

EVALUATION OF EMPLOYEES INITIAL ORIENTATION AND ON-THE-JOB  
TRAINING IN MID- TO LARGE-SIZED HOTELS IN THE TWIN CITIES WITH  
REGARD TO SERVICE TRAINING

By

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**ABSTRACT**

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Evaluation of Employees Initial Orientation and On-the-Job Training in Mid- to Large-			
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sized Hotels in the Twin Cities with Regard to Service Training			
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The purpose of this study was to evaluate hotel employee initial orientation and on-the-job training in mid- to large-sized hotels in the Twin Cities with regard to service training to model current training practices. This study helped define the local process for front office, housekeeping, and food & beverage employee orientation and on-the-job training with regard to service training.

Of the 60 distributed questionnaires given to front office, housekeeping, and food & beverage managers in mid- and large-sized hotels in the Twin Cities, 20 were returned by mail and 22 were returned by e-mail. A total of 42 surveys were returned yielding a 70% return rate.

The findings, such as the situation and length of carrying out periodical employee orientation and on-the-job training, the relationship among employee professional skills or knowledge, orientation, and on-the-job, indicate areas that where employee orientation and on-the-job training should focus. The results encourage hotel managers in the front office, housekeeping, and food & beverage departments to re-evaluate existing situations of employee service training and determine whether or not they need to redevelop and improve the customer service training given to their employees. It was noted that if a hotel had good employee orientation and on-the-job training, customers would have a good impression of an employee attitude and service rendered. In that way, satisfied guests tend to be returning customers; guest service training of employee most likely impacts guest satisfaction.

While manufacturing industries mostly deal with both product and human interaction, service industries mainly focus on human interactions. Research indicates that customers are more likely to repurchase and/or recommend the product or service to others if they have a good perception of employee service performance (Kandampully, Monk, & Sparks, 2001). It seems that there are antecedents and consequences of this simple relationship. According to studies in 2001, “service quality may be only one of a number of factors that influence ‘value’ and that it is value, rather than service quality alone, that determines people’s willingness to buy and subsequent satisfaction” (Kandampully et al., 2001, p. 105).

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

CONTENT	PAGE
ABSTRACT	i
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	iv
LIST OF TABLES	vii
LIST OF FIGURES	ix
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	
Introduction	1
Background	1
Purpose of the Study	6
Statement of the Problem	7
Objective of the Study	7
Definition of Term	7
Limitations of the Study	9
Assumptions of the Study	10
CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE	
Introduction	11
Introduction of Mid- to Large-sized Hotel Industry in the Twin Cities	11
The Importance of Quality of Customer Service in the Hotel Industry	12
The Relationship Between Quality of Customer Service and Satisfaction	13
Defining Quality of Hotel Service	14
The Main Service Duties and Responsibilities of the Front Office Department	15
The Main Service Duties and Responsibilities of Housekeeping Department	16
The Main Service Duties and Responsibilities of Food & Beverage	17

Department	
Need for Service Training	17
Defining Orientation	18
The Importance of Orientation Towards Development of Quality of Service	19
Successful New Employee Orientation	20
Defining On-the-Job Training	20
Benefits of On-the-Job Training	22
Procedures and Methods for Conducting On-the-Job Training	23
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY	
Introduction	24
Selection of Population	24
Instrumentation	25
Data Collection	26
Data Analysis	27
CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS	
Introduction	28
Personal Information	29
Hotel and Its Employee Information	31
New Employee Orientation Information	37
Employee On-the-Job Training Information	45
Other Issues and Comments	55
CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY, DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATION	
Summary	56
Discussion	57
Recommendations	61

REFERENCES	62
APPENDICES	65
Introductory Cover Letter	66
Questionnaire	68
A List of Respondents Answers for Survey Question 25	73

## LIST OF TABLES

TABLE	PAGE
1. Personal Information	29
2. Number of Rooms within Hotel	31
3. Number of Full-Time Employees within Hotel	33
4. Number of Part-Time Employees within Hotel	34
5. Employee Education Levels within Hotel	35
6. Type of Person who is Responsible for Employee Orientation and OJT Training	36
7. The Situation of Carrying Out Periodical New Employee Orientation	37
8. Length of Time for Carrying Out New Employee Orientation	38
9. The Emphasis of the Importance of Service Quality Enhancement in the Orientation	39
10. The Relationship Between New Employee Professional Skills or Knowledge and Orientation	40
11. Necessity of New Employee Orientation	41
12. Method of New Employee Orientation	42
13. Rating of New Employee Orientation	44
14. Reason of Formulating Employee OJT Training	45
15. Type of Employee OJT Training is Conducted within Hotel	46
16. Length of Time for Carrying Out Employee OJT Training	47
17. Method of Employee OJT Training	48



18. The Relationship Between Employee Service Performance and Service Quality Enhancement	50
19. Cost of Investing in Employee OJT Training	51
20. Situation of Employee Demands Towards OJT Training	52
21. Necessity of Employee OJT Training	53
22. Rating of Employee OJT Training	54

## LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE	PAGE
1. A Simple Relationship Between Service Quality and Satisfaction	14

## **Chapter I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **Background**

The Twin Cities are comprised of Minneapolis-St. Paul and they are also the largest cities in Minnesota. Together, these two metropolitan areas are ones of the business and financial centers. Sixty percent of the tourists who are from Canada and international tourists as a group make up a very small percentage of all tourists in the state, as 84 percent come from the 12-state north-central region are attracted to visit the Twin Cities because the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport is serviced by all major domestic airlines and is a hub for Northwest Airlines (Citizen League, 1998). This airline offers numerous flights throughout the US and abroad. Thus the lodging industry in the Twin Cities serves a diverse domestic and international consumer market.

