

Perspectives on Careers in Hospitality



The Hospitality Industry



(Courtesy of Four Seasons Hotel, Mexico, D.F.)



The Hospitality Industry and You

The Purpose of this Chapter

Your own career choice is probably the most important management decision that you will ever make—at least from your point of view. This chapter has been designed, therefore, to help you analyze a career in the hospitality industry and correlate that analysis with your personal, professional, and educational experiences. It will also help prepare you for the first career decision you make just before or after you graduate. This chapter discusses the career decisions that are ahead of you over the next three to five years.

THIS CHAPTER SHOULD HELP YOU

1. List examples of the kinds of businesses that make up the hospitality industry.
2. Identify the reasons people study hospitality management—and list the advantages these academic programs offer.
3. Identify two key components of the job-benefit mix that allow one to profit from work experience.
4. Name three general career goals frequently cited by graduates seeking employment.
5. Identify key trends driving change in employment opportunities in the hospitality industry.
6. Describe your career plan in terms of a life's work and not just as an economic means of survival.



What Is Hospitality Management?

When most people think of the hospitality industry, they usually think of hotels and restaurants. However, the true meaning of **hospitality** is much broader in scope. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, hospitality means “the reception and entertainment of guests, visitors or strangers with liberality and good will.” The word hospitality is derived from hospice, the term for a medieval house of rest for travelers and pilgrims. Hospice—a word that is clearly related to hospital—also referred to an early form of what we now call a nursing home.

Hospitality, then, not only includes hotels and restaurants but also refers to other kinds of institutions that offer shelter, food, or both to people away from their homes. We can also expand this definition, as many people have, to include those institutions that provide other types of services to people away from home. This might include private clubs, casinos, resorts, attractions, and so on. This wide variety of services will be discussed in later chapters.

These different kinds of operations also have more than a common historical heritage. They share the management problems of providing food and shelter—problems that include erecting a building; providing heat, light, and power; cleaning and maintaining the premises; overseeing employees; and preparing and serving food in a way that pleases the guests. We expect all of this to be done “with liberality and good will” when we stay in a hotel or dine in a restaurant, but we can also rightfully expect the same treatment from the dietary department in a health care facility or while enjoying ourselves at an amusement park.

Turning our attention now from the facilities and services associated with the hospitality industry to the people who staff and manage them, let us consider the profession of the hospitality provider. The hospitality professions are among the oldest of the humane professions, and they involve making a guest, client, member, or resident (whichever is the appropriate term) feel welcome and comfortable. There is a more important reason, however, that people interested in a career in these fields should think of hospitality as an industry. Today, managers and supervisors, as well as skilled employees, find that opportunities for advancement often mean moving from one part of the hospitality industry to another. For example, a hospitality graduate may begin as a management trainee with a restaurant company, complete the necessary training, and shortly thereafter take a job as an assistant manager in a hotel. The next job offer could come from a hospitality conglomerate, such as ARAMARK. ARAMARK provides food service operations not only to businesses but also in such varied areas as recreation centers, sports stadiums, college and university campuses, health care facilities, convention centers, and gourmet restaurants. Similarly, Holiday Inns is in the

Entertainment and attractions, such as the Fremont Street Experience in Las Vegas, play an important part of the hospitality industry. (Courtesy of Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority.)



hotel business, but it is also one of the largest food service companies in the United States.

The point is that the hospitality industry is tied together as a clearly recognizable unit by more than just a common heritage and a commitment to “liberality and good will.” Careers in the industry are such that your big break may come in a part of the industry that is very different from the one you expected (see Case History 1.1 for a personal example). Hospitality management is one of the few remaining places in our increasingly specialized world of work that calls for a broadly gauged generalist. The student who understands this principle increases his or her opportunity for a rewarding career in one or more segments that make up the hospitality industry.

The Manager's Role in the Hospitality Industry

As a successful manager in the hospitality industry, you must exhibit many skills and command much specialized knowledge, all directed at achieving a variety of management objectives. The **manager's role** is wide and varied. Let's now discuss three general kinds of hospitality objectives with which management must be concerned:

1. A manager wants to make the guest feel welcome. This requires both a friendly manner on your part toward the guest and an atmosphere of “liberality and good will” among the people who work with you in serving the guest. That almost always translates to an organization in which workers get along well with one another.



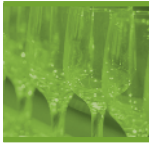
CASE HISTORY 1.1

A Former Student's Unexpected Change

When one of the authors was an undergraduate student studying hospitality management at a large state university, he heard repeatedly from his professors how important it was that he become active with the student organizations on campus. There were quite a few student chapters of professional hospitality organizations to choose from, including the Hospitality Sales and Marketing Association International, the Travel and Tourism Research Association, and various food service organizations, among others. Partially to satisfy his professors, and partially out of curiosity, he joined the student chapter of the Club Managers Association of America, which had a strong presence on campus. When he joined, he was quite confident that he would never have occasion to work in a private club, but he had to admit that it sounded like an interesting segment of the industry. He spent two years with the association and even took an elective course on club management to learn a little bit more about the field. He then promptly began his management career with a food service management company. Much to his surprise, he was offered a job at a private club a few short years after graduating. His membership in the student chapter, and the connections that he made while a member, went a long way in helping him secure the club position. He has since enjoyed a long association with the Club Managers Association of America as well as the private club industry. In fact, he was also the faculty advisor to a student chapter of CMAA for ten years. Our own students now share similar stories with us. This just goes to further illustrate how careers can take strange twists and turns and how hospitality graduates can find themselves moving from one sector to another in short order.

2. A manager wants to make things work for the guest. Food has to be savory, hot or cold according to design, and on time. Beds must be made and rooms cleaned. Gaming facilities must be service oriented. A hospitality system requires a lot of work, and the manager must see that it is done.
3. A manager wants to make sure that the operation will continue to provide service while also making a **profit**. When we speak of “liberality and good will,” we don’t mean giving the whole place away! In a restaurant or hotel operated for profit, portion sizes are related to cost, and so menu and room prices must consider building and operating costs. This enables the establishment to recover the cost of its operation and to make enough additional income to pay back any money borrowed as well as to provide a return to the owner (or investor), who risked a good deal of money—and time—to make the establishment a reality. (The unique challenges associated with the operation of subsidized or noncommercial facilities will be discussed later.) The key lies in achieving a controlled profit, loss, or break-even operation. A good term to describe this management concern is “conformance to budget.”

Simply stated, these objectives suggest that managers must be able to relate successfully to employees and guests, direct the work of their operation, and achieve operating goals within a budget—that is, to run a productive operation within certain constraints.



