture.
3. Formalize learning as a process.
4. Use multiple learning approaches.
5. Seek continuous improvement.

We shall discuss each of these in turn.

Critical Skills

Berry's first principle involves identifying the skills that service employees simply must have. A hospitality organization can identify these critical skills through a systematic analysis of the service, delivery systems, and staff. They can also determine them by asking their guests and employees. The guests can tell you what employee skills are related to their own satisfaction, and employees can be trained to ask the guests what it takes. The organization can survey regular customers who know the business well. Employees should become involved in the design of training as they have a pretty good idea of what critical skills they need for their positions. Ask the best service providers in the organization. Study the servers who do things well to understand what everyone else needs to learn. Study what the best do and what they know.

The Big Picture

In an earlier chapter, we stressed the importance of teaching the organization's culture to give employees a way to make sense out of their jobs and how they do them. The best organizations do this consistently and well to show employees the big picture. Teaching the big picture means teaching employees the organization's overall values, purposes, and culture, and how what they do helps the organization succeed. This is what Jan Carlzon did with SAS, and it paid handsome dividends for this organization. Once he told the employees what things they did that helped and what they did that hurt the organization, they could understand for themselves how their performance and skills added to the airline's success.

New employees in any organization are usually eager to learn the organization's core values and what the company is all about, so they can see how their jobs fit into the big picture. When an employee is later confronted with a problem situation that doesn't exist in a handbook or training manual, the core values learned and accepted during training should lead that employee to do the right thing for the customer. Since so many situations in services are unplanned and unplannable, teaching the big picture and the culture's core values is especially critical. People who are taught the values and beliefs from the first day are far more likely to make the right choice for the customer and the organization when the situation calls for both personal judgment and decisive action.

Formalized Learning

Formalizing learning refers to the process of building learning into the job, making learning mandatory for everyone, and institutionalizing that expectation. Give employees learning opportunities, and do it on company time. By putting their money where their values are, the best hospitality organizations send a strong message to employees that learning is vital to the organization and that everyone must participate.

Gaylord Palms has made a strong commitment to employee learning and linked formal training programs to the company's mission and strategic objectives. For example, it set an objective of promoting from within and designed a curriculum to teach its employees how to achieve that objective.

Varied Approaches

Because different employees will learn differently, using a variety of learning approaches is also important. Berry recommends leaving no opportunity unexplored. In addition to traditional methods, he suggests that organizations sponsor book clubs, send employees out to observe exceptional organizations in the service industry to benchmark against the best, and constantly practice the necessary skills through a variety of means.

Continuous Improvement

A commitment to continuous improvement is essential. The initial training found at most organizations provides the KSAs that enable employees to begin doing their jobs. But training shouldn't stop there. The best service organizations and their employees want continuing employee improvement through on-the-job training and supervision, special training sessions, video demonstrations, online courses, and the full range of training methods available to modern organizations.

DEVELOPING A TRAINING PROGRAM

What Do We Need to Improve?

Training should always be preceded by a needs assessment to determine if perceived organizational problems or weaknesses should be addressed by training or by some other strategy. What do we need to improve? Will training give it to us? For example, a service problem might be initially identified as a training issue, to be solved by offering servers a short training session. Upon closer examination, however, the issue might turn out to be a fault in the nonhuman part of the service delivery system. For example, constant guest complaints about slow beverage service at a local restaurant might seem at first to require training for the servers. But maybe the coolers in the beverage service area are too small. Or perhaps there are simply not enough servers on staff to manage the volume of orders. All the server training in the world cannot correct a flaw in some other part of the service delivery system.

Needs assessment takes place at three levels: organizational, task, and individual. The organizational analysis seeks to identify which skills and competencies the organization needs and whether or not it has them already. If, for example, the organizational analysis reveals a need for several new restaurant managers in the Boston market and people to fill that need are not available, the organization would initiate a training program to prepare either existing employees or new entrants to be restaurant managers in that market.

The second level of analysis is the task. What tasks need to be performed? Are they being done well, or is training needed? Most training in the hospitality industry is at the task level, either to prepare new or newly promoted employees to perform the necessary job tasks or to retrain existing employees when existing task requirements change. At the third level, that of the individual, the organization reviews the performance of people doing tasks to determine if they are performing up to job standards. For example, low customer satisfaction scores may reveal that employees need to be better trained in customer interaction skills. Once the organization has assessed its needs at these three levels, it can set up training programs to meet them. Table 6.1 shows examples of training programs commonly found in the hospitality industry.

Solving the Guest's Problem

The needs assessment also leads to identifying the objectives of training and learning goals. If the needs analysis reveals a lack of some important employee skill, the training objective would be to ensure that each employee needing that specific skill to perform effectively has it. If, for example, guest comment cards show general dissatisfaction with the effectiveness of a hotel's front desk agents in checking guests in and out, the training objective would be to improve their mastery of the check-in and check-out procedures.

With the objectives known, specific learning goals should be specified. It should be clear to both the trainer and trainee what is supposed to be learned during the training process. Continuing the above example, what do front desk agents need to learn in order

to improve their mastery of the check-in and check-out procedures? Depending on the situation, it could require better customer service skills, or perhaps better knowledge of the company's information systems. Once you are clear on your learning goals, it is much more straightforward to design a training program to accomplish those specific needs. This is what is ultimately needed for a training program in order to improve employee job performance.

Guest feedback about service problems or failures should serve as an important trigger for evaluating relevant parts of the service delivery system and for considering training as one way to solve the problems. It should concern you if your guests are dissatisfied with your employees' performance, whether your needs assessment has revealed a problem or not. Training may or may not be the answer. Service failure could be a result of strategic issues (misidentifying the needs of the market), inadequate staffing (providing an insufficient quantity of staff to deliver services in expected time frames), poor selection (hiring people without the right skills or capability to learn the job), or delivery service issues (not having the right equipment to do the job correctly). The environment may cause a service failure (such as an approaching hurricane or a major earthquake that forces a resort to evacuate), and a poorly designed service delivery system can lead to poor service (e.g., the layout of the hotel kitchen and the hotel's rooms makes it impossible for room service to deliver food while still hot). Of course, training cannot fix the inadequacies that led to these failures. However, if you have enough employees to handle the demand, if your systems are properly designed, if the environment or setting doesn't interfere, if employees are ready and willing to perform, and if they have the capability to learn, training can give them the specific skills they need to provide the desired service quality and value to the customer.

Effective hospitality organizations constantly measure and monitor the performance of their staff, systems, and service products to identify problems. Many problems in delivering the guest experience are caused by the people comprising the delivery system. If managers learn about these problems quickly, either from surveying guests or from their own observations, and identify their connection to training issues, they can quickly institute corrective training to address the issue before other guests have the same problems.

External Training

Some large organizations can afford internal training departments. Others rely on individual managers, high-performing employees, and supervisors to provide the training for both new and existing employees. If companies choose to go outside, they generally turn to training consultants or independent training organizations. These **external training** companies range from small organizations with an expertise and reputation in training within some specialized area of a particular industry to large multinationals that offer training programs on just about any skill, area, or topic imaginable.

