chapter three

GENERAL MANAGERS: A VIEW AT THE TOP

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In most companies, someone who has attained the title of general manager (GM) or something similar heads the organization. Most of us in the hotel field consider this job the acme of one's career. In many hotel companies, the job serves as the springboard to corporate jobs or larger and more prestigious properties.

In previous editions of this book, I noted how surprising it is that so little has been written about hotel general managers. Little structured attention was paid to the development of their careers and the skills and strengths they bring to their jobs. Strangely, this is still the case.

A 1981 article by Arnaldo presented a statistical profile of hotel general managers. Arnaldo drew a demographic picture of his sample ($n = 194$) and commented that although GMs changed jobs frequently, they re-ported a high degree of job satisfaction. He also provided an analytical framework for reporting how these GMs allocated time and importance to a number of classic managerial roles. The most important of the managerial roles ranked by the GMs were (in descending importance): leader, entrepreneur, monitor, and disseminator, with six others (figurehead, liaison, spokesman, disturbance handler, resource allocator, and negotiator) assuming less importance (see also Mintzberg, 1973).

Readers of Arnaldo's article may be struck by the similarities that echo in Nebel and Ghei's contribution here. Another useful comparison can be made by reading Arnaldo's work with that of David Ley (1980). This work, based on a small sample of seven GMs in comparable properties in one hotel company, recorded how much time the GMs allocated to the same managerial work roles

(Mintzberg, 1973). The difference here was that Ley asked for a corporate office rating of each GM's effectiveness. He compared the effectiveness ratings (highly effective, effective, and less effective) to the observed time allocations of the GMs to leadership and entrepreneurial activities. Ley concluded that in this small group, the more effective managers spent more time on entrepreneurial activities than leadership activities. In contrast, Arnaldo's much larger group of GMs devoted much more time to leadership than entrepreneurship. This should suggest to the reader some interesting questions about what sorts of activities might best prepare future GMs for that role.

This makes the Nebel and Ghei piece all the more interesting, for while still a small group, their GMs were studied intensely, and the authors propose a structural framework from which to view the job of GM. If you will, it is a hotel general manager theory that can be used to explain, predict, or control the position of GM.

A central aspect of career development among GMs is explored by Rutherford and Wigenstein (1985), which looked for the first time at the role of mentoring as it could be measured to affect the success and satisfaction of a modern hotel GM's career.

Although the demographic, salary, and operational data in that article are out of date, the focus of the research can still be useful to those who aspire to the top job in a hotel organization. Also, because the literature on hotel GMs is so sparse, the insights gained from the managers studied in this case add flesh and tone to the work of the other authors included in this section. In the mentoring research, Rutherford and Wigenstein conclude that there is ample evidence that seeking out and developing mentoring relationships can have a positive effect on several aspects of a GM's career.

Another view of the career and personal aspects of the GM's job is discussed by Pavesic and Brymer (1990). In a number of studies in recent years, they have looked at the roles job satisfaction and stress play in managerial careers. In a review of this technical research, the authors interpret the behavioral dimensions of the GM's career, work values, and personal challenges. Hotel careers are challenging, but as these researchers point out, they do not have to be arduous.

In the research reported by Woods, Schmidgall, Sciarini, and me, we sought answers to questions regarding the importance of various operational measures, and at the same time asked GMs for suggestions about the structure of a hotel-related education. Students reading this article find solid suggestions from successful GMs, as the sample for the study was drawn from mostly upscale and luxury hotels with more than 500 rooms. Much of the financial data are out of date, but many of the conclusions are still viable.

In an interesting new article, Beth Chung-Herrera and her colleagues study the specific skills and competencies demonstrated by successful hotel leaders. The model they develop can be useful to hotel organizations, schools, and professionals crafting the structure of successful careers.

Speaking of success, the three professionals who contribute their thoughts on the job of GM have attained that level in separate areas of the country and for different types of organizations. The employment circumstances of each have also changed since the previous edition.

Previously the GM of the Rosen Centre
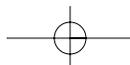
Hotel in Orlando, Florida, Emilio Fabico is now in the management structure of the Disney World Resort complex, also in Orlando. His perspectives from the standpoint of the GM and as a member of a management team do not necessarily change. Speaking through his writing like he was a guest in your class, Mr. Fabico shares his insights about management in this fascinating industry.

In the third edition of this book, Rob Balmer shared his experiences as the GM of a DoubleTree Club Hotel in Las Vegas. DoubleTree is part of the Hilton family of hotel products. Since then, he has managed another DoubleTree in California and was recently promoted to GM of the Hilton Burbank Airport and Convention Center Hotel, moving up in complexity and responsibility. His view from the top is instructional.

Another contributor from the last edition is Bob Peckenpaugh, who when we last read about him was operations manager at the Westin Innisbrook Resort near Tampa, Florida. He is now GM of the Rancho Bernardo Inn near San Diego. His observations about managing a relatively small but top-quality resort differ from his previous experience, but both work together to contribute to his success.

From an academic standpoint, the Nebel and Ghei contribution, coupled with the piece by Chung-Herrera et al., can be considered the overarching theory guiding the hotel GM's job. Fabico, Peckenpaugh, and Balmer provide us with the insights and views of insiders and with clear evidence that the theory actually works in practice. This is my goal for this edition of this book: to provide the reader with the opportunity to see that there should be a connection between the book learning of the classroom and what happens in the real world.

3.2 A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF THE HOTEL GENERAL MANAGER'S JOB

Eddystone C. Nebel III and Ajay Ghei

Abstract. *This article, based on the research of one of the authors into hotel general managers' effectiveness, presents the viewpoint that the job of a hotel general manager can be better understood by analyzing the influences that shape it. The two major contextual elements that influence the job are deemed to be job demands and relationship issues. They differ depending on the time frame (short-run, intermediate-run, or long-run) under consideration. These two elements give rise to specific job functions and concomitantly suggest various managerial work roles that must be performed in each job function. Finally, the importance of the communications requirement for being effective in the job is emphasized.* Key Words: *Job demands, relationship issues, time frame, job functions, managerial work roles, communications requirement.*
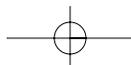
Major hotels of today are diverse, multifaceted, and fast-paced businesses engaged in a wide variety of operational activities. Their organizational and operational complexity increases with size. A hotel, irrespective of whether it is an independent or part of a chain, can be managed as a separate, independent business entity. Thus, each individual hotel can, in effect, be treated as a unique profit center. While it takes more than one person to effectively manage a hotel, the executive with overall operational responsibility for this business is the general manager (GM) of the hotel. "The general manager is the key implementer of the business strategy for the property and the behavioral role model for the entire management team" (Eder and Umbreit, 1989, 333). It can thus be argued that the GM is the central management figure in the hotel business. The demands and challenges of managing hotels are reflected in the complexities of the GM's job.

This article takes a close look at the context in which GMs of major hotels work and how this context affects the nature of their job. It is based on the research of one of the authors (Nebel, 1991) into the managerial effectiveness of hotel GMs. The purpose of the research was, in part, to better understand the nature of the GM's job, and through this understanding develop a conceptual framework of it. As Dann (1990) has stated, "[T]here is now a need to . . . develop a conceptual framework for the better understanding of the actual nature of managerial work in the hospitality industry."

Ten extremely successful GMs of some of America's finest hotels agreed to participate in the study. Each of the GMs studied was an experienced, top-rated hotel executive with an average of ten years' experience in the position. One research goal was to study hotels that exhibited the fullest range of operational and managerial complexity. Thus, the smallest participating hotel was an internationally renowned luxury property of about 400 rooms, and the largest was a great convention hotel of nearly 2,000 rooms. The author stayed as a guest at each hotel, observed each GM for three days as he proceeded through his normal workday, and recorded his every activity. The research methodology followed closely that employed by Kotter (1982). It employed a combination of participant observation of GMs at work, extensive personal interviews with both the GMs and 53 of their key division heads, background surveys, and analysis of organizational and operational information from each hotel. The personal interviews extended over a number of days and took between four and six hours with each GM, and about one hour with each of their division heads. In addition, informal interviews were conducted with at least 100 other executives and employees of the ten hotels. The field research was conducted while the author was on sabbatical leave and resulted in over 700 pages of field notes, which were subjected to extensive qualitative data analysis.