Why Study in a Hospitality Management Program?

One way to learn the hospitality business is to take the direct route: go to work in it and acquire the necessary skills to operate the business (as has been the traditional route). The trouble with this approach, however, is that the skills that accompany the various line-level workstations (cook, server, etc.) are not the same as those needed by hospitality managers. In earlier times of small operations in a slowly changing society, hospitality education was basically skill-centered. Most hospitality managers learned their work through apprenticeships. The old crafts built on apprenticeships assumed that knowledge—and work—was unchanging. However, this assumption no longer holds true. As Peter Drucker, a noted management consultant whose management observations are virtually timeless, pointed out, “Today the center [of our society’s productivity] is the **knowledge worker**, the man or woman who applies to productive work ideas, concepts, and information.”¹ In other words, knowledge is crucial to success, and studying is a necessary part of your overall preparation for a career as a supervisor or manager.

Many people argue that a liberal-arts education provides an excellent preparation not only for work but also for life. They’re quite right. What we’ve found, however, is that many students just aren’t interested in the liberal-arts subject matter. Because they are not interested, they are not eager to learn. On the other hand, these same people become hardworking students in a career-oriented program that interests them, whether that is in the hospitality industry or some other profession. There is no real reason for educational preparation for work to be separate from preparation for life. We spend at least half our waking hours at work. As we will learn shortly, work lies at the heart of a person’s life and can lead directly to self-discovery.

Business administration offers one logical route to management preparation. Indeed, many hospitality managers have prepared for their careers in this field. Business administration, however, is principally concerned with the manufacturing and marketing of a physical product in national (and increasingly international) markets. By contrast, the **hospitality industry** is a service industry, and the management of a service institution is vastly different. Food may be the primary product of a restaurant, but most of the “manufacturing” is done right in the same place that offers the service.



High-volume food service depends on a highly skilled team made up of both front-of-the-house and back-of-the-house associates. (Courtesy of ARAMARK.)

The market is often local, and the emphasis is on face-to-face contact with the guest. Hospitality operations also tend to be smaller (with some obvious exceptions), so the problems of a large bureaucracy are not as significant as the problems of face-to-face relationships with employees and guests. Moreover, the hospitality industry has a number of unique characteristics. People work weekends and odd hours. We are expected by both guests and fellow workers to be friendly and cheerful. Furthermore, we are expected to care what happens to the guest. Our product, we will argue in a later chapter, is really the guest's experience. Additionally, the industry has its own unique culture. An important task of both schooling and work experience, then, is that of acculturating people to the work and life of hospitality industry professionals.

Our point is not that there is something wrong with a liberal-arts or business administration education. Rather, the point is that programs that are specifically focused on hospitality management are usually made up of students who are interested in the industry that they are studying. There is a clear difference between the hospitality service system and the typical manufacturing company—between the hospitality product and the manufacturer's product. For these reasons, hospitality management programs provide a distinct advantage for such students.

Why do people want to study in a hospitality management program? Perhaps the best answer can be found in the reasons why students before you have chosen this particular course of study. Their reasons fall into three categories: their experience, their interests, and their ambitions. Figure 1.1 lists the various reasons that students cite, in order of frequency. Many students become interested in the industry because a job

they once had proved particularly captivating. Others learn of the industry through family or friends working in the field. Others learn about it through their experiences as customers.

One final consideration for many students is that they like and are genuinely interested in people. Working well with people is a crucial part of a manager's job in our industry. Many students, too, have a natural interest in food, and some are attracted by the glamour of the hospitality industry.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES



Another important consideration when choosing a profession is what the future holds for the industry. In the case of hospitality, the employment outlook is solid in most segments, particularly for managers. This should encourage those students who are attracted to a field in which they can be reasonably sure they will secure employment. Others feel that in a job market with more opportunities than applicants, they will enjoy a good measure of independence, whether in their own businesses or as company employees. Many students are drawn to the hospitality industry because they want to get into their own business. Others, with good reason, suspect that there are opportunities for innovation off the beaten track of the traditional or franchise organizations. There have been many successful examples of the latter throughout the history of the hospitality industry.

One segment in particular that seems to offer tremendous opportunities is the catering industry. Many young entrepreneurs have chosen catering as a low-investment field that offers opportunities to people with a flair for foods and the ability to provide customized service. Catering is a fast-growing segment of food service and is also a business that students sometimes try while in school, either through student organizations or as a group of students setting up a small catering operation.

There are ample opportunities in the lodging area as well. One of the areas that provides opportunities for entrepreneurs is the bed-and-breakfast/inn segment. Operators are typically able to enter these segments with lower capital requirements than would be necessary in other lodging segments.

EXPERIENCE

Personal work experience

Family background in the industry

Contact with other students and faculty
in hospitality management programs

INTERESTS

Enjoy working with people

Enjoy working with food

Enjoy dining out, travel, variety

AMBITION

Opportunity for employment and
advancement

Desire to operate own business

Desire to travel

Desire to be independent

Figure 1.1

The reasons students select hospitality management programs.

LODGING

Sales Managers

Front Office Managers

Guest Services Managers

FOOD SERVICE

Restaurant Managers

Banquet Managers

Food Service Managers

CULINARY

Chef Supervisor

Banquet Cook

Station Cook

TRAVEL AND TOURISM

Meeting and Convention Planner

Festival Manager

Market Researcher

Whichever the segment, the hospitality industry has always attracted its share of entrepreneurs for the simple reason that it offers everything that small-business owners are looking for. One characteristic that very much appeals to independent-minded individuals is being able to be your own boss.

There are many other opportunities as well. For instance, people with chef's training may open their own business, especially if they feel that they have a sufficient management background. In the health care area, home care organizations are expanding in response to the needs of our growing senior-citizen population and offer a wide range of opportunities to entrepreneurs.

Whether you're studying hospitality management because you want to start a business of your own or because you found your past work experience in the business especially interesting—or perhaps just because the need for managers in the area makes the job prospects attractive—management studies are an important preparation for budding entrepreneurs. Hospitality management students tend to be highly motivated, lively people who take pride in their future in a career of service.

Starting positions that hospitality, tourism and culinary students typically accept upon graduation are presented in Figure 1.2.

Figure 1.2

Starting positions for hospitality and tourism management graduates.