Universities and colleges are also important sources of training as their faculty members frequently have job or industry expertise and the teaching experience and ability to convey it. Many universities offer night, week-end, or online classes to accommodate degree-seeking employees who cannot attend classes during the typical workweek. Also offered are various forms of executive education, including short courses during the summer, periodic courses over the year, or custom training programs developed for specific companies. Universities offer a lot of potential options for delivering training to workforce members wanting to supplement their education and skills. The people teaching knowledge and skills to college students can also teach your employees.

TABLE 6.1 Examples of the Types of Training Programs Offered in the Hospitality Industry

Mandatory training
EEO/diversity training
Orientation
Safety training
Skills-oriented training
Basic skills training
Computer training
Crisis training
Cross-functional training
Language training
Retraining
Specialized skills training
Competency-oriented training
Communications training
Customer service training
Ethics/values training
Remedial/basic education
Team training
Wellness/health training
Managerial training
Change-management training
Cross-cultural training
Leadership training
Performance feedback and management training

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While many companies contract with training organizations that develop and deliver customized on-site training, others send their employees to more generic, often less expensive, external programs. If the required training is in a highly specialized area or if only a few people need it, a company-specific program would probably not be worth the expenditure, so employees needing training are sent outside to get it. Advanced techniques of financial management, information systems design and use, Web design, and new marketing strategies are examples of specialized programs frequently offered through universities and other organizations that provide generic training for the general public. These programs may lack specific application to the hospitality industry or firm, but on the plus side they are relatively inexpensive.

Training in even more general topics such as supervision, human relations, and service orientation is frequently available through these same organizations. Universities offer similar programs through their executive development and continuing education programs. These programs can be fairly inexpensive and one or two key employees may be sent to get important training if producing a specially tailored in-house program would cost too much. Frequently, trade associations offer programs that focus on topics of interest to their members, such as working with unions, new purchasing techniques, sanitation in food-service organizations, and the rules and regulations defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act. The common benefit of membership in trade associations is that the organizations can collectively hire an expert consultant, or use someone from a member organization who has mastered a topic to educate and train others in the industry. Trade associations also frequently offer certification programs in topic areas of

interest to their members. The Educational Institute of the American Hotel and Lodging Association, Educational Foundation of the National Restaurant Association, the Professional Convention Management Association, and the Destination Marketing Association International have all developed training products for their members.

Internal Training

In-house training departments are found in larger hospitality organizations. Every major company has an **internal training** unit that provides programs to its employees. Hilton, Hyatt, Marriott, McDonald's, Holiday Inn Worldwide, Sheraton Hotels, Darden and Disney are all multiunit organizations that have internal training departments. Some companies have even set up their own "universities," such as The Ritz-Carlton's *Leadership Center*, instituted in 2000.¹⁰ With courses like *Onboarding New Talent ... Everything Matters*, *The 21st Century Luxury Experience*, and *It's All About Leadership*, the center supports the growth and expansion of the company's products and services and helps provide training to the company's employees. The Leadership Center also provides training to other companies interested in learning about The Ritz-Carlton's approach to customer service and employee development. In fact, roughly one third of the participants in the center's programs come from outside the company.¹¹

Training Costs

Although some organizations keep all training in-house to preserve organizational security and culture, the usual determinant of whether to use in-house or outside training is cost. The number and location of employees who need training and the level of expertise they need to acquire determine the cost. If only a few employees need highly technical training, it will be expensive for the organization to deliver it. If the employees are scattered at multiple locations, the training will cost even more. But if those employees need only basic skills training, the organization will probably offer it internally. If many employees at a single location need training, the organization will probably find a way to do its own training. The high employee turnover that is a basic problem for many hospitality organizations can influence the decision. An organization of 2,500 employees with an annual employee turnover rate of 80 percent has the same basic training requirements for new employees as an organization of 20,000 employees with a 10 percent turnover.

Likewise, the level of expertise that the training must develop has an important impact on the training cost. If considerable employee expertise will be required, training costs will be high. Offering 100 training hours to 10 employees who will be responsible for operating a sophisticated point-of-sale electronic system, like ticket sellers in a theme park, might cost about as much as offering 5 training hours to 200 employees hired to work at a fast-food drive-through window.

TRAINING METHODS

The most common training method is on-the-job training. Other common methods are classroom presentations, simulations, audiovisual programs, home study, and computer-assisted instruction (see Table 6.2). Training programs deliver their content in varied ways. Many rely on extensive interpersonal contact, such as coaching and mentoring. Other training programs use a combination of presentation techniques with increasing emphasis on Web-based methods, as computers have become more widely available and people more comfortable with this way of learning. Table 6.2 shows a variety of training methods, ranging from those with high personal contact to those with high reliance on technology and no or little personal contact. We now discuss the characteristics of each of these programs.

TABLE 6.2 Different Methods of Employee Training

Mentoring	A formal relationship between junior and senior colleagues. The mentor gives advice regarding functioning in the organization and career development.
Coaching	One person who has necessary knowledge instructs other individuals on a one-to-one or small group basis.
Apprenticeship	Trainees spend a set period of time learning a craft or trade under the guidance of an experienced master.
On-the-job training	The employee learns the job by doing. The individual is placed in the work situation and a supervisor or coworker instructs the employee on how the job is done directly at the work station.
Cross-functional training	The trainee moves through a series of job assignments over specific time frames.
Classroom training	Content is delivered to trainees using a lecture-based format.
Simulation	The employee practices the job in a simulated work environment.
Audiovisual training	Training using video, such as through DVDs or online content.
Computer-assisted instruction	A computer program guides the trainee through a preprogrammed training course. The training is conducted on a computer, often at the schedule of the trainee, and at the trainee's desired pace.
Training at home	Self-paced and self-directed learning where individuals learn the material in his or her own time, and away from the job site.

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Mentoring

Mentoring is a relationship in which an experienced manager is paired up with an individual early in the latter's career or when new to the company. The purpose of the relationship is for the experienced employee to convey interpersonal, organizational, and developmental skills. Mentoring can help employees acclimate to a new organization quicker, reduce stress by providing an efficient way for employees to get help, and allow employees to better develop their own careers within the company by using the advice of their more experienced mentors.

Research has shown mentoring to be associated with a number of beneficial outcomes, including higher job performance, motivation, satisfaction, helping of others, and lower turnover and stress.¹² It is important to point out that while the research shows a number of statistically significant relationships associated with mentoring, the size of these effects is modest. Thus, while beneficial, the overall value of mentoring should not be overestimated.

Coaching

Coaching involves a relationship between an individual (a teacher, supervisor, or trainer) and either an individual or a team of employees. Coaching requires a strong relationship between the coach and the individual(s) being trained, but it is not the same as mentoring. Whereas mentoring focuses on providing career advice, coaching focuses on building skills or competencies.

Coaching requires opportunities for both observation and feedback. Coaches need to be able to explain appropriate behaviors, articulate why certain actions need to be taken, provide suggestions to improve performance, and reinforce desired behaviors. Coaching may be conducted by outside consultants, specialists within the organization, supervisors, or by particularly skilled peers.

