The Hospitality Service Staff

We're not in the coffee business, serving people; we are in the people business, serving coffee.

—Howard Schultz, CEO, Starbucks Coffee

CHAPTER 5

Staffing for Service

HOSPITALITY PRINCIPLE: FIND AND HIRE PEOPLE WHO LOVE TO SERVE

If someone isn't smiling during the interview, what in the world would make you think they will be smiling when faced with a line of customers all in a hurry for service, service, service?

—T. Scott Gross, *Positively Outrageous Service*

It is delusional to expect your employees to be extraordinary and differentiate your organization if your employee systems are basically the same as those in other organizations.

—Daniel M. Cable, *Change to Strange*

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading this chapter, you should understand:

- The process of recruiting employees who will give excellent guest service.
- Internal and external recruitment strategies that organizations use.
- Standard approaches and techniques for screening and interviewing job candidates.
- Employee skills, traits, and general abilities that have been found to lead to guest service excellence.
- The importance of a strong service orientation for all organizational employees, not just those on the frontline serving guests.
- The importance of a diversified workforce to hospitality organizations.

KEY TERMS AND CONCEPTS

recruitment

service naturals

selection

human resource planning

KSAs

job analysis

emotional labor

emotional relationship

surface acting

deep acting

hiring from within

succession plans

unstructured interview

structured interviews

behavioral interviews

situational interviews

assessment center

on-boarding

When you check into a hotel, most of the time things go … as expected. You drive up to the hotel, get your luggage out, go to the front desk, give the agent your name. She interacts with you pleasantly while she finds your reservation, handles the check-in, gives you your key, and has the luggage sent up to the room. You let yourself into your room without incident. You maybe watch TV to relax after your trip, and then you go to sleep. If someone were to ask you, "How were the employees of that hotel?" you might think back to your front desk experience and say "fine." But this answer overlooks the large number of people that were hired, trained, and coordinated to make your check-in meet your expectations.

So, who are all the people involved? There was the reservationist who took your reservation, the manager who hired and scheduled the reservationist, the valet who parked your car, the bellperson who took your luggage, the doorman who let you in to the hotel, the front desk agent (whom you did remember), the front desk manager who scheduled enough people to be on staff to ensure that your check-in occurred in a reasonable amount of time, the housekeeper who cleaned the room, the maintenance person who made sure the light bulbs and TV remotes were working, and of course, the executive staff who were responsible for the higher level management activities that ensured the profitability and efficiency of the hotel. It took literally dozens of people to get you checked into your room … as expected. All those people had to be hired, trained, paid, and managed.

This chapter begins a discussion of the human resource issues involved in managing the guest experience, by reviewing the first issue: hiring the right people, who can deliver the experience your guests expect. Chapter 6 will look at what is involved in training and developing the employees you have hired, and Chapter 7 will examine the financial and nonfinancial factors involved in motivating quality employee service. The final chapter of this section will consider these human resource management issues as they apply to your guests who can be considered as quasi-employees coproducing their own hospitality experiences.

THE MANY EMPLOYEES OF THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY

Providing either a tangible or an intangible service product requires many different employees doing many different jobs. Most obvious are the front-of-house employees who interact with the guest. They are directly responsible for providing the value and quality of an exceptional experience because they are the interface between the guests and the company. Back-of-house employees or what is sometimes called the *heart of the house* help create the service experience. They fix the rides, cook the meals, clean the sheets, and so forth so that the guest's experience meets or exceeds expectations.

Management also plays a critical role. They hire the employees, train, evaluate, reward, discipline, celebrate, promote, and oversee all the other tasks that must be done to ensure that there is someone at the right time and place ready to serve the guest. Beyond these tasks, there are laws and regulations that must be followed; accounts that must be balanced; financial statements that must be created; strategies that must be developed and implemented; marketing and sales that must be done. All these tasks—and the people who perform them—are critical for a successful business.

Serving the Guests

Scott Gross, in his *Positively Outrageous Service*,[1] provides numerous examples of how exceptional customer service can make the service experience extraordinary. One such service experience occurred at a Hampton Inn at the St. Louis Airport. A guest arrived very late at night, with an important 9 a.m. meeting the next morning. Unfortunately, his luggage didn't make it, but he needed to look fresh and clean for this important meeting. Upon hearing the dilemma, the night auditor suggested that the guest get clothes and other essentials at a Wal-Mart store, which stayed open late. Because the guest had flown in and had no way to get there, the night auditor gave the guest directions *and* the keys to his car!

While many people are involved in the delivery of any service experience, it is the frontline or customer-contact employee, with whom the guest interacts, that has the most direct influence. This employee—the front desk agent, the restaurant server, the character at a theme park, the driver of the bus, the flight attendant—is frequently the one that can turn a guest experience into a wow that is memorable. This can be done in a variety of ways, but one way is to add something extra and unexpected to the experience. The story is often told of a Southwest flight attendant who hid in the overhead compartment to surprise boarding guests with an unexpected greeting. Those who were greeted this way still talk about the pleasant and memorable experience this provided them on an otherwise as expected flight. Such an employee can make the

Many employees contribute to the service experience, beyond those often seen by the guest

Photo courtesy Marriott International

service experience something special, worthy of being told to friends or recorded in books about great service experiences, by adding an extra service to an already outstanding service product.

The hotel employees in the preceding examples illustrate the role of the hospitality employee in adding this extra. In the first example, in which a guest checks routinely into a hotel, the service was as expected, simple, polite, and efficient but not especially memorable. The flight attendant, in the second example, however, made the experience memorable by going above-and-beyond what was expected. And by doing more, he created a memorable guest experience that helped the guest in an unexpected way. For this guest, it was a wow!

Supporting the Service

If employees are to deliver excellent service, there must be something excellent to deliver in the first place. And just as guest-contact employees must have the right abilities and motivation to interact appropriately and engagingly with guests, so employees in non-contact positions must have the right abilities and motivation to do their jobs if an excellent service experience is going to result. For example, Spain's El Bulli is considered by some to be the best restaurant in the world. It is open only seven months a year, the dining room had fewer than 50 seats, and there is only one seating per night. The restaurant claimed to receive over a million reservations a year but accommodated only about 8000 diners in a single season. And yet the dining experience was supported by over 40 chefs![2] The guest might interact directly with only a few employees (e.g., maitre'd, server, wine steward), and while those employees provide exceptional service, they were not what made the restaurant so special. People go to such restaurants (if they can get in) for the magic occurring out of sight in the kitchen. Of course, getting into El Bulli will become even harder, as it is scheduled to close for two years in 2012 to become an academy for advanced culinary study. Chef Ferran Adrià plans to reopen El Bulli in 2014, but in a re-imagined way. As with any restaurant, whatever new form El Bulli will take will require careful consideration of the sort of talent that will operate behind the scenes.

Almost any service encounter requires some back-of-the-house people providing support to those interacting with guests. Rooms must be cleaned, laundry must be done, beds must be made, buildings and rides must be maintained, and dishes must be washed. The work of some support services is obvious—a skilled chef is clearly involved in the preparation of a meal served at a fine restaurant. Other functions are less obvious—the Walt Disney World Resort in Orlando, Florida, is supported by a full-time fire department, employing roughly 150 firefighters, emergency medical technicians, and paramedics, who are seen only when needed.

The Role of the Manager

Hospitality is such a labor-intensive industry that there must also be managers to supervise, coach, and coordinate the many employees doing the different jobs. Supervisors and managers have a number of important roles, from checking employees' work to creating work schedules, supplying necessary equipment and supplies, providing training, and conducting performance evaluations. Yet managers in service firms are faced with very different issues than managers in product-producing firms.[3] For example, managers in service firms have to rely on subjective assessments, such as customer satisfaction and loyalty, to determine the effectiveness of their decisions and their employees' behaviors. Furthermore, the simultaneous production and consumption of services makes the hospitality

Both front-of-house and back-of-house employees must work together to provide an exceptional service experience

managerial role complex and difficult to spell out. In addition to their administrative responsibilities, hospitality managers are held accountable for success on qualitative measures, and often perform a customer-service role as well. Finding and hiring managers with these capabilities is at least as important, critical, and challenging as hiring customer-service employees.

LOVING TO SERVE

While employees in different positions will obviously play different roles and have different levels of customer contact, ultimately, the hospitality industry comes down to providing service. Each employee helps deliver that service, either directly or indirectly. When one comes across employees who deliver exceptional customer service experiences, they really stand out.

Scott Gross calls these people "**service naturals**" because they instinctively give great service when provided the opportunity. These are the employees who can change a regular interaction into something special that the guest will both appreciate and remember. Through this experience, the server connects with the guest in a way that builds a relationship. Though often very brief, this relationship somehow makes an emotional connection that leaves the guest feeling good about the experience and believing that something was special and memorable about it. The challenge for hospitality organizations seeking excellence is to find and hire these people who can make these connections with guests.

Gross estimates that Service Naturals represent only one in ten of the available workforce. As he states, "Ten percent can't get enough of their customers. Five percent want to be left alone. The vast majority, when it comes to customers, can take 'em or leave 'em."[4] If Gross's percentages are accurate, he raises two major challenges for hospitality managers. First, they need to work hard at developing a process that will systematically

It is critical for exceptional service organizations to find the employees who love to serve

find, recruit, and select those 10 percent who are truly committed to providing excellent service. Second, they must work even harder to develop an effective process for showing the rest how to provide the same quality of service that the naturals do naturally. Because naturally talented people are so rare in the labor pool, the organization must identify what skills are lacking in the people they do hire and train them in those skills.

Given the challenges of recruiting and hiring good employees in the hospitality industry, some organizations are tempted to place the service naturals in the guest-contact jobs and hire the rest for support jobs, which don't have direct contact with the guest. Since not all jobs in hospitality organizations require extensive guest contact, putting people not naturally good at service in these behind-the-scenes jobs might seem like a way out. The truly excellent organizations, however, recognize the fallacy of this reasoning. They know that *all* employees are somehow involved in serving either external, paying guests or internal fellow workers. Knowing that service effectiveness depends on everyone throughout the organization taking service responsibility seriously, these outstanding organizations try not to hire anyone unwilling or unable to provide outstanding service. There are simply very few places to hide employees who may be outstanding technically but have no service skills.

Many hospitality companies say they hire the "best and the brightest." Others claim to follow the mantra "select the best and train the rest." But in reality, the process of getting employees into service roles can prove to be a challenge for all companies. Entry-level jobs in the hospitality industry are often known for long hours, difficult conditions, and low pay. By its very nature, the business of hospitality often means being open twenty-four hours a day, including on holidays and weekends. It is an industry known for its high turnover, and finding qualified applicants can prove to be quite a challenge. For all the rhetoric about hiring the best and the brightest, it is not uncommon to hear managers say, "If the candidate has a pulse, he's hired!"[5] The exemplar or benchmark organizations know that this is a recipe for service disaster. They know that the **recruitment** and **selection** process must be carefully planned and executed.

Although all companies clearly want to have high-ability, motivated employees, the best-performing companies are those that have gained a competitive edge by developing recruitment, training, placement, and reward and recognition programs that motivate all employees to provide outstanding service for customers. It all begins with recruitment and selection. If the organization can somehow attract and select the best potential employees, it will gain a significant advantage over those organizations that do not systematically seek out and find these guest-focused people.

The selection process, in theory, is straightforward. First, figure out exactly what you are looking for; second, recruit a pool of good candidates; third, select the best in the pool; fourth, bring the best candidates on board; fifth, make the new hires feel welcome; and sixth, manage any potential future turnover of employees strategically. Each step requires a number of critical decisions. How do you know who your best candidates are and what does a great candidate look like? Do you look for applicants from inside or outside your company? What tools do you use to collect information (e.g., interviews, psychological testing, references)? How do you combine the information you collect to decide who you should hire? How do you make the new hire feel genuinely welcomed and show your appreciation to that person for agreeing to join your organization?