#### The Importance of Employee Orientation and On-the-Job Training in Mid- and Large-sized Hotels

Mid- and large-sized hotels provide many services and amenities to customers. Although tourists planning trips to the Twin Cities might pay more for lodging fees in mid- and large-sized hotels than small-sized hotels (e.g. motels), they can enjoy high-end hospitality services found in mid- and large-sized properties, such as daily maid service, refrigerator, facsimile machine, computer, and meal service, etc. Owing to this, the front office, housekeeping, and food & beverage departments in mid- and large-sized hotels in the Twin Cities play a key role in attracting tourists and business travelers as they compete with other-sized hotels. The three hotel departments are the main administrative ones in general mid- and large-sized hotels. In addition, front office, housekeeping, and

food & beverage staff is a hotel's main front-line service personnel. Thus, in order to increase mid- and large-sized hotels competitiveness and their service quality in the Twin Cities, a hotel requires its front office, housekeeping, and food & beverage staff to be capable of delivering consistent, enthusiastic service, and responding to guests needs. Therefore, staff training is an important task in order to provide better service quality to customers in a hotel.

Training can help front office, housekeeping, and food & beverage employees control or manage change. Training in the hotel industry is designed to enable the front office, housekeeping, and food & beverage employees to master new knowledge, attitudes, and skills (Nilson, 1990). A front office, housekeeping, or food & beverage employee who once received formal training can cope with each customer situation with more confidence and experience. Training is a way of organizing information and experience so that a front office, housekeeping, or food & beverage employee can behave differently on the job—to their own and the hotel's benefit (Nilson, 1990). Thus, a front office, housekeeping, or food & beverage manager can view training as an efficient tool to enable their employees to take charge of change.

When guests stay in a hotel, a front office, housekeeping, or food & beverage employee might have the first contact with guests. Thus, a front office, housekeeping, or food & beverage employee service performance behavior will have a straight influence on a customer perception of good or bad service quality. In order to promote front office, housekeeping, and food & beverage employee service performance, effective orientation and on-the-job training are necessary to be carried out in mid- and large-sized hotels. A customer perception of the service performance of staff can influence a hotel's reputation

directly or indirectly and impact financial performance.

Front office, housekeeping, and food & beverage employee tasks in mid- and large-sized hotels might be more complex and varied when compared to smaller hotels. Typically, a task list for mid- and large-scale hotels include check-in, checkout, reservation, registration, night audit, making beds, tidying rooms, cleaning and polishing toilets, taps, sinks, bathtubs and mirrors, washing floors, removing stains, vacuuming, nightly entertainment, banquet service, and catering operations, etc. Thus, employee orientation and on-the-job training seem to be necessary tasks towards the development and enhancement of overall hotel service quality.

#### Training for Service

“Service can be seen simply as those points of interaction between service providers, normally the employees of an operation, and their customers” (Jafari, 2000, p. 527). Service has been defined as “any activity or benefits one party can offer to another that is essentially intangible and does not result in the ownership of anything” (Kandampully, Monk, & Sparks, 2001, p. 6-7).

Hiring skilled employees seems to cost more personnel expenses than hiring unskilled employees overall as managers have to spend additional time retraining these new skilled employees. Hiring the unskilled workers is just as costly in terms of overall productivity and service quality. In addition, haphazard or unstructured training methods such as shadowing, in which a new front office, housekeeping, or food & beverage employee merely follows an experienced employee, often prove inadequate (Lawson, 1997).

## Job Orientation

Based on the considerations above, new employee job orientation is an important task that cannot be neglected to advance overall service quality. “The terms orientation and training are often used interchangeably. Although it is sometimes difficult to distinguish where one begins and the other ends, it is important to recognize the distinctions between them and their differing objectives” (Jerris, 1999, p. 283).

Orientation is different from on-the-job training. Orientation is used to lead new employees or persons to the organization and to the job. Orientation answers the “what” questions new employees have on the first day of work: “What is my manager’s name?” “What are the names of my co-workers?” “What hours do I work?” (Jerris, 1999). The purpose of orientation in all hotels is to enable new front office, housekeeping, and food & beverage employees to get more professional knowledge about their new job and at the same time give them a feeling of belonging to a competent organization where procedures and standards are important (Drummond, 1990). If a new employee starts their job without any orientation, it is most likely that the new employee will feel somewhat bewildered and confused about their new employment. For example, when a new employee who not has been given any orientation attempts to make a reservation for customers, errors can occur and the quality of service will be adversely affected. Thus, in order to solve similar situations, front office, housekeeping, or food & beverage managers must take the time to greet their new employees and go through orientation and initial training procedures. An effective orientation can provide a clear message that the employees are as important as the job they do.

New employee orientation is very helpful to the hotel because it communicates the values and priorities of the organization. Orientation can model good customer service behavior, foster a positive attitude, and help new employees make a positive contribution from the start of their employment. A long-term effect can help ensure the long-term health of the hotel in the form of lower turnover, lower costs, and a greater competitive edge through quality service (Jerris, 1999).