Apprenticeships

An **apprenticeship** is a training program that combines on-the-job training with related instruction so that a worker learns how to perform a highly skilled craft or trade. In exchange for the instruction, the apprentice works for the trainer or training organization for an agreed period of time. Apprenticeship programs can be run by individual employees, trade groups, unions, or employer associations.

Apprenticeships are historically and most typically found in construction or related jobs (e.g., carpenter, electrician, plumbing). In the hospitality industry, though, apprenticeships are still common in food-related occupations (e.g., baker, butcher, chef, pastry chef).

In the United States, apprenticeships need to be certified by the Department of Labor. Practices vary widely around the world. While apprenticeships are not very common in the United States, they are a major component of the educational system in Germany and cover many more occupations than in the United States. Apprenticeships are still common around the world, and while they share some common elements (i.e., time spent under the supervision of a master of the given craft), the nature of the programs varies by country.

On-the-Job Training

One of the best ways to learn something is to actually do it. **On-the-job training** comprises having an experienced employee help a new employee actually do the job. One-on-one supervised experiences are a typical on-the-job training method. The trainee may attend a short classroom introduction and then go to a work station, where a supervisor or trainer can demonstrate, observe, correct, and review the employee performing the required tasks. Because the skills required to do some jobs are often unique, the only cost-effective training method to perform them is to put new employees into the actual job and let them learn the job by doing them in real time, under close supervision.

Hospitality organizations use the on-the-job training technique extensively because many tasks are best learned by doing, while supervisors or coworkers with more experience are standing by to assist. Veteran servers help new ones; a new front desk clerk will often quickly find himself checking guests into the hotel, but with an experienced employee standing close by to ensure that all procedures are properly followed. Many a small organization, like Ralph's Restaurant on the corner, does the same thing. If Ralph can't hire someone with the experience he needs for one of the restaurant's many jobs, or can't afford to send a new employee to an external training course, then the most efficient and cost-effective training method is for Ralph to teach the new employee "Ralph's Way" of washing dishes, making spaghetti, or serving meals.

If managers are conducting the training, they themselves may benefit from on-the-job training as the training specialists can coach them while training their employees. Jenny Lucas, director of education and development for Loews Hotels, says, "Our training managers are out there, watching training being delivered, watching managers in action, doing spot checks, and giving feedback afterward."¹³



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New chefs often train under the watchful eye and careful guidance of a master chef.

Besides sometimes being the only way to train an employee in a job with varied and changing duties, on-the-job training has added advantages. First, employees find out directly what the job requires because they are actually doing it. There is no question about how well the training carries over to the actual task, because the trainee is *doing* the actual task. Another advantage is that the company is actually getting some productivity out of new employees, whereas if they were in classrooms, they would not be contributing to achieving organizational goals.

Of course, on-the-job training has its drawbacks. Because the trainee is actually doing the job, errors due to lack of experience may directly affect the customer and the organization's reputation for service. The impact of poor service delivered by untrained new employees can be compounded if management does not take its commitment to on-the-job training seriously. Jerry Newman describes his first day on the job at a cash register in a fast-food restaurant.¹⁴ At first, a manager stood with him and gave him some guidance, but once the lunch rush started, the manager disappeared to do other tasks. Although he had told Jerry "I'll be here if you need me," Jerry was left totally on his own. Customers noticed his poor performance and were not favorably impressed.

On-the-job training can be a very effective way to help employees learn a new job, but it needs to be carefully planned and implemented. Is the job one that can actually be learned by doing? Are experienced employees ready, willing, and able to provide the necessary assistance? What are the business- and service-related consequences of having a new employee learn by doing on the job? In short, learning by doing can be a great way to learn, but companies that want to preserve their reputation for providing excellent customer service do not use it to force new employees to "sink or swim."

Cross-Functional Training

Cross-functional training enlarges the workforce's capabilities to do different jobs. Gaylord's Opryland Hotel cross-trains its front desk personnel and telephone-reservation

agents so that each can help out the other. The front desk often needs help when many people wish to check in or check out within a short period of time. The hotel has set up a separate registration desk in the lobby, and when the lines at the front desk begin to reach unacceptable levels, these cross-trained agents are called to the separate desk to help serve guests. Some hotels cross-train employees from many departments on how to provide banquet service. On banquet days, current employees can be temporarily redistributed rather than hiring more employees. Since all hospitality organizations have similar variability in their demand patterns, cross-functional training is often necessary to handle the sudden surge in guests at different points in the service delivery system. At the same time, it provides task variety and higher interest levels for employees, which has significant benefits in employee motivation and morale. Cross-functional training is often a win-win-win for guests, hospitality organizations, and employees.

Classroom Training

Another common training method is training in a classroom environment. **Classroom training** can follow a variety of formats. The most usual is the lecture presentation. A knowledgeable expert speaks to employees so that they will learn the necessary skill or knowledge in the available lecture time. This listen-and-learn approach is based on the assumption that an expert can train the uninformed by speaking to them. That this assumption has been questioned by research on how people actually learn doesn't seem to deter its continued use. University teachers and students alike know that not everyone listens and not everyone can learn by listening.

Nonetheless, the method has advantages: It is inexpensive, time efficient, and to the point. If a top performer in the company stands up and tells you what she knows, she may not feel the need to develop elaborate visual aids, instructional screens, or anything else that takes time and money to produce. She and the company may assume that since she has been there, done that, and done it well, she is obviously worth listening to and will have great credibility with employees. Most of the time, these assumptions prove accurate. This strategy should be combined with on-the-job training and mentoring to help reinforce the important points made in the classroom presentation.

Another basic classroom technique is the interactive case study. Here, the organization provides learners with case material for discussion. The material may be related to the skill they need to learn, or it may be material to teach the more general skills of decision making or problem solving. This technique requires a skilled facilitator, to keep the discussion focused and the learners engaged.

More recently, with the increasing organizational emphasis on teams and leadership, team-based training has become popular. Leaderless groups may be given a problem to solve or an issue to address and asked to form collaborative problem-solving teams to tackle it. People learn to work together, but they also learn about discovering and sharing the tremendous amount of knowledge that often exists within a team. Smart managers believe in training their people to take advantage of the wisdom of teams; other managers never discover their value.

The modern approach to classroom learning emphasizes learner involvement and frequently uses a mixture of educational formats to reach as many types of learners as possible. While some can learn from listening or watching, others can learn only by doing. Those facilitating classroom experiences mix short lectures or videos with case or problem discussions with role playing to engage and retain active learner interest.



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Classroom learning provides an efficient means to instruct a large number of employees.

Simulation

While learning by doing is often the most effective way to train new employees in certain areas, the consequences of failure may be too great or expensive to allow the employee to fail in real time with real guests and equipment. Sometimes, employees should learn by practicing a task in a controlled and safe environment, a **simulation**.

