

STAFFING IN THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY

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Abstract

Hotel organizations are very labour intensive. For this purpose, people in addition to machines are needed to perform many of the tasks that produce quality products and services for the guests. In this case, employees at all organizational levels must be recruited and trained to consistently perform their jobs well if guests are expected to come back and for the hotel to be able to gain a reputation of providing quality service. Staffing means hiring people for work in such a manner that their skills match the job requirements for particular positions. This paper seeks to examine adequate staffing in the human resources department of the hospitality industry. To do this, the following issues will be addressed: recruitment, selection, placement, induction or orientation/socialization, training and development, incentives and benefits and planning for future needs.

Hospitality, according to Ghosh (2008) defined it as the friendly reception and generous treatment of guests, which means entertaining guest with courtesy and warmth. It is also an industry made up of businesses that provide lodging, food and other services to travelers. It comprises mainly hotels, motels, resorts and restaurants. A hotel, as defined by the British Law in 1760, is a place where a bonafide traveler can receive food and shelter, provided he/she is in a position to pay for it and is in a fit condition to be received Vallen (1991). This definition indicates that a hotel must provide food and lodging to travelers on payment and has in turn the right to refuse admission if the traveler is disorderly, drunk, unkept or is not in a position to pay for the services. Even the provision of beverages is subject to local customs and practices. With this tradition, hotels have always been a place where visitors and guest dressed at their best.

Hotels and motels are similar except that motels are roadside hotels with parking space to accommodate travelling tourists. Resorts on the other hand, are mainly near the sea, beaches, hot springs, waterfalls, lakes, hills, mountains and cater to the needs of the tourists especially those who need rest and recreation. Restaurants, are eating places meant to feed the travelling public both domestic and international travelers.

Human activities in hotels are actually performed by two groups of staff. The first group consists of operating managers in line department, while the second group, consists of the specialist in staff department. Line departments, are those directly involved in the chain of command. For example, front-office, food and beverages, house-keeping and Engineering/Maintenance departments.

The hotel divisions responsible for generating revenues are the front-office and the food and beverage sections. This is achieved through the sale of rooms for accommodation and food/beverages including services for feeding lodged guests. The section in charge of property operations are the house-keeping and engineering/maintenance departments. The house-keeping is responsible for the cleaning and maintaining the aesthetic standard of the hotel; while the engineering/maintenance are responsible for the supply of air-conditioning or heating, lighting, mechanical, electrical, carpentry, electronic and civil works of the hotel. The house keeping depends on them for climate control and so on.

Staff departments, are the purchasing, human relations and accounting. The purchasing staff buys only those items needed by menu planners. Human relations, provide personnel (staffing) needed by line departments and also provide technical advice about labours laws, training and related specialized activities. Staffing, means hiring people for work in a manner that their skills match the job requirements for particular positions. Accounting personnel, are responsible for developing accounting systems, collecting financial information, recording data in financial statements and making recommendations to decision makers in line departments.

Managers in line departments are responsible for making the direct operating decisions that impact the success of the property. They need the specialized and technical assistance of persons in staff departments who provide information to support the line decision makers. A manager therefore, is someone who works and through other people by coordinating their work, activities to accomplish organizational goals. Managers are classified into three levels such as: front line managers, middle

managers and top-managers. Front-line managers are the lowest level managers who manage the work of employees. They may also be called supervisors. A front-office supervisor for example, takes charge of a shift and supervises the guest agents on the shift bases. Middle managers, are like departmental heads and fall between front-line managers and top management. They are responsible for short to medium range plans and establish goals and objectives to meet organizational goals and manage the work of front-line managers. Top managers are responsible for making medium to long-range plans and establishing goals and strategies to meet those of organizational goals.

Recruitment

Recruitment is the process of identifying and attracting or encouraging qualified candidates for the purpose of filling existing or future positions in an establishment. Recruitment process in most organizations according to Mondy and Flippo (1988:322) begins with the issuance of an employment requisition form, which contains such information as the job title, starting date, pay scale, a brief summary of principal duties. Recruitment form is an efficient way to indicate the need for personnel and control the establishment size of a unit.