Planning a Career

THE MEANING OF WORK

We all have several motives for going to work. We work to live—to provide food, clothing, and shelter. Psychologists and sociologists tell us, however, that our work also provides a sense of who we are and binds us to the community in which we live. The ancient Greeks, who had slaves to perform menial tasks, saw work as a curse. Their Hebrew contemporaries saw it as punishment. Early Christians, too, saw work for profit as offensive. By the time of the Middle Ages, however, people began to accept **work as a vocation**, that is, as a calling from God. Gradually, as working conditions improved and work became something that all social classes did, it became a necessary part of maturation and self-fulfillment in our society.

Today, workers at all levels demand more than just a job. Indeed, work has been defined as “an activity that produces something of value for other people.”² This definition puts work into a social context. That is, it implies that there is a social purpose to work, as well as the crude purpose of survival. It is an important achievement in human history that the majority of North Americans can define their own approach to a life of work as something more than mere survival.

Work contributes to our self-esteem in two ways. First, by doing our work well, we prove our own competence to ourselves. Psychologists tell us that this is essential to a healthy life, as this information gives us a sense of control over both our environment and ourselves. Second, by working, we contribute to others—others come to depend on us. Human beings, as social animals, need this sense of participation. For these reasons, what happens at work becomes a large part of our sense of self-worth.

Education, too, is clearly important. Indeed, education has become essential in most walks of life. There is, moreover, a clear connection between education, work, and income. Studies have shown that workers with a post secondary education earn much more annually than workers with just a high-school education. This difference is expected to grow as the demand for “knowledge workers” continues to increase. The evidence, then, is that your commitment to education will pay off.

The next section explores career planning in regard to employment decisions that you must make while you are still in school. We will also discuss selecting your first employer when you leave school. If you’ve chosen the hospitality industry as your career, this section will help you map out your job plans. If you are still undecided, the section should help you think about this field in a more concrete way and give you some ideas about exploring your career through part-time employment. A large number of those reading this text already have significant **work experience**, many in hospitality fields. Because not everyone has such experience in his or her background, however, this is a subject that does need to be covered. Perhaps those with more experience will find this a useful opportunity to review plans they’ve already made. Taking a fresh look at your commitments is always worthwhile.

It’s hard to overstate the importance of career planning.



Employment as an Important Part of Your Education

Profit in a business is treated in two ways. Some is paid out to the owner or shareholders as dividends (return on their investment). Some of the profit, however, is retained by the business to provide funds for future growth. This portion of profit that is not paid out is called retained earnings. We need the concept of retained earnings to consider the real place of work experience in career development.

PROFITING FROM WORK EXPERIENCE

The most obvious profit you earn from work is the income paid to you by an employer. In the early years of your career, however, there are other kinds of benefits that are at least as important as income. The key to understanding this statement is the idea of a lifetime income. You'll obviously need income over your entire life span, but giving up some income now may gain you income (and, we ought to note, enjoyment, a sense of satisfaction, and independence) just a few years later. There is, then, a **job benefit mix** made up of both money and knowledge to be gained from any job. Knowledge gained today can be traded with an employer for income tomorrow: a better salary for a more qualified person. The decision to take a job that will add to your knowledge is thus a decision for retained earnings and for acquiring knowledge that you can use later. Many graduates choose their first job on the basis of salary without concern for the potential long-term advantages that one job may offer over another.

Every job, therefore, has to be weighed according to its benefit mix, not just in terms of the dollar income it provides. A part-time job at a retail store might seem attractive because it pays more than a job busing dishes does. However, if you think about the learning portion of the benefit mix and your total income, including what you learn, your decision may—and probably should—be for the job that will add to your professional education.

There is another important point to consider about retained earnings and the benefit mix. Often the only part-time jobs in the industry available to students are unskilled



Hospitality takes many forms including fast growing areas such as takeout and delivery. (Courtesy of Domino's Pizza, Inc.)

ones. Many people find these jobs dull, and they often pay poorly. If you think about these jobs in terms of their total income, however, you may change your perspective. Although the work of a busperson or a dishwasher may not be very challenging, you can improve your total profits from such a job by resolving to learn all you can about the operation. In this way, you can build your retained earnings—the bank of skills and knowledge that nobody can ever take away from you.

LEARNING STRATEGIES FOR WORK EXPERIENCE

When you go to work, regardless of the position you take, you can learn a good deal through careful observation. Look first at how the operation is organized. More specifically, look at both its **managerial organization** and its physical organization.

Managerial Organization. Who is the boss? Who reports to (or works directly with) him or her? Is the work divided into definite departments or sections? Is one person responsible for each department? To whom do the department staff members report? If you can answer these questions, you will have figured out the formal managerial organization of the operation. Indeed, most large companies will have an organization chart that you can look at. If your employer doesn't have such a chart, ask him or her to explain the organization to you. You'll be surprised at how helpful to hospitality management students most employers and supervisors are.

While you're thinking about organization, it is also important to notice the **informal organization**, also known as the social organization, of the group with which you are working. Which of the workers are influential? Who seem to be the informal leaders? Why? Most work groups are made up of cliques with informal leaders. After you identify this informal structure, ask yourself how management deals with it. Remember that someday the management of these informal organizations will be your challenge; in time, you will be helping to manage the organization, and you will need their cooperation. In the meantime, this firsthand experience will help you both in your studies and in sizing up the real world of work.

The Physical Plant. You can learn a great deal about a **physical plant** by making a simple drawing of your workplace, such as the one shown in Figure 1.3. On this drawing, identify the main work areas and major pieces of equipment. Then begin to note on it where you see problems resulting from cross traffic or bottlenecks. For example, if you're working in the back of the house, you can chart the flow of products from the back door (receiver) to storage and from there to preparation. You should also trace the flow of dishes. Dirty dishes come to the dish room window and go to the clean-supply area after washing. How are they transported to the line or to the