Airlines provide the clearest example. They use sophisticated flight simulators to teach their pilots how to fly different airplanes into different airports and how to prepare for emergency situations. They create a virtual airplane with all the controls, physical layout of a cockpit, and simulated motions so that pilots flying the simulator feel like they really are flying an aircraft. You do not want to use on-the-job, real-time training to teach a pilot what to do if two of the airplane's four engines fail or if the airplane flies into a flock of seagulls and has to ditch in New York's Hudson River!

Simulation can be used in a variety of settings. Some hotel companies use employees to act as guests with a complaint in a mock check-in scenario. Often based on real experiences at the hotel, the simulation lets the new employee learn by doing without the risk of mishandling a real situation and losing a real guest's business. One luxury hotel chain uses a simulation for its new bartenders. A preset number of orders come in, and the new bartender has to make the drinks in precise proportions within a certain length of time. To help prepare everyone for the real opening night, new restaurants will often have a mock opening, with chefs making meals and servers taking orders from each other or from local dignitaries who are served a free meal.

Success in a simulation does not automatically mean success in a real situation. And simulations can be a very expensive way to train employees, even if they are not as sophisticated as flight simulators. But in situations where employees need hands-on experience to truly learn how to do their jobs and service failures are costly to risk in real time, simulations can be an effective way to teach employees the skills they need.

Learning in small groups can help develop both skills and the ability to work in teams.

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Simulations provide a safe way for airline pilots to practice their skills without the risk of harming guests.

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Audiovisual Training

Another major training technique involves using videos, either through DVDs or delivered on-line, collectively referred to as **audiovisual training**. Audiovisual training is frequently used in conjunction with a live presentation as a way to bring in new material beyond the expertise of the classroom presenter or to add variety to the presentation. For many hospitality organizations, videos are a cost-effective strategy. A centralized training

department can make or buy video presentations and then ship them to individual units, all over the world if need be, or host them on a Web site. Smaller, independent hospitality organizations can obtain a wealth of video instruction through either commercial retailers or their trade associations. Larger organizations often create their own.

Starwood Hotels uses DVD videos to supplement many aspects of its various training modules. Obviously, having business leaders from the entire company share their experiences with every new employee would be prohibitively costly and time consuming, so Starwood uses a DVD video presentation to provide what it calls *Lessons from Leadership*. The DVD video includes testimonials and examples from leaders throughout the company—from the corporate level (the CEO), to the different business units, to the different divisions, to property leaders—about what the service culture means to them. The use of these realistic on-the-job examples from company leaders helps teach and inspire new employees to deliver the appropriate customer service experience.

In view of the traditionally high turnover in the hotel industry and the constant need to train new employees, an instantly available video is useful and practical. New employees can watch it by themselves anytime and learn the basics of how, for example, housekeeping is to be performed in a W Hotel. Darden's restaurants uses a series of videos to educate new employees about its various restaurant brands, including Red Lobster, Olive Garden, Seasons 52, and Bahama Breeze. New servers learn how the different menu items are to be prepared and served, how guests are to be greeted, and how the waitstaff are supposed to do their job. Darden's goal for its standardized training is to teach its people to provide the same high-quality restaurant experience in every facility throughout the entire chain.

Indeed, one of video training's many advantages is to standardize the presentation of the material so that everyone learns from the same source of information and learns how to do the required tasks in the same way. Being able to offer the same high-quality experience every time in every location is quite important for a multi-unit operation like a chain, franchised restaurant, or branded hotel where guests have standardized expectations about what the organization is supposed to do, how it provides its service, and what it looks like.

DVD and online videos are also relatively cost effective when organizational locations are numerous and widely dispersed. The cost and logistics to send a corporate trainer to every location of a brand every time a new employee is hired would be prohibitive, but sending training DVD videos to every part of the world or providing access to streaming video through the Web is easy. A well-designed and well-produced video can do an excellent job of holding the new employee's attention, portraying outstanding role models of expected service behavior and stressing important points. With professional actors or star employees in a video showing the correct means of providing guest service, a new employee can see far more easily what the expected behavior is than if an instructor spoke for several hours.

Videos can also overcome language barriers. Homewood Suites created a training video to meet the needs of its multilingual housekeeping staff. The videos demonstrate procedures, but no words are used.¹⁵ Truly, a picture is worth a thousand words when it comes to training in the highly diverse hospitality industry.

The making of videos can itself be used as a training technique. The organization can call upon its best employees in the training video's subject area and ask them to create and produce the video. Such a home-made video lets the participants see that the organization appreciates the quality of their job performance, gives them ownership in the training role, and provides live role models for the new employees to follow. Making a video is an enjoyable and status-enhancing recognition reward for service jobs well done, though it takes time away from other activities.

Streaming video, video conferencing, and Webinars (seminars conducted via the World Wide Web) are often used to conduct training simultaneously in multiple locations. Live transmissions allow participants from around the world to ask questions and interact with the instructor. Also, the content can be saved and downloaded as desired by others who need the training but could not participate in the live session.

The cost of broadcasting live training sessions to remote employees is declining rapidly. Once the company has acquired the technology to deliver this sort of training, the incremental cost of additional training sessions can be minimal. After the technology is in place, companies can have their own experts share their knowledge with the entire company, and both present and future employees can learn from the content. The increasing availability of video conference and teleconference facilities, advances in Internet technology, and the escalating costs of sending people to central training locations are making streamed and live video presentations increasingly desirable training options, especially when employees and service units are geographically dispersed. DVDs and videos come quite close to providing the just-in-time education and training that is needed in industries like hospitality where organizational requirements, guest expectations, available technologies, and employees are diverse and change rapidly.

Of course, DVDs and on demand, streaming video have limitations. The key issue is the extent to which managers and new employees take them seriously. Jerry Newman describes one example of being “trained” in the fast-food industry. He was sent into a back closet with a video player and told to come out after he had watched a training video. No one emphasized that the video was important; no one checked to see if Jerry had learned anything; no one even checked to be sure he watched the video. It was simply something that “had to get done” to satisfy a corporate policy. As is true of all forms of training, videos will work only if management is committed to their use and if trainees take them seriously.

Computer-Assisted Instruction

As with all other areas of business, technology has changed the way training can be delivered. **Computer-assisted Instruction**, such as with Webinars and streaming video, can allow interactions between instructor and learners across the world. Expertise can be delivered anytime, anyplace, to anyone who is online. These advances are expanding the reach of much classroom training and are even blurring the distinctions between classroom and at-home training. Computers can help with on-the-job training, as technology can monitor an employee’s speed on check-ins, accuracy in placing orders, and so forth. For example, Choice Hotels has a training initiative called ResCoach. Distributed by CD, the program is a self-paced course that teaches the basics of telephone etiquette and reservations selling. This training is then followed up with on-site workshops, and its effectiveness is tested through three random phone calls each month to every hotel property.¹⁶

Hyatt has created its own Hyatt Leadership Network, which makes hundreds of training programs available to any Hyatt employee anywhere and anytime. If a manager needs refresher training on how to conduct a performance appraisal, there is a program for that. If a new property management system requires employee training on its use, there is a program for that too. The network contains so many training programs that some managers now assign specific topics as part of an employee’s improvement plan to overcome weaknesses identified in a performance review.