In addition, the results of initial training are not always obvious, so orientation should be promoted to guests as well as to future employees. Most guests are not trained in what to look for and may only see the superficial results of employee job performance. Therefore, in order to provide better service quality, new front office, housekeeping, and food & beverage employee orientation and service training should be carried out periodically to maximize overall service quality.

#### On-the-Job Training

Besides orientation, on-the-job training (OJT) is also an important task for front desk, housekeeping, or food & beverage employees. Although each employee has a different personality, a hotel still has to enable each front desk, housekeeping, or food beverage employee to obtain consistency in job performance through effective OJT. In addition, on-the-job training not only save training costs, but it can also help employees familiarize themselves with their working situation more quickly than traditional methods.

Thus, in order to improve hospitality employee job performance, Tracey and Tews (1995) reported that, many hospitality companies spend large sums of money on implementing training programs. O' Halloran (1991) and Harris (1995) also mentioned

that on-the-job training was predominant in the hotel industry. On-the-job training that includes one-on-one instruction and shadowing costs less money when compared to other types of training programs. In addition, through on-the-job training, front office, housekeeping, or food & beverage employees can learn how to perform their duties and responsibilities directly from a trainer. Employees can immediately demonstrate their competence and skills to their trainer. This enables a trainer to determine whether the employee has the required level of competence or not.

In addition, most on-the-job trainers in front office, housekeeping, and food & beverage departments in mid- or large-sized hotels are shift managers. This method of training reduces overall training costs. Hotels typically do not hire professional trainers to train their front office, housekeeping, and food & beverage employees.

According to Lawson (1997), on-the-job training can be defined as a structured process conducted in the employee work areas that provide the employee with the specific knowledge and skills to perform their job tasks. The range of OJT is finite; it must have a beginning and an end, and can be used in cross training, retraining the current employees, and newly hired employees (Lawson, 1997).

### **The Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to evaluate hotel employee initial orientation and on-the-job training in mid- to large-sized hotels in the Twin Cities with regard to service training to model current service training practices. This study helped define the local process for front office, housekeeping, and food & beverage employee orientation and on-the-job training with regard to service training.



## **Statement of the Problem**

The purpose of this study was to evaluate hotel employee initial orientation and on-the-job training in mid- to large-sized hotels in the Twin Cities with regard to service training to model current service training practices. The target population was front office, housekeeping, and food & beverage managers in mid- and large-sized hotels, defined as those having between 70 to 370 rooms in Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota.

## **The Objectives of the Study**

The objectives of this study were:

1. To assess the level of service training during orientation and on-the-job training in mid- and large-sized hotels in the Twin Cities, Minnesota.
2. To model the process of the front desk, housekeeping, and food & beverage employee orientation and on-the-job training in mid- to large-sized hotels in the Twin Cities, Minnesota.
3. To provide front office, housekeeping, and food & beverage managers with data to evaluate and improve employee orientation and on-the-job training with regard to service training.

## **Definition of Term**

The following key terms were used throughout this study. These were obtained by Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary (1996) and The Dictionary of Hospitality, Travel, and Tourism (Metelka, 1990).

**Accommodations** Lodging of any sort for the traveler. *Commercial* lodgings are paid for—in effect rented—by someone who provides this service for a fee. *Noncommercial* accommodations include vacation or second

homes, user-provided tents or campers, or staying with friends or relatives.

**Front Office** Functional area in a hotel, motel, or other facility that is responsible for coordinating all guest/customer services, including registration, providing information, maintaining guest accounts, and settling the final bill.

**Hospitality** Used interchangeably with *tourism* and *tourism industry* but focusing attention on the responsibility of industry personnel to be hospitable hosts. Sometimes which used to refer as a category to the hotels, motels and other accommodations comprise a significant part of tourism.

**Housekeeping** Nonrevenue operating department responsible for preparing and maintaining the guest rooms and public areas of a hotel, or other commercial facility.

**Large-sized Hotel** For the purpose of this study, large-sized hotel is being defined as a hotel has number of rooms that range from 221 to 370.

**Mid-sized Hotel** For the purpose of this study, mid-sized hotel is being defined as a hotel has number of rooms that range from 70 to 220.

**On-the-job (OJT)** Of, relating to, or being something (as training or experience) learned, gained, or done while working at a job and often under supervision.

**Orientation** The act or process of orienting or of being oriented.

**Quality** Substance, meaning, or extent of lasting effects of a given

experience; an imprecise, emotional, and often strictly personal estimation of the perceived value of an event. A concept used in discussions of tourism; quality of the tourism experience, quality of the tourism product, quality of life.

**Service** Concept that is fundamental, complex, and inherent to the seller-buyer relationship. Service is a valued quality as perceived by the buyer, involving the people, product and place. The buyer's perception of "good" or "bad" service is highly situational, dependent upon the expectations associated with the fast food stand, luxury or souvenir shop wherein the interaction takes place.

**Twin Cities** The cities of Minneapolis & St. Paul, Minnesota.

### **Limitations of the Study**

The major limitations of this study were:

1. The study focused on only the orientation and on-the-job training at the front office, housekeeping, and food & beverage departments in mid and large sized hotels so the results of this study might not be applied to other departments.
2. The study only focused on specific mid- and large-sized hotels so the findings of the study would not be available for other sized hotels.
3. The survey may have overlooked a process, techniques or items that were used at some of the hotels, thus limiting or altering responses to certain questions.
4. The use of a mail survey and an e-mail survey methods prohibited direct contact with the subjects. Therefore, there was no opportunity to further investigate the response in a survey to ask for clarifications.