THE FIRST STEP: STUDY THE JOB

Human Resource Planning

Selecting the best person for the job should begin by first looking not at the applicants but at the job. First, you should engage in **human resource planning**. Human resource planning is the process of analyzing an organization's current human resource capabilities and the organization's human resource needs that are required to meet organizational objectives. Based on your organizational strategy, you must determine what knowledge, skills, and abilities (**KSAs**) employees must possess to accomplish your goals, what levels of KSAs currently exist in your organization, and how you expect both your organization and people to develop over time.

HR planning not only is directed at today's employee needs but also should be done with a longer-run perspective. While most recruitment activity is focused on filling jobs that are currently vacant, some effort should be given to anticipating the long-term employment needs of the organization. If, for example, you are planning to build a new hotel or expand an existing one, you must consider whether or not job candidates with the necessary KSAs will be available for hire when the project is done. If not, plans need to be developed to recruit from distant labor markets, retrain people in the current labor market, or hire away qualified employees from their current employers. Each of these strategies has costs and benefits that should be carefully weighed, but each also offers a planned path to find the employees needed when it is time to hire.

HR planning may reveal that you have too many employees (and so layoffs may be necessary), current KSAs are inappropriate, or your organization needs to acquire more people with more skills. You may also determine that you can acquire the new skills by training current employees (a topic covered in Chapter 6) or by motivating and empowering your employees (Chapter 7), but commonly you will find that the best way to acquire the needed KSAs is by hiring new employees.

Job Analysis

After HR planning, but before you start looking for a new employees, you must take the time to carefully analyze exactly what sort of job you are going to fill. A careful, thorough **job analysis** allows the organization to identify the exact job specifications and required competencies for each job classification and type (Figure 5-1). A job analysis will tell you if you need physically strong people to assist park visitors into a ride, skilled lifeguards to keep people safe in the water parks, or multilingual people to speak to foreign guests.

Many organizations spend a considerable sum of money identifying the KSAs associated with each major job or job category and then develop measures to test applicants on the degree to which they have these KSAs. A carefully developed measurement process ensures that the tests are both valid and reliable to provide an effective and legally defensible means for putting the right candidates in the right jobs. Further, a careful job analysis to develop accurate selection measures has the added benefit of identifying training needs and building reward structures that are directly connected to the critical knowledge, skills, and abilities closely linked with job performance.

While the KSA approach is the most widely used strategy for selection in industrial organizations, using it in the hospitality organization is more difficult because of service intangibility and variability in guest expectations. Measuring the strength, height, and manual dexterity competencies necessary for a manufacturing job is far easier than measuring friendliness, ability to stay calm under guest criticism, integrity, and willingness to help—all necessary to provide excellent guest service. For this reason, hospitality organizations must go beyond KSAs and consider other factors such as *employee attitudes*. Indeed, many hospitality organizations find attitude so important that they use this staffing principle: Hire for attitude; train for skill. From the guest's perspective, another way of expressing this idea is found in a commonly heard hospitality saying, "Guests don't care how much you

FIGURE **5-1** The Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities Required for an Assistant Front Desk Manager in a Major European Hotel
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- Ability to work in a fast-paced environment.
- Outstanding flexibility; must be able to work under stress and pressure and reflect at all times, even under difficult conditions, a positive can-do attitude and the best image of the hotel.
- Ability to analyze complex statistical data and make judgments accordingly.
- Ability to deal effectively with internal and external customers, some of whom will require high levels of patience, tact and diplomacy to difuse anger, collect accurate information, and resolve conflicts.
- High school diploma required. Degree with hospitality focus preferred.
- Minimum 2 years previous front desk experience required.
- Experience with reservation information systems required.
- Experience in a luxury property of comparable size preferred.
- Operational and/or sales experience required.
- Must be able to deal correctly with confidential information and must be discreet.
- Must be fluent in French and English and must be able to address any kind of information in an adequate manner.
- Must be well groomed and maintain impeccable hygiene standards.
- Extensive walking required and ability to stand on feet for a long time.
- Hours may vary based upon organizational needs and operational demands.
- Strong leadership skills.
- Excellent oral and written communication skills in English and French. Dutch is an asset. German and/or Spanish is a plus.

know until they know how much you care." Of course, you cannot forget that you need to hire people with the right skills to perform the job, or at least the right abilities to be successfully trained on the job, but employee attitudes can also be an important factor in whether a company provides service excellence or a service failure.

Study Your Best Performers

The intangibility of the guest experience and the uniqueness of what each guest expects from it have led some hospitality organizations to use a secondary strategy for identifying good candidates: study the organization's best performers and identify their personal traits, tendencies, talents, and personality characteristics. Then, find candidates who match this profile.

Instead of identifying the KSAs that particular jobs seem to require or will require in the future, this approach starts by defining the KSAs of currently successful employees. In essence, this is benchmarking against your own very best practitioners of the job. The idea is that if you hire only employees who have traits, skills, abilities, tendencies, talents, and personality characteristics that are similar to those found in the current strong job performers, they should be more successful than new employees who don't have those same characteristics. If you want to find a successful new job performer, find an existing successful job performer and hire someone as nearly like that person (in terms of KSAs and attitudes) as possible. The trick, of course, is to discern the distinguishing characteristics that enable your strong performers to succeed.

Develop Talent Profiles

Many organizations have followed the strategy of identifying talent profiles that is based on work by the Gallup Corporation, S.R.I., J.D. Power, and other similar organizations. The idea here is to look at an organization's strong performers and, based on their talents, develop talent profiles for each major job category. Then, they use these benchmark profiles to screen new applicants. For example, theme park ticket sellers have traditionally been hired and rewarded on their ability to handle large sums of money transactions quickly and accurately. Careful analysis has shown that the best ticket sellers have additional talents. In effect, the ticket seller is the first point of contact between a theme park and its guests. Newly arriving guests are not typically knowledgeable about the many ticket package options. They often need to talk to a person who can quickly and easily identify what guests really want to do and then sell them the most appropriate ticket package. The talents required of the employee who can do this well include having very good empathetic listening, interpersonal, and coaching skills in addition to the ability to handle large sums of money rapidly and carefully. The successful ticket seller is really something of a vacation planner. Once the talent profile of successful ticket sellers is identified, a reassessment of both the selection process and the reward structure for this job can be done.

The use of this approach can even be extended to look at the mix of talents in entire departments. If an analysis of a particular department shows that the current composition of people does not include some vital talent for departmental success, the selection process can ensure that the next person hired will have an ample supply of the missing ingredient.

Companies like Choice Hotels and Marriott International have made identifying leadership competencies a priority. By identifying appropriate competencies, senior managers can be more effective in selecting and developing future leaders. Competencies are usually

identified by examining the characteristics of current high performers. Once identified, these competencies are then formalized, defined, and described so that one knows when they are being demonstrated. Choice Hotels uses a database of employees' competencies for help in internal selection, promotion, and succession planning. Marriott uses its competency system, called the Benchstrength Management System, to help ensure that high-potential managers are given assignments that help their development and prepare them for future assignments.[6] Table 5.1 shows some of the key competencies needed for leadership in the hospitality industry.

Competency-Based Approaches: Disadvantages

Competency-based approaches to selection have a few drawbacks. Designing them for a single job or single job category can be quite expensive unless the organization has a lot of people doing that job. While Marriott employs so many hotel assistant managers that developing a competency profile becomes worthwhile, an independent hotel may not believe that the considerable expense of having a professional organization come in to do this work can be recaptured in any selection efficiencies gained. Further, as the necessary competencies change, so too must the selection measures. Finally, it is not clear how

TABLE 5.1 Leadership Competency Model for the Lodging Industry.

FACTOR	DIMENSION
Self management	Ethics and integrity
	Time management
	Flexibility and adaptability
	Self-development
Strategic positioning	Awareness of customer needs
	Commitment to quality
	Managing stakeholders
	Concern for community
Implementation	Planning
	Directing others
	Reengineering
Critical thinking	Strategic orientation
	Decision making
	Analysis
	Risk taking and innovation
Communication	Speaking with impact
	Facilitating open communication
	Active listening
Interpersonal	Building networks
	Managing conflict
	Embracing diversity
Leadership	Teamwork orientation
	Fostering motivation
	Fortitude
	Developing others
	Embracing change
	Leadership versatility
Industry knowledge	Business and industry expertise

Source: From Exhibit 2, pg. 23, Leadership Competency Model for the Lodging Industry. In Chung-Herrera, B. G. Enz, Cathy A., and Lankau M. J. (2003). "Grooming Future Hospitality Leaders: A Competencies Model", *Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly*, 44 (3) 17-25. Reproduced with permission.

helpful developing a competency profile is for a specific job in the long run if the company plans to promote employees into other jobs in the future. Because of this, companies like Marriott and Choice have developed more generic competency measures, which help avoid some limitations of the single-job measures.

Nonetheless, all competency measures are essentially anchored on the successful practitioners in the current organization. If the organization wants diversity in opinion, training, talents, and personalities to promote change and organizational growth, the use of the mix of existing executives to establish the norms for who should be hired in the future may impede gaining the benefits of a diverse workforce. To avoid these potential problems, competency measures should be considered as only one tool in the selection process.

Other Key Characteristics for Service Personnel

While certain KSAs or competencies can be identified for a specific job, there are some known characteristics that are needed by employees who are actually serving customers, clients, or guests. One is enthusiasm. To provide exceptional service, guest-contact employees must have *an enthusiastic approach to life*. Enthusiasm is contagious, and guests come to most hospitality organizations expecting to be served by employees who are enthusiastic about the service itself, the organization, and the opportunity to provide service. There are very few guests who do not want and expect a feel-good guest experience that only enthusiastic employees can deliver.

Enthusiastic employees show their enthusiasm in many ways, but one important way is to put on a "show" for their guests. Scott Gross devotes a significant part of *Positively Outrageous Service* to the importance of hiring and training people who can create the show. He believes a touch of spontaneous, unrehearsed showmanship can sometimes provide the margin of difference between a hospitality experience that merely meets the guest's expectations and one that is truly memorable. Enthusiastic hospitality "showpeople" engage guests in their performances and enable guests to remember the experience. Whether it is the server who bursts unexpectedly into a song during a restaurant meal, the bus driver who delivers a comedic monologue during the ride to an off-airport rental car location, or the amusement park employee who spontaneously turns an unexpected delay for an attraction into a "good show," the point is the same.

Employees who are recruited, hired, and trained to not only perform their jobs in exceptional ways but also create a good show for the guests add value to the guest experience in important ways. First, they make the experience memorable and help keep the hospitality organization in the top of the guest's mind, increasing the likelihood of return or repurchase. Who can forget the Southwest attendant who surprises newly boarded passengers by singing the preflight safety instructions to rap music? This entails more than just "doing the job." Sometimes, guests will get extra value from being entertained while dealing with boring, routine activities like boarding a plane.

Employing servers who interact with guests in this way creates a competitive advantage since no competitor can design into its service experience the same feeling of a unique and personalized show for the guest that the well-selected, well-trained, enthusiastic employee can. The opportunity to provide a show for the guest is a terrific opportunity for properly selected employees to show their enthusiasm in a fun way. An organization that encourages its employees to take every opportunity to be creative and individualistic with guests, connect with guests, and use their showmanship tells employees that the company

Service personnel need to demonstrate an authentic sense of concern for their guests

Photo courtesy Darden Restaurants

appreciates their skills and trusts them to do the right thing with customers. For servers who sought the job partly for the opportunity to demonstrate their creativity and originality, this is a fun part of the job.