From this analysis and from an exhaustive review of the literature on managerial work in hotels (Guerrier, 1987; Guerrier and Lockwood, 1991; Koepper, 1988; Ley, 1978; Shortt, 1989; Umbreit, 1986) there has emerged a view of the hotel GM's job that is given in Figure 3.1, which presents a model of the influences that shape the job. The model incorporates ideas found in the research of Kotter (1982) and Mintzberg (1973). Kotter (1982, 10–33) showed how job demands and relationship demands affect executive behavior. Mintzberg (1973, 55–99) described ten separate work roles that managers perform. Figure 3.1 reflects how the hotel context influences the various job functions and man-
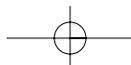
Figure 3.1 **Influences That Shape the General Manager's Job**
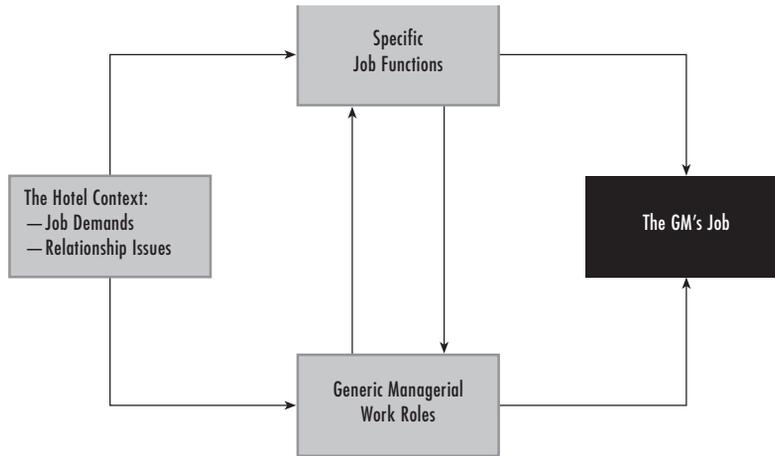
agerial work roles GMs must perform in order to be effective.

The two major contextual elements of the GM's job that affect the specific job functions and the generic managerial work roles are job demands and relationship issues. These, depending on whether they relate to the short-run, the intermediate-run, or the long-run time frame, give rise to certain specific job functions. They also suggest, in general, the various managerial work roles GMs are required to perform. It is the symbiosis of these specific GM job functions and the generic managerial work roles that actually defines the GM's job. We now proceed to discuss each of the elements described in Figure 3.1.

▶ JOB DEMANDS AND RELATIONSHIP ISSUES

Table 3.1 lists key GM job demands and relationship issues according to whether they re-

late to a hotel's short-run, intermediate-run, or long-run time frame. The structure for this table is adapted from Kotter's study of managerial behavior (Kotter, 1982, 10–33).

▶ THE SHORT RUN

The short-run demands on hotel GMs revolve around the daily, ongoing operational issues of providing high-quality guest service, controlling costs, and maximizing revenues. Hotel GMs bear direct responsibility for their properties and thus, like operational managers in charge of profit centers anywhere, are under tremendous pressure to produce short-run results. They must therefore devote a substantial amount of their time and efforts toward exercising effective operational control. An important functional characteristic of hotels is that many of their day-to-day business problems have extremely short lead times. That is to say, most service-centered problems in hotels must

Table 3.1   Key Job Demands and Relationship Issues of Hotel GMs

Time Frame	Key Job Demands	Key Relationship Issues
Short Run	Day-to-day operational control of service, costs, and revenues. Intense pressure to earn profits and render high-quality service.	Intense and frequent downward, internal verbal communication and interaction with hotel subordinates.
Intermediate Run	Train and develop subordinates. Fine-tune hotel's service strategy to changing external environment. Develop and refine the organization structure.	Downward internal communication. Lateral communication with the external environment. Upward communication with corporate superiors and staff specialists or owners.
Long Run	Capital expenditure decisions in line with hotel's strategic service vision. Develop and sustain organizational stability and vitality.	Downward internal communication to further stability and vitality. Lateral communication with the external environment. Intense upward communication with corporate office or owners.

be solved quickly or not at all. Moreover, major hotels are both organizationally and operationally complex businesses in which numerous, highly diverse activities take place constantly as well as concomitantly.

To stay on top of this complicated short lead-time business is unquestionably the single most challenging and demanding aspect of the GM's job. To be able to do so effectively and in a proactive manner so as to retain the ability to influence events, GMs must engage in intense verbal communication and interact frequently with subordinates. In discharging these responsibilities, a hotel GM can be said to be performing the job function of opera-

tional controller. However, the heavy workload of short-run operational demands must not take up all the time of GMs, as they must also concentrate on intermediate-run and long-run demands and issues as well.

▶ THE INTERMEDIATE RUN

In addition to their involvement in daily operational issues, effective GMs must train and develop subordinates as well as formulate plans and programs that systematically improve their operational control over the hotel. As changes take place in the external

environment, GMs must adapt and fine-tune the hotel's service strategy and organizational structure on an ongoing basis to keep abreast of these changes. These initiatives represent a proactive response to the operational demands of the business; they take time to implement and constitute the bulk of intermediate-run demands faced by a hotel GM. These intermediate-run demands, then, involve putting into place a hotel's organizational structure, systems, and people who are capable of quick and effective response to external stimuli and who can simultaneously help the hotel meet its demanding daily operational commitments. Thus, in effect, the GM is fine-tuning the hotel's service strategy and refining and realigning its operating systems to ensure a smoothly functioning business.

All these efforts require intense, downward internal communication and a high degree of interaction with subordinates. In addition, intermediate-run job demands require the GM to develop communication channels and to nurture relationships that extend beyond the specific domain of the hotel. These relationships include, first, a wide-ranging network of hospitality industry and community contacts who can help the GM better understand the hotel's external environment; and, second, the GM's corporate superiors and staff specialists, whose cooperation is needed for the successful implementation of the formulated specific plans and programs for the hotel. In carrying out these responsibilities, the job function of a hotel GM can be referred to as that of organizational developer.

▶ THE LONG RUN

Two important long-run demands of a GM's job relate to the capital needs and the organizational stability of the hotel. Capital expenditure decisions are required in order to ensure the long-run viability of the hotel, and they therefore must be consistent with the hotel's strategic service vision. The other important long-run demand on GMs is the need to develop a degree of organizational stability and vitality that is in tune with the hotel's carefully planned and clearly defined strategic service vision.

The key relationship issues for long-run capital expenditure decisions are communications upward with corporate executives or owners and laterally with an assortment of industry and community contacts as sources for intelligence concerning the hotel's competitive operating environment. Developing organizational stability depends on ongoing programs of human resources training and development and of sequential career progression. Many of the human resource programs that foster intermediate-run goals ultimately benefit long-run organizational stability and vitality.

Organizational stability enables a hotel to consistently deliver high-quality service and effectively control day-to-day operations. Organizational stability and vitality also gives the hotel the maturity and experience required for it to rethink its basic marketing and service strategies in the event of altered market or environmental conditions. Finally, stability permits the hotel to make any required transition with minimal disruption to its regular operational practices. Key relationship issues associated with organizational stability include continual monitoring of the external environment and intensive downward communication within the hotel. In fulfilling these responsibilities, the GM's job function can be described as that of business maintainer.

► ROLES PLAYED BY A GENERAL MANAGER

This section is organized around Mintzberg's study (1973), in which he suggested ten generic work roles for managers. Mintzberg grouped these ten work roles into three broad categories: interpersonal, informational, and decisional. Interpersonal work roles included those of figurehead, leader, and liaison; informational work roles covered those of monitor, disseminator, and spokesperson; and decisional work roles were those of disturbance handler, entrepreneur, resource alloca-

tor, and negotiator. A brief description of these generic managerial work roles is given in Table 3.2.