5. Since the Minnesota's Restaurant, Hotel, and Resort Associations did not list all hotels in the Twin Cities, Minnesota, the population chosen only came from those listed in the Minnesota's Restaurant, Hotel, and Resort Associations. Therefore, some mid- and large-sized hotels did not participate in this survey.

#### **Assumptions of the Study**

1. There was a close relationship among service quality, and front office, housekeeping, and food beverage employee orientation and on-the-job training.
2. All front office, housekeeping, and food & beverage employees could promote their service performance and quality through methods of effective and formal orientation and on-the-job training.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

This review of literature will discuss employee orientation and on-the-job training in hotels with regard to service training. The focus of this review centers on the introduction of the mid- to large-sized hotels in the Twin Cities, the importance of quality of customer service in the hotel industry, the relationship between quality of customer service and satisfaction, the definition of hotel service quality, and the main service duties and responsibilities in front office, housekeeping, and food & beverage departments. In addition, it also centers on the need for service training, the definition of orientation, the importance of orientation towards development of quality of service, successful new employee orientation, the definition of on-the-job training, benefits of on-the-job training, and procedures and methods for conducting on-the-job training.

#### **Introduction of Mid- to Large-sized Hotel Industry in the Twin Cities**

The hotel industry has been recovering for years from the recession and overbuilding of the late 1980s and early 1990s, and hotel managers are still encountering challenges to effective operations and service delivery. The post 9-11 travel market is challenging all facets of the travel industry. Labor issues are particularly crucial as the workforce continues to change and the role of the employee is rethought. With the advent of total quality management, high performance work teams, learning organizations, and participative design strategies, managers must rethink who they hire, and how they deploy and train human resources (Breite & Woods, 1997).

The Twin Cities are known for their natural beauty, cultural attractions, recreational resources and increasingly, a great place to do business (United Defense

Corporate Headquarters, 2002). The population of the Twin Cities has grown to a composite of 2,868,847 people in 2002 (City Demographics, 2002). So far, the Twin Cities is considered the 15th largest metropolitan area in the United States. From a tourism perspective, visitors can enjoy exciting cultural and recreational opportunities in the beautiful natural surroundings of Minnesota. Hotels play an important role in providing visitors with comfortable accommodations in the Twin Cities.

In the mid- and large-sized hotels, these properties can furnish one or more services to customers, such as food and beverage service, room attendant (housekeeping) service, concierge, bell and door attendant service (sometimes called uniformed service), laundry or dry cleaning, and use of furniture and fixtures, etc. In addition, business customers can avail of e-mail & Internet access, facsimile & copying services, full business center, and PC services when offered. Most mid- and large-sized hotels in the Twin Cities have complimentary parking, unless they are located in the city center, or downtown area.

### **The Importance of Quality of Customer Service in the Hotel Industry**

Understanding quality of customer service in service industry is an important concept. “Quality is an investment not a cost; it is the price of entry into whatever market the company chooses to compete” (Harrington & Akehurst, 1996, p. 284). Generally speaking, “customer service is a philosophy in which all employees feel and act accountable for creating satisfied customers” (Reilly, 1995, p. 25). Service quality is regarded as a means to differentiate hospitality brands, increase customer satisfaction, improve market share and increase staff morale (Stewart & Johns, 1996). According to Jafari (2000, p. 530), “it is a measure of how well the service delivered meets customer

expectations, resulting from comparing these with the actual performance on both the outcome and the process dimensions of the service.” In addition to that, service quality is also represented by attributes that customers may see, feel or touch, and thus evaluate prior to purchasing the goods (Bonaccorsi & Fiorentino, 1996). According to Yasin and Yavas (2001), in the hospitality industry, service quality is emerging as an irrepressible and pervasive strategic force. Hotels are one part of the service industry; its intangible service quality is not as easy to produce as compared to manufacturing industries. The manufacturing industries mostly deal with both product and human interaction, while service industries mainly focus on human interactions. For hotel industries, Hall (1990) notes that the customers will assemble all expectations together into a quality judgment regarding the facility. For example, most of the customers have first contact with front desk employees when they check into a hotel. Thus, if a hotel employee service attitude to a customer is one that is rude, the customer will probably have a bad impression of the hotel employee’s service attitude and possibly even the hotel’s service quality.

### **The Relationship Between Quality of Customer Service and Satisfaction**

Hotel managers need to understand the relationship between quality of customer service and satisfaction. Service quality is a global measure of a number of quality dimensions (Kandampully, Monk, & Sparks, 2001). In understanding the relationship between customer service quality and satisfaction, SERVQUAL is the best model that measures service quality. This model is based on the notion that customers evaluated quality by comparing their present satisfaction, with their expectations (Nicholls, Gilbert, & Roslow, 1999). Figure 1 presents the relationship between service quality and satisfaction.