Employees with guest-contact responsibilities should *demonstrate an authentic sense of concern* for their guests. They must be upbeat, cheerful, enthusiastic, and genuinely interested in serving the guest, even when the guest is not reciprocally positive and even when they themselves don't feel upbeat or positive. This requires them to engage in **emotional labor**, which can be just as tiring as physical labor.[7] When hiring individuals into customer-contact roles, companies must select individuals with the ability to not only do their jobs but also make a connection with guests in an **emotional relationship**. Putting on a happy face when you yourself are having a bad day is difficult. When employees' true emotions are not consistent with the types of emotions the company and the customer want them to display, they can act in one of two ways: **surface acting**, where they modify their facial expressions, or **deep acting**, where they modify their inner feelings.[8]

Not everyone, no matter how service oriented, can make or act as if they can make this heavy emotional commitment consistently. All hospitality employees have had guests who push them to their limits and thus challenge their genuine commitment to provide great service. Some positions require listening to complaining guests all day, and for most employees, a point comes when they can endure it no longer. It may take a day, a week, or years, but this type of negative experience eventually exacts its toll on the employee and results in burnout. Sometimes, it doesn't even take negative experience. Some employees burn out because they tire of acting the same positive, upbeat way in the same job every day. Watch a fast-food server greet everyone with the same smile and the same affected cheery greeting and wonder how long that person has performed this same ritual. Employees who engage in surface acting experience more negative effects than those who are able to engage in deep acting.[9] At some point, most people switch into an "automatic-pilot mode" because they can't perform the emotional labor of their jobs any longer.

They have lost the emotional commitment to treat guests with sincerity. Bowen and Schneider term this emotional commitment *a passion for service*, and they have developed a questionnaire for measuring it. More importantly, their research reports that a passion for service is highly correlated with positive service outcomes.

Finally, because service employees will be interacting with the guests, they should also be polite, considerate, and willing to make a genuine effort to help other people. For example, during the hiring process, observe how candidates treat the receptionist before the interview. To put these general abilities together would lead to selecting someone who has the ability to handle emotional labor, can put on a consistent show in front of guests, cares about the quality of the performance and the guest's reaction to it, and does it all with gusto.

THE SECOND STEP: RECRUIT A POOL OF QUALIFIED CANDIDATES

Once you know what you are looking for in new employees, you need a diverse pool of qualified applicants from which you can select them. Where do you find them? The most basic choice here is, do you consider people from inside the company or outside?

Whether the company looks inside or outside may depend partially on the level of positions to be filled. If they are entry level, recruiting will occur mainly from outside. If above entry level, the company will have to decide whether to promote from within or look outside.

Hiring Internal Candidates

Many companies prefer internal recruitment for several reasons. In fact, the practice of **hiring from within** is often seen as a best practice of human resource management.[10] Hiring internal candidates has a number of advantages, as described below. But it is no panacea, and the decision to hire from within needs to be considered in light of both its advantages and disadvantages.

The Known Quantity

The most important advantage of promoting from within is that you have much more information—and more accurate information—about your current employees than you do about external candidates.[11] The internal candidate is a known quantity. That person's performance has been available for observation and evaluation every day, and the person's strengths and weaknesses are generally known. Because some external candidates will interview well and some poorly, managers doing the hiring can make mistakes. On the other hand, the good and bad qualities of a person observed every day are evident. Perhaps even more importantly, the present employee has shown loyalty to the organization by staying on and seeking higher levels of responsibility and challenge. For these reasons, many organizations prefer a known inside candidate over an outsider. Because customer relationships are so important in hospitality organizations, it makes considerable sense to promote current employees who have proven successful in their job, have shown a commitment to customer service, know and like the company culture, may be connected to the company's customers, and are familiar with the organization's mission and commitment to guest service.

Internal Equity

The second reason for internal hiring is internal equity. Many hospitality organizations employ people from varied backgrounds and with different levels of training and education. Many employees, except those in some technical areas and those with unique qualifications and experience, start at the same entry-level point. Each has an equal opportunity to prove a commitment to service excellence if they wish to get promoted. At a hotel front desk, you might find a recent college graduate, an older person who has changed careers, and a person with a high school or technical school degree—all working side by side and trying to impress the front desk manager with their merits for promotion. If an outsider gets the vacancy at a higher level, these hard-working employees will not feel fairly treated. They helped the organization achieve its success; now they should be recognized for their contributions and allowed to share the rewards.

The Shangri-La Group subscribes to this internal promotion approach. Says Kenneth Wai Shiu-kee, Island Shangri-La, Hong Kong area's director of human resources, "We believe that to build a career in the hotel service, it is useful to accumulate knowledge and experience from the start. The first-hand experience of what delivering the service product is like will prove useful when an employee moves on to more senior decision-making positions. Our policy of internal promotion helps us promote this attitude among staff. The steadying effect it has on our workforce also helps us make good succession planning. We invest heavily in training for our staff, not just to improve their performance but also to prepare them for career advancement when opportunities arise from our rapid business growth. The group also benefits from having experienced employees well-versed in our corporate culture."[12]

Experience

Most people, as just mentioned, start in the hospitality industry by taking entry-level jobs. Companies want their employees to know the business from the ground up. This hiring strategy is usually uncompetitive and unattractive for college graduates who have not acquired such experience through co-op or intern programs. While most graduates appreciate the need to take the entry-level jobs as an opportunity to prove themselves, many are unwilling to accept the relatively low starting salaries that hospitality organizations offer. This is becoming an even greater issue for the industry as students graduating from college increasingly start their careers with tens of thousands of dollars of debt. These students cannot afford low starting salaries even when they have hope of future promotions and pay raises.

The hospitality industry has, consequently, often relied on growing its own from non-college talent or finding college students who are so committed to the industry that they will give up current rewards to enter it. In a tight labor market, the belief in the need to start everyone at the entry level has caused the industry some difficulty. Bright college graduates interested in the hospitality industry often have better options even in other service industries. The entry-level approach makes attracting MBAs and other advanced-degree holders especially difficult. While this is less of an issue in a loose labor market (i.e., when a lot of people are looking for jobs), there is always a shortage of truly excellent workers, even when there is high unemployment.

Hiring from within makes it possible to gain the employee commitment needed while maintaining the entry-level salary structure. The well-managed hospitality organizations have systems in place to recognize potential and have training programs available to develop that potential. Although they miss out on some college-trained applicants, they are

able to build a strong workforce based on their own internal processes. Whether the costs of these internal development programs are worth the trade-off—for not paying higher entry-level salaries—is still debated, but college graduates are often not willing to make the heavy financial sacrifice that the industry asks of them.

Another experience-related point in favor of hiring from within the organization—if the job to be filled is at the managerial or supervisory level—is the belief that you cannot manage someone doing something you've never done. Although hospitality experience and real-life examples can be acquired in one company and brought to another, the most relevant experience and examples are obviously those that are acquired internally. The core competence of hospitality organizations is providing service, and unless you have had experience in providing service, felt the pressure of guests in your face, and found ways to resolve guest problems on the spot, you don't really know what it's like. Given the uniqueness of organizations, and the particulars of companies' cultures, promoting employees from within helps preserve the investment you have made in employees, and keeps that company-specific knowledge working for you. You are in the business of providing an outstanding guest experience and, as a manager, of establishing and sustaining a guest-focused culture within the organization. You need to have real examples from your own experience that help you tell your employees how to provide excellent guest service.

Knowing the Culture

Organizations like to promote internal candidates because much of the training in the organizational culture has already been done. Internal candidates already know the company's beliefs and values and have proven themselves to be comfortable in that culture. The cultural learning curve for promoted internal candidates is substantially reduced as they already know the office political structure, the corporate goals, the real way things get done inside the organization, and what the organization really believes in and rewards.

Lower Cost

Internal recruitment also has the general advantage of reducing costs. There is no need to pay for advertisements and travel expenses of candidates to be interviewed, and the decision often requires less time, which saves money. Also, candidates can be considered before a position is even open, and the company can begin developing them to take on the new responsibility when it becomes available. This way, when an opening does occur, it takes less time to fill the position. Additionally, cost savings occur because there are fewer eligible employees and ultimately fewer applicants for a given position than would be the case had external candidates also been considered. A well-prepared company can use internal selection successfully to move good people up through the organization. But if not well prepared, it may find itself forced to select from a pool of less qualified employees.

Another advantage of internal selection is that it can reduce turnover. Employee turnover is greatest among new hires, so promoting internally helps decrease the chance that the position will need to be filled again in the near future. Recruiting is an expensive process and reducing turnover reduces costs. Promoting good performers from within will reduce turnover by giving the high performers assurance that the company will let them grow and reward them for their loyalty and dedication. As Len Berry puts it, excellent companies "hire entry-level people who share the company's values and, based on performance and leadership potential, promote them into positions of greater responsibility."[13]

Internal Search Strategies

A pool of internal candidates can be created in one of two ways: job postings or a review of personnel records. Many organizations announce open positions to employees via a company Intranet, bulletin boards, newsletters, or other means of communication. Sometimes, employees are informed of openings before they are publicly announced, thus giving internal candidates the first chance to apply for positions.

Some companies use their employee records to identify potentially qualified candidates. For example, Hilton Hotels uses a computer application that tracks such factors as employee profiles, past performance ratings, employment history, skill sets, employee interests and career aspirations, willingness to relocate, and languages spoken. Hilton can instantly access the records of qualified candidates from across its entire set of properties and determine who might be a good fit for, say, a new general manager position in San Diego. This technology provides decision makers with instant access to a potentially large pool of applicants for whom they already have good performance and competency data.[14] It also helps employees manage their careers by matching their preferences and qualifications with the requirements of open positions. Employees can then see what they need to do to prepare for positions with greater responsibility.

Some companies, like Darden Restaurants, manage internal promotions and transfers even more proactively. They develop **succession plans**, in which employee careers are planned over a long period, including the progression through a number of key positions or key locations. When a position becomes available, the company already has a list of finalists for that job, or even a person already identified to take on a new role. Succession plans allow a company to identify talented personnel and put them through appropriate training and increasingly challenging job positions to prepare them for taking on greater responsibility.

Hiring External Candidates

Not every job can be filled by an internal candidate. For example, the only source of candidates for entry-level jobs is the external labor market. Nor do organizations always want to promote only from within. Internal recruitment is by definition limiting. A company's internal labor pool is almost always smaller than the total labor pool. In some circumstances, looking outside the company for new employees has a number of advantages.

New Ideas and Fresh Perspectives

One problem with hiring internally—which usually involves promotions and transfers—is that it limits the diversity of experience of the candidate population. When companies hire only from within for everything except entry-level positions, everyone's experience comes from the same organization. Employees may learn very well how business is done in their company, but they may have no idea of how other companies are doing the same things, and in particular how others might be handling certain problems in a better way. Some companies have come to rely on hiring from the benchmark organizations as a way to reduce their own training costs while obtaining the talent they need to be competitive. This strategy can be expensive as hiring someone away from an existing external job will generally cost more than developing such a person internally, but for some specialized or senior positions, the benefits gained may be worth the cost (and may actually reduce training costs).

Difficulties with Internal Candidates

The company that promotes from within often promotes its best line-level employees into supervisory or managerial roles but good line-level employees do not always make good managers, nor do all of them want to become managers. For example, by promoting the best front desk agent to front desk supervisor, the company may be losing a great agent with great customer service skills and acquiring a bad manager with poor leadership abilities. Convincing a bellman or waitress to become a manager may be difficult as employees in tipped positions frequently make more money than their supervisors. Unless organizations are willing to develop employees systematically to take on the greater responsibilities of higher-level positions, promotion from within might do more harm than good. Similarly, if a culture change is desired, or if a particular talent is unavailable in the internal labor pool, adhering to the practice of promoting from within can fail to produce the characteristics required in new leaders.

Specific Skills and Knowledge

While hiring from within can be a means to motivate and retain lower-level staff interested in a promotion, external candidates may be desirable when a needed ability or combination of abilities in a specific job is unavailable among existing employees. Although most hospitality leaders can tell many stories of general managers who worked their way up from entry-level positions, many aspects of running a hospitality business may require particular knowledge and training that a firm may not always be able to provide internally.