The influence of Mintzberg's work is reflected in the studies of hotel GMs by Arnaldo (1981) and Ley (1978) and that of restaurant managers by Ferguson and Berger (1984). The previous section explained how job demands and relationship issues had an impact on the job functions of GMs. It was from that discussion that we proposed the three specific GM job functions of operational controller, organizational developer, and business maintainer. Each of these three job functions requires GMs to perform vari-

Table 3.2 General Managerial Work Roles

Work Role	Description
Interpersonal	
Figurehead	Symbolic head of the organization. Required to perform certain legal activities and attend to social activities.
Leader	Responsible for staffing, training, direction, and motivation of subordinates.
Liaison	Develops a network outside the organization to gather information.
Informational	
Monitor	Seeks and analyzes a wide variety of outside information (from liaison role) and inside information (from leader role).
Disseminator	Transmits information received both from outside and inside the organization to other members of the organization.
Spokesperson	Transmits information about the organization to outsiders.
Decisional	
Disturbance Handler	Takes corrective action whenever organization faces unexpected, nonroutine disturbances.
Entrepreneur	Looks for ways to change the organization for the better. Seeks information externally and internally for improvement ideas. Initiates and supervises improvement projects.
Resource Allocator	Responsible for allocating all important resources of the organization, both financial and human, including how the manager schedules own time, programs work, and authorizes actions.
Negotiator	Responsible for the organization's major outside negotiations.
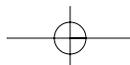
**Table 3.3 Combining Managerial Work Roles and Job Functions in Defining the GM's Job**

Time Horizon	GM Job Function	GM Managerial Roles
Short Run	Operational Controller	• Monitor and Disseminator (of internal information) • Disturbance Handler • Resource Allocator (of own time) • Leader
Intermediate Run	Organizational Developer	• Liaison • Monitor and Disseminator (of both external and internal information) • Entrepreneur • Resource Allocator (of own time, programs, and funds) • Leader
Long Run	Business Maintainer	• Liaison • Monitor and Disseminator (of external and internal information) • Resource Allocator (of programs and funds) • Entrepreneur • Leader

ous managerial work roles in order to be successful. Combining the various managerial work roles with the specific job functions helps provide a clearer understanding of the GM's job. These relationships are shown in Table 3.3.

Although the GMs studied were observed performing each of Mintzberg's ten managerial work roles, the interpersonal roles of leader and liaison, the informational roles of monitor and disseminator, and the decisional roles of disturbance handler, entrepreneur, and resource allocator were found to be of particular significance. These roles were performed regularly as GMs carried out their various job functions. We now proceed to describe the managerial work roles most often performed by GMs while discharging their three primary job functions.

► MANAGERIAL WORK ROLES AS OPERATIONAL CONTROLLER

The GM's work as operational controller is characterized by a high degree of involvement in the daily operations of the hotel. Because the activities of a hotel are both numerous and diverse, GMs must be constantly monitoring and disseminating detailed information pertaining to daily operational matters. Time and again throughout the course of the working day, GMs interact with subordinates to stay on top of the numerous operational problems that occur. GMs must also be available to effectively and quickly handle disturbances that are not covered by a hotel's routine procedures or those that
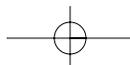
subordinates perceive as being beyond their scope of authority or experience. In order to effectively play this managerial work role of disturbance handler, GMs must have rapid access to reliable internal information and, in turn, be able to quickly process and disseminate this information downward in the organization. While functioning as operational controller, the GM's work role as resource allocator revolves mostly around the allocation of his or her own time to the numerous short-run demands of the job. GMs can, of course, allocate a proportion of their hotel's financial and human resources to help solve short-run operational problems, but it is the manner in which they allocate their own scarce time that is of paramount importance when referring to the short-run operational problems of the job.

GMs perform the leader role in every contact with subordinates. Every action of a GM is analyzed and interpreted by subordinates; thus, every interaction with subordinates provides GMs with an opportunity to exercise leadership (Hales and Nightingale, 1986). That is why outstanding GMs realize they are constantly in the limelight throughout the working day. GMs also exercise leadership by deciding the operational issues on which to concentrate. Subordinates automatically look for clues regarding what GMs deem important; thus, by deciding which operational issues to focus on, GMs send an unequivocal message downward in the organization regarding what they consider important.

► MANAGERIAL WORK ROLES AS ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPER

The managerial work roles of GMs as organizational developers extend beyond the imme-

diate confines of the hotel. GMs must monitor information about both the community and the competitive environment, and this requires them to become a liaison between the hotel and the outside world. Further, the information GMs gather from the external environment must be analyzed and disseminated to subordinates within the hotel. GMs must process both externally and internally obtained information in order to effectively play the work role of entrepreneur, the importance of which has been stressed by Ley (1978). As entrepreneurs, GMs are the developers of specific plans and programs geared to improving the operating efficiency and service strategy of the hotel. Any new plan or program imposes additional time obligations on both the GM and on subordinates. New plans and programs often involve the allocation of financial and human resources as well. Therefore, in the course of developing and implementing these specific plans and programs for the hotel, GMs play the decisional work role of resource allocator.

Finally, GMs continue in the leader work role by virtue of, first, continuing relationships with subordinates as an integral component of the job, and, second, by choosing specific plans and programs to implement. As leaders, GMs must contend with the challenge of ensuring that subordinates fully accept the plans and programs outlined for the hotel and are committed to working toward their successful implementation. This requires that GMs pay careful attention to their work roles of monitor and disseminator of information.

► MANAGERIAL WORK ROLES AS BUSINESS MAINTAINER

The final job function of business maintainer requires the GM to see to the long-run capital
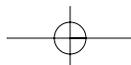
requirements and organizational stability and vitality of the hotel. In seeking capital and planning a strategy for organizational stability and vitality, the GM's work roles of liaison, monitor, and disseminator of external and internal information upward to corporate executives or owners are critical, as is the work role of allocator of scarce financial resources. The resource allocator role, more often than not, requires detailed presentation of formal budget proposals that include careful financial justification. This is especially true if the GM is proposing a major directional shift in the service strategy of the hotel. As maintainer of organizational stability, the GM also plays the work role of disseminator of important information downward to subordinates. The GM must act as entrepreneur with respect to important human resource development plans and programs, and, as with all activities, continue as leader in the ongoing role of nurturing and developing managerial talent.

While GMs perform three job functions with different time horizons, it is not necessarily the case that these job functions are performed independently of each other. That is to say, it is altogether possible for GMs to perform two or even all three job functions simultaneously. It is clear from Table 3.3 that many of the Mintzbergian managerial work roles are common to more than one job function. In fact, the work roles of monitor, disseminator, resource allocator, and leader are common to all three, while those of liaison and entrepreneur are common to two of the job functions. Thus, when GMs are engaged with short-run operational concerns, they often do so in the context of longer-run considerations. For example, while responding to a short-run operational problem of slow guest check-ins—that is, functioning as operational controller—a GM may simultaneously be

monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of a front-desk clerk training program—that is, functioning as organizational developer. The GM may also be formulating a long-run plan to purchase an advanced front-office computer system—that is, functioning as business maintainer. The actual manner in which effective GMs perform this delicate balancing act is covered later in the text.

▶ CONCLUSION

A hotel GM's job can be better understood by examining the contextual variables that influence and help shape it. A hotel's context presents GMs with a series of job demands and relationship issues with which they must deal effectively in order to be successful. As seen, these job demands and relationship issues differ depending on the time frame under consideration. These considerations give rise to specific job functions that GMs perform through a variety of work roles.

In the short run, the GM job function was described as that of operational controller. Here, GMs are involved with the day-to-day internal operational control of their business, requiring intense and frequent downward verbal communication within the hotel. They must be adept at the managerial work roles of monitoring and disseminating a wide variety of internal information, handling nonroutine disturbances, and allocating their own scarce time to important operational issues.

In the intermediate run, the GM job function was described as that of organizational developer. Here, GMs face the challenges of developing subordinates, formulating specific plans and programs to improve their operational control of the hotel, and fine-tuning the hotel's service strategy in the context of external environmental conditions. In addition

to internal downward communication, these challenges require intense lateral communication with both the hotel industry and local community sources. This helps the GM stay abreast of market and environmental trends. The GM also maintains upward communication with corporate superiors and staff specialists to ensure their cooperation in the successful implementation of operational plans and programs. Here, GMs' work roles require them to monitor and disseminate external as well as internal information, so they act as liaison between the hotel and the outside world.

They also may initiate, as entrepreneurs would, plans and programs designed to improve the hotel's operational and organizational efficiency. This requires the allocation of their own time, as well as the financial and human resources of the hotel, to these plans and programs.