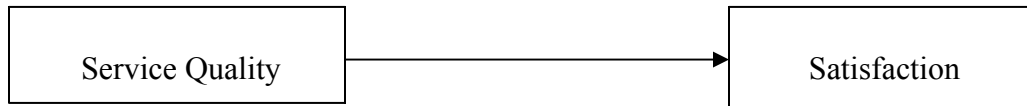


Figure 1. A Simple Relationship Between Service Quality and Satisfaction

(Kandampully et al., 2001, p. 105)

Research indicates that customers are more likely to repurchase and/or recommend the product or service to others if they have a good perception of employee service performance (Kandampully et al., 2001). It seems that there are antecedents and consequences of this simple relationship. According to studies in 2001, “the relationship may not be as simple as Figure 1 depicts, as service quality may be only one of a number of factors that influence ‘value’ and that it is value, rather than service quality alone, that determines people’s willingness to buy and subsequent satisfaction” (Kandampully et al., 2001, p. 105).

Thus, a hotel manager must understand that service quality has a positive effect on customer satisfaction. If a hotel can provide better service quality to customers, customer satisfaction will increase. When customer satisfaction and expectations have been met, they are likely to repurchase the service product. Thus, if a hotel manager wants customers to return to the hotel again, he has to construct ways to meet customer expectations and satisfaction by providing the service quality the customer expects to consume.

### **Defining Quality of Hotel Service**

The service product in a hotel can be flexible and variable based on the different needs of guest. Thus, in order to understand the range of hotel services, it is important to profile the front office employees, housekeepers, and food & beverage employee job descriptions with regard to hotel service.



## The Main Service Duties and Responsibilities of the Front Office Department

Generally speaking, accompanying accommodation is main service work of front office department in a hotel. Accommodation as a product, therefore, does not just consist of a guest-room, but also the additional facilities and services which are applicable to that room. Since accommodation as a product normally cannot be examined before purchase, a guest relies upon the front office employees to accurately describe the product to them (Baker, Bradley, & Huyton, 1994). Hence, a hotel front desk employee must have sufficient knowledge of the variables available in the accommodation package offered by a hotel, such as room rates, room types, room assignments, room changes, and the normal needs of guests, etc.

Besides arranging suitable accommodations, greeting guests is another important aspect of the front office employee service work. The front desk employee is likely to be the first person arriving guest comes in contact with, after the attendant at the door. Front desk employees can be said to represent the entire hotel. The initial impression of front desk employees greatly influences a guest perception of the entire hotel operation.

Front office employees also handle reservations. Before a front desk employee checks a guest into a room, they must know how to select and sell rooms according to the needs of individual guests. Room selection will include type of room and rate, number of people in the party, and length of stay, etc. Although this information might already be on file, a front desk employee must verify this information with guests. As guest requirements may have changed since the reservation was made. A front office employee must strive to ensure that the guest receives the service they prefer to purchase (Kasavana & Brooks, 1998).

## The Main Service Duties and Responsibilities of Housekeeping Department

Housekeeping is considered the toughest job in any lodging facility. “The housekeeping department has two prime functions: providing clean interiors in order to increase sales, and protecting the owner’s investment. It is the executive housekeeper’s responsibility to make sure these goals are met on time, on budget, and at the highest possible levels of quality” (Schneider, Tucker, & Scoviak, 1999, p. 5).

It is widely known that housekeeping in a hotel is a very physically demanding job that includes many varied tasks. “Typically, housekeepers or room attendants are responsible for cleaning up to 16 rooms per 8-hour shift. The actual amount of a housekeeper’s work still depends on the size of the rooms and the number of beds. A cleaner typically needs between fifteen and thirty minutes to complete all needed tasks for cleaning guest room. These tasks include making beds, tidying rooms, cleaning and polishing toilets, taps, sinks, bathtubs and mirrors, washing floors, removing stains, and vacuuming, etc” (Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety, 1998).

Housekeeping is one of the largest and most important departments in a hotel. Without properly trained housekeepers, a hotel cannot provide quality service and comfortable accommodations to its guests. Overall tasks in the housekeeping department are to clean and maintain the different areas of the hotel. As a result of that, housekeeping plays a key role in the production of overall service quality.

## The Main Service Duties and Responsibilities of Food & Beverage Department

The services provided by the food & beverage department in a mid- or large-sized hotel are very complex. “The large hotel food & beverage department can offer several different types of dining facilities ranging from average low check outlets such as a coffee shop or family oriented restaurant to average high check outlets such as a plush, intimate dining, room, roof-top restaurant, and providing top-notch food and service, etc. In addition, the food & beverage department operates clubs featuring, nightly entertainment, and/or dancing, banquet and catering operations, an employee cafeteria, room service, and a variety of bars and lounges, etc. It may even offer take-out food services, a delicatessen, snack kiosks, poolside food service, morning coffee in the main lobby, or afternoon tea in the hotel’s garden” (Rey & Wieland, 1985, p. 10).

From the tasks listed above, it can be observed that food & beverage employees provide extensive services. However, in order to keep high service quality, food & beverage employee service training cannot be neglected. Enhancing employee service quality through service training is an important task that cannot be overlooked by management, especially with a wide array of outlets, food styles and concepts.

### **Need for Service Training**

In order to enhance service quality in the hotel industry, training is an important task that cannot be neglected. As a result of that, some researchers feel that the need for service training in the hotel industry has become larger. In the hotel industry, service training is the important factor affecting employee turnover. According to Callan (1994), service training programs should be developed by hotels to meet the specific needs of

targeted markets. However, according to Breite and Woods (1997), many hotel operations have yet to implement structured service training programs.

Generally speaking, service and job training needs are largely determined by the corporate office, owners, and the site management team.

