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## Effects of Management-Development Practices on Hospitality Management Graduates' Job Satisfaction and Intention to Stay

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# Effects of Management-Development Practices on Hospitality Management Graduates' Job Satisfaction and Intention to Stay

## **Abstract**

Companies have long recognized the importance of training and developing their managers to prepare them for their short- and long-term careers. Formal management-development programs and other less formal means of management development abound in the hospitality industry. Therefore, one may ask whether the entry-level managers for whom these programs are designed perceive them to be effective. The present study explores management-development practices, procedures, and techniques, and their effects on job satisfaction and organizational commitment

## **Keywords**

Management-Development, Hospitality, Satisfaction, Commitment, Higher Education, Career, Career Development

# Effects of Management-Development Practices on Hospitality Management Graduates' Job Satisfaction and Intention to Stay

By Edwin Torres and Howard Adler

*Companies have long recognized the importance of training and developing their managers to prepare them for their short- and long-term careers. Formal management-development programs and other less formal means of management development abound in the hospitality industry. Therefore, one may ask whether the entry-level managers for whom these programs are designed perceive them to be effective. The present study explores management-development practices, procedures, and techniques, and their effects on job satisfaction and organizational commitment.*

## INTRODUCTION

A common human resource management cliché states that “people are your best asset.” Arguably an organization’s success or failure will depend in large part on the quality of its talent pool. Recruiting the best talent is important to an organization’s success, especially when it comes to professional and managerial personnel. However, an organization’s human resources also can be a major liability for employers. From an organizational perspective, how a business manages its talent will account for the success or failure of that business. Hamblin suggested four ways to measure for the effectiveness of training and development efforts: reaction, learning, job behaviors, and organizational outcomes combined with profits (as cited in Adams & Waddle, 2002).

Many hospitality graduates are recruited for and placed in management-development programs (MDP). Such programs, depending on their specific objectives, seek to prepare young managers, assistant managers, and supervisors for a career with the company. Watson (2008, p. 759) defined management development as the “training, education, and learning practices that are intended to assist managers realize their potential, either for personal or organizational benefits.” Management-development activities can take place at any time during a manager’s career and in a variety of industries. The present research emphasizes the early stages of a hospitality manager’s career. The purpose of this research was to evaluate the perceptions of management-development programs from the perspective of entry-level hospitality managers. Analysis of the perceptions of management-development programs will help management gain a better understanding of how such programs could be

designed to maximize the level of satisfaction and effectiveness among participants.

The present research will be significant to both industry and academia from a number of standpoints. First, from an industry perspective, the study will provide an overview of common managerial development practices in the hospitality industry. Second, a deeper understanding of common practices and their perceived effectiveness from the trainee's point of view, could assist organizations in creating management- development programs that are more suitable to the needs and preferences of their trainees. A better understanding of the needs and preferences of the entry-level manager could help companies design more effective training programs. This, in turn, would increase trainees' level of job satisfaction and intent to stay.

From an academic perspective, the research will assist in settling a variety of debates within the training and development literature. First, debate exists in terms of the degree of horizontal integration; that is to say, whether a more strategic (narrower) or a broader approach to training and development is best to use within the hospitality industry. Second, the research will study the relative importance of managerial support and development techniques or methods utilized, and their relationship to the perceived effectiveness and satisfaction of trainees.

Training and development needs to fulfill its organizational purpose. One of the most important purposes is to help new managers develop a set of skills ranging from technical to interpersonal. New managers need to be given the tools to be effective in their positions. They need to become familiar with the company's organizational structure, operating procedures, quality-assurance standards, human resources, and financial practices. Attaining a certain level of learning and developing certain skills and habits through management development could arguably have a significant impact on a trainee's job satisfaction. Furthermore, the way that managers are developed could potentially have an important impact on feelings of satisfaction or dissatisfaction towards the firm, ultimately helping the trainee decide whether to make a long term commitment to the company or not.

Despite the industry's eagerness to engage recent graduates in management development programs, there is very little empirical research to support how most companies evaluate the effectiveness of such programs. The impact of such programs on job satisfaction and, ultimately, retention and career progression warrants further study. The following research questions are proposed:

1. Are management trainees more likely to be satisfied by a development program that uses a variety of different methods or techniques for learning?
2. What impact do training and development have on managerial job satisfaction?
3. Does managerial support play a role in the level of satisfaction with management development?
4. Do trainees perceive the exposure to different functional areas to be important?