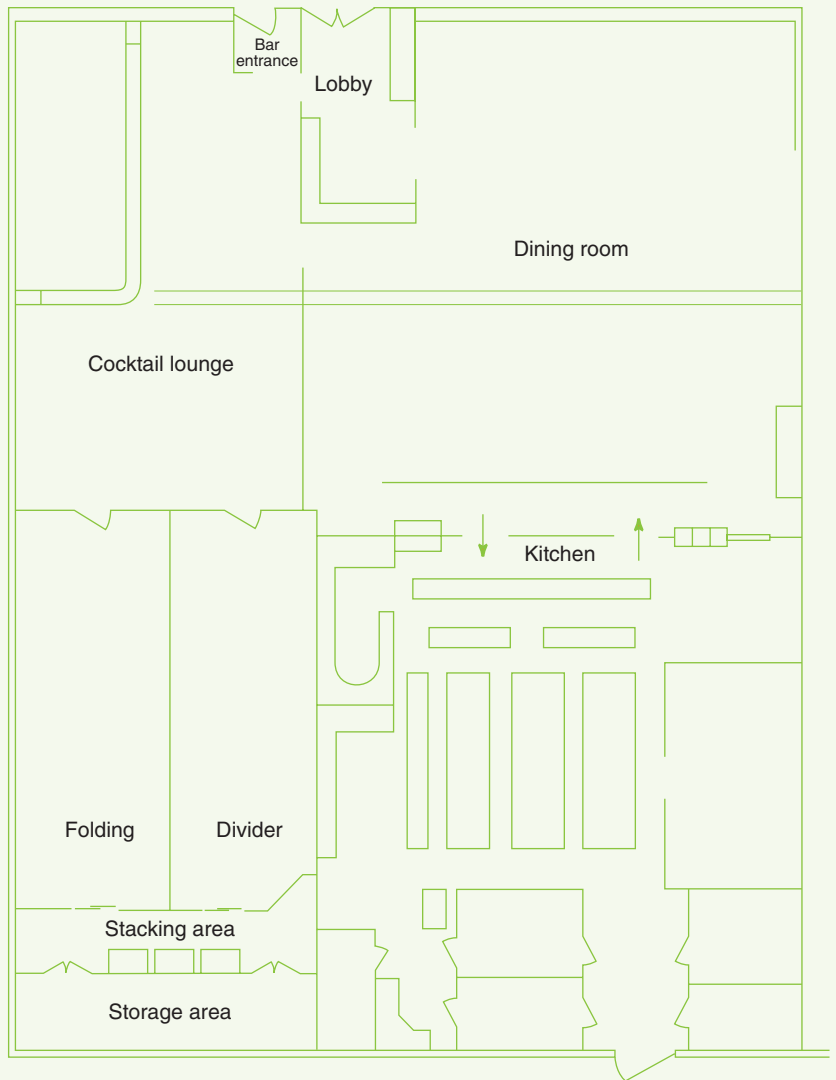


Figure 1.3
A sample layout.

pantry people for use in service? If you are working in the back of the house, you will be looking mostly at the flow of kitchen workers and dishes from the viewpoint of the kitchen, dish room, or pantry. A similar flow analysis of guests and servers (and plates) can also be made from the front of the house (i.e., the dining room).

A study of guest flow in a hotel lobby can also be educational. Trace the flow of room guests, restaurant guests, banquet department guests, and service employees arriving through the lobby. Where do you observe congestion?

These simple charting activities will give you some practical experience that will be useful for later courses in layout and design and in food service operations and

analysis and, more important, for decisions that you will make while on the job later in your career. Sometimes simple observations can lead to improvements in workflow patterns.

Learning from the Back of the House. Things to look for in the **back of the house** include how quality is ensured in food preparation, menu planning, recipes, cooking methods, supervision, and food holding. (How is lunch prepared in advance? How is it kept hot or cold? How long can food be held?) How are food costs controlled? (Are food portions standardized? Are they measured? How? How is access to storerooms controlled?) These all are points you'll consider a great deal in later courses. From the very beginning, however, you can collect information that is invaluable to your studies and your career.

Learning from the Front of the House. If you are busing dishes or working as a waiter, a waitress, or a server on a cafeteria line, you can learn a great deal about the operation from observing the guests or clients in the **front of the house**. Who are the customers, and what do they value? Peter Drucker called these the two central questions in determining what a business is and what it should be doing.³ Are the guests or clients satisfied? What, in particular, seems to please them?

In any job you take, your future work lies in managing others and serving people. Wherever you work and whatever you do, you can observe critically the management and guest or client relations of others. Ask yourself, "How would I have handled that problem? Is this an effective management style? In what other ways have I seen this problem handled?" Your development as a manager also means the development of a management style that suits you, and that is a job that will depend, in large part, on your personal experience.



Getting a Job

CAREERS IN
HOSPITALITY



Hospitality jobs can be obtained from several sources. For example, your college may maintain a placement office. Many hospitality management programs receive direct requests for part-time help. Some programs maintain a job bulletin board or file, and some even work with industry to provide internships. There are numerous Web sites devoted to matching employers and job seekers, such as www.hcareers.com. The help-wanted pages of your newspaper also may offer leads, as may your local employment service office. Sometimes, personal contacts established through your fellow students, your instructor, or your family or neighborhood will pay off. Networking is as effective as always, and some would suggest it is still the most important tool.



The New York, New York Casino in Las Vegas captures the feel of the original. (Courtesy of Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority.)

Networking occurs both formally and informally—often at industry functions, chapter meetings, and the like. Or you may find it necessary to “pound the pavement,” making personal appearances in places where you would like to work.

Some employers may arrange for hospitality management students to rotate through more than one position and even to assume some supervisory responsibility to help them gain broader experience.

GETTING IN THE DOOR

It is not enough just to ask for a job. Careful attention to your appearance is important, too. For an interview, this probably means a coat and tie for men, a conservative dress or suit for women. Neatness and cleanliness are the absolute minimum. (Neatness and cleanliness are, after all, major aspects of the hospitality product.) When you apply for or have an interview for a job, if you can, find out who the manager is; then, if the operation is not a large one, ask for him or her by name. In a larger organization, however, you’ll deal with a human-resources manager. The same basic rules of appearance apply, regardless of the organization’s size.

Don’t be afraid to check up on the status of your application. Here’s an old but worthwhile adage from personal selling: It takes three calls to make a sale. The number three isn’t magic, but a certain persistence—letting an employer know that you are interested—often will land you a job. Be sure to identify yourself as a hospitality management student, because this tells an employer that you will be interested in your work. Industry Practice Note 1.1 gives you a recruiter’s-eye view of the job placement process.

LEARNING ON THE JOB

Many hospitality managers report that they gained the most useful knowledge on the job, earlier in their careers, on their own time. Let's assume you're working as a dishwasher in the summer and your operation has a person assigned to prep work. You may be allowed to observe and then perhaps help out—as long as you do it on your own time. Your “profit” in such a situation is in the “retained earnings” of increased knowledge. Many job skills can be learned through observation and some unpaid practice: bartending (by a waitress or waiter), clerking on a front desk (by a bellperson), and even some cooking (by a dishwasher or cook's helper). With this kind of experience behind you, it may be possible to win the skilled job part time during the year or for the following summer.