According to Forrest (1990), training cannot be the solution to every operational or performance problem, nor the cure-all for all human resource related problems.

Service training is used to help hotel managers communicate the requisite knowledge, skills and attitudes for employees to help them perform satisfactorily in their current and future roles (Pepitone, 1995).

### **Defining Orientation**

According to Green (1978, p. 27), orientation is defined as “assistance provided to familiarize trainees with the job and help them adjust to the work environment, the employer’s establishment, and the specific training program in which they are enrolled. Orientation should provide all information that the trainees should need regarding company policy, procedures, benefits, and work rules. More specifically, some activities recommended for orientation are an explanation of the training program, a description of the occupation and its career ladder, a description of the company, basic information about the industry and the company’s relationship to it, and an explanation of supportive service available while in training.”

Thus, during the orientation, on the first day, when a new employee arrives at the hotel, they can be anxious, excited, and highly motivated to please (Hall, 1990). This is the best time to give them a motivational talk about the property, explain the quality assurance program, introduce the hotel, go over the hotel’s regulations and benefits, build

a natural relationship between employees and the employer, and establish the do's and don'ts while soliciting feedback (Hall, 1990). Moreover, during the orientation, a hotel manager should give new front desk, housekeeping, and food & beverage employees to a tour of the hotel. The hotel manager should take an advantage of opportunities to explain guest or customer service philosophy, mission, and goals of the department to new employees to enhance service quality.

To provide better service quality, a hotel manager needs to carry out a professionally prepared formal orientation for new employees. It must be done in a way that a new employee can familiarize themselves with their future-working environment.

#### The Importance of Orientation Towards Development of Quality of Service

Orientation is a specific type of training designed for new employees. According to American Society for Training & Development in the year 2000, most organizations invest 7 percent of training dollars on new employee orientation (Sims, 2002). In addition to that, “the average length of orientation programs for the 65 properties responding to a national study, found that they had orientation programs running 59.34 minutes. That probably equates to 9.34 minutes of lecture followed by a 50-minute tour of the property” (Hall, 1990, p. 199). However, that trend is changing. More companies are starting to recognize the importance and value of the orientation and are spending two to four hours for on new employee orientation.

Orientation enhances new front desk employee job performance and service attitude plays an important role in making on-the-job training a success in the lodging industry. The purpose of orientation is to make new hotel employees knowledgeable about their new job and give them a feeling of belonging to a competent organization

where procedures and standards are important (Drummond, 1990).

### Successful New Employee Orientation

To make orientation successful, a hotel manager needs to allocate adequate time for it to be effective. Orientation is an enthusiastic welcome training, which contains a variety of information regarding the workplace services and mission. Therefore, it can be assumed that orientation is a planned part of training which is important for each new employee. An unplanned orientation results in confused new employees, who are not productive, will probably make mistakes, and are likely to leave the organization within a year. Thus, a hotel manager or organization needs to build objectives that make new employee orientation successful and productive for the hotel and the employee.

### **Defining On-the-Job Training**

“The need for training hospitality employees has been well documented since the early 1980s” (Breite & Woods, 1997, p. 87). Front office, housekeeping, and food & beverage employees belong to a hotel’s front-line servicemen, so each customer has direct contact with these employees when they stay in a hotel. Therefore, without suitable and formal on-the-job training for these front-line employees, employee service performance and attitude might affect a customer perception of a hotel’s service quality.

Before understanding the definition of on-the-job training, the definition of training needs to be clearly understood first. According to Forrest’s theory (1990, p. 4), “Training can be defined as the process by which a learner acquires and develops knowledge, skills, and attitudes that lead to changes in behavior in line with established performance goals. Training is usually limited to acquiring and developing competencies that meet a specific defined need while education is learning that contributes to total life

growth.” Moreover, “training is a learning process that involves the acquisition of skills, concepts, rules, or attitudes to increase the performance of employees” (Lloyd & Leslie, 1987, p. 198).

“On-the-job training and instruction are broad terms that can be applied to the personal guidance and instruction an employee receives at their work station after attending a formal training program at/or the one-on-one training given to an employee in an organization without a formal training program” (Lash, 1989, p. 80).

OJT is a training method that is extensively used in hotels. During OJT, the employee can be productive while at the same time realizing a cost-savings for the hotel. Also, on-the-job training can be organized to a greater degree and allowed training to have recognized objectives and outcomes (On-the-Job Training Programs For Printers, 1988).

OJT in hotel industry means that an experienced manager, employee, or even trainer usually shows an employee how to do their job tasks. Thus, OJT is one-on-one instruction training in the hotel industry. Generally speaking, on-the-job training is usually referred to as “shadowing”, “trailing”, and “following” (Forrest, 1990). In other words, on-the-job training consists of an experienced manager, employee, or trainer “showing” a trainee around the operation for a few days; the trainee is then expected to be competent at the end of that time (Forrest, 1990).

On-the-job training is one of the most cost-effective training. It costs less money than most standard training programs. Many hotels are unwilling to incur greater costs to training their employees. In addition, on-the-job training can be flexibly changed according to different employee needs. Although OJT has some disadvantages, this

method still can result in the development of a highly skilled employee or trainee on a very individualized basis only if it is followed through and reinforced by coaching and counseling. A trainee's or employee's learning in on-the-job training usually occurs on-site, so there is no problem in applying learning to the actual situation. Forrest (1990) notes that: structured OJT at front desk, housekeeping, and food & beverage departments is highly recommended as a primary training method for ongoing training within any hotel industry.