The recruitment process involves making the potential applicants aware of specific job openings, attract them to the employment opportunities, and screen out applicants who lack the requisite qualifications. The recruitment process also involve a number of steps vital to a successful recruiting effort such as:

- Job analysis
- Job description
- Job specification
- Job evaluation

Job analysis is the systematic process of examining job, duties and responsibilities in order to identify the essential requirements of each job and determining the skills and knowledge required for performing jobs in the organization (Needham & Dransfield, 1990). McCormick (1976) defined job analysis as the systematic study of what is to be done, when, where, how, why and by whom. Job analysis also involves task analysis, activity analysis and skill analysis. For instance, task analysis helps in scheduling work by examining it closely for process, materials, equipment and skills needed to complete a job. For example, the steps or activities involved in preparing a bread sandwich go like this:

- collecting ingredients together,
- mixing the butter in the ingredients of the filling
- spreading filling between slices and pressing them together
- cutting and shaping the sandwiches and arranging in service plates or packing in portions as required.

Job analysis includes Human Resources Audit (HRA) which involves a cataloguing of the strengths and weaknesses of current employees. This consists of two dimensions namely: job description and job specification. Job description is a written document which describes the exact activities, responsibilities, roles, duties and tasks of a job and of what an employee is expected to do on his job within the organization. It tells the total requirements of the job and exactly what the work actually entails. Usually, the job description sets out the job title, job location, to whom and for whom the employee is responsible. A well defined job brings about greater certainty of what is expected in terms of the performance and when actual results match expected ones, both morale and efficiency are raised. It is important that a job should not be narrowly defined to allow for initiative and creativity. It should not also be too vague in order not to be difficult to understand and handle leading to frustration and loss of control. Job descriptions need to be more detailed, clear-cut and expressed in a language and form that can be understood by even less educated workers found in the hospitality industry.

Job description serves as a useful tool to draw up recruitment requirements, set up salary levels commensurate with work involved, provide guidelines for orientation, training of new employees and aid in controlling activities within the establishment. It also removes conflicts between people in terms of specifying each persons job responsibilities.

Job Specification

This can be referred to as employee or person specification; it is a list of traits, abilities and skills as well the mental and physical attributes required for the job or job-holder. It also include education requirements, basic working experience and personality needed for the job. It also covers duties expected to be performed, working conditions in which job will be carried out.

Job Evaluation

This is a determination of appropriate base salary or wage rate for specific combinations of duties or positions in business organization. It involves value judgment on the relative worth of each job to the organization as a whole in terms of Naira & Kobo or Dollars etc (Heyel and Cascio, 1987:389).

Sources of Recruitment

Recruitment can be within the organization (internal sources) or from outside the organization (external sources). They are regarded as recruitment method.

Internal sources method can be applied to both lower and higher level jobs in the organization. In any recruitment exercise, it is advisable to look inward for qualified or potentially qualified candidates to fill particular post within the organization. The methods used are: transferring, promoting and upgrading which are done in the following ways:

- pasting vacancy on bulletin boards
- circulating in memos to supervisors
- reporting in employee publications

Advantages of Internal Recruitment

- It increases employee morale and motivates them to work harder and this gives them that feeling of security.
- It saves cost of vacancy advertisement and an interview panel will be avoided.
- An internal person needs shorter period of training and orientation
- It attracts a better quality of external applicants, if chances within are not good
- Organization will hire only at entry point and will also retain high performing individuals who might leave if there are no advancement opportunities.

Disadvantages of Internal Recruitment

- There may be inadequate supply of qualified applicants from within
- There may be morale problem upsetting some persons for one person's promotion
- There is the possibility of political in-fighting for promotions to top positions.

External Recruitment

This is a process of attracting individuals from outside the organization to apply for jobs.