The newer technologies mean that colleges and universities no longer have a monopoly on education in their geographical areas. These developments are a boon to the hospitality industry, as many organizations are multi-unit and geographically dispersed. Getting their people to an educational center or a centralized training program is costly, difficult, and sometimes impossible. Getting these same people to log onto the Internet is comparatively easy, and the amount of information, knowledge, and training they can obtain through this medium is enormous. Internet capabilities make just-in-time education a reality as the people needing training can log on to the appropriate site at exactly the time they need it.

Training at Home

Self-study is another major training method, and **training at home** can prove efficient and effective for both employees and organizations. Here, a trade association or private training organization produces materials that people can receive in their homes by mail or online and study at their own learning pace. When they have gone through the materials, they take an exam online, at home, or at a central location often with a proctor. The American Hotel and Lodging Association uses self-study material extensively for programs leading to industry-recognized certification and diplomas. The self-study is ideally backed up with classroom experience, but the geographic dispersion of hotels makes offering classes difficult except in cities where a lot of hotels are clustered. Universities offer online courses, allowing people to take courses on their own time and often at their own pace. Self-study courses work well in the hospitality industry; they provide skill and knowledge training in topics unique to the hotel business at times and locations convenient for employees—after hours and at home.

Further Approaches to Training

Training can be very specific or somewhat general. The specific is typically used for new entrants who must quickly start performing a job skill well to justify their salary. Consequently, the major training costs tend to be for skills training. It can cover a wide variety of topics, ranging from literacy to complex electronic systems. According to the American Management Association, companies report that over one-third of applicants tested by major U.S. companies lacked sufficient reading and math skills to do the job they sought. Some restaurateurs even find it necessary to teach employees basic hygiene, including teaching food handlers how to wash their hands.

Large hotels may need to provide training just to teach new employees to know their way around. The Wynn hotel and resort complex in Las Vegas has a novel training program for new employees. The resort is so large—with dozens of places to eat, an extensive casino environment, many shops, a nightclub, a theatre, and so on—that new employees need the basic skill of knowing to their way around the property. To help acquaint them with the entire facility, they are asked to participate in a scavenger hunt, searching the property for artwork, items, landmarks, and so forth, and in the process they learn about the entire resort.

There are other types of training that companies offer for specific outcomes. For example, *retraining* is often made available to employees who have burned out, have become unable to perform their current jobs because of technological developments, or whose jobs have been eliminated. Disney has operated a retraining program for many years that tries to sprinkle “Pixie Dust” on employees who have become disenchanted with their

present jobs or have otherwise lost their enthusiasm. In the program, it retrains such employees for new jobs that might help them recapture their enthusiasm or rethink why they are unhappy with their existing jobs, to regain the spirit of doing it the way the guests expect.

To encourage employees to be more effective and responsive to guests, outstanding hospitality organizations offer *training in special competencies*, such as working as a team, creative problem solving, communications, relationships, leadership, and guest service orientation. These organizations realize that having the job skills is only part of the service requirement for their employees.

Companies have learned that *diversity training*, attitudinal training, and other efforts to change how people look at other people can have significant payoffs in improving the way their service employees interact with each other and with the many types of guests. There are more than fifty languages spoken by employees at the Waldorf Astoria in New York City, and employees come from an even greater number of different cultural backgrounds. In today's diverse environment, companies need to train employees in how to get along with and understand each other and their guests.

The Message: Guest Service

One benefit of training is to remind the employees of what management thinks is important. Sending people to a training program that focuses attention on service sends a powerful message to all employees that management cares enough about both its commitment to service and its employees to invest time and money in its people to improve service quality. Any training tends to make employees feel more positively about the topic covered because they recognize the training as a visible show of organizational commitment to improve the area.

CHALLENGES AND PITFALLS OF TRAINING

While training can help a company prepare its employees to provide excellent service, problems often arise. Common causes are a failure to establish training objectives, measure results, and analyze training costs and benefits.

Know Your Training Objectives

Training programs can run into trouble if the precise nature and objective of the training are unknown or imperfectly defined, or if the expected outcome of the training is hard to define or measure. Such programs are hard to justify or defend when senior management reviews the training budgets. Typical examples of areas in which the effectiveness of training is difficult to measure are *human relations* and *supervisory skills*. Since these terms are vague and situationally defined, knowing what and how much training to offer to improve trainees in these areas and how to measure results is difficult. Hospitality organizations quite naturally want their employees to have a service orientation, but the concept is as hard to define as it is to know whether the training has resulted in such an outcome. Such training is important, without question. What exactly that training should be and how to measure its effectiveness are much more difficult to determine.

Measuring Training Effectiveness

If you don't know what your training is or is not accomplishing, you cannot know whether it is making your organization more effective. Four basic measurement methods are available to assess training's effectiveness.¹⁷ These approaches range in complexity, expense, and accuracy.

Participant Feedback

The easiest, cheapest, and most commonly used measure of assessing training effectiveness is to simply ask the participants what they think about it. They fill out a questionnaire based on general evaluation criteria and respond to questions such as "How valuable was this training?". Although asking such questions has merit, responses to these questionnaires tend to reflect the entertainment value of the training rather than its effectiveness. Such evaluations, therefore, have relatively little usefulness for accurate program evaluation. They tell you if the participants enjoyed the training, but not much more.

Content Mastery

Another way to assess a training program is to test participants for content mastery. After all, if the point of the training was to learn a specific skill, competency, or content area, it should be possible to design a test to determine whether participants learned what they were supposed to learn. These measures can be as simple as paper-and-pencil tests similar to academic exams or as elaborate as on-the-job demonstrations of how well participants mastered the skill.

Of course, doing well on a test does not mean that the employee will retain that knowledge or use it on the job. Such evaluations also run the risk of having instructors "teach to the test," essentially training people how to do well on the final exam and not necessarily how to be better performing employees.

Behavioral Change

A more advanced level of training evaluation is to assess the behavioral change in the participant. Many people quickly forget what they learn in classroom settings, especially if they don't apply it. "Use it or lose it," as the saying goes. College students often say they learn a subject well enough to get through the final exam and then flush all the information out of their brains. To be effective in any meaningful way, training must be followed by real and lasting behavioral changes when the employee returns to the job. If the training is well designed, and connected to mastering specific service-related behaviors that are reinforced by positive results on the job, then positive, measurable behavioral change should result.

One function of supervisors is to evaluate the behaviors of their subordinates. If the training affects subordinate behaviors, then the training results should be included in supervisory evaluations. Supervisors can observe employee behaviors and assess the extent to which the desired behaviors are exhibited. Companies can also use mystery shoppers to find out what behaviors their employees exhibit when interacting with guests. Feedback from actual customers concerning employee behavior is also a valuable way to learn if the training was effective.

Organizational Performance

The ultimate and most sophisticated level of evaluating training effectiveness is to watch what happens to the measures of overall organizational performance. The training may be well received, the employees may remember most of it upon completion, and they may continue to use it on the job, but the training is useless unless it eventually contributes to overall organizational effectiveness. To maintain the organization's competitive position, the training objectives, and the training program require constant monitoring to make sure they continue to prepare employees to provide the level of service expected by an ever-changing customer.

