

Hotelier express

MIDDLE EAST

YOUR GUIDE TO SUCCESSFUL BUDGET AND MIDMARKET HOTELS IN THE GCC



P10

**UNDERSTANDING
THE VOID BETWEEN
HOSPITALITY AND
EDUCATION**

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First Central Hotel Suites
general manager
Wael El Behi

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BRIDGING THE GAP—INDUSTRY AND ACADEMIA

Understanding the voids between the hospitality and education sectors

Today the hospitality industry is facing a deepening shortage of skilled professionals in almost all trades... Or is it? If we look at the statistics, Hays reported in 2015 a 5-10% increase in the staff intake in the hospitality sector. A further 275,000 jobs are expected to be created for Expo 2020, with a majority being in hospitality and tourism sectors. This indicates there is no shortage of jobs in the industry, but recruitment challenges facing hotels are what need analysing.

More hotels in UAE are opting to hire more unskilled workforce from developing countries; this will impact the recruitment and attrition trends. In reality these employees do not possess the required qualifications in the field of hospitality and are also untrained. Their lingual skills are not up to the industry standards, but since they are ready to work at the lower salary as compared to other industries, hotels often choose to hire these employees.

Hotel managers do not realise that these employees do not always contribute to the hotel

standards, compelling the hotel to invest in more training.

This requires committing money, time and energy to raise their standards to bring these employees to par with expected levels of the organisation. Whereas the flip-side of the scenario is that polished employees move

Hotels must therefore take a decision to hire professionally qualified employees and invest in quality rather than quantity. Efforts should be made in hiring candidates from quality institutions and aim at retaining them. These candidates come with the required skillset and are willing

“ With the current world economy scenario more hotels in UAE are opting to hire more unskilled workforce from developing countries; this will impact the recruitment and attrition trends leading up to EXPO 2020.”

on to better opportunities and salaries once they acquire the necessary skills.

Meanwhile, students who get themselves professionally qualified in colleges and universities, do not get the desired jobs they deserve. This is because the hotels favour economic workforce and in turn, spend more on them, all the while compromising on their brand’s quality and guest satisfaction level.

to take up greater challenges injecting new ideas in the system.

In the end, the gap will be non-existent between demand and supply if the hotels start looking at the broader picture, rather than short-term benefits. Investment is needed in people who will become leaders rather than recruiting unskilled employees who tend to leave the hotels as soon as they get better opportunities. ☺



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Five top tips for bridging the gap between industry and academia:

1 Identify gaps and partnerships
As two different domains in hospitality, industry and academia need to collaborate with each other. The extent of academia-industry partnership should identify possible areas where academia would be most valuable to the industry.

2 Impart professional knowledge
As an integral element, experience sharing sessions with industry experts should be a part of the curriculum. Qualified, industry-experienced faculty, equipped with the knowledge of latest techniques, need to be part of the academia.

3 Enhancement of practical skills
It is important to put theory into practice by providing students with hands-on experience. This should progress during the curriculum from the basics to the intermediate stages, leading to the advanced levels.

4 Establish industry-academia linkage
Formal agreements like MoUs can be signed for mutual benefit of all stakeholders involved. In this way the industry can provide support through provision of internships, and the academia can provide necessary consultancy assistance.

5 Real time exposure at the industry
Regular field visits are a must to expose students to gain insight into the real work atmosphere of hotels. This can be in the form of a short-term field work project or a long-term internship with the hotels for a stipulated time.