In the long run, the GM's job function was described as that of business maintainer. Here, GMs must ensure the long-term viability of the hotel through capital expenditure decisions that are consistent with the hotel's strategic service vision, and by developing a degree of organizational stability that allows the hotel to carry out its strategic plan. Intense upward communication to corporate superiors, staff specialists, and owners, as well as lateral communication with a wide variety of industry and community contacts, highlight the relationship issues of this job function. GMs are required to play the work role of liaison between the hotel and corporate office or owners as well as industry and community sources. This involves monitoring the widest variety of external and internal information and disseminating it laterally, downward, and upward. In addition, GMs play both the work roles of resource allocator of capital funds

and of entrepreneur when seeing to the organizational stability of the business. All three job functions require GMs to be leaders, a work role they play through every contact with subordinates. Finally, these job functions need not and often are not performed independently of each other.

Three important conclusions about the GM's job can be drawn from this analysis:

1. By their nature, major hotels of today provide GMs with a variety of challenges that require careful attention be paid to short-run, intermediate-run, and long-run time frame issues. Thus, GMs must be able to successfully carry out three separate and different job functions. They must be effective as operational controllers, organizational developers, and business maintainers if they are to enjoy long-term success as effective GMs.

2. To be effective at all three job functions requires that GMs perform a large variety of managerial work roles. While GMs perform all ten of Mintzberg's managerial work roles, they must be particularly effective at seven of them to be successful operational controllers, organizational developers, and business maintainers. They must develop the wide variety of skills necessary to play the work roles of leader, liaison, monitor, disseminator, disturbance handler, entrepreneur, and resource allocator.

3. The importance of communications in the hotel GM's job becomes apparent from this analysis. Every job function and every managerial work role carries with it a communications requirement. GMs must be adept at gathering, analyzing, and disseminating external and internal information, and they must be able to effectively
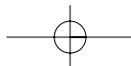
communicate laterally, downward, and upward. Without good communication skills, GMs cannot possibly be effective in any of their three job functions (Worsfold, 1989).

Today's major hotels are complex businesses engaged in a wide variety of activities. The demands of managing these businesses are reflected in the complexities of the GM's job. To be effective, hotel GMs must understand the key job demands and relationship issues hotels thrust upon them. They must perform three separate job functions that relate to different time frames. To do this, they must become adept at a number of managerial work roles, depending on the job function they are performing. Finally, hotel GMs must become accomplished communicators if they are to effectively meet the variety of challenges they face.

## 3.3 GROOMING FUTURE HOSPITALITY LEADERS: A COMPETENCIES MODEL

Beth G. Chung-Herrera, Cathy A. Enz, and Melenie J. Lankau

The ability to identify the skills and competencies required for tomorrow's industry leaders is essential for companies that hope to remain competitive. Some firms, such as Marriott International and Choice (Enz and Siguaw, 2000) have made identifying leadership competencies a priority. Identifying appropriate competencies helps senior managers in selecting, developing, and coaching future leaders, as well as mapping career paths and planning management succession. In this article we present a leadership-competency model that is industry specific and future based. Our goal in creating this model was to provide the hospitality industry with a functional-competency model that: 1) organizations can use to develop their own model for leadership development, 2) employees can use to understand the competencies they need for advancement, 3) hospitality schools can use to design curriculum, and 4) students can use to craft career paths. We first describe the nature and use of competency models and then describe our study. We examine the critical competencies that we found to be important (and those that, surprisingly, are not as important). Last, we consider the possible uses for the industry-wide model that we have developed.

► COMPETENCY MODELS

A competency model is a descriptive tool that identifies the knowledge, skills, abilities, and behavior needed to perform effectively in an organization (Lucia and Lepsinger, 1999). Designed to help an organization meet its strategic objectives through building human-resources capability, competency modeling has been in existence since the 1970s, starting with the first models created by David McClelland (Mirabile, 1997, 73–77). Such models gained popularity in the late 1980s and remain in use today.
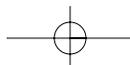
Competency models focus on behavior rather than on personality traits, because personality traits are usually hard to measure accurately (Lucia and Lepsinger, 1999, and ACA's Competencies Research Team, 1996, 6–21). Expressing desirable traits in behavioral terms is essential for a competency model to be useful as a human-resources tool, because the model must not only define the competencies necessary for effective performance but also indicate how to tell when a particular competency is being demonstrated. Most competency models express traits and characteristics in behavioral terms on the grounds that behavior is the observable manifestation of personality traits and characteristics. Competencies are deemed critical for inclusion in a model when they distinguish superior performers from poor performers.

Competency models are less specific than is the job analysis typically performed for specific positions, and models can encompass a whole family of jobs. Choice Hotels International, for example, developed competency models for each of the top four levels of its organization (i.e., senior vice president, vice president, senior director, and director). In so doing, the company found that the competencies for success of a senior vice president were similar to those needed for the other three positions.

▶ USING COMPETENCY MODELS

Competency models provide a common language for discussing capabilities and performance. The development of a competency model can help provide guidance for a host of different HR practices and ensure that those practices are consistent. Specifically, competency models can be used as a foundation from which to establish criteria for a broad array of HR systems (McLagan, 1996, 60–65 and Lucia and Lepsinger, 1999). For instance, listed below are eight HR activities that can be guided or enhanced with the use of a well-developed competency model.

1. *Recruitment and selection.* Looking beyond skills to performance dimensions such as teamwork, competency models can help to establish what it takes to do well on the job. Armed with this information, companies can focus recruitment dollars on finding the greatest number of prospective employees who have the right mix of competencies for the job in question. The content of appropriate selection instruments (e.g., structured interviews, role plays) can target the key competencies—and, hence, the whole package of needed skills and abilities. Beyond their usefulness in improving selection tools, competency models also provide candidates with a clear and realistic picture of expected behavior.

2. *Training and development.* Assessing gaps between existing employee skills and those identified by a competency model can be extremely useful in devising a long-term strategic plan for leadership training and development. Identification of the skills needed to perform effectively makes it easier to ensure that the design and delivery of training are aligned with the organization's objectives. When a competency model is used as the foundation for training objectives, individual leadership gaps can be assessed and a training plan devised to address deficiencies.
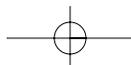
3. *Performance appraisals.* Performance-management systems can be enhanced by a competency model that provides a shared set of expectations regarding what is important and what will be monitored and measured. Competency models help managers to focus performance-appraisal discussions on critical aspects of behavior, thus providing a strategic tool for consistent and meaningful evaluation.

4. *Coaching, counseling, and mentoring.* Competency models are often used as the basis for 360-degree feedback, in which a manager receives performance information from all relevant sources (including supervisor, subordinates, self, peers, and customers, if applicable). Coaches and advisers can use the information so gathered to guide the employee in designing a development plan and making critical-skill improvements. The clarity and specificity of competency models enable coaches and mentors to reinforce desired behavior and tie performance-management systems to necessary competencies.

5. *Reward systems.* A tremendous percentage of a hospitality organization's operating expenses is devoted to employee compensation. To attract, retain, and motivate employees, reward systems must be equitable and linked to desired behavior. Competency models can be extremely useful for defining the behavior that will be rewarded.

6. *Career development.* For employees who aspire to reach the next level on a career path, a competency model serves as a map. Competency models make employees aware of the behavior and skills needed to advance and achieve success, allowing them to prepare accordingly.

7. *Succession planning.* Competency models can be used to identify possible successors for critical jobs by clarifying the requirements for the job and providing a method for assessing a particular candidate's readiness. Without a clear understanding of the competencies needed by future leaders, it is difficult for a firm to measure its "bench strength"—that is, to determine whether the organization has people with those capabilities and, if it does, who they are.

8. *Change management.* Organizations can work toward an uncertain future by creating models that are based on competencies that may be necessary for future leaders, as well as competencies needed for current operations.

Competency models confer several advantages on a company. First, a competency model is useful for building an integrated framework for developing a company's human-resources system. Used consistently, such a model should lead to improved and consistent performance standards. More important, the model can be a critical guide during periods of instability and change. Moreover, making HR decisions on the basis of carefully developed competency models reduces legal challenges to those decisions. (*Note:* Include specific competencies in the job description to reduce legal liability, especially if the competencies will be used for performance appraisals.) Finally, well-developed competency models enhance a company's ability to communicate with its employees regarding the behavior connected with success, thereby increasing the firm's ability to achieve its business objectives (ACA's Competencies Research Team, 1996).