One of the best student jobs, from a learning standpoint, is a relief job. Relief jobs are defined as those that require people to fill in on occasion (such as during a regular employee's day off, sickness, or vacation). The training for this fill-in work can teach you a good deal about every skill in your operation. Although these skills differ from the skills a manager uses, they are important for a manager to know, because the structure of the hospitality industry keeps most managers close to the operating level. Knowledge of necessary skills gives managers credibility among their employees, facilitates communication, and equips them to deal confidently with skilled employees. In fact, a good manager ought to be able to pitch in when employees get stuck.⁴ For these reasons, one phrase that should never pass your lips is “That's not my job.”

OTHER WAYS OF PROFITING FROM A JOB

In addition to income and knowledge, after-school part-time employment has other advantages. For example, your employer might have a full-time job for you upon graduation. This is particularly likely if your employer happens to be a fairly large firm or if you want to remain close to the area of your schooling.

You may choose to take a term or two off from school to pursue a particular interest or just to clarify your longer-term job goals. This does have the advantage of giving you more than “just a summer job” on your résumé—but be sure you don't let the work experience get in the way of acquiring the basic educational requirements for progress into management.

Wherever and for however long you work, remember that through your employment, you may make contacts that will help you after graduation. People with whom you have worked may be able to tell you of interesting opportunities or recommend you for a job.

Global Hospitality Note 1.1 offers some information you may find helpful if you think you might like to work overseas.

An Employer's View of Job Placement—Hyatt

What do you look for in a potential management recruit?

We look for someone who is really thinking about a “long term” career versus getting a good offer. We take pride in the number of managers who have been rewarded with career growth and opportunities. Another characteristic we evaluate is one’s energy level and service skills. We look that they have the desire and are able to align with the company service strategy.

What is your favorite question, the one you ask to get the best “read” on a person?

“Tell me what you have learned from past experiences and what you can offer Hyatt.” This is a very open question that allows us to hear more about one’s experiences. They have to be able to give specific points and apply them to a new career with Hyatt.

How much does Hyatt depend on formal testing and how much on personal interviews?

The personal interview will always outweigh the testing. However, we are experimenting with pre-employment assessments to ensure certain service characteristics are visible. We feel this is a great way to prescreen applicants and create a more focused interview.

What is the quickest way for an interviewee to take him- or herself out of the running?

Indecisiveness. We really want someone to have thought about a future career and have a general direction or goal. In addition, they must be flexible with relocation. A good hotelier is backed by a variety of experiences.

What skills do today’s recruits have that those ten years ago didn’t?

Hospitality today means much more than it did ten years ago. Today, recruits are introduced to other avenues such as Revenue Management, Retirement Communities, Casino Operations, Recreation, and



Employment at Graduation

Graduation probably seems a long way off right now, but you should already be considering strategies for finding a job when you finish your formal education. Clear goals formed now will direct your work experience plans and, to a lesser degree, the courses you take and the topics you emphasize within those courses. If you have not yet decided on a specific goal, this question deserves prompt but careful consideration



Development. Due to technology, recruits know how to get information about companies and opportunities (blogs, message boards, etc.).

What are some of the current opportunities for graduates of hospitality management programs in the lodging sector?

Lodging will always offer the traditional opportunities in Operations, Culinary, Facilities, Catering, Sales, Accounting, and Human Resources. The lodging sector offers much more today including Revenue Management, Spa Operations, and Development.

To what extent does your company employ the Internet in recruiting?

There is no other way to apply for a Hyatt job other than online. We deploy our training program and all career opportunities on Hyatt career sites. However, we do leverage job openings on other Internet sites, but we are selective. We prefer to post on a few large and some niche sites rather than posting on as many as possible. Everyone uses the Internet to find their next position.

Is there anything else that might be helpful for a hospitality management graduate to know before applying for a job with Hyatt?

Before applying to Hyatt, we ask that a graduate be open to movement [relocation]. We are focused on growth and differentiating our brands. Our current processes allow our associates movement among all Hyatt entities. There is opportunity for experience across all sectors of the industry including Classic Residence, Hyatt Place, and Summerfield Suites by Hyatt. This proves beneficial in building one's experiences.

Randy Goldberg, Executive Director Recruiting
Kristy Seidel, Manager of Staffing
Hyatt Hotels Corporation, February 7, 2006

as you continue your education. You still have plenty of time. Further, you will never know when or where a job opportunity may arise. For this reason alone, you should always keep your résumé up-to-date.

The rest of this section offers a kind of dry-run postgraduation placement procedure. From this distance, you can view the process objectively. When you come closer to graduation, you may find the subject a tense one: People worry about placement as graduation nears, even if they're quite sure of finding a job.

Career Opportunities Overseas

Companies hire North Americans to work in hospitality positions abroad for several reasons. Some countries do not have a large enough pool of trained managers. Moreover, particularly in responsible positions, a good fit with the rest of the firm's executive staff is important—and often easier for an American firm to achieve with someone from North America. The relevant operating experience may not be available to people living outside the United States and Canada. Many factors are considered, however, including familiarity with other cultures and the ability to speak multiple languages.

North American employees, however, are more expensive to hire for most companies than are local nationals because their salaries are usually supplemented by substantial expatriate benefits. But cost is not the only reason for hiring people from the host country. Local people have an understanding of the culture of the employees in a particular country, to say nothing of fluency in the language. Local managers, moreover, do not arouse the resentment that is directed at a foreign manager. For many of the same reasons, foreign-owned firms operating in the United States seek U.S. managers and supervisors in their U.S. operations.

A final point to consider is that many North American firms are using franchising as the vehicle for their overseas expansion. In this case, the franchisee is most often a local national whose local knowledge and contacts are invaluable to the franchisor. Not surprisingly, however, the franchisee is most likely to prefer people from his or her own culture if that is possible.

Although most positions in operations outside the United States are filled with people from those countries, many American companies offer significant opportunities for overseas employment. One of the first obstacles to immediate employment overseas is the immigration restrictions of other countries (similar to the restrictions enforced in the United States). Employment of foreign nationals is usually permitted only if the employer is able to show that the prospective employee has special skills that are not otherwise available in the country. It is not surprising, therefore, that many employees who do receive overseas assignments have been employed by the company for a few years and, thus, have significant operating experience.

Another major problem facing Americans who want to work overseas is a lack of language skills. In fact, many hospitality programs are now encouraging students to select the study of at least one foreign



Goals and Objectives: The Strategy of Job Placement

Most hospitality management students have three concerns. They all speak to the decision that is known as the **strategy of job placement**. First, many students are interested in such income issues as starting salary and the possibility of raises and bonuses.