### Benefits of On-the-Job Training

On-the-job training can provide unique opportunities for front office, housekeeping, and food & beverage employees who already possess some job-related skills and the knowledge to "learn as they earn". During the process of OJT, front office, housekeeping and food & beverage employees can practice new or enhanced skills immediately and become more confident and competent in the job more quickly. Generally speaking, on-the-job training is a structured process conducted at the employee's work area to provide the employee with the knowledge and skills to perform their job tasks (Lawson, 1997). Thus, it can be assumed that using structured OJT can provide more benefits than an unstructured OJT program. Because structured OJT training is carried out at the workplace, it has more relevance for a hotel's front-line employees (Lawson, 1997). The employee can practice the new or enhanced skills immediately and become more confident and quickly become competent in the job. In addition, an effective structured OJT program can build teamwork and help develop cohesiveness in the workshop between employees and the managers (Lawson, 1997). Since the employee receives training from a co-worker or a manager, the fact that a



person with whom the employee interacts daily is showing him or her “the ropes” will establish long term good interpersonal work relations (Lawson, 1997).

### Procedures and Methods for Conducting On-the-Job Training

On-the-job training is not a silent activity. It is the process in which one employee, the supervisor or lead person of a work area, passes job knowledge and skills to another employee most often (Broadwell, 1986). Therefore, a front office, housekeeping, or food & beverage employee must be able to verbally repeat to practice the procedures as well as perform it after receiving formal on-the-job training. However, teaching methods on how to let an employee be able to repeat to perform the procedures effectively are important tasks for a manager.

On-the-job training can be a very effective training method because an employee can learn how to perform their job tasks directly from a manager. Thus, the method can save a large amount of time in training an employee rather than using typical training programs. According to Lash (1989, p. 80), on-the-job training has four main steps.

1. The on-the-job trainer explains the steps or techniques and then demonstrates the steps or techniques to their employee.
2. The on-the-job employee explains the steps or techniques while the on-the-job trainer demonstrates or follows the employee instructions.
3. The employee explains the steps or techniques and demonstrates.
4. The employee repeats the explanation and demonstration for the trainer until both are satisfied that the training has been learned.

## **Chapter III**

### **METHODOLOGY**

The purpose of this study was to evaluate hotel employee initial orientation and on-the-job training in mid- to large-sized hotels in the Twin Cities with regard to service training to model current training practices. A questionnaire was mailed and e-mailed to hotel front office, housekeeping, and food & beverage managers in Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota.

#### **Selection of Population**

The purpose of this study was to evaluate hotel employee initial orientation and on-the-job training in mid- to large-sized hotels in the Twin Cities with regard to service training to model current training practices. The target population was front office, housekeeping, and food & beverage managers in hotels with 70 to 370 rooms in Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota. To adjust for cross management or ownership, if the company had more than one hotel in the Twin Cities, this study randomly selected only one of them. A list of Minnesota's Restaurant, Hotel, and Resort Associations was obtained from <http://www.hospitalitymn.com> (Hospitality Minnesota, 2002). According to this source, there were 60 hotels considered suitable for the population of this study. The researcher mailed questionnaires to 30 hotels and e-mailed questionnaires to another 30 hotels in Minneapolis and St. Paul, Minnesota. All of the 60 hotels in Minneapolis and St. Paul were requested to respond to a mail or an on-line questionnaire which was designed for this study by going to the website <http://studentweb.uwstout.edu/wuh>.

## **Instrumentation**

The researcher used a questionnaire to evaluate hotel employee initial orientation and on-the-job training in mid- to large-sized hotels in the Twin Cities with regard to service training.

The questionnaire consisted of twenty-five questions and was segmented into five sections. The first section was personal information. The researcher adopted multiple-choice response. In this section, the questionnaire included personal gender, position, working time, and educational level. The second section was hotel and its front office, housekeeping, and food & beverage employee information, the researcher adopted one open-ended and multiple-choice responses. In this section, the questionnaire included number of hotel room and number of full-time and part-time employees in a hotel, employee educational level, and the person who is responsible for employee orientation and on-the-job training. In the third section of orientation, the researcher also used multiple-choice responses. In this section, the questionnaire included the situation of carrying out periodical orientation, length of time for carrying out orientation, emphasis of the importance of service quality enhancement in the orientation, the relationship between new employee professional skills or knowledge and orientation, necessity of orientation, methods of orientation, and rating of orientation. The fourth section was on-the-job training; the researcher still used multiple-choice responses. In this section, the questionnaire covered the reason of formulating on-the-job training, types of on-the-job training, length of time for carrying out on-the-job training, methods of on-the-job training, the relationship between employee service performance and service quality enhancement, cost of investing in on-the-job training, situation of employee demands

towards on-the-job training, necessity of on-the-job training, and rating of on-the-job training. In the last section, the researcher used one open-ended question to obtain respondents' answers.

After the survey was designed, a pilot study was conducted on the campus of the University of Wisconsin-Stout.

The purpose of the pilot study was: (1) to determine the workability of the questionnaire, (2) to determine if the respondents understood the terminology in the questionnaire, (3) to determine the time required to complete the questionnaire, and, (4) to obtain suggestions, additions and/or deletions needed in the questionnaire.

