
Recruiting Hospitality Graduates

INTRODUCTION

There are literally thousands of hotel schools and universities globally that offer a diverse range of hospitality-related qualifications. Some are internationally recognised educational 'brands', others are smaller and more localized products. Almost all carry a common objective of wanting their students to work in the hospitality industry upon graduation, and most strive to place their undergraduates in training placements periodically throughout their course. Neither is an easy objective to fulfill, although in the current global hospitality trading environment it is in theory easier than it has been at any point over the last four years.

HOSPITALITY GRADUATE AND UNDERGRADUATE EXPECTATIONS

One of the most difficult obstacles to be overcome (on both the part of the graduate and the employer) is matching the needs and expectations of the applicant to a potential company and role. There is a considerable diversity in terms of the resources that hotel schools possess in order to manage the whole area of undergraduate internships and graduate careers, and to some extent it could be argued that this correlates to how realistic the undergraduate interns and graduates/alumni are in terms of the job or training they are about to undertake. For example some schools place greater emphasis than others on the application process, overall learning objectives of the students, and reflective feedback following an internship, while others attach less significance and structure to this important process.

It is very important to be as clear as one can possibly be in terms of stipulating the key responsibilities and accountabilities of any potential job role, and this is especially the case within the realm of graduate and undergraduate recruitment. In general terms, and it is very hard not to generalize, undergraduates seek a training placement which offers them clearly defined learning outcomes (normally through operational exposure to the department for which they apply), and the chance to experience and learn from a working environment which is new to them. It could be argued that there is a misconception that interns are typically wanting to 'run before they can walk', however the author is of the view that as long as the undergraduate expectations are discussed and defined, then an operational, 'hands on' internship is quite satisfactory to both parties, and ultimately this basic operational experience is critical to their future career.

Graduate recruitment is a little more complex, whereby typically there is less support and resource allocation from the educational establishment and, of course, much more diversity of experience within the applicant database. Typically the hospitality graduate is seeking to find a role and company which will capitalize upon their previous vocational experience, and allow the opportunity to put into practice some of the theoretical and 'management' learning that they have developed during the attainment of their qualification. This is a very competitive market place, with so many graduates joining the employment market every 6 or 12 months, and there exists a high frustration level amongst graduates when they perceive that such roles are not widely available.

MATCHING EXPECTATIONS FROM THE EMPLOYER'S PERSPECTIVE

Tapping into the network of graduate recruitment is very important for most hospitality businesses, especially those that run at high occupancy, those that are expanding or have expansion strategies, those that cater for a very international clientele, or those that have seasonal business patterns.

It is no easy feat to match the employer's recruitment needs and strategy to the graduate job and training seekers. In order to be successful at this, the following (and by no means exhaustive) points should be considered:

the budget for graduate and undergraduate salaries;
market analysis of where these salaries and benefits should be pitched;
the need for well defined job descriptions and personal specifications for graduate and undergraduate roles;
the exact requirements and expectations of the potential employee;
the quality of the induction/training that the employee will receive;
reasonable employer expectations of the employee's likely output, and;
the process and strategy for recruiting such employees and finding the 'cream of the crop'.

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

Luzern-based recruitment company Hospitality Graduate Recruitment (h-g-r) specializes in this niche market. Working with over 60 hotel schools and universities globally, it helps hospitality employers to find and recruit graduates and undergraduates via its industry leading database website www.h-g-r.com at very low cost. With no recruitment fees, just the initial small membership fee, it could well be the ideal solution for your hospitality business to streamline its graduate and undergraduate recruitment strategy.

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