For example, the knowledge of accounting, IT, finance, human resources, law, marketing, revenue management, statistics, and strategy that a general manager needs in order to run a profitable hotel cannot necessarily be "picked up" along the way without some sort of external education or experience at the same level at a different company. Many hospitality organizations must look outside for information systems skills that are not generally acquired through the experience-based internal-development career paths. While organizations would like to promote internal candidates, the technological revolution is happening so fast that the traditional in-house training processes are often not able to keep up. The hospitality industry increasingly looks to the more technologically advanced industries for filling positions that require application of up-to-date technologies to emerging hospitality focus areas. The same phenomenon has occurred in the finance area, where the increasing need to have employees skilled in asset-management and capital-budgeting techniques has meant that the traditional approach of growing the necessary skills internally doesn't work well enough or fast enough to keep up with the rapid pace of change.

In short, the hospitality industry is becoming more sophisticated. Companies are recognizing that to acquire specific sorts of skills and experiences, they have to look outside the company for people with particular education, experience, or a good combination of the two. Because the pace at which technologies are changing is so rapid, and because the sophistication of the business of hospitality is increasing, the traditional strategy of "start at the bottom and grow your way to the top by watching others doing it as we've always done it" can no longer be viewed as necessarily the best way to fill all positions.

Diversity

Another concern with promotion from within is that it can limit diversity at higher organizational levels. If a company hires only from within, its diversity in higher-level positions is limited by the employee demographics already present. For example, if women are slightly more likely to leave a company than men, it becomes increasingly unlikely that women will achieve the highest levels when the company hires only from within. Hiring from outside the firm allows a company to enhance its diversity by seeking candidates from different applicant pools.

Of course, simply hiring externally does not guarantee diversity. Enhancing diversity takes a concerted effort to seek diverse applicant pools and to have managers willing to hire people who do not necessarily look or sound like themselves. One company that has clearly made such an effort is Marriott International. In 2003, Marriott's board of directors established the Committee for Excellence, chaired by a member of its board, to monitor the progress of the company's diversity initiatives. The committee's programs are designed to increase the diversity of Marriott's workforce, hotel ownership, and suppliers. And the initiative has paid off. While maintaining its presence on *Fortune*'s list of 100 Best Companies to Work For, Marriott has also been listed repeatedly as one of the "40 Best Companies for Diversity" by *Black Enterprise* Magazine, "Top 50 Companies for Diversity" by DiversityInc, "50 Best Companies for Latinas to Work For in the U.S." by *LATINA Style* magazine, a "Diversity Elite 60" company by *Hispanic Business* magazine, and "Top 50 Companies for Executive Women" by the National Association for Female Executives.[15] Making a clear commitment to diversity begins at the top of the organization and has helped to keep Marriott one of the most highly regarded lodging companies in the world.

Embracing diversity is not about being politically correct. It is good business. Clearly you have to act within the law. U.S. Federal laws prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age (if 40 and over), disability status, veteran status, and genetic information. Some (but not all) jurisdictions prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity. Beyond the legal and moral need to comply with antidiscrimination laws, contemporary hospitality organizations have three other very good reasons to foster diversity in their staff. First, thanks to advances in transportation and communication, global travel patterns, and the breaking down of many cultural and racial barriers, increasingly guests are from diverse cultural and demographic populations. In some service settings, these diverse guests expect that service providers will be similar to themselves or will at least understand the expectations of people like themselves. They want servers who speak their language, figuratively and perhaps literally. Many large airlines try to hire multilingual flight attendants and reimburse attendants for taking language lessons or classes. United Airlines offers classes for flight attendants in Air Spanish, Air Portuguese, and Air Japanese. Attendants learn the forty or so words necessary to greet, board, and serve native speakers of these languages and use a smile and hand gestures for everything else.[16] When the Gaylord Opryland Hotel was preparing to host a large international meeting, it gave its 7000 employees special training in international guest service. The grand training finale was an all-day international marketplace; employees won prizes by participating in games while dining on international foods.[17] Although no workforce will be as diverse as the broad cultural range of guests, staffing strategies should be designed to hire guest-contact employees sufficiently insightful to read cues indicating the expectations of guests from different cultures and backgrounds and flexible enough to meet those varied expectations.

A second reason for interest in diversity is that employing a diversified workforce, by tapping all available segments of the general labor pool, will result in *a better workforce* than if the organization limits its hiring to select parts of the labor pool. In a competitive environment, all organizations must look at the entire labor pool for the best employees, regardless of background, cultural heritage, or other differences. The best organizations gain a competitive advantage by seeking out and recruiting talent wherever it may be found. Recognizing and appreciating diversity can be a stimulus to develop innovative ways to recruit. Knowing that Orlando, Florida, has a large Moroccan population, one hotelier sought them out. Since few other hospitality organizations recognize this group's size or bother to understand its proud cultural heritage, this hotel has gained a unique and valuable advantage by recruiting from this relatively untapped resource.

A third reason a company should embrace diversity is that its labor pool and its customers are becoming more diverse. Companies should therefore be proactive so that they are prepared for the inevitable demographic shifts that they will be seeing. According to the Census Bureau, roughly 35 percent of the U.S. population is a racial or ethnic minority. The Census Bureau projects that by 2050 only 52.8 percent of the U.S. population will be comprised of white, non-Hispanics.[18] In short, businesses need to accept and be prepared for diversity, whether they like it or not. There is no longer a typical hospitality employee for whom the organization can design one-size-fits-all selection, training, and reward systems. Dual-career couples, same-sex partners, single mothers with child care responsibilities, grown children with elder care responsibilities—all these and many other demographics are apt to be represented in the hospitality organization's workforce. The manager of the modern hospitality organization must be sensitive to the needs of employees from these varied backgrounds and lifestyles.

No matter how diverse the hospitality organization's workforce, the fact remains that guest-contact personnel will be different in most ways from the guests they serve. For example, most restaurant servers are younger than the patrons. The organization must hire people who are adept at interacting with the great variety of guests, who can take a reading of guest expectations during the first few moments of the service encounter, and who enjoy the challenge of providing personalized service to today's multicultural hospitality clientele.

External Search Strategies

When looking to hire externally, companies can develop an appropriate pool of applicants in many ways. Figure 5-2 lists important external-search strategies. For large hospitality organizations in cities and towns, where the tourism and hospitality industries dominate, these strategies are especially important to provide the tremendous number of people that the hospitality industry needs. The smart hospitality companies go where the growth is; thus, growth plus replacement needs add up to a big recruitment job. Seasonal fluctuations in demand for hospitality services only compound the problem by requiring intensive recruitment and selection drives to prepare for an expected seasonal rush. Even in tighter

The modern workforce is increasingly diverse, and the best hospitality companies prepare for, manage, and embrace their diversity to get the best applicants and ideas

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FIGURE **5-2** Some Sources Used for External Recruitment

Advertising

A message containing general information about the job and the organization is placed in various media, such as newspapers, radio, and television. These media can have a local, regional, or national audience and can serve the general public or a specific segment of population.

Associations and Unions

Many occupations have state, regional, or national associations that hold meetings, publish newsletters, and represent the interests of the occupation. Such associations frequently have job-placement units (e.g., the International Council on Hotel, Restaurant and Institutional Education, CHRIE).

Colleges and Secondary Schools

Organization members are sent to colleges and schools to meet with individuals or groups of students to provide specific information about the organization or their jobs and to answer any questions. They may also perform the first review of applicants. The organization's members may visit, for example, Cornell University's School of Hotel Administration or University of Central Florida's Rosen College of Hospitality Management.

Employee Referral Programs

When using this word of mouth technique, employees are provided with information about job openings and asked to refer individuals to the company. Often, the employee is given a bonus if the referred individual is selected. Should the applicant be rejected, the employee is customarily given a brief explanation.

Employment Agencies

The firm contacts an organization whose main purpose is to locate job seekers. The company provides the agency with information about the job, which the agency then passes along to its clients. Clients can be either employed or unemployed. Agencies can be either public or private. Fees may be charged to either or both the client seeking a job and the company seeking applicants. Global Hospitality, Marshall-Alan Associates, and Presley Consultants are executive search firms that specialize in the hospitality industry.

Employment Events, Job Fairs, Career Fairs

These events are specially organized to attract a large number of potential candidates to a specific location on a certain day, who are then interviewed for jobs. These events can be held in conjunction with other organizations and may be in one's own labor market or in a distant location where unemployment is high. Job fairs are also increasingly being held in central business-district locations where any potential employee can talk to recruiters from sponsoring organizations. For example, the Roosevelt Hotel in New Orleans, which was closed because of Hurricane Katrina, received 5000 applications for 400 jobs when they held a four-day job fair (*Times Picayune*, May 13, 2009).

The Internet

The firm can either post information about open positions on its own Web site or contract with an Internet recruiting service. These services are online job centers that offer

many organizations a site for listing jobs across many job categories and locations. Job seekers can access the job center and view job postings according to job title, company name, geographic location, and so on. Some centers will perform an initial match between applicant characteristics and company job requirements. Résumés of applicants who are well matched to the job requirements are forwarded to the company for future contact. The CareerBuilder and Monster web sites are two examples.

Temporary Employment Firms

Companies sometimes need to fill short-term positions that do not warrant commitment of resources to recruit, select, and train people. Temporary employment firms, like Kelly Services and Manpower, help to fill such vacancies. Job contracts are generally limited to less than a year, and companies pay a given hourly rate. Although some temporary workers hope they may be considered for permanent employment, others like the flexibility and variation that working for temporary employment firms offers.

Walk-Ins

Unsolicited individuals sometimes initiate contact with the organization. The number depends on such factors as the nature of the business, the level of the positions open, the image of the company, the frequency of job openings, and how close the labor market is to the hiring company. For example, many people want to work at the Phantom Ranch in Arizona but it gets few walk-in applicants as it is located at the foot of the Grand Canyon.

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economic times or in situations with limited seasonal variation, the high turnover in the hospitality industry makes recruitment a constant challenge, and controlling costs becomes even more important. In the end, regardless of the specific economic or business situation, a major challenge for all hospitality organizations is how to both create and maintain a qualified external labor pool in a cost-effective way. The key point, however, is that every job will be seen as a great opportunity by some group of people, and the external search strategy should begin by considering who those people are and where to find them.

Public Advertising

Although there is much discussion of how the Internet is replacing print media, help-wanted advertisements are still a very common method for advertising job openings. Almost all newspapers still print help-wanted ads in the traditional way in which they have been printed for decades.

In addition to the advertising in newspapers, magazines, and weeklies targeting potential employees, aggressive recruiters use more creative means to reach people who may not read the help-wanted ads, may not be thinking about changing jobs, or may not even be thinking about working. Just as marketers segment their markets to find likely candidates for their products and services, recruitment managers increasingly segment their markets to reach and attract job candidates. For example, when the Wynn Hotel in Las Vegas was opening a sister property, Encore, it needed to hire for every position: roughly 6000 new employees, including room concierge, dealers, room attendants, management staff, security, and valet. To fill these positions, their managers believed they needed approximately 60,000 applicants. As part of their recruitment effort, Wynn used skywriting

to advertise its openings. Planes flew up and down the California coast leaving messages over every major beach and even over a Los Angeles Angels versus Boston Red Sox baseball game. They received over 25,000 applications on the first day, and they would have received more had not the sheer volume of response crashed their server.

This type of public advertising can also attract interest from employees who are currently working for someone else. These people might not have thought about working for the organization doing the advertising until they happened to see or hear the ad, which might suggest to them an intriguing opportunity. If these people are at all dissatisfied with their current jobs, the possibility of interesting them in your organization becomes even greater. Even though they aren't looking for a job, their interest may be captured by a billboard; an advertisement at the bus terminal, television, or radio ad; or a skywriting campaign.

Some public advertising can, however, create problems. For example, having a sign on the marquee of a fast-food restaurant may be an efficient way to advertise for new employees, but it potentially sends a negative message to customers: We don't have enough employees, so our fast-food experience may be a lot slower today. Care must be taken so that any recruitment effort sends the right message to employees, potential employees, guests, and potential guests.