Various sources of external recruitment are:

- **Media advertisement:** radio-television, daily newspapers, magazines, technical and professional journals.
- **Public and private employment agencies:** federal, state, private employment agencies, job centres which run window displays, management consulting firms.
- **Educational institution:** colleges of education, polytechnics, universities, technical and trade schools, graduating classes and alumni placement
- Professional organizations, technical society, meetings and conferences, society placement services.
- **Military:** state and national retired officers associations' replacement services.
- **Employment referrals:** The present employees being informed of the vacancies and asked to recommend excellent applicants for the vacant jobs.
- Walk-ins and write-ins
- Unsolicited applications - not asked for: they are received through the mail or submission of application or resume personally
- Labour unions
- Field trips or field recruiting
- Extra-continental or overseas recruiting

Needham and Dransfield (1990:389) provided useful advice on internal or external labour through advertisement such as:

- Stating where the job is (location)
- How much the job pays
- What qualifications are required to do the job

- What the job involves
- What fringe benefits are available
- How to go about applying for the job

Advantages of External Recruitment

- There are new blood, new ideas and perspectives which are injected into the organization.
- It covers a large pool of candidates than does internal recruiting.

Disadvantages of External Recruitment

- The person selected may not fit the job
- It may cause morale problems for internal candidates of the organization
- It involves higher cost, longer adjustment or orientation time for those employed from outside the organization

Selection and Placement

Selection is the process of identifying (from the pool of those to be recruited) the applicants with the best requirements for the job. Applicants are invited to attend an interview with the view that they meet the minimum standards required for employment.

An interview is a formal meeting between an employer and an applicant in order to ascertain by questioning and discussion, the faters suitability for a post (job). The purpose is to learn more about the job-seek values, interest, physical appearance (dress) mannerism, oral communication skills, reasoning skills, emotional maturity and social qualities. There are several types of interviewing method e.g. one-on-one situation, group interview, unstructured interview, structured interview, board/panel interview, semi-structured interview.

The Structured Interview

This is patterned or guided interview, the questions are prepared in advance and the interviewer only asked the question listed on the interview sheet. The advantage of the structured interview is that all candidates are asked the same questions. (This is particularly important when an unsuccessful candidate claims that he was discriminated against in some way). It is also easy to score and answers make it easier to compare the candidates (Nwachukwu, Torrinton & Hall, 1988).

The Unstructured Interview

The unstructured or unpatterned interview does not follow any planned strategy. The interviewer asks broad-ended questions designed to have the applicant do most of the talking. He then picks up an idea in the applicant's response to one question to phrase the next question e.g. "Tell me more about yourself, Why do you want to leave your current place of work", "What aspect of your work do you like most? Least? "Why do you like this aspect least? 'Why are you applying for this position', what qualifications do you have that make you a good candidate for the position? 'Describe your idea of guest service', what extra curricular activities did you participate in while in the school?

The only problems of this method include maintaining its job-relatedness and obtaining comparable data on each applicant, it is also time consuming. The process is difficult to control and may lead to irrelevant areas and miss important facts and questions. However, the applicant is likely to be more relaxed and may respond more naturally.

Part of the selection process might involve the conduct of reference and background checks which are usually done verbally because the written reference letters may be positively biased in favour of the applicant. The reasons for this is to provide additional insight regarding an applicant and to prevent certificate/credential fraud. Then the forma! appointment letters are sent out to successful applicants. The offer outlines the terms and conditions of employment. The offer should include the title of the position offered, the location, hours of work and job description. It will be signed by the new employee, showing that he understands the duties and responsibilities, the benefits and orientation schedule and the performance evaluation methods. The letter may include a date by which the offer must be accepted.

The last step in the recruitment and selection process is the medical examination. The medical examination acts as a precaution for both the employee and the organization. For instance, it helps to screen out individuals who have contagious diseases, determine the applicants to medical conditions, eliminate applicants whose poor health could result in too many days sick off, lateness and accidents that may endanger his life and others. Finally, to provide a record to protect the organization against

claims for previous existing medical conditions.