The problem with this sort of training evaluation is that it is difficult to know precisely how organizational results change due to a specific training program. If booking agents receive training and then room occupancy increases, is this increase a result of the training or changes in the economy? If front desk agents receive customer service training and then scores on measures of customer satisfaction improve, how confidently can the company attribute the gain to the training program? Knowing the exact effects of training on organization-level outcomes is very difficult.

Even so, organizations must try. One way to approach this is to measure changes in key outcomes, like the number of guest complaints before and after training or customer satisfaction ratings. Or an organization could use paid mystery shoppers to sample the level of service before and after the training. The point of any such technique is to measure the value added by training. With no "before" measurement, the organization has little way to know if the measurement after the training represents any improvement. Here, larger organizations have an advantage as they can use people from different parts of their organization to test different types of training and statistically determine whether or not one training type is more effective than another in terms of reducing guest complaints or increasing positive comments. Another strategy might be for the organization to survey the attitudes of its own employees toward guests both before and after the training. Since there is a positive relationship between guest and employee attitudes, measuring employee attitudes can indicate how your guests will perceive the service experience before and after training.

While measuring the impact of training on the organization as a whole is quite challenging, all training programs should nonetheless be implemented with the goal of increasing organizational effectiveness. Training should help make your employees more effective, which should ultimately result in greater customer satisfaction, greater market share, higher profits, and other key results.

Getting Good Value from Training

Training programs have obvious direct costs, but they involve indirect or opportunity costs as well; all the time that trainees and instructors spend away from their regular jobs costs money. Training is too expensive for the organization to train everybody in everything, so it must try to get the best value for its money by using those training programs that give the greatest positive results for the training dollar expended. Too many organizations fall victim to consultants selling programs of unproven usefulness and value. Organizations should make the effort to ascertain the value of each training program, and they should assess if each training program provides the desired results and greater guest satisfaction.

When a Great Training Program Can Hurt You

Sometimes, even a great training program can have negative results. Some companies find hiring trained employees away from competitors is easier and less expensive than

developing their own training programs. For example, employees from The Ritz-Carlton are very marketable, as competing luxury hotels know that these employees have been given excellent preparation and training in their jobs. Similarly, one chain of Japanese steak houses spends almost no money on training its chefs; instead, the owners travel to competing restaurants and try to find chefs who are already excellent at what they do. This restaurant chain finds that providing higher pay to attract another organization's experienced chefs is more cost effective than training new chefs and paying them until they become as proficient as desired. The same sort of "hunting" or "poaching" of employees occurs in many sectors of the service industry, including casino dealers, restaurant servers, and tour guides.

The Ritz-Carlton knows that it risks losing its investment in well-trained employees. Its strategy is to not only provide exceptional training on how to deliver the top-level service in which it takes pride but also to select employees who find their fit into The Ritz-Carlton culture to be so strong that they will stay. The Ritz-Carlton also knows that showing employees opportunities for growth in the company is another way to help retain their highly trained employees. No matter what retention strategies a company uses, the fact remains that it is not only the guests who can recognize exceptional training. Competitors can see it too, and so the risks associated with providing such training should be kept in mind.

EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT

Norman Brinker of Chili's said, "People either shrivel or grow. Commit to helping people help themselves."¹⁸ Walt Disney said, "Get in. Be part of it and then move up."¹⁹ CEOs of the best hospitality organizations agree. They provide many opportunities for employees to grow and develop, and they give employees the opportunity to work their way up through their individual efforts. Employee growth can be facilitated by means of the many techniques covered in this chapter. Organizations should make it possible for employees with ambition, ability, and a willingness to expend the effort to rise as high as they want to. Career paths should be made available and visible. The current leaders of many hospitality organizations took advantage of the educational opportunities and the promotional paths available and worked their way to the top. When each entry-level employee can see the same possibility, it provides a general feeling of opportunity for all. The desire to learn, the encouragement of learning, and the assumption that learning can lead to advancement should be an important part of the organization's culture.

Employee development involves a combination of work experience, education, and training. Training typically focuses on teaching people how to do the new jobs for which they have been hired or to overcome deficiencies they may have in performing their current jobs. Employee development, on the other hand, is typically focused on getting people ready for their future. Training tends to look at the present to identify and correct employee deficiencies in performing the job today. Development looks forward to identify the skills, competencies, and areas of knowledge that the employee will need in order to be successful tomorrow. One problem with employee development is that knowing exactly what the future will bring is impossible. Therefore, employee development programs tend to emphasize more general managerial, problem-solving, and leadership skills. Measuring these general development programs and evaluating their effectiveness is difficult.

Career Paths and the Right Experience

Preparing for Organizational Needs

In spite of the challenges in predicting what the future will bring, organizations need to prepare for how they will meet it. Many companies plan to grow and they need to have people who are ready to rise to higher-level positions as that expansion occurs. Current expansion in China and India, for example, will see the opening of thousands of new hotels over the next twenty years. These hotels will need general managers, executive teams, trainers, managers, supervisors, and staff. You cannot prepare for this sort of expansion without giving careful consideration to where the people will come from and what KSAs they will need in order to perform well in those positions.

Companies often want employees to follow certain preferred career paths that will effectively prepare them to move up into future assignments. For example, some hotel chains require their employees to have a full range of experiences, in the front-of-house, back-of-house, marketing, sales, food and beverage, and rooms divisions, before they can be considered for general manager positions. Ensuring that these experiences are provided for potential managers in a chain with dozens of hotels takes careful planning and career tracking of employees.

The most effective organizations know that they cannot simply promote someone from a functional task into a management position and hope for the best. Training must be designed to help newly promoted managers make the transition, but the employee must already possess at least some of the necessary knowledge and skills that turning a “super doer” into a supervisor will require.

Giving Employees the Chance to Advance

Employees tend to believe that the longer a person is with a company, the more that person is worth to the company. Many organizations support that belief by celebrating anniversary dates with parties and pins to show that the organization recognizes and appreciates the employee’s commitment to the organization.

However, pins and parties are not enough. The outstanding service organizations recognize that most, but not always all, individuals’ need for personal growth and development must also be satisfied in well-designed career development paths. The hotel housekeeper should be able to see a path upward through the organization that can be successfully traveled with hard work, dedication, and effort. Too many organizations typecast their employees, and these people know that no one expects them to go very far. Indeed, some employees lack the ability, training, or desire to move up and are satisfied with their present positions. Trying to convince a successful bellman at a resort hotel to abandon his tip money and move up as front desk manager is a tough sell because many bellmen are not willing to give up their higher income (much of it in tips) for the lower salary of an entry-level manager with only the hope of long-term career growth prospects.

On the other hand, very few people picture themselves doing in the far future the same thing they are doing today. Humans have a need to grow and develop. People who are helping the organization succeed today should also be getting prepared to help it succeed in the future, and most of them want to. The outstanding organizations provide career paths with development support that give talented people the opportunity to realize their dreams.