The Internet

The widespread use and accessibility of the Internet has turned Internet recruiting into a multibillion dollar industry. Companies can use Internet job sites, like Monster, to advertise their positions. Job seekers examine what is available and look for additional information on jobs that interest them. This method can help attract a large number of possible applicants, and applicants can consider a large number of possible jobs. The problem with this approach, however, is that hiring companies cannot always tell which applicants are really interested in a given job and which ones are not really serious, so a large amount of useless information may be generated.

The Internet also helps to fit employees to jobs and companies they want. Unlike some web sites that only post job openings—like a modern help-wanted section—some others ask job seekers questions to assess their fitness for positions or about what they are looking for in a new position. For example, you might be asked if you had managerial responsibility in a previous job, or whether you prefer to work for a large or small company. A job site can then use the information it collects to try to create a fit between the qualifications and preferences of applicants and the characteristics of jobs and companies.

Some companies are trying to stay on top of technological trends to reach out to potential applicants. Some companies have developed Facebook, LinkedIn, and MySpace pages as part of their recruiting efforts. These efforts help employers find and attract young, tech-savvy candidates and may make such employers stand out from their competitors—at least, until all companies start recruiting this way. Of course, this approach is also not without its risks. Companies with blogs and Web pages must update their content continuously or they won't look credible. Also, these pages create opportunities for any company detractors to have more of a voice. While companies should take advantage of current technology to enhance their recruiting efforts, they need to understand how their use of technology can be used against them. Further, they must be prepared to commit the necessary resources to monitor and use the technology well or the entire effort may actually hinder recruitment efforts.

Some, companies also use their own Web sites to advertise openings. By using a structured online application form, an employer can use screening technology to eliminate those candidates who are not a good fit for either the company or the advertised job. The technology also makes it easier to follow up with those candidates who may indeed be qualified. All major hotels' Web sites have links for careers from their main page that allow users to search for available jobs with the company, often by location, job characteristics, job title, and so forth.

Furthermore, as already mentioned, companies use the Internet to facilitate recruitment by allowing applicants to post their résumés on job search web sites like CareerBuilder and Monster. Here, applicants can advertise their skills and have the Web site help match their skills to positions that fit their skill set. This approach can give job seekers far more exposure to opportunities than previous paper-and-pencil job searches; however, if not properly managed, they can also create too much information to be useful to either party.

The Internet is also affecting the type and quantity of information on both candidates and companies. Job seekers are increasingly using their social networks to find job opportunities. People looking for jobs can make large amounts of personal information publicly available by posting it on sites like LinkedIn and Facebook. Prospective employers have begun to examine these sites to learn more about job candidates. People seeking jobs should therefore think carefully about what information and pictures they post or allow on their sites. Job seekers can also use networking opportunities, such as LinkedIn, Plaxo, and others, to look for jobs by networking with their online contacts, finding out about job opportunities, and so forth.

In short, the Internet has dramatically changed the way in which people look for, apply for, and find out about jobs. While the Internet has not replaced older ways in which companies and job seekers find each other, it certainly has added a host of new communication methods. Although many jobs will still be filled in traditional ways, the information made available through the Internet has changed the job search and recruitment process dramatically.

Niches

Targeting specific segments of the labor market to identify potential employees is another recruiting strategy. Some organizations target high schools, minorities, associations of disabled people, homeless people, or senior citizens. They structure the job opportunities and marketing to appeal to the needs and limitations of that particular segment of the employment pool. For example, many hospitality organizations find that some of their best employees are older, retired people, so they target that group. Retired seniors are often lonely, bored, looking for something to do that will bring them into positive contact with other people, or, realizing that they retired too early, need a job to supplement their Social Security. Many guest-contact jobs can provide this opportunity for them. Organizations that originally recruited older people because of labor shortages have often found to their pleasant surprise that their older employees not only have better attendance records than younger employees but they bring an enthusiasm for and experience in helping and interacting with guests that makes them great customer-focused employees.

For example, McDonald's offers McMasters, a nationwide program that identifies, recruits, and trains workers aged fifty-five years and older. It features job coaches as well as a referral program that alerts older workers to other opportunities at McDonald's. Workers hired through McDonald's referral program are immediately teamed up with a partner—an experienced worker who helps the employee through the initial training.

McDonald's employs about three workers per restaurant who are sixty or older, and they are looking to increase that number.

Professional Networks and Placement Services

Successful hospitality managers join professional organizations to find both good employees and good ideas about how to find good employees. The amount of movement back and forth across hospitality organizations causes these professional networks to be strong and informative. Some organizations seek to represent an entire industry (like the American Hotel & Lodging Association), a segment within the industry (like the Asian American Hotel Owners Association), specific professions (like the Society for Human Resource Management), or even particular networks of individuals (like the Cornell Hotel Society). While jobs can be found in many ways, networking is still one of the most effective to find out about potential jobs and potential employees, network, and enable the personal face-to-face connection that can make a potential employee stand out in a large pool of applicants and ultimately set up and serve as an initial interview.

Student Recruiting

An important strategy for finding the many people that the hospitality industry needs is student recruiting. A number of programs develop pools of potential employees among young people who are either still in school or have recently graduated. Being young, full of energy, recently educated on state-of-the-art methods, and enthusiastic, students are often ideal hospitality employees. In addition, they come to the job with the anticipation of learning and growing and are, therefore, quite comfortable with structured work requirements and extensive training. The most common recruiting strategy is the traditional campus visit by a company recruiter. The institution's placement office schedules eligible students to meet with the recruiter and provides an interview space on campus. The recruiter may interview graduating senior applicants for full-time jobs and undergraduates for summer internships. A variation on this idea is the job fair, where many employers come to the campus on the same day and set up booths where they can meet with potential employees.

Organizations can sometimes get students to work for them as part of a school experience, such as co-op, internship, or work-experience programs. Nearly all hospitality programs, most schools of business, some other academic majors, and many high schools and junior colleges encourage their students to get some real-world work experience while they are taking academic course work. For example, Cornell University's School of Hotel Administration requires students to work 800 hours in the hospitality field before graduation. The student not only makes some money to help cover education costs but benefits from seeing the practical application of classroom theory in the real world. This sort of relevant work experience can add value to a college student's résumé or high school student's college application.

The company also benefits from these programs as it gains access to an eager, young, energetic labor pool that does not expect a permanent employment commitment. The smart organizations, however, keep a close eye on these student employees and make sure that impressive student workers know of the company's interest. They offer these students scholarships or put them in special work experiences that prepare them to be fully trained employees upon graduation. Unfortunately, not all organizations use these programs well, and they can work to the student's and the industry's disadvantage. Some short-sighted organizations place young, part-time students only in simple, quickly learned, highly repetitive, and monotonous jobs that provide little learning experience and even less personal growth. The fast-food industry has burned out many students in this way. Putting students in these jobs not only keeps turnover high but, more importantly,

FIGURE **5-3** Sample Internship Programs from Major Hotel Companies

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Four Seasons Internships

Four Seasons offers global internship opportunities to undergraduates and graduates who want to get a head start in their career. An internship allows you to experience the Four Seasons culture, learn our standards, and gain exposure to various areas of a hotel or resort.

Marriott Internships

Marriott offers paid internships that provide true hands-on work experience to prepare you for leadership in the professional world. You will focus on one professional area, with possibilities to explore other business operations.

Starwood Summer Intern Program

Starwood offers summer opportunities in our hotels which foster students' professional development, understanding of hotel operations and career planning for placement after graduation. Starwood provides each summer intern with experiences comparable to entry-level, full-time professionals in the field of hospitality.

has discouraged many bright young people from seeking careers in the food-service industry. These companies have unfortunately taught many young people that the industry is full of jobs suitable only for burger flippers.

Enlightened organizations, taking a longer-term view of the need to get and keep young people interested in the hospitality industry, have designed their work-experience programs to provide some real learning opportunities and growth challenges. The point is that student-recruitment programs can be designed and used to get not only employees who learn, earn, and contribute to the business today but also employees who will be eager to stay in the industry tomorrow upon graduation. The best organizations know how to use these work-experience programs to identify the better students and keep them after they graduate. Since many of these same organizations also place a high premium on dues paying, these programs give the students the opportunity to pay their dues in these entry-level jobs while they are still in school and put themselves in a better position for promotion to higher-level and better-paying jobs by the time they graduate. Figure 5-3 presents descriptions of internship programs at several major hotels.

Helped by the current federal funding emphasis on school-to-work programs and stronger ties between hospitality companies and academic institutions, the hospitality industry has found a variety of ways to effectively create opportunities to attract students. This is a constant issue because of the large number of new employees required by this industry's growth rate and the high turnover common in the industry. Even while there are a lot of students looking for work, and particularly when economic times return to lower unemployment, it is always critical to find highly skilled and motivated new talent.

Employee Referrals

Another large and successful source of employees for many hospitality organizations is referrals by current employees. A great way to get the kind of new employees you want is to ask your star employees to find them. Your good employees know what your organization

is like, perform well in it, obviously like working for you, and can therefore be your best recruiters and spokespersons in the labor market. A bonus of this strategy is that existing employees who bring in their friends feel responsible for them and their performance. They exert positive peer pressure and encourage the new employees they sponsored to do well, which acts to the organization's benefit. Some organizations pay a bonus to their existing employees if they bring in a job candidate who is hired and stays through a probationary period. The reward might be monetary, or it could be something else that has value to employees, such as a free weekend trip to a nice resort area, dinner at a special place, or some other inducement. A common characteristic of *Fortune*'s Best Companies to Work For is the presence of an employee referral program.[19]

Employers of Choice

A company's reputation can also aid in recruitment. Publications like *Fortune* magazine, *Fortune Small Business*, and *HR Magazine* list companies that they evaluate to be Employers of Choice. These employers are characterized as being good places to work, where the organization makes efforts to create and maintain a humane and respectful workplace. As described by the Society for Human Resource Management, "They're the kinds of places at which we all want to work. Where talent and teamwork are highly esteemed; where everyone is encouraged to reach their potential and given opportunities for advancement; where employers respect and care about their workers, and workers, in turn, care about the company and its customers."[20] In other words, these companies hold out for the best employees, invest in those people so they grow and develop, provide challenges and keep them motivated in their current jobs, and offer them future opportunities with the organization. These companies see higher average returns on investment than those not on the list.

Interestingly, although so much time and energy are devoted to high-quality customer service in the hotel industry, only four hotel and restaurant companies made *Fortune*'s 100 Best Companies to Work For list in 2009 (Starbucks, at 24; Marriott International, at 78; Four Seasons Hotel and Resorts, at 92; and Kimpton Hotel and Restaurants, at 95).[21] Of course, there are other such lists—such as *Best Company to Work for Women, Best Companies for Minorities, Best Small and Medium Companies to Work for,* and even many local surveys within specific cities—and many different companies fill these lists. Nonetheless, the high-quality treatment of customers on which the industry prides itself does not seem always to be matched by similar treatment of its internal customers, at least in the view of these list makers.

Some companies try to enhance their reputation by building a positive image in the community. Southwest Airlines provides an excellent example of how a company can establish an exceptional community reputation. In addition to providing multiple educational programs and opportunities that have earned it the reputation for growing and developing its people, Southwest has spent much time and money making itself into a good neighbor. Each year, Southwest details its contributions in its Southwest Cares Report.[22] Each year's report details the previous year's activities related to environmental conservation, donations of money and tickets to charitable causes, number of employee hours devoted to charitable causes, and so forth.

Similarly, Marriott (among various activities) sponsors Spirit to Serve Days, where employees participate in various activities to benefit local nonprofits, schools, parks, hospitals, and charitable organizations. Such activities support Marriott's culture, demonstrate the company's support of its people, community, and environment, and make for good public relations too.

Marriott's employees show their Spirit to Serve by contributing to local charitable causes

Photo courtesy Marriott International

Even when the labor market is tight, Southwest and Marriott have a talented and deep labor pool. Being a good neighbor is good public relations, enhancing the company's positive reputation among potential employees and motivating satisfied employees to tell their friends that this is a great place to work.