Placement on the Job

This implies the assignment of an employee to positions in an organization. Placement on the job starts from the sending out of appointment letter to the employee. The elements and processes of placement has been identified by Ibekwe (1984:58) as follows: « Writing out appointment letters

- Receiving the new staff on assumption of duty
 - Getting them to feel at home and settle down in the organization and on the job
- » Organizing orientation and induction courses for the newly employed
- Assigning the new staff offices or placing them in their work environment and ensuring that they get necessary facilities

Orientation, Induction and Socialization

Once a person has accepted a job offer, the company/organization helps the new employees to adapt to the organization and its environment. It introduces them to the specifics of the workplace. Orientation is a planned process of introducing recently employed individuals or existing employees who have been promoted or transferred to different units to their jobs, their co-workers, their departments, the policies, rules, objectives and services of the organization.

Induction-, is defined as the process by which the employing organization familiarizes new employees with the employing organization.

Socialization

Socialization is described as learning the job and developing appropriate attitudes, skills, forming new interpersonal relationships and accepting the organization's culture and norms and required behaviour patterns of the workplace by the new employer. Berlew and Hall (1966) saw socialization as the process by which the person learns how to operate effectively in a new culture through the acquisition of information, values and behavioural skills associated with one's new organizational role.

Benefits of Orientation and Socialization

The overall goal of orientation is to help new employees to easily adjust, adapt and fit their new work environment and settle down to business with minimum difficulties and discomfort. It also

provides specific information concerning the task and performance expectations of the job, including safety and fire prevention. It creates a sense of welcome, security, self-confidence and belonging.

Training and Development

This is an ongoing activity conducted by a training department. The reason is that employees may become obsolete or rustic if they do not update themselves with new work methods, skills and knowledge about their work, organization and environment. For instance, an engineer's knowledge of his or her field is cut in half every 10 years because of the advancement of the field, unless he/she continues to be in practice and attending seminars and workshops.

Likewise, in the food and service area of the hospitality industry, there is much to learn about preparation techniques, new recipe and flavor combination, quality characteristics, nutritive contents and so on. Also, presentation of food in different forms, matching texture to service, dishes and table appointments, all require knowledge and training. There should be constant demonstration of new skills and techniques by various professionals in the production areas of each departments.

What then is Training?

Training is planned organizational efforts or activities concerned with helping an employee acquire specific and immediately usable skills, knowledge, concepts, attitudes and behaviour to enable him/her perform more efficiently and effectively on his present job. It is related to improving upon the present job experience. It also concerned with technical/manual skills to non-managerial staff (Mathis and Jackson, 1982).

Development are planned activities which focus on increasing and enlarging the capabilities of employees so that they can successfully handle greater and/or assume higher positions in the organization's hierarchy to better handle current responsibilities. Klatt (1985). It focuses on improving the conceptual skills - the intellectual abilities needed to handle complex situations and do a

better job. It is not only "person-oriented", but focuses on supervisory and managerial personnel. It means that only the managers of various categories will be involved in the training.

The first step in establishing a training programme is to identify the training needs and then set training objectives. This is because the training must be geared towards fulfilling guest expectations. Training often focuses on areas where current service falls short of guests expectations as noted in guest surveys.

There are five main types of employee training in the hospitality industry:

- The apprenticeship
- Simulation
- Certification
- Corporate required training
- On-the-job training

The Apprenticeships

The apprenticeship training is given to people who are new to a particular job. The training is specially designed to teach participants the correct way to do a particular task. It involves on-the-job experience by an employee under the guidance of a skilled and certified worker. It often follows the "tell me, show me, do it" routine. Many chefs are involved in an apprenticeship programme which includes a mixture of classroom and "on-the-job training" with seasoned professionals.

Simulation training are specially prepared simulation exercises for travel agents, such as Sabre and Apollo airline reservation systems and so on. Once the trainee has reached the required level of proficiency, he/she is allowed to do real ticketing (i.e. selling of tickets). Hotel front-desk employees use simulation software packages for beginners and advanced training. Simulation is the required level of understanding the skill or language of the job given or expected. It is also a situation where an activity is being performed consistently until a mastery is achieved.