▶ LEADER COMPETENCIES FOR THE LODGING INDUSTRY

With point number eight in mind, we sought to devise a future-oriented leadership-competency model for the lodging industry. We consider this endeavor to be important given the absence of an industry-focused model that works across many organizations. (Our research found no current models for hospitality leadership.) Having an industry-wide model is important because it can inform students and employees alike about the expectations for future leaders as identified by senior-level managers. Furthermore, an industry-wide model helps to paint a comprehensive picture of the critical skills needed by the entire industry, thereby assisting senior managers in hotel organizations as they devise and implement their recruitment, selection, and development systems.

Looking ahead. We focused our competency model on managerial behavior that industry executives anticipated would be needed ten years from now. We wanted a model that could be used as a prototype to

Table 3.4 Self-Management: Dimensions of a Competency Factor

Factor	**Self-Management**			
Dimensions	**Ethics and Integrity**	**Time Management**	**Self-Development**	**Flexibility and Adaptability**
Characteristics	• Acts in an ethical manner. • Treats people fairly. • Treats people with respect. • Displays consistency between words and actions. • Considers ethical implications prior to taking action. • Protects confidential information.	• Effectively handles multiple demands and competing priorities. • Manages time to ensure productivity. • Spends time on the most important issues, not just the most urgent ones.	• Deals constructively with own failures and setbacks. • Seeks feedback from others. • Adjusts behavior in response to feedback and experience. • Pursues continual learning and self-development. • Demonstrates awareness of own strengths and weaknesses.	• Adapts to changing circumstances. • Works constructively under stress and pressure. • Works effectively in ambiguous situations. • Views problems as opportunities and mistakes as progress.
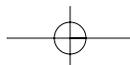
guide people's aspirations in the coming years and to create future leaders. Asking leaders to focus on the future is a common approach when building competency models, although the resulting model may not identify all necessary competencies (given that one cannot see the future). (*Note:* Firms including PDI, DDI, and Hay Management employ forecasting techniques. We used the linkage systems method, asking participants to forecast future important behaviors; see Linkage, 1997.) The essential limitation in asking current leaders to project future competencies is that they may be unable or unwilling to define the future differently from the present. However, many thoughtful executives are able to envision and plan for a future that is not simply a reflection of the present, highlighting behavior that they see as increasingly important.

Using a number of different competency studies (Mirabile, 1985; Evarts, 1988; Zingheim, Ledford, and Shuster, 1996; Blancero, Boroski, and Dyer, 1996) as a starting point, we constructed a provisional behavioral-competency model that captured the most important dimensions of leaders' behavior across several industries. Using this preliminary model, we refined the components through hospitality managers' feedback, developing the competency model by means of the customized generic model method (Dubois, 1993). We collected managers' comments by surveying individuals from around the globe who participated in senior-level executive-education programs at Cornell University. In our pilot survey, respondents could add other competencies that they felt were becoming increasingly important and eliminate those items that they deemed inappropriate.

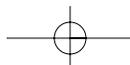Based on the feedback from the pilot study, we modified the competency model to reflect hospitality-specific behavior. In this fashion, we arrived at a final competency model consisting of 8 overarching factors, 28 dimensions, and 99 specific behavioral competencies. The factors and dimensions were derived from the literature on competency models and through hospitality managers' feedback. The eight overarching factors are communication, critical thinking, implementation, industry knowledge, interpersonal skills, leadership, self-management, and strategic positioning. Each of those factors comprised up to six dimensions that captured various aspects of that factor. Leadership, for example, is composed of the following six dimensions: developing others, embracing change, fortitude, fostering motivation, leadership versatility, and teamwork orientation. As another example, Table 3.4 shows the behavioral items and dimensions for the self-management factor.

We listed the 99 hospitality competencies (Table 3.5) in a survey that was faxed worldwide to 735 senior-level industry executives at various hotel companies. Using a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (not at all important) to 5 (extremely important), respondents were asked to rate the importance of each of the 99 competencies or skills for a senior-level manager ten years from now (see the accompanying list). A total of 137 industry leaders responded either online or via return fax, yielding a response rate of 18.6 percent. Participants' positions ranged from director to CEO or chair of international hotel chains and corporations. Response rates for executive-level employees are notoriously low, and our response rate for this sample was typical for this population (Agle, Mitchell, and Sonnenfeld, 1999).

Table 3.5   99 Lodging Competencies

(1) Anticipates obstacles and develops contingency plans.

(2) Adapts to changing circumstances.

(3) Manages time to ensure productivity.

(4) Monitors progress of others and redirects efforts when necessary.

(5) Works effectively in ambiguous situations.

(6) Prepares people to understand changes.

(7) Seeks feedback from others.

(8) Works toward win-win solutions with others whenever possible.

(9) Steers conflicts away from personalities and toward issues.

(10) Provides employees access to information.

(11) Takes a stand when resolving important issues.

(12) Integrates planning efforts across work groups or functional units.

(13) Displays consistency between words and actions.

(14) Identifies measurable action steps that support the hotel's strategy and mission.

(15) Works constructively under stress and pressure.

(16) Acts in an ethical manner.

(17) Presents ideas in a convincing manner.

(18) Expresses disagreement in a tactful and sensitive manner.

(19) Treats people with respect.

(20) Considers a broad range of factors (internal, external, and trends) when solving problems and making decisions.

(21) Translates business strategies into clear objectives and tactics.

(22) Brings together different perspectives and approaches and combines them in creative ways.

(23) Summarizes and clarifies what people say to ensure understanding.

(24) Coaches others in skill development.

(25) Challenges others to make tough choices.

(26) Works to understand why others resist change instead of forcing others to accept change.

(27) Accurately identifies strengths and weaknesses in others.

(28) Stays informed about industry practices and new developments.

(29) Examines and monitors trends in the hotel business.

(30) Understands the agendas and perspectives of owners, staff members, managers, and other parties.

(31) Clarifies expectations to staff members about assignments, roles, and responsibilities.

(32) Selects leadership style most appropriate for the situation.

(33) Provides challenging assignments to facilitate development.

(34) Applies cross-functional knowledge to understand and solve problems.

(35) Expresses confidence in people's competence to do their jobs.

(36) Addresses and works through conflict.

(37) Interacts with people in a direct and open manner.

(38) Views problems as opportunities and mistakes as progress.

(39) Works to establish strong relationships with owners.

(40) Understands and harnesses individual differences to create a competitive advantage.

(41) Develops action plans to meet customer needs.

(42) Reduces redundancies in processes and procedures.

(43) Gives specific, timely, and constructive feedback.

(44) Adjusts behavior in response to feedback and experience.

(45) Models the changes expected of others.

(46) Considers alternatives before making decisions.

(47) Listens to people without interrupting.

(48) Protects confidential information.

(49) Encourages employees to use their initiative to remedy problems when they first occur.

(50) Takes calculated risks when appropriate.

(51) Builds networks with people inside and outside the hotel.

(52) Spends time on the most important issues, not just the most urgent.

(53) Commits organizational resources for community events.

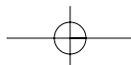**(54)** Considers pros and cons of proposed solutions to problems.

Table 3.5 *(Continued)*

(55) Develops new systems or processes for increased efficiency.

(56) Encourages others to express their views, even contrary ones.

(57) Listens carefully to input and concerns expressed by others.

(58) Deals constructively with own failures and mistakes.

(59) Handles multiple demands and competing priorities.

(60) Knows the strengths and weaknesses of competitors.

(61) Defines and sets up quality standards for employees.

(62) Gives others the authority necessary to accomplish their objectives.

(63) Adjusts leadership approach to fit other individuals.

(64) Involves others in critical decisions that affect them.

(65) Understands complex concepts and relationships.

(66) Delegates enough of own work to others.

(67) Identifies and defines problems.

(68) Determines which of many problems may become crises.

(69) Defines priorities for the staff.

(70) Confronts problems early before they become unmanageable.

(71) Works as a member of a team.

(72) Considers ethical implications prior to taking action.

(73) Gets others interested and involved in the change process.

(74) Creates needed systems and procedures to support changes.

(75) Keeps others updated with information.

(76) Considers customer needs when making decisions.

(77) Considers the effects of decisions on community well-being.

(78) Champions new ideas and initiatives.

(79) Focuses on important information without being distracted by unnecessary details.

(80) Employs a team approach to solve problems when appropriate.

(81) Understands owners' and stakeholders' values and how they perceive issues.

(82) Influences and shapes owners' and stakeholders' decisions.