Walk-Ins

Some hospitality organizations rely extensively on walk-ins. Here, they have a significant advantage over the manufacturing and industrial sector. A prospective employee curious about what goes on cannot casually walk into a General Motors assembly plant in Arlington, Texas, to see and feel what it is like. Almost anyone can casually walk into a hotel or restaurant and get a pretty good idea of what it might be like to work there. Indeed, many Disney employees are people who fell in love with the place after visiting with family or friends. One employee said that, after visiting the Magic Kingdom with her family, she planned for twenty years to work there. After her children grew up, she sold her home and moved to Orlando to work in the parks because she wanted to be one of the people who made other people happy. Students in hospitality management programs tell similar tales of a great experience in a hotel, restaurant, or other hospitality organization that excited them about the industry. As a result of that experience, they found out what they wanted to do when they grew up.

The Competition

Scott Gross adds another strategy: Seek out excellent employees in similar service jobs elsewhere. Again, unlike the manufacturing sector, where a potential employer is not going to be able to walk in and watch the best workers on a competitor's factory assembly line, watching customer-contact employees do their jobs in the hospitality industry is easy.

Every time you receive service or watch someone receiving service, you can evaluate the server as a potential employee in your own organization. Gross hands his business card to those who really impress him and tells them to come see him if they are interested in another job. Hiring people because you saw them working well elsewhere has the advantage of starting off the new relationship on the right footing: New employees found in this way will be flattered that you sought them out and asked. Everyone likes to be recognized, and if, by asking people to consider a job opportunity, you do a better job of recognizing them than their boss has done, you may very well land some excellent candidates. A variation on this strategy is to ask good people, whether they work for you or not, if they know about other good people. A surprisingly large part of the existing workforce is networked with people who are like themselves or have similar jobs. Using the network to build a candidate pool can be a rewarding strategy.

Call-Back File

Usually, there are more applicants than positions. Companies can call unsuccessful applicants back several months later to see if they are still interested. Even applicants who dropped out because they found other jobs might now be interested if the positions they took didn't turn out to be what they hoped for. They were once interested and might be again.

The Final Applicant Pool

No matter how the set of applicants is acquired—through internal selection, via a job posting system, using the Internet, or through public advertising—the selection decision will come down to two factors. First, how choosy can the company be in the selection process; and second, how well can the employee's performance be predicted.

Being choosy means having enough applicants apply for a position so that you can select the better ones and not hire others. Obviously, to make a decision, you need at least two applicants for a given position. But companies want much more than that. When opening its new hotels, the Gaylord Palms hired 1400 full-time employees from a pool of 14,000 applicants.[23] Similarly, as noted earlier, the Wynn Hotel sought to attract a pool of 60,000 applicants to fill 6000 openings. The point is if you have not built a sufficiently large labor pool to select from, you cannot be picky; you cannot choose to hire better people.

But being picky is not enough. You also need to be able to predict who will be better employees. Companies must be able to collect information on each applicant that can be used to identify good performers—and ideally the best performers. This process of gathering information on applicants constitutes the third step in the selection process.

THE THIRD STEP: SELECT THE BEST CANDIDATE

With a pool of applicants assembled, the next step is to determine who will be hired into the company. The selection process sounds disarmingly simple: figure out what an ideal candidate looks like, collect information on potential candidates, and then select the person who best matches the ideal. The people hired should be able to offer the quality of service that guests expect and that makes hospitality experiences memorable. They should be able to handle the stress of providing service, especially when a service failure occurs.

They must handle failure smoothly and successfully enough to satisfy the guest. Finally, they must act in such a way that each and every guest feels specially treated, safe, and secure. Anyone who has had both good and bad service experiences knows that companies perform the selection function with varying degrees of success.

Screening and Evaluating Applicants

Once you know what you want in a candidate, you must collect information on your applicants to make the best hiring decision. Many tools are available to help collect this information efficiently so as to make accurate hiring decisions. There is, of course, a trade-off. The more information that is collected, the better the potential decision can be; however, collecting more information takes both time and money. Companies must therefore carefully consider how they evaluate applicants in order to make efficient and effective hiring decisions.

The Application Form

Application forms are the first screen an employer should use in deciding whom to hire. A typical application form will include the applicant's employment history, education level, and conviction record if any. The form should be designed such that responses provide enough information to permit reasonable decisions about whom to keep in the pool and whom to drop. Obviously, a major trade-off is involved here. The recruitment strategy should be designed to bring in as many legitimate candidates as possible but also screen out unsuitable candidates. The advertising should state what qualifications, work experience, or training are minimum requirements for employment. The application form serves as a preliminary check on whether or not the candidates do in fact have the appropriate occupational qualifications. Job requirements should be clearly stated, so that they do not inadvertently amount to discriminatory hiring practices or eliminate candidates who could perform superbly in the role.

Technology is changing the form that applications can take. Sometimes, the application form can be built into a telephone application system. Applicants are encouraged to call a job hotline to find out about job openings and apply for those that interest them. A telephone application-and-screening process collects basic information about the candidate. If the information matches the organization's predetermined criteria, the automated interview ends with a request for a faxed, mailed, or e-mailed résumé. Optical character recognition (OCR) systems can scan résumés, evaluate each candidate's suitability for the job, and provide summarized information. These systems allow applications to be processed in larger numbers and with greater speed. They also allow organizations to be more flexible with their résumé screening, searching their database of résumés for applicants to see if any fit with the jobs openings on hand. Many companies allow—and some require—applicants to apply for jobs via the Web or kiosks in the organization's facilities. Online systems allow people to search and apply for jobs at their own convenience. These automated systems allow organizations to use computerized screening programs that save a great deal of time and money when compared to manually screening the many candidates who apply.

Traditionally, applicants have often needed to complete paper-and-pencil applications during business hours in a company's human resource department. But some people can't fill out applications in person, because they are already working elsewhere during these hours or are living in a different geographic area. The use of technology in the application process allows people to apply for jobs at any time of any day or night.

These 24/7 automated recruiting systems—just a phone call or click away for most potential applicants—are particularly useful for people who may not be able to call or come in during the usual work day and are a comparative advantage for firms.

The Interview

If the applicant passes the initial screen, the organization will most likely schedule an interview to determine if the information on the application checks out. That is, they will seek to determine if the applicant seems to fit the organization, see if the candidate is really committed to service excellence, and tell the candidate what the job is actually like. The interview is the most common method used by employers to help select employees. Research, however, has also shown it is often the least accurate.

Not surprisingly, the accuracy of an interview is largely determined by how well it is planned and how consistently it is used. When interviewers make up questions as they go along, have no predetermined way to score applicants, or rely purely on their memory, they are conducting what is called an **unstructured interview**. Probing questions (e.g., "Tell me about yourself and why you're interested in or qualified for this job") can sometimes add valuable information, but they can also yield information that differs in quality and amount from candidate to candidate because of interviewer differences in ability to ask and interpret appropriate questions. Without training, interviewers can be overly influenced by their own mood, the attractiveness of the candidate, personal biases, and the quality of the candidate interviewed just before.

Most writers believe that interviewing should follow a structured pattern. **Structured interviews** increase the likelihood that interviewers will assess all candidates according to the same criteria. When large numbers of interviewers interview large numbers of candidates, consistency becomes both organizationally and legally important. A structured array of questions ensures that the interviewer collects the necessary personal and job-related data. A properly designed and administered structured interview ensures that the questions are job related, consistently scored, and asked of all candidates. Research shows that such interviews can be valid predictors of job performance.[24] Typically, a structured interview will include questions that address past experiences, work competencies, willingness to do the job as designed, and commitment to service.

Structured Interviews   Because past performance is often the best predictor of future performance, one would ideally assess an applicant's prior performance in order to make a hiring decision. Unfortunately, that information is generally not available, or perhaps the person has actually never performed the job before. A valuable way to assess a candidate, though, is to see how he or she has or would have responded to particular situations.

In the hospitality industry, **behavioral interviews** are often the most effective way to assess applicant's qualifications on critical criteria. Behavioral interviewing is based on trying to specifically evaluate some instances of past performance to help predict future performance. So, unlike most interviews, in which applicants get questions like "Tell me about yourself" and "What are your strengths and weaknesses?" behavioral interviews try to capture past behaviors and performance. They might include questions like "Give me an example of how you helped to resolve a customer's problem," or "Tell me about a time when you had to make an unpopular decision and the consequences of your choice."

The employment interview, whether structured or unstructured, is one of the most commonly used methods for selection

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Sometimes, and particularly for entry-level positions, applicants simply do not have the experience to answer the questions typically asked in a behavioral interview. Depending on the pool of applicants, companies may want to employ **situational interviews**. Like behavioral interviews, situational interviews aim to assess performance, but they involve hypothetical situations rather than actual past experiences. So, questions might include "How would you handle a guest whose reservation cannot be found and the hotel is full?"

For a structured interview system to be successful, the interview questions should be based on a careful job analysis, and the questions should be clearly related to specific KSAs that you want in an employee. Furthermore, interviewers should be trained in how to conduct interviews and evaluate candidates. A structured interview—be it behavioral or situational—involves more than just giving interviewers the same set of questions and the same scoring sheet.

Work Competencies   The second group of questions that should be included in a structured interview are those related to work competencies. A good structured interview should be closely connected to job analysis, so that the questions clearly help evaluate the characteristics of an applicant that are relevant to the job in question. For example, the interviewer assesses the competence of an applicant for a hotel front desk position by asking specific questions about check-in and check-out procedures and processes. Although hotels use customized systems and vary the routine, the steps of checking guests in and out are basically the same across all hotels. This part of the interview can be objectively scored, based on the candidate's correct and incorrect responses to job-related questions.

Doing the Job as Designed   The third part of a structured interview should assess the candidate's willingness to do the job as it is designed. The interviewer might ask questions about such aspects of the job as the applicant's willingness to work overtime, long shifts,

or weekends. Many hospitality workers have to work when others do not. If candidates can't or won't be available when needed, they are probably not a good fit.

Commitment to Service   For positions with customer contact, interviewers will want to include questions that help to assess each applicant's commitment to service. The reality is that the successful hospitality employee is different from the successful traditional manufacturing employee, and the interview must take the difference into account. Frontline hospitality employees must be able to do the task assigned to them, but they also need interpersonal skills to relate to the guests and creativity skills to fix service problems when they occur. Service employees perform a wide array of tasks, both physical and mental, and yet throughout all of it, they must demonstrate a sincere and genuine sense of concern for their guests. Since applicants may try to hide their true feelings during an interview to get the job offer, interviewers must try to determine which of the candidates are the true service naturals,[25] who genuinely want do deliver exceptional customer service. Interviewers can try to assess this service orientation by asking situational-stress-type questions that focus on the service experience, and in particular, guest service problems.[26] Employees must respond quickly, appropriately, and creatively when the organization fails the guest in some way. The nature and critical importance of each aspect of service delivery make it essential to assess the applicant's attitude and personality before that person is hired and put out in front of guests.

The best hospitality companies also know that commitment to service is not limited to frontline employees. Indeed, ensuring that managerial candidates possess a high commitment to service may be more important because the commitment of managers to service quality positively affects those around them. Even when managers do not interact much with guests, their commitment to service influences their team members' behaviors, and helps the company deliver excellent customer service.[27]

Psychological Tests

Psychologists have developed a variety of tests to distinguish one person from another along different dimensions. Tests of mental ability measure logical reasoning, intelligence, conceptual foresight, ability to spot semantic relationships, spatial organization, memory span, and a number of other cognitive factors. Some measures of personality traits and behavioral predispositions have also been developed and validated for use in the selection process. For example, service orientation is associated with gregarious and outgoing personalities who make a conscientious effort to help others. Psychological tests have also been used to assess applicant integrity, such as how likely they are to engage in theft or risky behaviors at work.

Personality Traits   Managers often talk about hiring the right type of person for a job, or someone with the right disposition. So it should be no surprise that some employers try to assess the personalities of applicants in order to make better hiring decisions.