Second, students are concerned with personal satisfaction. They wonder about opportunities for self-expression, creativity, initiative, and independence. This applies particularly to students coming from culinary schools who want to be able to



language as part of their curriculum. The ability to adapt to a different culture is also important, and probably the only way to get it is to have some experience of living abroad.

Summer or short-term work or study abroad not only gives students experience in living in another culture but also may offer them the opportunity to build up contacts that will help them in securing employment abroad upon graduation. Opportunities to study abroad are plentiful in summer programs offered by many hospitality programs. Some institutions also maintain exchange programs with institutions in foreign countries.

Obtaining work abroad is more difficult because work permits are required for a worker to be legally employed in a foreign country and these are usually not easy to come by. Some colleges and universities have begun to arrange for exchange programs for summer employment, but, unfortunately, many do not yet have such a program.

As a student seeking overseas work, you should begin with your own institution's placement office and international center. The consulate or embassy of the country you seek to work in may be aware of exchange programs or other means to obtain a work permit. Probably the best source of information is other students who have worked abroad. Talk with students at your own institution or those you meet at regional or national restaurant or hotel shows. They know the ropes and can give practical advice on getting jobs and what to expect in the way of pay and working conditions. Whether you are interested in overseas work as a career or not, work, travel, and study abroad can all be unique educational experiences that broaden your understanding of other cultures, increase your sophistication, and enhance your résumé.

Don't underestimate a recommendation. Even if your summer employer doesn't have a career opportunity for you, a favorable recommendation can give your career a big boost when you graduate. In addition, many employers may have contacts they will make available to you—perhaps friends of theirs who can offer interesting opportunities. The lesson here is that the record you make on the job now can help shape your career later.

immediately apply what they have learned. Although few starting jobs offer a great deal of independence, some types of work (e.g., employment with a franchising company) can lead quite rapidly to independent ownership. Students also want to know about the number of hours they'll be investing in their work. Many companies expect long hours, especially from junior management. Other sectors, especially on-site operations, make more modest demands (but may offer more modest prospects for advancement).

Third, many students, particularly in health care food service, want to achieve such professional goals as competence as a registered dietician or a dietetic technician. Professional goals in the commercial sector are clearly associated with developing a topflight reputation as an operator.

These three sets of interests are obviously related; for example, most personal goals include the elements of income, satisfaction, and professional status. Although it may be too early to set definite goals, it is not too early to begin evaluating these elements. From the three concerns we've just discussed, the following are five elements of the strategy of job placement for your consideration:

- 1. Income.** The place to begin your analysis is with the issue of survival. How much will you require to meet your financial needs? If your income needs are modest, you may decide to forgo luxuries to take a lower-paying job that offers superior training. Thus, you would make an investment in retained earnings—the knowledge you hope someday to trade for more income, security, and job satisfaction.
- 2. Professional status.** Whether your goal is professional certification (as a registered dietitian, for example) or a reputation as a topflight hotelier or restaurateur, you should consider the job benefit mix. In this case, you may choose to accept a lower income (but one on which you can live and in line with what such jobs pay in your region). Although you shouldn't be indifferent to income, you'll want to focus principally on what the job can teach you.
- 3. Evaluating an employer.** Students who make snap judgments about a company and act aggressively during an interview often offend potential employers, who, after all, see the interview as an occasion to evaluate a graduating class. Nevertheless, in a quiet way, you should learn about the company's commitment to its employees, often evident through its employee turnover rates and its focus on training. For instance, you might want to explore whether it has a formal training program. If not, how does it translate its entry-level jobs into learning experiences? (Inquiries directed to your acquaintances and the younger management people can help you determine how the company really scores in these areas. Recent graduates from the same hospitality program as yours are good sources of information.) Because training beyond the entry-level basics requires responsibility and access to promotion, you will want to know about the opportunities for advancement. Finally, you need to evaluate the company's operations. Are they quality operations? Can you be proud to work there? If the quality of the facility, the food or the service is consistently poor, can you help improve things? Or will you be misled into learning the wrong way to do things? A final note with regard to evaluating employers who may be independent operators: Sometimes it can be more difficult to research a small business. In this case, it might be worth asking around the local business community to find out what kind of reputation the prospective employer has.
- 4. Determining potential job satisfaction.** Some students study hospitality management only to discover that their real love is food preparation. Such students may decide, late in their student careers, to seek a job that provides skill training

in food preparation. Other students may decide they need a high income immediately (to pay off debts or to do some traveling, for example). These students may decide to trade the skills they have acquired in their work experiences to gain a high income for a year or two as a server in a topflight operation. Such a goal is highly personal but perfectly reasonable. The key is to form a goal and keep moving toward it. The student who wants eventually to own an operation will probably have to postpone his or her goal while developing the management skills and reputation necessary to attract the needed financial backing.

5. Accepting skilled jobs. Students sometimes accept skilled jobs rather than management jobs because that is all they can find. This happens quite often, especially during a period of recession. Younger students, too, are prone to suffer from this problem for a year or two, as are students who choose to live and work in small communities. The concept of retained earnings provides the key to riding out these periods. Learn as much as you can and don't abandon your goals.

A final word is in order on goals, priorities, and opportunities. Hospitality students' preferences for work upon graduation are summarized in Table 1.1. Hotels are clearly the favored sector of the hospitality industry, and luxury operations are preferred over midmarket or midscale operations among this sample of students. Interestingly, QSR and contract and noncommercial food service are at the bottom of the list. There is an old saying, *De gustibus non disputandum est* (In tastes, there is no disputing), and that certainly should apply to job preferences. Still, the researchers speak of "how fulfilling and rewarding careers in the QSR industry can be" and suggest that "perhaps more than any other [this segment] provides an opportunity for hospitality students to fast-track to the top." On the other hand, later in this text, we will point out that although work in on-site management is not any easier, its hours are more regular and its pace more predictable. In short, there are many excellent career opportunities in the food service industry in general, and it is even better in some specific segments.

TABLE 1.1	
Hospitality Graduates' Career Preferences Ranked in Order of Preference	
RANK	INDUSTRY SEGMENT
1	Luxury hotels
2	Clubs
3	Fine dining/upscale restaurants
4	Midmarket hotels
5	Contract/noncommercial food service
6	Midscale/family restaurants
7	Economy hotels
8	Quick-service restaurants

Source: Robert H. Woods, Seonghee Cho, and Michael P. Sciarini, unpublished manuscript, Michigan State University, 2003.