(83) Recognizes and seizes strategic opportunities in the environment.

(84) Promotes respect and appreciation for diversity and individual differences.

(85) Treats people fairly.

(86) Allows others to lead under the appropriate circumstances.

(87) Pursues continual learning and self-development.

(88) Promotes quality initiatives.

(89) Deliberately allows direct reports to use their own methods for completing tasks.

(90) Demonstrates awareness of own strengths and weaknesses.

(91) Understands organizational strengths and weaknesses.

(92) Writes in an effective manner.

(93) Actively and frequently listens directly to customers.

(94) Sees how things fit in the big picture.

(95) Promotes teamwork among groups; discourages us-versus-them thinking.

(96) Inspires and motivates others.

(97) Makes sound decisions under time pressure and with limited resources.

(98) Speaks clearly and articulately in a variety of situations.

(99) Builds partnerships and alliances with community organizations.

▶ KEY COMPETENCIES IDENTIFIED

Competency in self-management is the overarching factor that was rated highest by our respondents, followed by knowledge of strategic positioning, implementation skill, and critical thinking. (Table 3.6 summarizes the ratings.) The self-management factor achieved a mean importance score of 4.32 out of 5. This factor consists of four behavioral dimensions, namely: (1) ethics and integrity, (2) time management, (3) flexibility and adaptability, and (4) self-development. Looking at the behavioral dimensions within each competency factor, we found that the behavior of acting ethically or with integrity was the most important to the responding senior leaders. *Post-hoc* Scheffe tests from an analysis of variance revealed that this behavioral dimension of self-management was rated significantly higher than the other three dimensions. The ethics-integrity dimension contains six specific behavioral competencies, such as "Treats people with respect," "Displays consistency between words and actions," and "Considers ethical implications prior to taking action" (see Table 3.4). The overriding importance of ethical behavior is consistent with previous competency models devised by managers outside the lodging industry. (See competency research reports by consulting firms such as Personnel Decisions International (www.personaldecisions.com) and Center for Creative Leadership (www.ccl.org).) The other specific competencies that fall under the self-management factor are "Works constructively under stress and pressure," "Seeks feedback from others," and "Spends time on the most important issues, not just the most urgent." Overall, self-management skills encompass actions related to the personal characteristics of the leader and how she or he handles himself or herself.

Competency in strategic positioning was the overarching factor considered to be second in importance for future leaders. This factor comprises the following four dimensions: (1) awareness of customer needs, (2) commitment to quality, (3) managing stakeholders, and (4) concern for community. Examples of behaviors that fall under these dimensions include "Influences and shapes owners' and stakeholders' decisions," "Promotes quality initiatives," and "Considers customer needs when making decisions." This factor clearly captures the hospitality industry's service orientation. The senior managers whom we surveyed suggested that future lodging-industry leaders need to be vigilant in their commitment to both quality and the needs of a variety of different stakeholders, including owners, Wall Street, employees, and customers.

Implementation, critical thinking, and communication skills were also deemed "extremely important" by senior managers. Leaders of the future will need to possess a strategic orientation and approach to decision-making that permits them to both plan and redesign their organizations. In addition, communicating persuasively, listening, and enabling others will be essential skills for managers hoping to reach senior leadership positions.

Industry knowledge, leadership, and interpersonal skill were factors that, while important, were ranked lower than the others by our respondents. The relatively low score for industry knowledge seems to suggest that the importance for leaders of industry-specific

Table 3.6 Leadership Competency Model for the Lodging Industry

Factor	Mean	Dimension	Mean
Self-management	4.32	Ethics and integrity	4.58[a]
		Time management	4.28
		Flexibility and adaptability	4.22
		Self-development	4.12
Strategic positioning	4.17	Awareness of customer needs	4.39
		Commitment to quality	4.26
		Managing stakeholders	4.21
		Concern for community	3.67[b]
Implementation	4.16	Planning	4.23[c]
		Directing others	4.15
		Reengineering	4.02
Critical thinking	4.15	Strategic orientation	4.24[d]
		Decision making	4.18
		Analysis	4.17
		Risk taking and innovation	4.03
Communication	4.12	Speaking with impact	4.27
		Facilitating open communication	4.14
		Active listening	4.06
		Written communication	4.06
Interpersonal	4.09	Building networks	4.20[e]
		Managing conflict	4.07
		Embracing diversity	4.01
Leadership	4.09	Teamwork orientation	4.25[f]
		Fostering motivation	4.19
		Fortitude	4.14
		Developing others	4.02
		Embracing change	3.98
		Leadership versatility	3.97
Industry knowledge	4.09	Business and industry expertise	4.09

a. "Ethics and integrity" scored significantly higher than the other three dimensions in this factor ($p < .01$).
b. "Concern for community" scored significantly lower than the other three dimensions in this factor ($p < .01$).
c. "Planning" scored significantly higher than "Re-engineering" ($p < .05$).
d. "Strategic orientation" scored significantly higher than "Risk taking and innovation" ($p < .05$).
e. "Building networks" is significantly higher than "Embracing diversity" ($p < .05$).
f. "Teamwork orientation" scored significantly higher than did "Developing others" ($p < .05$), "Embracing change" ($p < .01$), and "Leadership versatility" ($p < .01$).
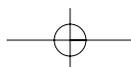
expertise is decreasing as time goes on. One reason for this is that industry expertise can be acquired by an adept leader, while the capacity for flexibility in a changing business environment can be hard to learn and often is inherent in an individual's personality and skill set. Interpersonal and leadership skills also scored lower than did other factors. We found it particularly interesting that the dimensions of developing others, embracing diversity and change, and leadership versatility were viewed as some of the least essential skills for the future.

Concern for community was a particularly low-rated dimension of strategic positioning. Scheffe *post-hoc* tests revealed that this dimension was rated significantly lower than the other three strategic-positioning dimensions. Although this dimension is not typically included in competency-modeling research, we (incorrectly) thought that it might be important to hospitality leaders because of their extensive connections with local community events and activities. This dimension consisted of three items: "Commits organizational resources for community events," "Considers the impact of decisions on community well-being," and "Builds partnerships and alliances with community organizations." Contrary to our thinking, the results revealed that those three were among the lowest-rated of all 99 items presented on the survey. When compared to other activities, a concern for and relationship with the local community in which the company operates does not seem to be a core competency needed for future hospitality leaders. On the other hand, competencies that appear to be the likely core attributes of future leaders are ethics, awareness of customer needs, time management, speaking with impact, commitment to quality, and team orientation.

► USING INDUSTRY-WIDE COMPETENCY MODELS

We believe that competency models can be important in building an effective human-resources system. They can also help in educating future generations of leaders by guiding university faculties in designing curricula to meet the industry's future needs. An increasing number of university programs are focusing on competency building in an effort to prepare students for a specific industry (see *Journal of Management Education* 25(2)). For example, the master of management in hospitality (MMH) program at Cornell University assesses entering students against three core competencies that are deemed necessary for graduation. These competencies are leadership skills, teamwork and group-process skills, and written and oral communication skills. Students are evaluated through an assessment center as they enter the MMH program and are given feedback at the end of the assessment center, as well as after each subsequent semester. If they have weaknesses in any of the three competencies, the students must make plans to improve their skills. Students' competency development is further supported by special modules offered by faculty members to enhance key skill areas. These modules contain both lecture and experiential components.

Industry-specific competency models can also help students seek out employment and career tracks that will give them ample opportunity to develop needed skills. The model presented here provides a comprehensive framework to inform future managers about what will be needed or expected to lead future lodging firms. A good competency model serves as both a roadmap and a prototype for achieving success.
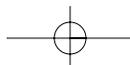
Employees in lodging organizations may find this model useful as a general guide for self-development. In the absence of an institutional program to help develop a promising manager, a competency model can be used by an individual to design and plan her or his own career choices.

Last, individual lodging organizations can use this industry-wide model to build their own specific model. Once an organization has tailored the model to its specific needs, that firm can use the model in a variety of ways. For example, Choice Hotels International now uses its competency database to perform annual readiness assessments to determine managers' leadership capability. The competencies in Choice's model are the basis for the company's selection, promotion, and succession planning. Marriott employs a system-wide leadership-development initiative, called the Benchstrength Management System, which is used by current senior managers to build leadership capacity. Using the tools and measurements from this system, Marriott's senior managers are responsible for identifying potential leaders and ensuring that those individuals develop the skills and competencies needed to carry the company forward. Targeted development plans are created to assist senior managers in filling critical positions that are "stretch" assignments for high-potential managers. The Benchstrength Management System provides Marriott with a consistent approach to evaluating its leadership potential and ensures that the company focuses on core capabilities that are key to future success.