Certification training enables individuals to gain corporate or professional certificate by obtaining passing scores on practical or theoretical tests. These tests are generally job specific and help in motivating employees. For example, "serve safe", is a popular certification (it is a professional certificate in catering) that is widely used in food service operations. Most line cooks are being challenged to obtain this, which gives them tremendous feelings of accomplishment.

Corporate-required training, include the many workshops and seminars on the topics like safety, workplace values, ethics, harassment, supporting service excellence, service essentials and valuing differences. On-the-job training, helps maintain standards by having managers, supervisors, trainers or fellow employees coach individuals in the most effective way to do the required work. It allows the trainee to quickly learn the best way to do the work based on the experience of trial and error. For instance, new hotel housekeepers may work with an experienced employee for a few days to learn the preferred way to do rooms.

Advantages of on-the-Job Training

- The employee is using the same machine, equipment or materials which he will be using after the training and also be subjected to the same environmental constraint he will be operating in.
- Effective training can be tailored to fit each trainee's background, attitudes, needs, expectations, goals and future assignment.
- The employee's development is influenced by the immediate supervisors, because it is learning by doing and is not time consuming.

Performance Appraisal of Human Resources

Hodgkinson (1972) defined performance appraisal as the systematic examination, evaluation and description of employee's performance as to how well they are doing or have done their jobs. It also points out individual's job - relevant strengths and "weaknesses. Performance appraisal can be positive or negative. The positive attributes include giving feedback to employees, building the appraisal into a personal development plan, establishing a rationale for promotion, wage or salary increases and helping to establish objectives for training programmes. The negative attributes include subjective judgment relating to personality traits or observations that cannot be verified. For example,

- Like-me-syndrome, occurs when managers rate an employee high because they have similar traits

Factors Necessitating Human Resources Planning

- For expansion or contraction of an organization
- Need for technological changes (labour saving devices)
- In the event of death, retirement, resignation, withdrawal of service, termination and dismissal
- A changing workforce (demographic change)
- Mobilization of staff through transfers
- Globalization and environmental uncertainty internal and external to the organization (Ferris & Buckley, 1995:156)

Essential Steps Involved in Human Resources Planning

Stoner (1979:499) summarized several steps of human resources into four step approach such as: planning for future needs, planning for future balance, planning for recruiting, selection or laying off, and planning for development. This means that planning for future needs means how many people that will remain in operation in the foreseeable future of the organization, while planning for future balance is how many people presently employed can be expected to stay with the organization. Planning for recruiting and selection or laying off, means how the organization should attain the number of people it will need, while planning for development means how the training and development of individuals should be managed to ensure continuing supply of experienced and capable personnel.

Benefits of Human Resources Management

Several benefits were enumerated by Mondy, Sharplin and Flippo (1988) such as follow:

- It enables the management to anticipate shortages and surpluses of labour, allowing the development of plans by avoiding or correcting problems before they become serious.
- It helps to organize and integrate activities in proper sequences, match jobs to skills and increase overall efficiency by helping to see the inter-relationship of the various activities in the light of total objectives of the organization and of individuals.
- It eliminates confusion if the plan is communicated well to those involved in its implementation
- It provides an important basis for control through budgeting of time, energy, space and money, while forming targets for achievement
- It helps managers at all levels to direct their subordinates effectively towards the goals. With every step forward in the right direction, job satisfaction and confidence develop.

Conclusion

The success of every hospitality establishment depends on how willing the people working in it give their best and identify with the goals of the organization. However, it does not always happen by itself when a group of people of diverse backgrounds, skills and needs are brought together to achieve common goals. They need to be guided, motivated and even coerced at times, to work towards the achievement of preset goals.

Staffing is a very specialized field concerned with the recruitment, selection, induction, placement, training and development of people. Every manager must know the legal implications of hiring staff, irrespective of his span of control over their work. For instance, the duties of the general manager is to formulate policies to be followed by all managers in their respective departments. Therefore, for a hospitality industry to survive, adequate staffing is necessary.

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