The opportunity is symbolically important, even if employees don't choose to take it. For example, the Gaylord Palms Resort sets as a goal to get 60 percent of its leadership from internal promotions. To do so, it offers three levels of leadership training. The first and most basic level is offered to all its employees (STARS). The second is for individuals who have been promoted into leadership positions and is designed to give them the tools and skills to help them be effective in their new roles. The third level, for those in positions above entry leadership, provides advanced training in the core processes and procedures needed to operate the hotel, with a special emphasis on the finance and people sides of the business.²⁰ Even those Gaylord employees who do not enter the leadership program appreciate the fact that their organization makes the opportunity available to any who aspire to lead.

Education

While experience and in-house training are clearly valuable in the preparation for some tasks, certain jobs require formal education. For example, knowledge of accounting, finance, human resources, information systems, marketing, and organizational behavior is necessary for taking on many managerial roles in modern businesses. Chefs are often required to have formalized instruction. Academics, such as the authors of this book, strongly believe that formalized education can help train people to perform well in new areas, think critically, and communicate more effectively. These skills, available primarily through formal education, may be the best way to prepare today's employee for the unknown challenges of tomorrow's competitive environment. Some companies make sure to provide opportunities for employees to get the education that they need to grow and develop within the organization.

Tuition Refunds

A good example of how to provide formal education is the traditional employee tuition-refund policy that many organizations use to encourage employee development. Companies may pay tuition in advance for certain programs, or they may reimburse employees upon the successful completion of a course. Of course, the providing of such programs needs to be thought out in advance. Will employees have to reimburse the company for education payments if they leave the company within a certain length of time? What is *successful* completion of a course? A? A or B? Not failing? And what courses should employees be allowed to take?

Companies may want to reimburse only for courses directly related to the employee's existing job. This limitation controls the potential tuition expense and makes it more likely that the organization will receive some direct business value for the expense. On the other hand, it might be better for both the company and the employees if the company pays for any course regardless of field. Doing so expands the total pool of knowledge available to the organization. Consider what could happen if a group of people who are studying different topics in different majors are brought together in a quality circle or problem-solving group session to work on an organizational matter. A variety of learning experiences expands the creative potential of both the employees and the organization and, therefore, increases the possibility of finding new and innovative ways to perform existing jobs and prepare for the future.

Supporting General Education

Supporting any legitimate employee effort to improve, grow, and learn is in the employer's interest. Such support lets employees know that the organization values their potential as much as it values their current contributions. Even more important is employee

awareness that the company supports a learning environment. An organization that actively promotes learning of all kinds sends a powerful message to its employees that it believes the only way it will stay competitive is to learn continuously. These learning organizations promote the active seeking of new knowledge that not only benefits the individual but the entire organization by building its total pool of knowledge. No matter how irrelevant the material may seem, the creative employee will use it to connect to organizational needs.

The organization will eventually benefit from whatever creativity the educational experience spurred and from the increased loyalty and feeling of support that any employee gets from working for an organization that supports employee learning. Forward-looking organizations understand that most of their profits in ten years will come from products or services they don't even know about today. Restricting educational reimbursement programs to those courses the organization thinks are important today may be as erroneous as trying to predict which products will be around ten years from now.

On the other hand, companies are in business to make money, and the present needs of the business must often be put ahead of the employee's needs for long-term growth and development, important though they may be. Obviously, not all employers can afford to let all employees take time off for tuition-paid courses, nor can many employers even pay partial subsidies for classes taken on an employee's own time. In difficult economic periods, companies may have to worry more about which employees to lay off than about funding coursework that may have some return in the future. Employee development, like any business cost, must be considered in the context of the broader business picture. While supporting employee growth needs is desirable and beneficial, business needs must come first if the organization hopes to survive in the long run.

The Competition Is Watching

While paying attention to immediate business needs is critically important, many organizations are too short-sighted and don't offer any development programs. Their employees may feel permanently stuck where they are and, as a result, may feel that the only path to career advancement lies in opportunities outside their present company. Some organizations seem to think that keeping their best service employees at the guest-contact level is smart. Their employees are likely targets for competitors, who seek out stuck people and invite them to join an opportunity to grow and develop.

At Outback

A good example of an organization that provides advancement opportunities at the managerial level is Outback Steakhouses. The company starts by recruiting the best restaurant operators it can find. Then, it offers them something most corporate restaurants do not: a chance to participate financially in their own restaurant. Many restaurant operators share a common dream of running their own restaurant. They will tell you that they will work for someone else only until they can save up enough money to buy their own. Outback has recognized this dream and has invited the best operators to run Outback restaurants with an ownership interest. This part-ownership gives them a direct payoff for their ability to run their restaurants well through sharing in the profits that they help to generate. It is a true win-win for both Outback and the operator. Outback gains excellent restaurant operators, and for a relatively small financial commitment, the operators gain an equity interest in an excellent restaurant.

They Want Your Best

At least some of your competitors will always seek to hire your best people. Scott Gross is out in your restaurant or resort right now, handing his business card to your best employees. Ignoring the needs of the employee to grow and develop may be a money-saving short-run strategy, but it will be a long-run expense. Not giving employees opportunities to grow means that the hospitality organization itself may not grow and develop either. The best employees you need for your future can always find opportunities elsewhere to use their talents if you don't give them the chance. The key idea behind organization development is that everyone must continue to grow and develop. Skill and knowledge development is a continuous process. It must be ongoing to meet the ongoing changes in the guest's expectations. It is a never-ending journey.

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1. Teach employees not only job-related skills but also interpersonal skills and creative problem-solving techniques.
 2. Do not train just to do training; know what outcomes you expect from your training dollars, and measure your training results to be sure you get them.
 3. Before training people, check the delivery system technology; the problem may lie there.
 4. Develop your people for your organization's future.
 5. Do more than just believe in your people; champion their training and development.
 6. Reward behaviors learned through training to keep them alive.

LESSONS LEARNED

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1. Virtually all organizations give their employees some training.
 - A. "Training frontline employees is more important to hospitality organizations than to manufacturing organizations, because hospitality employees are dealing with people, not widgets." Do you agree or disagree? Discuss.
 - B. How can organizations try to find out if the training they provided was effective? Can they ever be sure?
 2. This chapter presents Berry's five principles of training. How would you set up a training program to apply these principles to restaurant servers?
 3. How should a training program for fine dining and casual dining waitstaff be different?
 4. The chapter presents several types of training. Match several of those training types to employee types and job types. For example, which techniques described in the chapter might be most effective with restaurant servers? Ride operators at a theme park? Agents at an information booth on a cruise ship?
 - A. How do you like to be trained or instructed? Which method or methods work best for you, and why?
 - B. If the class shares responses to that last question, how do you account for the differences among students?

REVIEW QUESTIONS

- C. How does all that relate to managing the guest experience in hospitality organizations?
5. What does it mean to *develop* employees anyway? Why is it particularly important to develop employees in hospitality organizations?
 6. Some types of hospitality organizations typically experience (and accept) a high rate of entry-level employee turnover. Do you think these organizations should develop their entry-level employees to reduce turnover? Or would they simply be spending money to develop employees who will be moving on anyway, possibly to competitors?