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Different organizations use various forms or methods of development to prepare their young managers for careers within the hospitality industry. Programs may stress different skill sets or highlight an organizational philosophy of training and development. Shaw and Patterson (1995) studied the skills that managers considered important to their own development. Accordingly, managers ranked service quality, motivation and training, and communication skills the most important. Advertising and personal selling were ranked the lowest (Shaw & Patterson, 1995). Additionally, managers within the lodging subset of the hospitality industry considered planning and budgeting important for their own development strategic (Shaw & Patterson, 1995). Watson (2008) identified people skills, cultural sensitivity, and flexibility, as well as leadership, corporate skills, and strategic skills as important among managers.

Management development practices can vary within the industry (Watson, 2008). Some companies prefer new managers to train mostly within the area they desire to specialize in. Yet other organizations will be well-rounded in their approach, thus encouraging new managers to obtain as much exposure to every functional area of the business. Organizations also can vary in their techniques or methods for engaging new managers.

Some firms rely heavily on a module-based approach, whereby managers are given a book of materials they must cover on a self-phased basis. Other organizations encourage their managers to spend specified periods of time in different departments and learn by doing (or *on-the-job training* or *action training*, as it is referred to in training and development literature). Various organizations also will stress the importance of more personal methods, such as mentoring. Additionally organizations are turning to electronic training and virtual universities to provide more consistent and economical delivery of content (Adams & Waddle, 2002).

Watad and Ospina (1999) studied the impact of horizontal and vertical integration in the development and implementation of a management-development program. Horizontal integration refers to the level of involvement of people at the same or similar hierarchal level in different departments, functional areas or divisions of the organization. The use of horizontal integration in a management development program encourages a more strategic perspective in the organization (Watad & Ospina, 1999). It also allows for more effective problem resolution. Finally, horizontal integration allows for better communication and an internal-customer view of other organizational departments (Watad & Ospina, 1999).

On the other hand, vertical integration, according to Watad and Ospina (1999), refers to the level of involvement of superiors and subordinates within the same department, functional area, or division within the organization. Vertical integration refers to the involvement of other people at different hierarchal levels within the organization. The use of vertical integration promotes a better development culture, a more objective performance appraisal process, and a quicker implementation of training knowledge and initiatives (Watad & Ospina, 1999).

Some researchers advocate a more customer-driven (in this case, trainee-driven) approach to training and development (Prestoungrange, 2002). A pre-made curriculum could be viewed as an imposition (Prestoungrange). The pattern and exchange of ideas was also studied by Prestoungrange. From this perspective, any development program must encourage a more casual exchange of ideas, reminiscent of normal social interaction, rather than formalized learning. Prestoungrange also argued that, for most practitioners, learning occurs in an active and pragmatic way, as opposed to a more traditional, reflective approach. Thus, the importance of saliency in creating a development program is critical. Hospitality organizations might have differing needs regarding the skill set expected from their managers (Watson, et al. 2008). For example, a casual restaurant might have different requirements than a five-star hotel.

Even in the field of hospitality education, there is considerable debate as to whether hospitality firms should stress operational abilities versus a more reflective approach, reminiscent of traditional management schooling (Alexander, 2007; Connolly & McGing, 2006; Raybould & Wilkins, 2005). Watson (2008) studied the factors that account for career progression in the hospitality industry, including training and education,

networking, mentoring, individual commitment to career advancement, willingness to be mobile, and interpersonal relations.

## **MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT AND SATISFACTION**

Watson (2008) examined the barriers to career progression in the hospitality industry. Low pay, low skills, and lack of career opportunities can have an impact in the retention of managers (Martin et al. as cited in Watson, 2008). Doherty (2004) concluded that the culture of long hours negatively affects female manager's progression from entry level- and middle-management into senior management positions.

Pavesic and Brymer (1992) studied the topic of job satisfaction among recent graduates of 11 hospitality management programs. According to their study, one-fifth of all hospitality graduates leave the industry after the first year, and one-third leave the industry after the third year of work. In analyzing the reasons for young managers' turnover, the researchers found no relationship between the amount of previous work experience and the turnover rate. However, the study found that most managers leave a company for the following reasons: a better hospitality job, higher pay, management problems, and work hours and work-life balance concerns. Job dissatisfaction was especially pronounced among graduates of top hospitality programs (Pavesic & Brymer, 1992).

