



## Hospitality Graduate Survey Results 2010

LUZERN, SWITZERLAND, August 2010, by Jeff Ross, Managing Director, Hospitality Graduate Recruitment

As the hospitality industry continues its steady emergence internationally from recession, graduate recruitment is a hot topic amongst the world's big hotel groups, as well as many independent operators. The reason? CASH – what else?!

Managing costs and payroll is more important than ever during this sensitive trading period, and many owners and operators are seizing the chance to employ interns and graduates, as a means of minimizing their payroll expense, for maximum return. Smart thinking, especially since there is no shortage currently of qualified, multi-lingual, motivated candidates seeking jobs for 2010 and into 2011.

HGR ([www.h-g-r.com](http://www.h-g-r.com)) is a Swiss-based recruitment company, specialized only in hospitality graduate recruitment. Established in 2004, HGR are experts in this niche. A recent hospitality graduate survey was conducted by HGR in June 2010 (based upon a sample of 1000 recent international hospitality graduates from 50 different hotel schools), with some interesting sample results summarized below.

A) When asked to rank the factors of greatest importance when choosing a future employer, participants selected the following:

- 1 – Career development opportunities
- 2 – Brand/perception of (quality) employer
- 3 – Training provided by employer
- 4 – The opportunity to obtain a role that offers a level of responsibility
- 5 – Remuneration

Some employers may be surprised to see that remuneration was the factor of least importance to fresh graduates. It was absolutely conclusive that graduates were much more focused on finding a job and employer that will offer training and career development.

B) When asked to choose the level of role that they felt was most suitable to their experience (at time of graduation), participants responded as follows:

- 33% - supervisory level
- 28% - entry level
- 21% - trainee level
- 18% - management level

It has always been a contentious issue, that graduate expectations are highly inflated versus their experience. These results perhaps show a more realistic alignment of expectations today.



C) When asked to rank the geographical area of interest (by continent) for their first role after graduation, participants responded as follows:

- 45% - Europe
- 22% - US & Canada
- 18% - Asia
- 8% - Middle East
- 7% - South America

These results throw up a challenge to the industry, especially for the emerging markets (predominantly Asia and Middle East) that are recruiting en masse, where currently hospitality graduates still have preference for the more 'traditional' geographical regions. Equally, this greatly restricts graduates, since opportunities are currently far fewer in Europe and US & Canada. Onus must be placed upon Asia and the Middle East to more aggressively and effectively market their destinations to the global hotel school population. Moreover, hotel schools internationally must gain a better grasp of the employment opportunities and intricacies of these emerging markets.

D) Participants were asked if they were currently considering further education rather than employment.

- 78% - No
- 22% - Yes

E) Participants were asked if they were currently considering employment out with of the hospitality sector.

- 55% - No
- 45% - Yes

This is a hugely worrying statistic. Retention of graduates in the hospitality industry has always been an important topic, and there is no easy solution. But with the global skills shortage that is still widely talked about in our industry, something needs to be done in order to catch these 45% that are potentially going to slip through the hospitality net.

F) Participants were asked how they would rate the general level and quality of response from international hospitality employers to job applications that they had made in the last 6 months.

- Excellent – 22%
- Good – 12%
- Acceptable – 15%
- Not good – 9%
- Unacceptable – 25%
- No response received – 17%



There exists massive dissatisfaction from graduate job seekers about the quality and low level of responses that are received to their applications. This is no new or small topic. Automated talent management IT systems probably contribute to this feedback, where automated responses are becoming the norm. HGR sympathizes with both parties on this topic, and is well experienced on seeing the often poor quality of graduate application, but equally on witnessing the poor or non-existent employer response to job applications. One thing is clear though; if the industry is to better retain the 45% of graduates that are considering leaving the industry, then response rates and procedures to processing job applications must be dramatically improved.

G) When asked to select the department of interest for their first role (at time of graduation), participants responded as follows:

- 1 – Food and beverage
- 2 – Front office
- 3 – Sales and marketing (including events)
- 4 – Human resources
- 5 – Finance
- 6 – Culinary
- 7 – Housekeeping

Probably no big surprises there, and as always, lack of kitchen applications remains an issue in the hospitality industry. Perhaps one contradiction to the misperception that graduates are only interested in administration or back office roles is the prevalence of desire to enter both the food and beverage and front office departments. This is encouraging.

#### **ABOUT HOSPITALITY GRADUATE RECRUITMENT ([WWW.H-G-R.COM](http://www.h-g-r.com))**

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Visit [www.h-g-r.com](http://www.h-g-r.com) for more information or contact Jeff N Ross, Managing Director, Hospitality Graduate Recruitment, Luzern, Switzerland, [jeff@h-g-r.com](mailto:jeff@h-g-r.com)