3.4 AS I SEE IT: WHAT I DO

Emilio Fabico

In reflecting upon what it is I do as a manager in the hospitality industry, it's clear that there are the tasks that I must complete, and then there is all the other stuff. Throughout our careers, there are always plenty of duties that we're responsible for completing and that are important to our business. These processes are typically mandated by operational need, fiduciary responsibility, or regulatory requirement. The manner in which virtually all of these tasks are completed is typically inflexible and requires little or no creativity. It's unlikely that one's professional success will come from one's ability to perform these duties successfully.

▶ THE OTHER STUFF

The swirled, chocolaty surface of a 3 Musketeers bar is not unlike that of any other candy bar; it's the fluffy stuff inside that makes it unique. We're not sure exactly what it is, but it sure is good and differentiates it from the others. That's the other stuff. That's what I spend most of my time focusing on and constantly working to improve. That other stuff is leadership. There's a world of people smarter than me who have written books on this subject, so I certainly don't profess to have any of the answers. What I can share with you is what the zigs and zags of my career path have taught me.
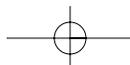
▶ IF IT WEREN'T HARD, EVERYONE WOULD DO IT

It's called *leadership,* not *maintainership.* Leadership is about leading. It's being proactive rather than reactive. It's being out ahead of challenges, as opposed to chasing them. It's about truly being engaged in and passionate about your work. It's about wanting to be and working toward being the best. As I walk the resort and interact with our employees and guests, I attempt to be aware of the challenges that each of the operations is facing. What are they proud of that they should be recognized for? What barriers are preventing them from continuing to improvement? What might be around the corner that we're not aware of yet? What's important to our guests? What can we do, for our guests and employees, to make us better than our competition? How can we meet our employees' developmental needs? Woven into all of these questions and what should always be factored into the answers are *people*—individuals with diverse backgrounds, varying opinions, and different needs. As a leader, I must be able to recognize those differences and respond appropriately to each of them. Being skilled at listening is just as important as leading. How can one answer without knowing the questions? In a 24/7 industry like ours, this interaction and these questions never stop.

Early in my career, when I was a shift manager, a clear line divided work time and off time. After my ten-hour day, the hotel and I went our separate ways until I was back for my next shift. In more senior leadership roles, this line is no longer as clear. Especially in the age of the Blackberry, that line can com-

pletely disappear. Here's the part where I make a pitch for balance. That, too, is a valuable leadership skill. Without question, it's possible to be a great leader and still have balance. This is important not only to the leader, but also to those he or she leads, as they often feel compelled to follow the leader's example. This should remain a priority throughout one's career.

▶ SIX DEGREES OF SEPARATION

I have found that many of the successes or failures I face every day can be traced to one source: respect. I must respect the fact that I work for a public company and must ensure that growth and the success of the business remain at the forefront of the decisions I make and the actions I take. I must respect the talents of my direct reports. I must work to inspire, influence, and support them toward their goals. I must not micromanage them. I must also strive to identify their accomplishments and celebrate their successes. I must respect that people enjoyed feeling fulfilled, so I must work to provide the tools and environment that will allow them to be successful. I must respect that our guests have choices when selecting their hotel. They have decided to entrust us with their money, time, and away-from-home experience. We have an obligation to provide them with an experience that will leave them with a lasting positive memory and influence them to return time after time. I must lead knowing that all of us want to be treated fairly and respectfully. When employees are asked why they leave their employment, the answer generally centers on lack of respect or being valued.
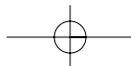
▶ "WHAT MAKES THE MUSKRAT GUARD HIS MUSK? COURAGE!"

Well said by the Wizard of Oz's Cowardly Lion. Although courage is not always easy to find, my role requires me to have it. I must have the courage to give honest, timely, and constructive feedback to my direct reports and my peers. I must have the courage to speak up when what I have to say may not be popular or may cause others pain. I must have the courage to take risks, if the calculated outcome will benefit our operation.

▶ JUST SAY NO

On a personal level, I must be true to myself. I can recall in school knowing exactly what my professional values were and never doubting that I would always remain true to them. As the years passed, the titles got fancier and the paychecks got bigger. I found myself separating from my beliefs. After losing a job a few years ago (I didn't truly lose it; I know where it is, but someone else now has it), I came to the realization that my paycheck was like a drug. I was thinking in terms of what I could do to get more of it. I had lost sight of how fun and exciting our industry is. Don't be afraid of the zigzagging career path. I found that it often leads where you never planned to go and teaches you what you could have never planned to learn.

And that's as I see it: what I do.

3.5 A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A HILTON HOTEL GENERAL MANAGER

Robert O. Balmer, CHA

I often have heard that professionals in the hotel business enjoy it because every day is different. While I find this to be a huge understatement, I, too, enjoy this business for the same reason.

My day begins with a large cup of coffee. I like to arrive at work early so I can walk the property and greet the early-morning team members and check on the daily banquet functions.

Every morning at 8:30 we have our daily operations meeting. This meeting is attended by our top lieutenants who run the day-to-day operations. The directors of sales, front office, housekeeping, and property operations are there, along with my executive assistant. At this meeting, we cover in detail our daily arrivals. With Hilton Hotel Corporation's advanced technology, we have the capability of ascertaining which guests are new to the

hotel, which are returning guests and how many times they have been here, which are new to any Hilton brand, and which have experienced problems in the past. We also know if guests have special preferences or requests. Our focus is to exceed guest expectations and increase customer loyalty.

During this morning briefing, we also discuss our banquet events, arriving VIPs, and any and all comment cards from the night prior. It is a great way to jump-start the morning. The team members briefly describe their day and are sent off with their marching orders. I do enjoy helping every team member be their best.

By this time, my email box is reaching capacity. What did we ever do before email, I wonder? I attempt to sift through and prioritize the messages.

The majority of my day is spent at various times strategizing and communicating with our director of sales and marketing and director of revenue management. Revenue is our lifeblood and of course cures most woes!

Between meetings with department or division heads, I can expect numerous interruptions coming from any direction. The director of finance requests assistance in reviewing a report that must be submitted quickly to our ownership group. The director of human resources needs to brief me on a new hire or recalcitrant team member. The executive chef and director of catering would like to review the banquet event order for the upcoming Mayor's State of the City luncheon.

I usually have lunch with clients, local dignitaries, guests, or of course team members in our four-star team dining room! Increasingly, the job of general manager has an outward focus, projecting the image of the hotel to the surrounding community.

After lunch, it is time to check more emails and to catch up on daily correspondence. Typically, I've got a corporate report due and phone calls to make and return. I spend a great deal of the afternoon reviewing forecasts and working on and updating action plans.

Running a large hotel is essentially the same as being the CEO of a small company. It is essential to have a strong executive committee so each department can run independently. This is the key to success. Success breeds success.

Funny things happen every day. One day during a staff meeting attended by corporate vice presidents, I was interrupted by our director of safety and security. The safety of our team members and guests was in jeopardy. The authorities had arrived at the hotel regarding a guest involved with drug trafficking. When the authorities attempted to apprehend the guest, he ran through the hotel waving a weapon. I arrived at the front entrance of the hotel to witness the guest face down on the ground being handcuffed while the authorities surrounded him with their guns drawn. I didn't want the VPs to be alarmed and leave the meeting room. Before I knew it, the guest had been arrested and business was back to usual. As I was returning to my meeting, a guest approached me and asked if someone was filming a movie. I responded, "Welcome to the media capital of the world! I'm glad you enjoyed the show." There are days I feel like the ringmaster of a three-ring circus. I think this is what keeps each day fresh and exciting.

I often giggle at the old hotel industry phrase, "If it weren't for those darn guests and team members, my day would be much more productive!" However, if it weren't for them, this job would not be different every day.
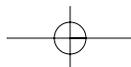
3.6 A DAY IN THE GENERAL MANAGER'S LIFE

Bob Peckenpaugh

You've made it! It is officially your turn. This is what you have worked for your entire career, the golden carrot, the title of general manager. So what is so different?