Research indicates that personality can be reliably measured and summarized along five dimensions:

1. *Extroversion*. The degree to which someone is talkative, sociable, active, aggressive, and excitable.
2. *Agreeableness*. The degree to which someone is trusting, amiable, generous, tolerant, honest, cooperative, and flexible.
3. *Conscientiousness*. The degree to which someone is dependable and organized, conforms to the needs of the job, and perseveres on tasks.

4. *Emotional stability.* The degree to which someone is secure, calm, independent, and autonomous.
5. *Openness to experience.* The degree to which someone is intellectual, philosophical, insightful, creative, artistic, and curious.

Of these five, conscientiousness is generally considered to be the most valid predictor of job performance.[28] Common sense suggests that people who are more organized, thorough, and dependable are likely to be better-performing employees.

Emotional stability has also been shown to be associated with job performance. Since the quality and value of hospitality experiences exist only in the minds and memories of guests, hospitality employees are often uncertain about whether they are delivering the experience as guests expect them to. Emotionally stable servers are much more likely to deal with this uncertainty in a positive, confident way. If the service turns out to be less than the guest expects and the guest complains, emotionally stable employees are more able to deal with the stress of complaints and work to resolve the complaints quickly, fairly, and with a smile.

While conscientiousness and emotional stability are correlated with job performance across jobs, extroversion has been shown to be an effective predictor of job performance in occupations where interactions with others are a major job component. Extroverts tend to be sociable, gregarious, assertive, and energetic. They are therefore more likely to get along well with others and seek out relationships and interpersonal interactions. Research suggests that extroverts are better at socializing or initiating contacts with others (e.g., customers, coworkers, and supervisors). They enjoy interacting with the customer and are more likely to perform better in service jobs, where interaction is a critical component of successful performance.

Cognitive Ability   While many managers think personality is the best predictor of job performance, in fact, decades of research has shown that cognitive ability may be the best.[29] This finding has been replicated across a wide variety of settings and occupational groups. Research has shown that general mental ability (GMA) can account for up to one third of the variance in performance ratings for complex, managerial jobs, and up to 16 percent of the variance in performance for less complex, semiskilled positions.[30] These results have led some to argue that GMA should be used as the primary basis on which to make selection decisions. As Norman Brinker says, "Look for people … who are smart. Remember, sinners can repent, but stupidity is forever."[31]

GMA is the ability to learn and process information. In part, GMA influences performance because it affects how quickly one can acquire the knowledge and skills needed to perform the requirements of the position. Given that modern jobs change frequently—in duties, responsibilities, technology—smarter employees, on average, perform better. GMA also helps employees process more information simultaneously. For a server waiting on multiple tables; for a front desk agent juggling check-ins, questions, and phone calls; or an amusement ride attendant paying attention to the line, safety apparatus, and customer questions, higher GMA gives the capability to perform better. Although GMA is not the only predictor of success, it is a good predictor of performance and an important criterion to use in selection decisions.

Integrity Tests   Integrity tests predict the predisposition of job applicants to engage in theft, drug taking, and dishonest or otherwise disruptive work behaviors. It includes questions like "Excluding pills you got from a doctor (prescriptions), which of the following drugs do you use?" [A. Cocaine, Coke, Snow, Crack; B. LSD, Acid, Mescaline, Peyote; C. Heroin, Opium; D. None.] It might seem that some applicants would not answer questions on an integrity test honestly, if they do indeed steal, take drugs, or drink at work.

Selection tests—of personality, cognitive ability, and integrity—are not very commonly used, although there is mounting research evidence of their validity for predicting job performance

But the evidence is strong that many people will indicate their misbehavior. In two separate uses of integrity testing in actual hiring in two hotel companies, roughly 30 percent of applicants indicated that they engaged in such risky behaviors.[32] Research shows that integrity tests can predict theft, illegal activities, drug use, absenteeism, tardiness, performance ratings, violence, and workers compensation claims.[33] They have also predicted these behaviors for various types of jobs and for both current employees and job applicants.

Despite the research evidence, integrity tests are not commonly used in the hospitality industry or elsewhere. But since they are relatively inexpensive and show evidence of ability to screen out undesirable candidates, they seem to be a promising tool in selecting the best candidate.

Assessment Centers

An **assessment center** is a battery of tests that are used to measure the KSAs of a group of individuals. This can be used either for the purpose of selecting individuals for higher-level positions or as a tool to help develop the participants' careers. Assessment centers often include interviews, psychological testing, and a variety of exercises involving administrative tasks, group exercises, cases analyses, and managerial exercises. While assessment centers can come in many forms, they typically measure seven key sets of KSAs: organizing and planning, problem solving, drive, influencing others, consideration and awareness of others, stress tolerance, and communication.[34]

Assessment centers require a significant time and resource commitment from organizations. Because of the large number of people involved and the types of devices used as part of the assessment center, the participants must be able to devote a significant amount of time to the process, and the company must provide the necessary space over this time. Furthermore, assessment centers require trained assessors to help score performance on all the measuring tools and provide feedback to participants. This investment, though, can have a substantial payoff. Assessment centers typically have high validity, and help predict performance beyond even cognitive ability and personality tests.[35]

References, Background Checks, and Drug Tests

It is also a fairly common practice to check a candidate's references. This may involve soliciting letters of recommendation, calling former employers, or requesting from candidates names of individuals who can attest to their character. Since most people are sensible enough to provide references from individuals who will write nice things about them, reference checks don't usually provide much useful information. Nonetheless, it is generally worthwhile to follow up on these references. If a given reference doesn't have good things to say, or worse, if the name given in the reference is fake, it clearly indicates a potential problem. Although many candidates can provide glowing references that may not really predict much, the skilled manager will still look for specific examples in the references that can attest to the KSAs and competencies needed for the job.

Once a candidate gets to the point of hiring, a criminal or background check and/or a drug test will often be conducted. Most hospitality organizations do these checks routinely to protect themselves and their guests. Obviously, a hotel's baby-sitting service must avoid hiring convicted child molesters. Indeed, no organization that sends its employees out unsupervised to provide a service can afford to employ someone who has not been thoroughly checked out before the hire is made. Similarly, hotel employees may have easy access to guests' belongings because some jobs require that they have keys to their rooms. Many services also involve handling cash. For all these reasons, a background check is critical when employees are dealing directly with customers or valuables. Learning that you hired a person who could damage your organization's reputation is not only embarrassing; much worse are the legal cases that can arise if a customer sues you for not exercising due diligence in your hiring practices.

Companies also want to screen out those who use illegal drugs, as drug use leads to greater absenteeism and greater likelihood of being fired or being in accidents, which results in higher medical expenses. Furthermore, because many drugs are by definition illegal, courts have generally accepted the use of drug tests in hiring, even if employers cannot provide a clear link between drug use and job characteristics.

THE FOURTH STEP: HIRE THE BEST APPLICANT

After all the information has been collected on potential applicants, selecting the right people from the applicants becomes the next critical step, in ensuring that the company gets the employees who will provide the level of service that the organization expects. While finding and hiring the right people is challenging for all organizations, it is especially difficult for the hospitality industry. Although many jobs require definable skills that can be identified, measured, and tested, the hospitality industry has the extra challenge of ensuring that the guest-contact employees they hire not only have the competency to perform the task skills but also have the interpersonal skills necessary to interact successfully with the guests and the creative skills to fix the inevitable service failures. The difference between a good and a great guest experience is so often the indefinable *extra* that the employee adds to the experience. Finding, hiring, training, and rewarding the employee who happily and naturally gives that extra effort is one of the biggest challenges for hospitality organizations.

The hiring decision must thus be made while balancing a number of factors. Does the person have the right personality to be successful in a service-based role? Is the person smart enough to handle a dynamic environment, master the training, and learn the job efficiently? Does the person's experience suggest that he or she will perform

Walt Disney World's
Casting Center

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effectively in creating memorable guest experiences? Does this person have the potential to grow into greater roles in the future? In short, is there a good fit between the person and the work environment? There is no simple way to collect information to help answer all these questions; all these issues should nonetheless be kept in mind when making the hiring decision. The purpose of all the different selection devices—the application blank, the interview, and the various psychological tests—is to collect information to answer these questions and help companies hire the kind of employee who can make the company's service experience truly stand out.

Of course, most applicants for a given position will not be hired. Even so, those making hiring decisions should try to maintain good relationships with all applicants. Someone not hired today may be offered a job tomorrow. The hospitality industry has very high turnover, so although there may not be an opportunity for a given candidate on Friday, the job could be vacant on Monday. Additionally, prospective applicants can also be prospective customers. If you treat applicants badly, they may not only refuse to work for you; they and their friends may not want to stay in your hotel or eat at your restaurant. Word of mouth is a powerful force in the service industry, and negative comments can hurt a business even more than positive ones can help. All applicants should be treated courteously and with respect. Even if they are not selected as employees today, they might become good employees or valued customers tomorrow.

Disney offers an example of how guestologists think about hiring. It knows that meeting its very large labor needs will require it to process a very large number of applicants. The Casting Center is not only designed to handle this volume of people but is an impressive reminder of the culture and values of Disney itself. Even if applicants do not get a job offer (and most will not), everyone leaves the Casting Center with a positive impression of how they were treated by the process and a strong reminder of Disney's

commitment to guest service. The experience not only pays off in how those that are hired feel about working for an organization with this strong culture of customer service, but it also impresses the many who are not hired but may be future customers.

THE FIFTH STEP: MAKE THE NEW HIRE FEEL WELCOME

Once the job offer is made and the selected applicant hired, the staffing process may seem to be complete. Indeed, many companies think and act this way too. However, the staffing process is not done until the organization has "on-boarded" the new employee. **On-boarding** should be designed to ensure that the new hire feels genuinely welcomed. After all, the organization spent a lot of time and money finding the right person to hire and convincing that applicant to accept the job offer. Now the organization should find ways to tell its new employees how welcome they are. The way the employees feel welcomed on their first day of employment may well set the tone for the rest of their career with that company.

On-boarding is the process of getting the new employee started in both a new company and a new job. Some of it is just common sense: people, especially the new supervisor, should be ready to greet the new person, the necessary paperwork should be complete, the office—if there is one for the position—should be ready with a computer, telephone, and other equipment and supplies. Many companies have formal orientation programs, and everything should be set up for the new employee to participate in one. While this process may all seem logical, surprisingly, many companies do not thoughtfully prepare for the arrival of new employees, and the result can be unpleasant. You only get one chance to make a first impression, and the best companies don't miss that chance.

As we discussed in Chapter 4, culture is critically important to most companies, and so communicating this culture to new employees is an absolute necessity for properly on-boarding a new employee. Since a lot of time and money have gone into the selection process, it is important to ensure that this investment is solidified by giving the new employee a sincere welcome to show that the company is as excited about the employee joining it as the employee is in accepting the job.

Because Gaylord's Opryland needs to employ a large number of people, it has developed a Convention of the STARS as an innovative way to on-board its new hires in groups. Since Opryland's primary business is as a convention hotel, it sets up its on-boarding process to resemble a convention. It gives new hires name badges with lanyards and tote bags, has keynote speakers, breakout sessions by functional area, a trade show floor with booth displays, entertainment, and even a banquet. This event not only makes the new employees feel very welcome but also effectively introduces them to how Opryland delivers the convention experience.

THE SIXTH STEP: TURNOVER—SELECTING PEOPLE OUT OF AN ORGANIZATION

Although you must expend significant time, money, and effort to hire people into your company, turnover is an inevitable part of business, and particularly in the hospitality industry. While selection is usually considered as the process of choosing employees from

a pool of applicants, turnover can also be seen as selection of a sort. While those acquired are selected into the company, those leaving the company are essentially "selected out" of the company's workforce. While many companies give a lot of attention to the process of selecting people into the company, the process of turnover is often less strategically managed. If you know it isn't a good idea to hire randomly, why would you leave the process of turnover up to chance?