Sturman (2001), in his study of comparative compensation between the hospitality industry and similar occupations, utilized the graduates of Cornell's hospitality management program as a case study. That study demonstrated that college graduates who accepted positions within hospitality operations were likely to have a lower grade point average (GPA) and to earn a smaller base salary than those who accepted positions as either hospitality specialists (outside of operations, i.e., specialists, consultants) and those who accepted comparable positions outside of the hospitality industry (Sturman, 2001).

Management turnover can have negative consequences for organizations. A firm typically invests a considerable amount of money in recruiting and training new employees, especially new managers. Because of lost productivity, increased costs are incurred during the initial weeks or months of employment, as well. Andrews, Van Rooy, Steilberg, and Cerrone (2006) and Costen, Johansson, and Poisson (2009) revealed that employee turnover is positively associated with management turnover. Therefore, from a financial point of view it is important that organizations retain their managers. Costen, Johansson, and Poisson (2009) also argued that much attention is focused on developing entry-

level and mid-level managers for senior management positions, while little training is focused on developing hourly staff for managerial positions. An employee's perception of how a company invests in his/her development arguably can increase his/her level of commitment (Costen, Johanson, & Poisson, 2009).

Addams and Waddle (2002) criticized the amount of money spent on management development with no accountability for results. Therefore, organizations must assess the effectiveness of their programs. Buckley and Caple (as cited in Adams & Waddle, 2002, p. 15) defined evaluation as "the process of attempting to assess the total value of training: that is the cost benefits and general outcomes, which benefit the organization as well as the value of the improved performance of those who have undertaken the training" Hamblin (as cited in Adams & Waddle, 2002) provided four types of measure for the effectiveness of training and development efforts: reaction, learning, job behaviors, organizational outcomes, and ultimate level (profits).

Ideally a development program should evaluate all of these criteria. However, from a practical standpoint, tracking specific job behaviors and financial outcomes attributable to the development can become difficult. Reaction and learning are the simplest to measure. Further study of the outcomes of management development is needed to assess the effectiveness of such practices and possibly establish benchmark best practices.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **Sampling**

After a thorough review of the literature, the researchers chose a survey that was conducted among recent graduates of Purdue University's Hospitality and Tourism Management program. For the purposes of the study, a recent graduate is someone who graduated a minimum of three months and a maximum of five years from the time this study was conducted. The benchmark of five years as the upper threshold of the sample was set for several reasons. First, employees who have spent more than five years in the industry are likely to have worked at several additional positions beyond their original entry-level position. Second, employees who spent less than five years in the industry are likely to have better recollections of their management training and development. Third, the task of obtaining accurate contact information is more likely for employees who have spent five years or less in the industry, as there is the potential that respondents have moved several times.

The addresses of respondents were obtained from a database of graduates of the Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management. A pilot test of the survey was conducted with five subjects. To obtain the necessary number of responses, the survey was mailed via the United States Postal Service to 685 Purdue University Hospitality Management Alumni who had graduated within the last five years. A postage- paid envelope was provided to return the survey from each alumnus. The list represented all of the alumni who had graduated from Purdue with either a bachelor's or a master's degree in Hospitality and Tourism Management. Since Purdue University is a major research university and has one of the top Hospitality and Tourism Management programs in the field, many of the graduates were expected to start their careers in entry-level managerial positions. This provided a useful sample of managers who had experienced a management-development program.

### **Survey**

The survey instrument (Appendix 1) was designed for easy use among respondents. All the questions were on a similar scale and were grouped together to facilitate quick completion of the survey and reduce the number of respondents who might not finish the survey due to time constraints. Survey questions were grouped together in related topic areas. The first section of the survey contained a series of demographic questions (1-3). Questions 4-10 addressed the topic of management support for training and development activities. Responses for such questions were on a Likert scale ranging from "Never" (1) to "Always" (4). Questions 11-15 addressed the concept of job satisfaction. Questions 17-22 addressed the concept of well-rounded management, as defined by the amount of different development methods or techniques to which trainees were exposed. These questions were also listed on a Likert scale that ranged from "Never" (1) to "Always" (4). Questions numbered 16, 23, 24, and 27 addressed the degree of horizontal integration or exposure to multiple functional areas within the business. Questions 25 and 26 addressed the respondent's intent to stay with the company. An additional question, number 28, was intended to test the same concept but had different response alternatives.

### **Hypotheses**

H1: The entry level manager's perception of support from middle and upper managers will be positively associated with job satisfaction.

H2: A well-rounded approach to management development (as defined by the amount of technique a trainee is exposed to) will be positively associated with job satisfaction and intent to stay.

