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Tips And Resource for the Travel Industry to Develop Workforce and Employee Hiring: Creative Findings from Other Resources

Many potential candidates do not see the value of working in Hospitality & Tourism, because they view the industry as low paying menial jobs that offer little pay off. We know this is far from the truth! The travel industry is for people who are passionate about sharing experiences. From introducing new cuisines, creating once-in-a-lifetime itineraries, or helping clients celebrate a special occasion, no two days are alike- but every day will create an impact on the customer's life. There are incredible opportunities in this ever-evolving sector where candidates can choose their own path!

The industry needs to reimagine how we position ourselves and use creative hiring practices to help bring the fun and fulfilling aspects of our industry into the spotlight! With such varied opportunities, a graduate from any major can find a path in our industry or a candidate can work their way up from the bottom. We offer creative, inspiring, social opportunities that any candidate can choose their own career path within!

Sell your Company to the Candidates!

A job flyer should not only include what the company is looking for in a candidate, but what a candidate is looking for in a company. Just as you would when scouting out potential clients, give potential candidates incentives. Why should this candidate want to work for your company? What opportunities or incentives come with the job title listed?

It is important to make the job description enticing to the prospects. Do you offer any unique job perks, such as travel opportunities, schedule flexibility, or discounts? What makes your job listing stand out from the rest? (U.S. Travel Association).

Combat Competition

A competitive salary is subjective to where the candidate is located. Combat local competition with other hiring companies or small candidate pools by expanding your business towards the virtual world- where you are less bound by the limitations of geography. By hiring remote workers, you have tapped into a whole new market of potential candidates (Assante, The Group Travel Leader).

Expanding a business to include remote employment can be viewed as an intimidating challenge. It is important for remote staff to feel just as involved as their on-site counterparts. To create an office-like atmosphere, coordinate consistent check-ins and touch base meetings. If possible, encourage staff to always use their cameras during these calls to maintain a more personable environment.



Say Goodbye to Formal Interviews!

The days of formal interviews are in the past. Networking and social situations are the best way to learn about a potential candidate, serving as an effective replacement to old-fashioned formalized interviews. By getting to know someone's personality and behavior you can learn what their needs are and how they may fit into your team. Have you ever heard a story of a candidate making jokes with a stranger at a buffet, only to land themselves the most coveted internship available that day? Candidates are looking for workplaces that align with their own personal goals and personality, just as much as employers are looking for a candidate that can both bring the skillset but also mix cohesively with their team.

By hosting employment networking events and reaching out to people outside of the community, potential candidates can build those connections and start to see firsthand the fun side of the industry!

Get the ball rolling with these ideas to encourage candidates to mix with employees:

- Host a gathering where all candidates who are applying for positions are together with members of your team or companies looking to hire.
- People can be partnered or find each other through color coding based on their position in the hiring company and the position types the person is applying for.
- Speed networking events. Questions can be predetermined in advance and there can be tabletops where interactive games highlight specific skills, so partners and candidates get to know each other and how they may work together.
- Information table with signups to learn more to track who is interested in what fields and positions.

Make the event as accessible as possible:

- Include food and beverage so no one is getting hangry and has a reason to leave.
- Schedule the event at an hour that your candidates and employees will be able to attend.
- If you are hiring for roles in front of house, make sure your serving staff have time to connect with attendees.
- Set a dress code so no one comes over or under dressed and feels out of place.
- Make certain tasks optional – this will also help you get a very quick idea of who is spontaneous, motivated, extroverted, and willing to learn more.

Keep your eyes on the goal – we are here to fill open positions by educating candidates on the benefits of our industry:

- Include a quick presentation from HR or a looped video about the career paths available in your business to keep your candidates focused.
- Share ways for candidates in attendance to easily apply for positions.
- Make candidates aware of the opportunities in the industry, they might be the right fit for a different pathway.



Clarity is Key/ Room for Growth

Positive work performance cannot lead to the employee having a bigger burden to carry without appropriate reward (BCG Global). Convey a clear guide of what is expected for the candidate to receive raises and bonuses. This includes implementing a concrete employee review schedule. Whether you hold it semiannually or annually is up to you and your company, as long as it is consistent, and the candidate knows the potential for advancement is there. This will not only position your company as more desirable for potential candidates, but it will also help with employee retention in the long run.

We recommend drafting a general template of employee expectations and goals that is then customized for each new hire based on their role within the company. Reviewing this during the employee's orientation creates a concrete foundation for the employee to reflect on moving forward, to assure they are capturing all components that are expected of them to effectively perform their role. This document can then be referenced during all the following employee reviews, to properly judge how the employee has adapted to their responsibilities.

