



Craft-based learning for real world success in hospitality

Sonia Tatar argues craft based education is key to delivering graduates capable of fast-track success

THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY has been experiencing remarkable growth and today ranks as the second-largest employer in the world. Recent research done by HVS shows that the top-ten leading hotel groups have added approximately 770,000 rooms to their total inventory since 2010. Brand leaders, such as Accor with its 4,111 hotels and 145,000 employees, maintain a strong presence across the globe. Travelodge, the UK's fastest-growing hotel company, recently announced plans to open 41 hotels, creating 1,000 new jobs. The Asia Pacific region provides leading hotel chains with significant opportunities for expansion.

HOTREC – an association representing Hotels, Restaurants and Cafés in Europe – reports that the hospitality sector currently employs 9.5 million people, which represents 4.4 percent of the total employment in Europe and eight percent of all enterprises in the European market. This shows the strong employment impact within the hospitality.

A recent study published on “London Hotels Insight” reinforces the argument that the hospitality sector is very attractive to graduates. The number of available positions for young people is increasing. And the hospitality sector offers graduates the opportunity to step into challenging, highly responsible jobs immediately. This contrasts with other sectors in which many recent graduates report that they are not satisfied with their first jobs that have a low level of responsibility.

All of this presents a tremendous opportunity for hospitality educators to provide students who are professionally prepared and fully capable of making an

immediate impact on the successful operation of a hospitality organisation.

To respond to such an increasing demand for professional graduates, schools must give students the expert training and preparation they need to be qualified to succeed in fast-track positions at growing hospitality companies. Combining theoretical classroom studies with practical, craft-based instruction and internships represents the most effective approach to preparing students for professional

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growth. This gives them an invaluable opportunity to put classroom learning into practice and to better understand how academic theory is affected by the potential and limitations of operational realities.

It is very important that a craft based instruction programmes be as relevant and current as possible. At Les Roches, we ensure that our curriculum and instruction reflects the latest trends in the industry by relying on a panel of expert advisors and alumni. The panel is comprised of senior executives and decision-makers from such industry-

leading hospitality companies as Four Seasons, InterContinental, Hyatt International and others.

Employers today look first and most favourably at graduates who have received a practical, craft-based hospitality education. Similarly, students who are serious about pursuing a hospitality career are most interested in schools that offer the real-world training and internships that will give them a competitive edge in the marketplace. Equally important, practical, real-world instruction helps students refine their interpersonal relationship and communication skills, their creativity, their work ethic, and teamwork.

Without a doubt, hospitality school graduates who are well rounded and have been highly trained in the real world are those who are most in demand. Consider the example of Evangeline Hayco's success story, who just two months after graduating from Les Roches, started her career as a general manager of Henrietta's Table Restaurant, at The Charles Hotel in Boston.

Students who have received hands-on practical training as part of their schooling are ahead of the game, as they enter the fast-paced and ever-changing hospitality industry. They are primed to create an impact in a very short period of time. Because they have the benefit of living the real-world experience, they are ready to perform and adapt quickly to companies' operations.

The hospitality industry will continue to grow and thrive. Organisations will continue to search for and attract young talent. Clearly, the best-qualified will be those whose hospitality education enabled them to learn by doing. ●