Luxury hotels, private clubs and fine-dining restaurants are undoubtedly more glamorous than many other operations—or at least seem so—and it does appear that they are attracting the greatest interest from graduates as applicants. In the supply-demand equation, they have a plentiful supply of applicants, and yet they are relatively smaller sectors of hospitality employment. That is to say, they have less demand for employees than many other sectors. In economics, you may recall, a large supply met by a modest demand is generally expected to yield a lower price. Of course, there are no dollar signs on job satisfaction, and these are highly personal choices. Still, the truth is that no job offers everything. You have to decide what your highest priorities are and then choose the opportunity that suits you best. If career advancement, achieving a substantial income, and gaining responsibility—or perhaps just having a manageable work life—are priorities for you, you may want to consider at least interviewing with some of the companies that are on the bottom of everybody else's list.

The Outlook for Hospitality

Over the past two generations, the hospitality industry has evolved to accommodate explosive growth, radically changing consumer demand, and a substantially different social and economic environment. We will examine some of the basic forces driving these changes in Chapter 2. The following brief summary points will alert you to some of the key trends discussed in the balance of this text. We can begin with trends closest to the industry and move outward to broader societal developments. Also, no hospitality text can ignore the short-term and long-term effects of September 11, 2001.

THE EFFECTS OF SEPTEMBER 11, 2001

The effects of the terrorist attacks in the United States on September 11, 2001, on all aspects of life have been examined extensively. Certain high-profile hospitality programs,

The outlook for the hospitality industry includes the continued growth of the casual dining segment. (Courtesy of Mimi's Café.)



including those at Johnson and Wales University and Cornell University, have hosted panel discussions and/or conducted studies on the impact that the day had on the industry. Certainly, there have been significant effects, both short-term and long-term, on the hospitality and tourism industries. These effects have ranged from the initial reaction during which many people in North America (and elsewhere) stopped traveling anywhere for any reason to traveling sporadically and finally to travel patterns reaching some level of normalcy. The airlines were perhaps the most affected industry of all (this is discussed much further in Chapter 13). The effects are sure to be felt for a long time to come, but travel, accommodation, and food service have all reached activity levels equal to those prior to September 11. Discussions of the impact of that day will be found throughout the chapters that follow. The text also discusses effects that other terrorist attacks have had (such as in Madrid, London, and Bali) as well as recent natural disasters in Asia.

POLARIZATION IN HOSPITALITY SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS

Hospitality companies are grouping themselves, to a very large extent, either as limited-service organizations or as service-intensive operations. In lodging, although there are price point divisions—budget, economy, midscale, upscale, and upper upscale—the most basic division is between limited-service and full-service properties. In later chapters, we will be concerned with the possibility of overbuilding and future excess capacity in all but the luxury and extended-stay segments of lodging.

In food service, simpler operations specializing in off-premise service to guests—take-out, drive-through, and delivery—have contributed greatly to the growth in restaurant sales in recent years. Quick-service, too, continues its healthy growth trend. Table service restaurant growth in the more economical family restaurant segment has flattened, but within the table service group a more service-intensive format—casual restaurants—has shown healthy growth.

Restaurants and hotels, then, are tailoring themselves to specialized markets, a practice often referred to as target marketing.

ACCELERATING COMPETITION

One of the major reasons that hotels, restaurants, and other hospitality organizations are increasingly targeting specific market segments is that in most markets, there is more than enough capacity to go around. Competition is likely to be even tougher in the years ahead. In food service, operators are adapting their operations by opening new restaurants and bringing them closer to the customer, that is, making them more convenient. They are also creating smaller prototypes. Lodging capacity, as we have already noted, offers a highly competitive outlook for all but the luxury sector (and even this is changing). The growth in competition makes tightly controlled operations especially important to survival. Competition also exists in the battle for customers in the convention,



Service is becoming the differentiating factor in all segments of hospitality and tourism. (Courtesy of Southwest Airlines.)

resort, and tourist destinations. Competition is no longer just limited to domestic competition, either. International competition has become a concern in some markets. We will consider those issues for restaurants in Chapter 6 and for hotels in Chapter 12.

SERVICE IS THE DIFFERENCE

As competing firms expand their menus and amenities and dress up their operations, all operations at a given price level tend to become more like one another. The crucial differentiation becomes service—usually in the form of personal service. Understanding service and how to manage it is so vitally important that the last chapter of this book is devoted to it. In the world of today and tomorrow, service will be the difference between barely surviving (or worse) and achieving success.

VALUE CONSCIOUSNESS

An educated, sophisticated customer base is placing increasing emphasis on the value of goods or services received in relation to the price paid in the marketplace. This trend probably originates in the baby boom generation and has continued with subsequent

generations. The best-educated generation in history, arguably the baby boomers, has become a generation of careful shoppers. With an intensely competitive industry vying to serve them, consumers are in a position to demand good value for their money. Any discussion of value should also include mention of time and how personal time is valued (as it becomes more precious). For this reason, consumers often strive to balance the price they are willing to pay with a trade-off such as time saved. For example, this helps to partially explain the increasing popularity of the “new” fast-casual dining segment.

TECHNOLOGY

Another driving force the industry has wrestled with for some years is the explosion of technology. Technology has already changed the way work is done in operations through increased automation and computerization. Even more fundamental, however, are the changes in marketing and management made possible by technological advances. Lodging marketing, already shaped by a global computerized reservation network, has been reinvented, so to speak, as the Internet continues to expand the communication capacity of operators, their competitors, and the guest. Restaurants, too, are maintaining Web sites, many of which are interactive rather than simply informational. With greatly improved communication and computerized financial and operational reporting, the hierarchy of organizations is collapsing and a flatter organization structure is emerging.

EMPOWERMENT

As a direct result of the reduced number of middle managers, employees and managers at all levels are being asked to assume more responsibility. For example, they are being empowered to solve many of the guest's service problems on the spot. This is an outgrowth not only of improved communication but of a more educated generation of employees. Bright, well-educated people want to do their own problem solving—and generally are able to do so effectively.

DIVERSITY

The face of North America is changing. Whereas the white male has always been the dominant force in the labor market, the majority of people entering the workforce for the foreseeable future will be women and minorities such as African Americans, Hispanics, and Asians. Managers will need a broad background and an openness to many kinds of people and cultures to prosper in the time ahead.

CONCERN WITH SECURITY

The results of September 11 and other more recent terrorist attacks have only served to underscore the value that travelers put on their personal safety and security. As the

perceived incidence of violence increases, people worry about their personal security—and so we see a proliferation of private security forces in hotels and restaurants, marshals on airplanes and other public places, as well as high-tech security measures such as keyless electronic locks in hotel rooms. Security has become a commodity that some people are willing to pay for—and that hospitality establishments must provide. In some places in the world (such as Israel), security is everywhere, even in the local supermarkets.