H3: The amount of horizontal orientation (as defined by exposure to multiple functional areas) will be positively associated with trainee satisfaction.

## RESULTS

The survey was sent to a total of 685 Purdue University Hospitality and Tourism Management alumni. A total of 116 responses were received, resulting in a 17% response rate. Eighty-six of the total respondents (73%) had managerial experience within their first year of graduation. The 86 respondents met the criteria for the study and, therefore, were utilized to determine results. SPSS 16.0 was used to generate statistical output.

A well-rounded approach to management development had been defined by the number of different techniques or methods utilized during training. Horizontal integration had been defined by the number of functional areas the trainee was exposed to. These two areas, along with managerial support, were correlated with trainee satisfaction. For purposes of the questionnaire, trainee satisfaction was defined by various measures, such as the work itself and the work environment.

The ANOVA for the multiple regression indicated an F-Value of 222 and a P-Value of .00. Therefore, the overall model was significant at the alpha = .10 level. When each variable was tested individually for significance using a t-test, results demonstrated that only two out of the three independent variables were significant. Management support ( $T=4.32$ , P-value = .00) and a well-rounded approach to training ( $T=2.14$  and P-value = .036) were significant at the alpha = .10 level. The variable of "horizontal integration" was not found to be significant ( $t=.088$ , p-value = .381). The researchers found sufficient data to support and accept H1, meaning that an entry-level manager's perception of support from middle and upper managers is positively associated with job satisfaction. Hypothesis 2 was also supported in that a well-rounded approach to management development is positively associated with job satisfaction and intent to stay. The final hypothesis, H3, was not supported because there is no positive association between the amount of horizontal orientation and trainee satisfaction.

The three independent variables also were tested against another response variable, intention to stay. The ANOVA test for multiple

regression found the model to be significant ( $F= 19.53$ ,  $P\text{-value} = .00$ ). The multiple regression model confirmed that two variables were significant. These variables were management support ( $T= 1.97$ ,  $P=.05$ ) and well-rounded management development ( $T=3.78$ ,  $P\text{-value} = .00$ ). The variable of “horizontal integration” was not found to be significant ( $T= 1.44$ ,  $P\text{-value} = .15$ ). The two response variables also were tested and found to be significant ( $F = 36.38$ ,  $P\text{-value} = .00$ ).

Chronbach’s Alpha was used to test for reliability of several measures. The scale designed for trainee satisfaction was determined to be reliable ( $\text{Alpha} = .87$ ). The scale designed to measure management support also was found to be reliable ( $\text{Alpha} = .718$ ). Finally, the scale designed to test for horizontal integration was determined to be reliable ( $\text{Alpha} = .80$ ).

## DISCUSSION

Management development is not only an expected practice; it is a necessity for any organization that seeks to have a competent and committed group of managers. The skill set required by these new managers can be diverse but must take into account the reactions, perceptions, and needs of the new managers. Management development is not only a means to create managers who are more technically proficient in the execution of their jobs, but also to ensure leadership continuity within hospitality organizations.

When structured in the right way, management development can also lead to increased satisfaction among new managers and improve their intention to stay within the organization. This could result in reduced turnover. An important finding of the researchers was the concept that management support had a pivotal role in achieving both the goals of satisfaction and increased intention to stay. Companies should put emphasis on designing effective management development programs that ensure that throughout the process, trainees are given sufficient time, attention, and support by their supervisors.

A well-rounded approach to management development was found to be a significant way to improve trainee satisfaction. Trainees who are engaged in a variety of methods and techniques will more likely be satisfied with their development and their jobs and have greater intent to stay with the company for a long-term career. Organizations should ensure that their development program does not rely too heavily on one technique (such as online training), but embrace a variety of ways to train their new managers.