ACTIVITIES

1. Interview three friends who have held jobs. Find out which of the chapter's training methods were used to train them. To what extent were any of your friends "developed" as well?
2. Divide into groups. For the group members who have held jobs, make a list of the different training methods that their organizations used. How are they similar to or different from the methods described in the text?
3. The next few times you visit a service provider, take particular notice of your servers. Although you did not see the training they received, do they seem to be conforming to some training and doing the job as it was designed to be done? If not, where are they going wrong, and why?
4. Interview four employees at a restaurant or hotel to discuss their training. Report your findings to the class.

ETHICS IN BUSINESS

In service jobs, training often involves in some ways "manipulating" the customer. This could be training a service worker how to calm down an angry customer, or might go as far as how to manipulate a customer to purchase a product even if the customer may not really need it. Ethically, when does this sort of training go too far? Servers can be trained to perform certain actions in order to increase tips. This may not improve the level of service, but creates subtle changes that research has shown have led to larger tip sizes. Is this appropriate? Salespeople can be trained to identify psychological characteristics of a potential customer and make a sales pitch in a way that evidence suggests is more likely to get that customer to agree to a purchase. Some employees are trained in high pressure sales techniques, based on the evidence that some customers are effectively manipulated in this way, resulting in sales of products that the customer may not really need. What level of customer "manipulation" is ethically appropriate? Can anything be justified in terms of increasing organizational profits as long as it is not illegal, or should companies have additional standards?

CASE STUDIES

The Beef and Reef Mystery Guest

Sally Salkind has worked for two years as a server at the Beef and Reef Restaurant while getting her degree in hospitality management. As a national restaurant chain, the Beef and Reef has specific written standards about how guest service should be provided and posts those standards in the kitchen, where all employees can see them. The chain also allows local managers considerable latitude in training employees and providing service, so long as unit financial results are satisfactory. Most of the servers go “by the book” in serving guests, figuring that the company knows best and that they can’t go wrong by following company standards. But Sally has developed her own very successful way of opening the service encounter and delivering service thereafter. Since manager Bill Gordy has had nothing but good things to say about her performance, she has continued to serve guests in her own style. Apparently the guests like it; her tips are among the highest and her average check is the highest in the restaurant.

Early one evening, the manager, Bill Gordy, informed the servers of a rumor he had heard at a national meeting: corporate headquarters intended to use more mystery shoppers in the following month. He said, “I know you all do the best job possible, and I appreciate it, but next month, let’s all lift our service to a new level.” About two weeks later, as Sally Salkind started to walk to greet a couple who had just been seated, Bill Gordy whispered to her, “Mystery shoppers. I can tell them a mile away. Do it by the book, Sally, and you’ll be fine.”

Sally tried to do it by the book: “Good evening, I’m Sally and I’m going to be your server tonight.” But then she got tongue-tied. She couldn’t remember if procedure called for her to solicit a beverage order, recite the specials, or encourage the party to choose an appetizer. The rest of the meal went the same way. The party of two had to ask for information that Sally usually related in her comfortable, natural way. But when called upon to do it by the numbers, she couldn’t remember what the numbers were. She had never been so happy to see two people leave.

Several days later, Bill Gordy called Sally into his office and reprimanded her for not following standard serving procedures at the very time when following procedures was most important.

“Sally, I had been considering promoting you to head server, but I can’t promote somebody who can’t follow simple instructions.”

Sally went quickly from surprise, to shock, to anger. She asked Bill Gordy why, if the procedures posted on the kitchen wall were so important, he had never said anything about them in her two years with the restaurant.

“I’m not dumb, Bill. I can learn as well as anyone. But you never told me that I had to learn that stuff, much less taught me how to do it. You threw me in the water, and, fortunately, I could swim. I did darn well on my own, using my own talents plus some things I learned in my hospitality courses. How can you expect me to change my whole way of doing things with 20 seconds notice?”

Bill Gordy didn’t have an answer for Sally’s question. He simply reiterated his criticism, told her that she had embarrassed him and the restaurant in front of “a big shot from headquarters,” and sent her back to her station.

Sally had been thinking of trying to get a permanent position with the Beef and Reef organization after she finished her studies, but she decided that she didn’t want to work for an outfit that gave her little training in how to do the job, complimented her for the way she did it, then criticized her because she didn’t follow formal procedures and memorize the silly little phrases. She would stick around for now because the tip income was good, but she would be looking.

1. What went wrong? Who was at fault?
2. Discuss the pros and cons of a strict set of serving standards for everybody.

Flint Hill Beef and Lamb

Just before graduating with a degree in hospitality management, Sally Salkind interviewed with several hospitality organizations. She was most impressed with Beef and Lamb, a medium-sized restaurant chain founded by Bob Beef and Larry Lamb. She was particularly impressed that Bob and Larry had come to campus to do the interviewing themselves.

Sally got along well with Bob and Larry. They invited her to corporate headquarters for further interviews, and the impression she made on other Beef and Lamb executives was exceeded only by the impression that they made on her. On the second day of her interview series, she was surprised to be offered a selection of several assistant manager positions in different cities. She had relatives and friends in central North Carolina, so she picked Flint Hill, NC, a growing community near Charlotte. The week after her college graduation, she headed for Flint Hill exuberant with optimism.

Smith Hamilton, manager of the Flint Hill Beef and Lamb, had only the day before been told that he was being sent an assistant manager. When Sally entered the restaurant, eager to begin the career that she had trained for, make a good impression, and justify the faith that Larry and Bob had shown in her, Smith Hamilton barely gave her the time of day. He told her he was busy but said that she should “make herself useful.” Sally was quite surprised to receive such a reception at the local level, since she had been treated so beautifully by the company founders, but she resolved not to be down about it.

Sally spent her first day walking around in the restaurant, meeting people, taking notes, asking questions of employees and guests, and generally getting the lay of the land. Since Smith Hamilton was too busy to talk to

her on the second day, she spent it in much the same way. By the end of the week, with no help from Hamilton, Sally had gathered valuable information, given it much thought, and saw numerous ways in which the already successful operation of the restaurant could be improved.

The next day, she made her presentation to manager Smith Hamilton. She was too excited to notice that he kept looking at his watch. When she finished, he said: “Young lady, I have made money with this Beef and Lamb restaurant every year since I have been here. I have 18 years of experience in the business, and I’ve got this restaurant set up just like I want it. Sure, I never went to college, but I know the food business. All you have is book learning. These ideas of yours might look good on a homework assignment, but they will not work in Flint Hill, North Carolina. I don’t want all these ‘point of sale’ machines you talk about; they aren’t worth the money. Neither are any of your other ideas. Maybe you ought to interview with Beef and Reef; your highfalutin college notions might be just what that outfit needs. Or you can stick with me and learn something about the restaurant business.”

* * *

1. How did things go so wrong?
2. Should Sally bear any part of the blame? Should the institution where she received her training in hospitality bear some blame?
3. If you were Sally, what would you say to Smith Hamilton, and what would you do? Would you “stick with him and learn something about the restaurant business”?

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