

the owner, convinced her that she was ready for the job. The only customer service position she hadn't held was bartender, but Diego assured her that he could teach her all she needed to know about this position. And to Rachel's relief, she would not be responsible for any of the kitchen operations.

So Rachel, 21 years of age at the time, took the job and found herself supervising 16 front-of-the-house employees, many of whom she had been working with since she started and all of them she considered to be her friends. One day they had been working together as a team and the next day she was in charge of the team. This sudden transition to being "in charge" was especially awkward with two of her co-workers, Mary and Joanie. They had become very close friends. All of them had been attending classes in the same Hospitality and Tourism program at the local college and, for the last two terms, they had been in many of the same classes together.

At first, when Rachel took over as assistant manager, she eased into her new position, reluctantly taking on her increased responsibilities. In the beginning, she even felt a little bad about being paid more than her friends who had been her equals just a few weeks before. However, things suddenly changed about six months after she became assistant manager, when the owner announced at the informal weekly staff meeting that two assistant managers were one too many. To Rachel's surprise he told the staff that Mary, who had been an assistant manager for over two years, was moving back to a head server position while Rachel would remain in her position as assistant manager. Change is always difficult and, when friends are involved, it can be even more difficult. Rachel now found herself in the awkward position of being fully responsible for restaurant operations in Diego's absence and having to supervise her friend Mary who had previously held the same position and whom she wanted to keep as her friend.

All of these changes came as a shock, but Rachel wanted to succeed. She thought to herself, "Dang, now here's a friggin' leadership challenge they don't teach you about in school. How do I manage my friends without losing them as friends?" Looking back, she thought about how excited she had been when asked to take on the assistant manager position and how much she had enjoyed the new challenges. Now she wasn't sure the extra money was worth the personal headaches.

La Fortuna's

La Fortuna's was a busy authentic 80-seat, family-owned Mexican-style restaurant located along with many other casual dining restaurants in a busy metropolitan setting. It opened in 1999 and was purchased by Diego Arrigo in 2011. It was open for lunch and dinner, seven days a week, and had a fairly large customer base of regulars from the community, good traffic from the local hotels as well as many students from the nearby college.

Rachel Maddox: Reluctant Restaurant Manager

So much of Rachel's experience prepared her to be La Fortuna's manager. She had been studying about basic business in college. While on the job, she learned to develop the weekly schedule for eight servers, one hostess, one cashier, five bussers, and a bartender. In her former position as head server, Rachel was already one of the primary trainers utilized when new people were hired, so this aspect of managing was not new to her. Upon being promoted to assistant manager, Rachel was asked almost immediately to do all of the interviewing, hiring, and firing, but again, she felt that the transition was slow enough to learn effectively what to do. Rachel felt the biggest change as assistant manager was that anytime the owner had a problem with staff, he came to her.