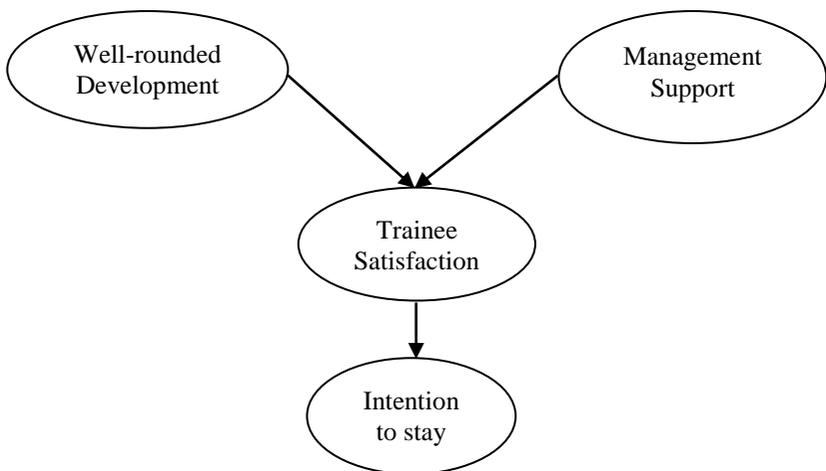
Upon examining the results of the study, the researchers found enough data to support both H1 and H2. However, hypothesis H3 was rejected. The variable horizontal integration was not found to be significant to explain satisfaction. Therefore, both the amount of support received by trainees on behalf of their managers and the variety of techniques used for management-development training are significantly more important than the number of functional areas to which trainees are exposed. While cross-training is often considered a valuable component of management development, more research needs to be done on whether trainees consider this technique valuable and whether it leads to increased satisfaction and intent to stay. Such training may help the company achieve its development, training, and business objectives, but trainee satisfaction needs more examination because the results of this study show that cross-training is not found to be an effective approach in and of itself.

From a theoretical point of view, the present research serves to affirm the importance of management support in achieving satisfaction among entry-level managers. It also highlights the importance of using various learning techniques or development methods to achieve satisfaction. A variety of methods could be more effective for a number of reasons. First, each manager is likely to learn best in a particular way, and adding various measures helps appeal to various learners. Second, a greater variety of techniques could reflect a greater organizational effort to develop managers. Whether horizontal orientation helps a business achieve its training objectives could be a subject of further research. However, the present study affirmed that such cross-training does not lead to higher trainee satisfaction. Management development should help an organization attain its objectives. However, too often an organization will focus on short-term objectives, such as the acquisition of technical skills. Lodging organizations spend a significant amount of time and effort in preparing new managers as they enter their organization. This is, of course, in addition to the initial recruitment costs the organization faces. Given the investment of time, effort, and money, organizations should make a concerted effort to retain their newly acquired and more recently developed talent. The design of their management development can play a pivotal role in helping the organization attain managerial job satisfaction and increase the likelihood that newer managers will stay with the organization. It is hoped that this research provides guidance in creating management-development programs that will improve satisfaction and assist managers in planning long-term careers.

## CONCEPTUALIZATION

Having reviewed the relevant literature and obtained results from the survey instrument, the researchers propose Figure I as a conceptualization of management-development input and likely outcomes. Figure I shows how a variety of training techniques and methods, such as mentoring, conferences, on-the job training, classroom training, online training, teambuilding, and support from both the immediate supervisor and senior management are likely to result in trainee satisfaction. Trainee satisfaction results from the management-development process and, thus, leads to improved retention.

**Figure I**  
**Conceptualization of Management**  
**Development Practices and Outcomes**



## KEY FINDINGS AND MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

Based on the results, the following research questions were addressed:

Are management trainees more likely to be satisfied by a development program that uses a variety of methods or techniques for learning?

Entry-level managers are more likely to be satisfied with a company that utilizes a variety of different methods or techniques for learning. A possible explanation is that a company that utilizes a greater variety of techniques is likely involved and

interested in the training and development of new managers. This also ensures that the program is adapted to the various learning styles.

1. Do training and development have an impact on managerial job satisfaction?

Training and development have a positive impact on job satisfaction when designed properly. Moreover, a company that provides management support during training and development, and that employs a variety of techniques is more likely to achieve greater satisfaction among managers.

2. Does managerial support play a role in the level of satisfaction with management development?

Managerial support is of primary importance in a training and development process. People who stated they had received managerial support were more likely to be satisfied and had a greater intent to stay than those who were not.

3. Is the exposure to different functional areas perceived to be important by the trainees?

Exposure to different areas, though perceived important by some trainees, does not have a direct correlation to managerial job satisfaction.

From a hospitality industry standpoint, human resource professionals and operations professionals can use the results of the study to design programs that will further engage their recent graduate managers. By utilizing a variety of techniques and making sure that trainees receive enough support, managers will attain greater satisfaction among trainees as well as increase the intent to stay. Utilizing a variety of techniques can be more complex to implement than just one. Also, obtaining every manager's support in training activities can be a difficult goal to accomplish. However, utilizing a variety of techniques and having manager support throughout the process are the elements most likely to produce the desired results: a more satisfied, better trained, more experienced, and more loyal management group.