The hospitality industry is known for having high turnover. This can be voluntary, where employees choose to leave, or involuntary, where the choice is made for them by the organization. Hospitality jobs often involve working in unpleasant conditions (such as hot kitchens) or during undesirable hours (holidays, nights, weekends). The hospitality industry also often pays less than other industries and attracts turnover-prone applicants who see it as a short-term job commitment or an industry where their career aspirations cannot be met.[36] High turnover is the result.

Turnover can be costly for organizations. Direct costs are associated with the selection of a replacement for a departing employee, namely the cost of advertising for an opening, processing applications, and conducting background checks. Additionally, because new people must be trained in skills that departing people already had, turnover also increases training costs. These turnover, selection, and training-cost numbers show why organizations are frequently torn between designing a job task in a way that makes it challenging, complicated, and interesting (to reduce turnover) and designing the task to be quickly learned and easy to do (to reduce training costs). In the former situation, if the strategy does not reduce the turnover typically found in the hospitality industry, the organization will be constantly investing heavily in new employees who won't stay long enough to justify the cost of training. On the other hand, the simple, boring, and repetitive jobs are the ones that tend to have high levels of turnover. Obviously, this is something of a chicken-and-egg problem: more interesting jobs might lead to lower turnover, but most organizations are unwilling to pay the costs to find out.

Turnover also has an important indirect cost: the cost of disappointed customers. Guests frequently build relationships with servers, and being served again and again by the same person is part of the value they receive from an organization's guest experience. If turnover is high, these relationships are destroyed or don't get built at all, and a powerful means for retaining repeat guests is lost. New employees are also less productive than experienced employees, and it takes time for them to learn their new tasks as efficiently. Turnover can also create morale problems. As Jerry Newman describes his experiences in the fast-food industry, where turnover is very high, the other employees don't even bother to learn your name when you begin your job. Because turnover is so high, it isn't worth the effort. Instead, they will learn your name only after you have come back to work a few times.[37]

Because of the direct and indirect costs, turnover can be quite harmful. For entry-level positions in the hotel industry, some estimate that replacing a single departing employee costs 30 percent of that individual's annual pay.[38] For positions of greater complexity, some estimate the cost of turnover to be upwards of two times an individual's salary.[39] Clearly, if turnover is high, a company risks being at a significant competitive disadvantage.

On the other hand, turnover is not always a bad thing. While turnover always involves costs, it can actually benefit an organization. For example, the selection process is never going to be perfect, no matter how carefully planned and implemented it is. So, if the poor performers leave and are replaced by better employees, the organization will benefit

in the long run. Customer service can be improved by shedding the employees who do not embrace the company's mission. Turnover also creates the opportunity to take advantage of the benefits of external selection. If the size of the company's workforce is not growing, turnover provides a means to hire employees from the outside with new ideas, new education, and different skills and perspectives, possibly from backgrounds that will enhance the company's diversity. Finally, if turnover occurs at upper levels, the door is opened for junior talent to move up. Talented junior people who see openings filled from within may stay, rather than moving to other firms that give them such opportunities.

Every company has turnover, but before assuming that all turnover is bad, the causes and consequences of this turnover should be investigated. Why are people leaving? Is it because of higher pay at competitors' firms, an unpleasant work environment, a poor manager, or something out of the company's control? Who is leaving? Is it high performers, low performers, new employees, long-tenured employees, a specific demographic group, or does it seem random?

Once a company understands who is leaving and why, it can begin to manage the turnover process effectively. Seeing who leaves and who stays, who succeeds and who fails helps provide a better understanding of what you are looking for in a candidate. Thus, this sixth step leads back into the first step—study the job—and the selection process becomes an ongoing cycle with the potential for continuous improvement.

EMPLOYING THE BEST TO SERVE YOUR GUESTS

To provide excellent service, the organization needs employees with the right knowledge, skills, abilities, and attitudes. To get the right people, the company needs to know what to look for, where to look to recruit talented workers, and the right ways to collect the information on job applicants. Successful staffing depends on a clear understanding of what the jobs require and of the personal characteristics that lead to success in these positions.

The best hospitality companies use a consistent and rigorous method to find, select, and hire the best talent. They also know that staffing does not just stop once an applicant is hired. Selection can continue as positions open up within the company, and internal candidates may make the best hires for these positions. Also, sometimes employees need to be "selected out" of the company, and this turnover process should be monitored and maintained with as much care and thought as the processes that bring people into the company.

Staffing is the first step in having the right human resources within your company to provide the level of service that you want to give your customers. But it is only the beginning. Hiring the best does not necessarily mean that employees will perform the best (although it certainly does help). Employees need to be trained in how to do their jobs, and they need to be motivated to perform their jobs well. These two steps are the focus of our next two chapters.

LESSONS LEARNED

1. Find the best people; train the rest.

2. Recruit creatively: Use the major search strategies, but try to think of new ones.

3. Carefully consider whether you should look inside or outside your company for new talent.

4. Build a large candidate pool; it will improve the odds of finding good people.

5. Carefully check applicants; are they the people you want serving your guests?

6. Know and hire the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to provide outstanding service.

7. Look for technical competence, strong interpersonal skills, and creative problem-solving ability.

8. Looking at internal candidates first sends a positive message to all employees about the kind of company they are working for.

9. Seek diverse candidates to enhance awareness of new ideas and trends.

10. Manage turnover with as much rigor as you manage the selection process.

11. You only get one chance to make a first impression with your new employees; make it a good one.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Why are hiring and promoting from within so popular in the hospitality industry? What are the disadvantages of this strategy?

2. Assume that you are in a tight labor market for entry-level employees.

    A. Do any of the recruitment strategies described in the chapter seem more or less appropriate under those circumstances?

    B. What innovative ideas do you have that might improve your ability to recruit outstanding entry-level employees?

3. Recruiting applicants is only half the task.

    A. Indicate several techniques you would use to select those you want to hire.

    B. Assume that you are hiring a server for a casual-dining restaurant. What KSAs would you look for?

    C. Assume that you are hiring a hotel front desk agent. What KSAs would you look for?

    D. Are the front desk agent KSAs different from those for the restaurant server?

    E. What problem-solving skills would you look for in either type of candidate?

4. Assume that you are interviewing candidates for a position that involves selling your hotel as a convention site.

    A. What questions would you ask of candidates?

    B. What questions are you not legally permitted to ask? Why?

5. Do certain personality traits seem to be typical of the best hospitality employees who have served you as a guest? How do these traits compare with those mentioned in the chapter?

6. When Scott Gross meets good employees in other hospitality organizations, he gives them his business card as a means of suggesting that they might want to give him a call for a job interview.

   A. Do you have any problems with the ethics of this method, which is not uncommon in the business world?

   B. Suppose that a competitor sent someone into your employee parking lot to put job-interview invitations under the windshields. Would you view this situation differently? Why or why not?

7. When Lone Star Steakhouse & Saloon needs staff, they print a large announcement on guest checks: Now Hiring Energetic Outgoing Servers! What do you think of this technique?

ACTIVITY

Find a hospitality organization that will tell you about its employee selection processes and procedures. How does the organization determine which recruits are likely to succeed as hospitality employees? What selection methods do they use? How well are the organization's predictors of employee success working?

ETHICS IN BUSINESS

As part of its screening process, after candidates fill out an application, the Family-Happy Hotel and Restaurant scours the Internet looking for blogs and Facebook entries for these prospective employees. Often, it discovers a job candidate looking drunk in a Facebook photo or acting in a way that would be embarrassing if a customer saw that person once employed. Typically, these photos aren't on the candidate's social networking site but are posted on various sites of his or her friends and acquaintances. Family-Happy's management has decided that these behaviors are not consistent with the image they want to project of the organization, and so they remove from consideration any individuals for whom they discover such images. Besides, there are enough people looking for jobs that they can be picky when hiring, and in any case they need some way to narrow down the pool of applicants.

   Do you feel the company's policy is ethically defensible?

CASE STUDIES

Choosing a Manager

The director of management development for the Long Stay Suites was required to recommend someone for a high-level management position in the company. Careful screening of all present employees narrowed the selection to two men: John Jarvis and Satya Patel. After lengthy interviews, the following information was accumulated.

John Jarvis had a tenure of three years with the company. He was very seldom absent from work and had obtained a college degree in hospitality administration by taking evening courses. His superiors rated his management potential as promising. The one complaint voiced against him was that he appeared impatient and overly ambitious. During his interview with the director of management development, Jarvis indicated that promotions had not come along fast enough for him and that unless he received this promotion he would seek employment with another major hospitality organization. He hinted that he had received offers.

Satya Patel was several years older than Jarvis. He had been with the company since graduation from a nearby university six years previously. He was rated by his superiors as a steady, dependable employee, apparently very intelligent, but he had been given little opportunity to display his talent. Three years ago, he had turned down a more responsible position at one of the organization's branches in another city. He said he didn't want to relocate, and the job required some traveling. Since that time he had not been given another opportunity to move upward in the organization.

In considering the recommendation he would make, the director of managerial development recalled a comment Patel had made during his interview: "I'm confident that you will recognize the importance of seniority when you make your final recommendation."

★ ★ ★

1. Weigh the pros and cons of promoting Jarvis or Patel.

2. Which one would you recommend for the position, and why?

3. Ideally, what additional information would you like to have before making a recommendation?

Regal Five-Star Hotel

During her first year as personnel manager of the Regal Five-Star Hotel, Margarita Gonzalez became increasingly aware of a possible morale problem among the housekeeping staff. Employee absenteeism and tardiness were rising. Coffee breaks were being extended beyond the allowed fifteen minutes. According to the grapevine, employees were not happy with working conditions or with the workload.

Although Gonzalez was aware that turnover had been rising, she was surprised to receive data indicating that it had exceeded 50 percent among the housekeeping staff over the past year. She reviewed the year's resignations. They accounted for 95 percent of the turnover. The other 5 percent were workers who had been terminated as unsatisfactory. Approximately 25 percent of the resignations were women, whose stated reasons for resigning were "husband being transferred to another city" and "leaving to devote more time to home and family." Gonzalez viewed these resignations as beyond the hotel's control and ignored them. The remaining resignations occurred for four reasons, in the following frequency of occurrence: (1) left to get salary increase, (2) left to get greater opportunity for advancement, (3) left to get different type of work, (4) personal reasons.

Margarita Gonzalez reviewed the criteria for hiring housekeepers, from desirable to undesirable in the hotel's view: under 25; single or newly married without children; husband in armed forces or for other reasons temporarily in the area; divorced with children; early twenties to early thirties; family fully established; husband permanently employed in the area; children fully grown. The hiring policy was obviously designed to appeal to women who seriously needed an income but who did not need a high income.

★ ★ ★

1. How should Gonzalez change the Regal Five-Star Hotel hiring policies, if at all?

Cruising Travel Agency

Ho-Chien Lee is a manager at a travel agency that specializes in cruises. Among his other administrative duties at Cruising Travel Agency, he hires and trains entry-level employees.

The typical agency job applicant is fresh out of college, excited about the future of travel, and confident that some of the world's problems can be relieved if hard-working people have a chance to relax on a cruise. Most applicants understand that travel-agency jobs are at the entry level. In return for these ideals and this ambition, the agency offers minimal training, little chance for advancement, considerable job security, low pay, and long working hours at night and on weekends.

For several years, job applicants have been plentiful. In recent months, the number of applications has dwindled.

Lee recently expressed his concern to Mary Ammerman, sitting at the next desk. "Where are we going to get fresh new employees? How can we keep the good people we have at the lower levels? I can't for the life of me see why so many stay on at Cruising Travel. Of course, the best ones go somewhere else for more money and faster promotions. But I'm surprised that any of them at all stay. I wonder what they get out of it. And how can we help them to get more out of their jobs?"

Mary Ammerman said she didn't know. As a matter of fact, she thought to herself, she wasn't getting all that much out of her own job.

★ ★ ★

1. How would you describe the staffing situation at Cruising Travel Agency?

2. Do you think hospitality-related organizations like this agency make a mistake in hiring college graduates at the entry level?

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