No matter what position(s) prepared you for this goal, it is all yours now. Total responsibility for the profit and loss statement and the success of the entire operation is in your hands. This is your opportunity to lead the senior management team in achieving the desires of the ownership, the management company, or both. You are now setting the tone for the operation and providing the results to the next level up.

Results are what your game plan is built around. Whether you work for an independent or a corporation, someone is going to want answers. What do they expect? Is it all about bottom-line profits, five-star services, or a happy medium? What elements of performance are most important to the company? Ask these questions and you are well on your way to developing your goals, the outline for your future success.

Set your goals, document them, and begin measuring your results. Obvious categories are guest and employee satisfaction, great communications, and positive financial results. Remember, you are now the general manager with a supporting cast of managers who each love specific talents and knowledge. Utilize these skills by communicating your goals and ask your team to outline their goals to support what you have set forth.

Sounds simple right? Here is where your day begins. You are now leading those who were your peers yesterday. How are you going to set the tone for your team and create an atmosphere that will support your expectations?

Create the image. A mission statement is a good starting point. What were the expectations given to you? How do you want the team to function? At the Rancho Bernardo Inn, we developed the following mission statement: "To be the finest family-owned destination resort, exemplifying comfortable elegance and service of unmatched warmth and sincerity. We will treat all of our guests and each other as lifetime friends. The way the world is supposed to be." The mood is set, the expectation is laid out, and we are all going to be friends in a world that's the way we want it to be, the one we are creating.

Give direction. How are you going to support the mission statement? Get the team involved; you will be amazed at how easy this is. We have developed a set of core values to show how we want to operate and what our roadmap looks like:

1. Anticipate and exceed guest expectations with genuine sincerity.

2. Maintain a professional staff at the highest standards through continuous training and development.

3. Treat each guest and employee as a member of our family, with respect, honesty, appreciation, and concern.

4. Protect and further our financial well-being.

5. Perform all duties safely, legally, and ethically.

6. Continuously strive for product improvement.

7. Respect and care for the property and its aesthetic image.

8. Communicate positively about the resort, on and off property.

Set the stage. Now focus on the experience. How will you conduct yourself with your staff, and how do you expect your staff to treat the guests? Each time you come on duty, you are stepping on stage. Describe the performance everyone is expected to give. We do this through a set of service expectations:

1. Anyone who receives a guest request owns it. Accommodate all special needs in a positive and timely fashion, and follow up with the guest.

2. Anyone who receives a guest problem owns it. Show genuine concern, apologize graciously, resolve the issue, and follow up with the guest.

3. Acknowledge every guest within 10 feet with eye contact, good posture, and a smile. Provide a positive and friendly greeting within 5 feet. Always be the first person to speak.

4. Ensure that guests are escorted to their destination.

5. Always acknowledge guest needs first by opening doors, offering the right of way, and ceasing personal conversations when a guest approaches.

6. Seek to identify the guest's name and use it at every opportunity, whether in person or on the phone.

7. Answer phones within three rings, saying "[Department name], this is [employee name]." Ask permission before putting the caller on hold and announce transfer calls. Always offer voicemail as an option.

8. Ensure that uniforms and personal appearance are immaculate. Nametags are part of the uniform.

9. Take responsibility for order and cleanliness of the facility. Pick up litter, reposition furniture, and prevent damage.

10. Always use appropriate professional language. Avoid using slang and hotel jargon.

Remember, the team needs direction, and they need it daily; you set the tone, and they create the atmosphere you want by following your example. Don't underestimate the value of each team member watching your actions. Treat others as you want to be treated!

Now take your creation on the road. Get the word out. It is like a campaign; infuse it into every communication: general meetings for all staff members, staff meetings for managers, departmental meetings for more intimate settings, and daily line-up meetings for repetition. Make it known what the expectation is and hold everyone equally accountable.

In a typical day as a general manager you will have contracts to sign, new managers to guide, senior managers to focus, vendors to negotiate with, forecasting to accomplish, guests to intrigue, and controls to monitor. Interruptions are commonplace. The chief engineer may call you to discuss the effects on your guests of the chiller going down. The director of human resources is on the line because a manager just overstepped his bounds with an employee. As you are comparing notes from the individuals involved, your cell phone rings; it's the golf course superintendent, who is on the twelfth hole in the rain watching the river that runs through your property flood the course and the neighbors'
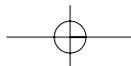
houses. Now you have to find time to coordinate the insurance adjusters, geologists, and canal clearing teams to determine liabilities, flow patterns, and potential problem solving for the future. Now it is lunchtime. Have you kept your head about you? Are you following the philosophies noted above?

General management is about using your brain, not your brawn. As you can see, your day can consume you. Don't let it. Surround yourself with the best talent possible and set the level of expectation high. You can spend the day involving yourself with every detail you can dig up, or you can find and nurture talent that can help free your time. Take pride in helping *others* learn to handle situations so you have time to focus the direction you have set.

Educate yourself. Read trade journals and newspapers. Keep up with community issues. Seek the latest trends in food and drink. Is your room product better than the competition? Being on the front end of a trend could mean free press for your hotel. Let your passion show through.

Get the word out. Employ a public relations company to ensure you get your fair share of accolades in the places your target guests will see them. Use your marketing team to research advertising opportunities, direct mail, and Internet options. Make yourself available to the sales team. The general manager's influence during a decision-maker's site inspection can make a profound difference. Be available, active, and involved. The phrase "Build it and they will come" only works in the movies. The team must be ener-gized to sell. They need to believe in your direction and vision as much as you do.

Special assignments can be rewarding. You may be called on to determine the direction of the development of the property. Your analytical skills may be tested in explaining to the ownership how a new ballroom will make them more money. You may be called on to sell the idea to community planning leaders to ensure the permitting process is successful. Your speaking skills may be further challenged in a town hall forum, with tough questions coming directly at you with no time to prepare an answer. You can do it; just translate the skills you learned from guest interactions. Remember your vision.

Community involvement can be vital. Keep up with the economic indicators in your region. Serve on a board for the Hotel and Lodging Association or the Convention and Visitor Bureau. You must be involved with politicians when transient occupancy taxes are a topic of city fund-raising. Will community involvement benefit your hotel or company? The current mayoral race may set the tone for many decisions that will affect the hospitality business in the next four years; your influence and support for right candidate may be needed. The property you run will develop a reputation that will be your signature. You will be setting a tone throughout the community in everything you do at your hotel.

Remember that you represent your hotel. Its ultimate success will be your success, so don't get too distracted. Keep focused and have fun. You have earned it!
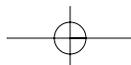
3.7 MINI CASE: SUNSET HOTELS AND SUITES

Shortly before the end of 2001, Mr. Andre Johnson, President of Sunset Hotels and Suites, Inc., heard through the company grapevine that several department and operational managers at the company's hotels in northern California were unhappy with their promotion prospects. Unwilling to risk losing these young managers, Johnson was contemplating how to help these men and women manage their careers, at the same time making staying with Sunset attractive and challenging.

Sunset Hotels and Suites is a growing West Coast chain with nine properties in southern California, six in the San Francisco Bay area (northern California), and five in the Seattle-Portland region. The hotels in the Bay area were the most recent acquisitions, and although fewer in number than the southern California region, boasted 20 percent more rooms and were more recently built. They also included the youngest management staff, many of who were retained from the staffs of the acquired hotels. Sunset is a privately owned company, operated as an S-corporation, with all of the corporate officers and hotel GMs holding shares of the company's stock.

Several of the unhappy managers had talked with their GMs and human resource officers about their frustrations. These included:

- Many of the GMs were young, in their thirties and forties, successful, and tending to not move.

- There are no regional managers, as Johnson prefers to run a fairly flat corporate organization.

- Several felt locked into narrow specialties (convention services, catering sales, housekeeping management, and front office) without clear prospects for cross-training to add breadth to their career.

- They were not particularly unhappy with salaries and the usual benefits, but some grumbled about the valuable stock options the GMs get, largely based on the performance of the operating managers' departments.

Johnson called a meeting of the Bay area managers at the Mark Hopkins Hotel in San Francisco (*not* a Sunset property) and invited all department managers from Sunset to be his guests for a two-day conference. Similar meetings were announced and planned in the Pacific Northwest and southern California.

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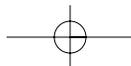
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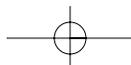
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