The industry could benefit by designing development programs that meet the recommendations of this study. Furthermore, by obtaining senior management support at the operations level, organizations will ensure a smoother process for new managers as well as increased satisfaction. With increased satisfaction and increased intent to stay come a series of benefits for hotel organizations. If an organization retains its

managers, it can gain a competitive advantage in the marketplace. Furthermore, the cost associated with the recruitment, training and development of new managers will be minimized and the benefits from an experienced managerial workforce will accrue.

### **LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH**

One key limitation of the present research is reliance on Purdue graduates as respondents. Future research could use alumni from various universities as respondents. The study also used graduates within the last five years of their graduation. A study of participants who graduated more than 10 years ago and have more industry experience could yield different insights and additional valuable information. Future research could also look at the various segments of the hospitality industry to determine whether there are any differences in attitudes towards management development and job satisfaction based on these factors.

## Appendix 1: Survey

Survey Instructions: The following survey will take approximately 15 minutes to complete. Please fill out the questions below. For all the questions, please recall your first managerial or supervisory role in a hospitality organization.

1. After graduation from the Purdue HTM program, did you start working at one of the following levels within the hospitality industry: Assistant Manager, Manager, Supervisor, Management Trainee, Leader-in-Training?	A) Yes B) No
2. What is your age?	A)21-25 B)26-29 C)30-35 D)36-40 E) 41 or more
3. What is your gender?	A) Male B) Female

For the following questions, please indicate how often each one has taken place on a scale from 1-5, with 1 being “never” and 5 being “Frequently.”

Question	
4. My manager takes time to train me	Never Infrequently Frequently Always
5. My manager is a mentor to me	Never Infrequently Frequently Always
6. My manager spends at least 30 minutes a day on training and development efforts	Never Infrequently Frequently Always
7. My manager cares about my career progression	Never Infrequently Frequently Always
8. My manager delegates my training & development to other employees (or other managers or supervisors)	Never Infrequently Frequently Always
9. My manager has an “open door” policy	Never Infrequently Frequently Always
10. I have the opportunity to interact with and learn from other senior managers within the organization	Never Infrequently Frequently Always
11. I would recommend my company for others to work in	Never Infrequently Frequently Always

12. My work is interesting	Never Always	Infrequently	Frequently
13. My work is challenging	Never Always	Infrequently	Frequently
14. I feel empowered at work	Never Always	Infrequently	Frequently
15. My work offers a positive work environment	Never Always	Infrequently	Frequently
16. I have or am expecting to receive training in one functional area of the business (e.g., front desk or housekeeping or restaurants or banquets or event management or other business function)	Never Always	Infrequently	Frequently
17. My company uses classroom training as one technique for my training and development	Never Always	Infrequently	Frequently
18. My company uses online classes or sessions as part of my training and development	Never Always	Infrequently	Frequently
19. My company uses online classes or sessions as part of my training and development	Never Always	Infrequently	Frequently
20. My company uses mentoring as part of my training and development	Never Always	Infrequently	Frequently
21. My company uses conferences or corporate retreats (2 or more days) as part of my training and development	Never Always	Infrequently	Frequently
22. My company uses teambuilding as part of my training and development	Never Always	Infrequently	Frequently

Question	Strongly Agree = SA Agree = A Disagree = D Strongly Disagree = SD
23. I have or am expecting to receive training in two functional areas of the business (e.g., front desk and housekeeping, or banquets and human resources, or any combination of two functional areas)	SA A D SD
24. I have or am expecting to receive training in three or more functional areas of the	SA A D SD

business (e.g., event management, finance and restaurants, or any combination of three or more functional areas)	
25. At the present time, I foresee myself continuing my employment with my current company for at least one year	SA A D SD
26. At the present time, I foresee myself continuing my employment with my current company for at least three years	SA A D SD

For the following questions, please provide an answer to the best of your recollection and mark how important it was to you.

27. During the first year of my employment with my company I spent (or am expected to spend)_____ number of days in other functional areas	A) 1-10 B) 11-20 C) 21-30 D) 31 or more	Not Important = 1 Somewhat important =2 Very Important =3
28. Other than your immediate supervisor, how many other managers are involved in your training and development	A) 0 (only supervisor) B) 1 C) 2 D) 3 E) 4 F) 5 or more	Not Important = 1 Somewhat important =2 Very Important =3

**Thanks for your participation  
Please mail in the pre-stamped envelope**

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