Two Way Street

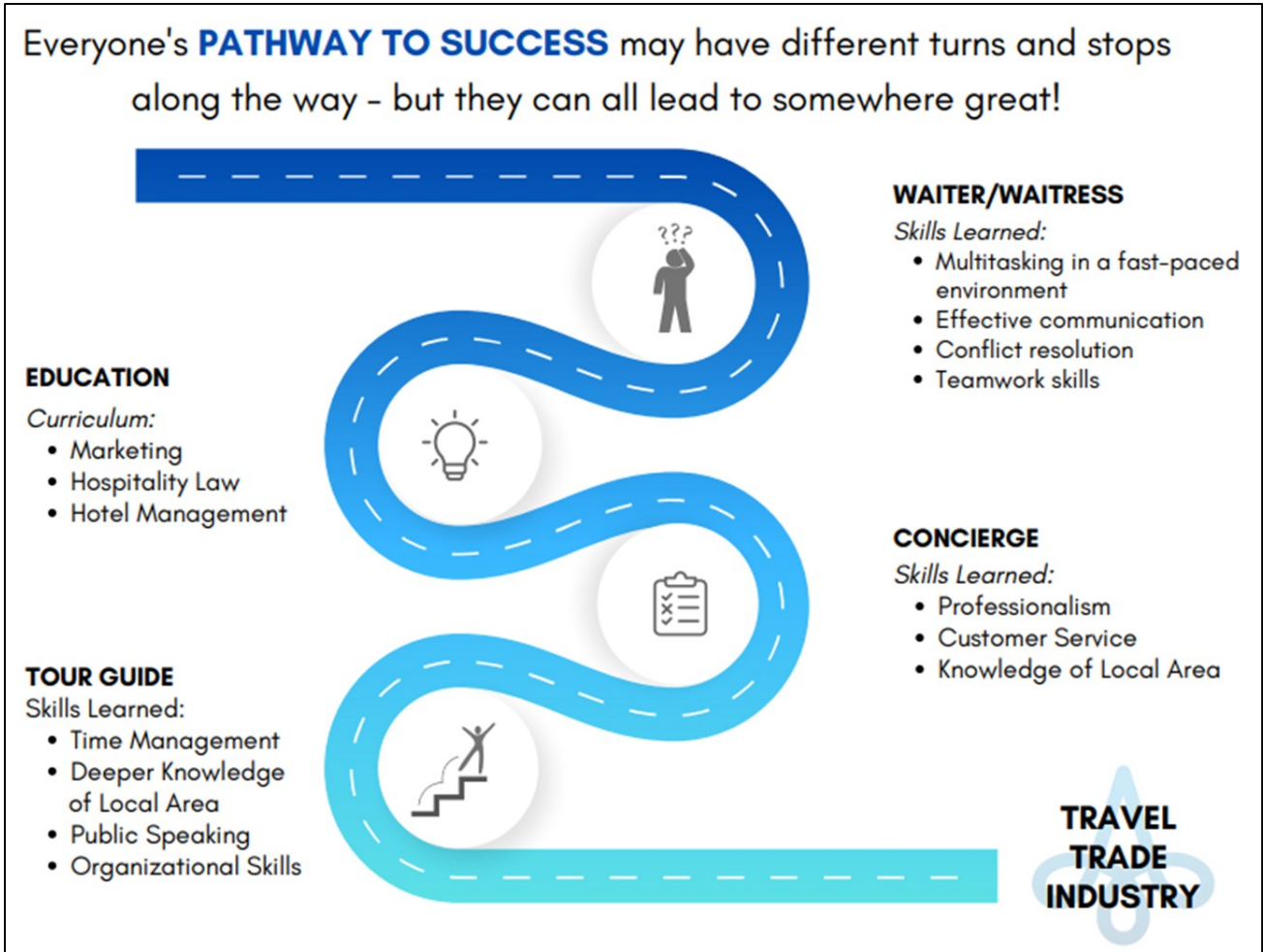
For a successful dynamic, the employer must create a proper balance where the employee feels that they are a part of a two-way street. What the employer provides should exceed just monetary exchange. Candidates today are looking for empowerment, recognition, and a positive workplace culture (Curran, NUI Galway). They do not want to just clock in and out, they want to feel a part of something. For a company to successfully create an uplifting environment, they need to be proactive.

First impressions matter. By creating an effective onboarding process, new employees can feel welcome and well-guided, thus laying the groundwork for a prosperous employment. At the end of the onboarding process, be sure to check in on the employee to determine if they have settled comfortably into their new position and if they could use any additional tools to maximize their success.

It can be difficult to gauge how your work environment is perceived by others. One idea to consider is creating a standardized exit survey for employees who are leaving the company. To maximize honesty and hindsight, it may be more effective to implement it a few weeks after their final day. Properly analyzing this feedback can shed light on any employee retention issues or any other internal challenges faced. Keep in mind, the exit survey must be reviewed without any bias or personal feelings, otherwise, it will hold very little weight. To be able to grow, we must accept constructive criticism.

Following Through

Once you have attracted top minds to accept a role within your company, it is important to follow through on all assurances made during the hiring process. Empty promises will only lead to employee frustration, greasing the wheel of the rotating door of poor employee retention and empty positions that we want to lock shut!



According to both the 2021 and 2022 Workforce Development Survey by The Business Council and New York State Department of Labor, **the overwhelming reason for a position being difficult to fill is due to a lack of qualified candidates** (The Business Council et al., 2022). This issue is more persistent than any following reason, even including monetary factors.

And to clarify, the main issue is not that there is a lack of candidates, but a lack of *qualified* candidates, which is of course, a subjective term. It is important to analyze what a candidate being qualified means to you and your company, and with a seemingly drier-than-average labor pool, maybe it is time to **redefine what we consider qualified** altogether. Let's consider **shifting our thinking to skill based**, instead of title based. *Why?* Because cannot change the labor pool available, but we can adjust our guidelines to view the candidates from a different perspective and remember that different backgrounds can still breed the same skills required to succeed!



Not everyone has a career path that leads them on a straight trajectory to the leisure and hospitality industry, but courses and college degrees of all kinds gain students skills that are transferrable to working in tourism! In our above infographic, we have laid out examples of different courses that are required for many associate and bachelor's degrees, that help lay a strong foundation of invaluable skills for college students who are looking to join the workforce.



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