CONCERN WITH FOOD SAFETY AND SANITATION

The incidence of food-borne illness has increased as the food service system has become more complex and the number of operations has expanded. One case of food poisoning can seriously injure a restaurant's reputation. More than one can endanger an operation's survival. The level of food safety demanded by consumers and regulatory agencies alike has escalated in the light of recent cases of food poisoning. That escalation will continue in the years ahead.

GLOBALIZATION

In a sense, this has already become old news. With the falling of trade barriers such as that brought on by the North American Free Trade Agreement and the European Community, borders have become less important. The ease of financial transactions and information flow means that some of the largest "U.S. firms" are owned abroad—and that U.S. firms are major players overseas as well. Holiday Inn, for example, is owned by a British company, and Motel 6 by a French firm. On the other hand, McDonald's is the largest restaurant chain in Europe and has restaurants in more countries than any other food service company in the world (currently at 121 and counting). Forecasters are expecting tremendous growth opportunities in both China and India, which are positioned to greatly influence global commerce in the coming years. With all of the dynamism that the hospitality industry offers, an exciting future beckons as you begin this study of the industry and what makes it tick.



Summary

As we have seen, the hospitality industry includes hotels and restaurants, as well as many other types of institutions that offer shelter and/or food (and entertainment, etc.) to people away from home. A manager in the hospitality industry, therefore, must keep in mind the following three objectives: (1) making the guest welcome personally, (2) making things work for the guest, and (3) making sure that the operation will continue to provide service and meet its budget.

We mentioned the many reasons for studying in a hospitality management or culinary management program, including past experiences working in the field, interests in the field, and ambitions in the field.

We also discussed the meaning of work and how to get the most from a job, including weighing both retained earnings and the job benefit mix. We pointed out that in the hospitality industry, you can learn a lot from studying the physical plant and from how the front and the back of the house are managed.

We then turned to ways to get a job—including always having a résumé ready and preparing for an interview—and how to gain the most from whatever job you do find. We also talked about what you should consider in regard to a more permanent job: income, professional status, your employer, potential job satisfaction, and accepting an interim less-skilled job. We noted as well that supply and demand work in the hospitality job market as they do elsewhere, suggesting that what is most popular in terms of employment may not necessarily translate into the best opportunity.

Finally, we began our continuing discussion of the outlook for the hospitality industry, which we found to be bright but full of change and competition.

Key Words and Concepts

Hospitality

Manager's role

Profit

Knowledge worker

Hospitality industry

Work as a vocation

Work experience

Job benefit mix

Managerial organization

Informal organization

Physical plant

Back of the house

Front of the house

Strategy of job placement

Review Questions

1. What kinds of institutions or establishments does the hospitality industry include besides hotels and restaurants?
2. What is the role of a manager in the hospitality industry?
3. Why did you choose to study in a hospitality management program? What alternatives were available to you?
4. What are some of the reasons that people work?
5. What does the concept of retained earnings mean as it relates to a career?
6. Describe the concept of the job benefit mix. Give examples from your experience or from that of your classmates.

7. What are some things to observe in both the front of the house and the back of the house in the early stages of your career?
8. What kinds of things can you learn from a part-time (or summer) job that are not strictly part of the job?
9. What are three principal concerns in regard to a job after graduation?
10. What are the five elements of the strategy of job placement?

Internet Exercises

1. Site name: Résumés and Cover Letters

URL: www.wku.edu/~hrtm/resumes.htm

Background information: This site provides a listing of Internet resources for writing résumés and cover letters.

Exercises:

- a. Surf the résumé and cover letter Web sites for information on writing résumés and cover letters. Write a simple résumé and cover letter for an entry-level hotel, restaurant or tourism position for which you are interested and qualified. Use only experience that you have already acquired.
- b. After writing the résumé and cover letter, describe the experiences you will need to acquire in the future to obtain an entry-level management position in the hospitality industry.

2. Site name: Hotel, Restaurant and Tourism Management Career Opportunities

URL: www.wku.edu/~hrtm/hrtmjjobs.htm

Background information: This site is a launch pad for hospitality management career Web sites. The site provides links to generic hospitality Web sites such as HCareers.com, HospitalityLink.com, and HospitalityJobOnline.com as well as Web sites that specialize in hotels, food service/restaurants, casinos, and travel.

Exercises:

- a. Explore at least two of the Web sites indicated above. Look through the job opportunities in your area of interest.
 - i. What job opportunities are available for entry-level management positions (recent graduates of a hospitality management program)?
 - ii. Are there abundant job opportunities in a location where you would like to be after graduation?
- b. Which support/career services does the Web site provide candidates to assist them with their job search (for example: résumé, cover letter, electronic résumé help, etc.)?
- c. Explore the “Career Services” Web site at the college or university you are currently attending.

- i. What types of services does your career services office offer to students (résumé and cover letters, job search assistance, etc.)?
- ii. Is there a person in your career services office who has been specifically designated to assist hospitality management students? If so, what is the name of this person?
- iii. Does the career services office hold job/career fairs for students on your campus? If so, when are these job fairs typically held and do they include potential hospitality employers as exhibitors?
- iv. Does your career services office maintain a database of current job opportunities for students? If so, how do they make this information available to students?

3. Site name: Council on International Educational Exchange

URL: <http://www.ciee.org/>

Background information: Study abroad or work abroad opportunities—CIEE provides quality programs and services.

Site name: Hospitality Internships Abroad

URL: www.internabroad.com/listings.cfm/interntypeID/110

Background information: GoAbroad.com was launched to fill an information void in the area of international student travel. GoAbroad.com was conceptualized to provide a one-stop information center for students wishing to travel internationally. The site was created to link prospective travelers with organizations providing international opportunities.

Site name: Idealist.org

URL: www.idealist.org/

Background information: Search for worldwide internship opportunities by location, dates, and required skills.

Exercises:

- a. Browse through all three Web sites and describe the countries that are represented and the hospitality job opportunities available on each Web site.
- b. Choose an international internship Web site and select an internship that you might be interested in pursuing. Describe the benefits and drawbacks of pursuing an international internship.

Notes

1. Peter F. Drucker, *The Age of Discontinuity* (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), p. 264.
2. *Work in America* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1973), p. 3.
3. Peter F. Drucker, *Management: Tasks, Responsibilities, Practices* (New York: Harper & Row, 1974), pp. 80–86.
4. If they get stuck too often, of course, management must find out why and correct the problem. If a manager has to pitch in frequently, it can be a sign of an inefficient organization.