Upon the completion of the pilot study, changes were made and several questions were rephrased for greater clarity. The questionnaire was approved by the research advisor. The questionnaire and the introductory cover letter were finalized on October 23, 2002.

### **Data Collection**

The mail and e-mail surveys were sent out between October 24 and November 7, 2002. Mail and e-mail addresses, names, and phone numbers of the survey population of the 60 hotels that are suitable for mid- and large-sized hotel models were obtained from Minnesota's Restaurant, Hotel, and Resort Associations at website <http://www.hospitalitymn.com> (Hospitality Minnesota, 2002).

The researcher adopted a method of approach for the distribution and collection of questionnaires from each property that decided to participate in this project. On October 24, 2002, the survey was mailed and also e-mailed to each of the 60 selected hotels chosen to participate in the survey. The researcher asked these 60 potential respondents

to complete the survey either by mail or e-mail response methods.

On October 24, 2002, the following items were mailed to each of 30 hotels identified for the mail portion of this study.

1. The introductory cover letter,
2. The questionnaire,
3. Postage paid return envelope.

On the same day, the researcher also e-mailed the survey to another 30 hotels to complete the survey. They would access the survey through the website <http://studentweb.uwstout.edu/wuh>.

Copies of all the survey materials can be found in the appendices.

Respondents were required to complete the questionnaire within two weeks.

The follow-up effort via e-mail was one week after the mailing. The e-mail thanked all those who had already e-mailed their questionnaire back and served as a reminder to those who had not yet done so.

Finally, of the 60 distributed questionnaires, 20 were returned by mail and 22 were returned via e-mail by October 7, 2002. A total of 42 surveys were returned by mail and e-mail. The overall response rate for the study was 70 percent. This included responses to the follow-up effort by e-mail that generated one-third of the total responses.

### **Data Analysis**

Data analysis involved the use of SPSS; Statistical Package for Social Science Software. Using the research objectives to guide the analysis, frequency accounts, percentage distribution, and qualitative analysis were calculated for most responses to gain an understanding of the nature of responses.

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **FINDINGS**

The survey was sent out between October 24 and November 7, 2002. Of the 60 distributed questionnaires, 42 were returned by mail and e-mailed and used for analysis. The overall response rate for the study was 70 percent. This included responses to the follow-up effort by e-mail that generated one-third of the total responses. Data analysis in the form of frequencies and percentages was done at the Academic Computer Services at the University of Wisconsin-Stout.

The specific objective of this study was to obtain an understanding of employee initial orientation and on-the-job training in the areas 1) To assess the level of service training during orientation and on-the-job training in mid- and large-sized hotels in the Twin Cities, Minnesota. 2) To model the process of the front desk, housekeeping, and food & beverage employee orientation and on-the-job training in mid- to large-sized hotels in the Twin Cities, Minnesota. 3) To provide front office, housekeeping, and food & beverage managers with data to evaluate and improve employee orientation and on-the-job training with regard to service training.

The survey questions were related directly to the objectives in this study. The questionnaire was divided into these sections – personal information, hotel and its employee information, new employee orientation information, employee on-the-job training information, and other issues and comments.

## Personal Information

Table 1. Personal Information

	Frequency (N=42)	Percent %
<u>Gender</u>		
Male	28	66.7
Female	13	31.0
Missing	1	2.4
<u>Position</u>		
Front Office Manager	8	19.0
Housekeeping Manager	1	2.4
Food & Beverage Manager	2	4.8
Other	31	73.8
Missing	0	0.0
<u>Working Time</u>		
Under 3 Months	1	2.4
3-6 Months	4	9.5
7-9 Months	2	4.8
10-12 Months	1	2.4
Over 1 Year	34	81.0
Missing	0	0.0
<u>Educational Level</u>		
Less than High School	0	0.0
High School	2	4.8
Vocational/Technical School	3	7.1
College/University	34	81.0
Graduate School or Higher	2	4.8
Other	0	0.0
Missing	1	2.4

As shown in Table 1, 25 out of the 42 respondents (66.7%) were male, only 31% were female and 2.4 percent of the respondents did not respond this question. For the respondents' position, about 73.8 percent of the respondents were others. The others included area general managers, assistant general managers, directors of operations,

directors of human resource, sales managers, and room division managers, etc. About 19 percent of the respondents were front office managers, 4.8% were food & beverage managers, and 2.4% were housekeeping managers. With regard to the respondents' working time, 81 percent of the respondents had worked in a hotel for more than one year. About 9.5 percent of the respondents had worked in a hotel for only three to six months, and 2.4 percent of the respondents had worked in a hotel for less than 3 months and ten to twelve months. The respondents' educational level results indicated that, 81 percent of the respondents graduated from colleges or universities, 7.1 percent of the respondents graduated from vocational or technical schools, 4.8 percent of the respondents graduated from high schools, and graduate school or higher educational institutes. However, 2.4 percent of the respondents did not respond this question.



## Hotel and Its Employee Information

Table 2. Number of Rooms within Hotel

	Frequency N=42	Percent %
70 or less	2	4.8
71-100	7	16.7
101-130	5	11.9
131-160	2	4.8
161-190	4	9.5
191-220	6	14.3
221-250	3	7.1
251-280	2	4.8
281-310	5	11.9
311-340	3	7.1
341-370	1	2.4
371 or more	2	4.8
Missing	0	0.0

According to Table 2, 16.7 percent of the number of hotel rooms was mainly between 71 and 100. Fourteen-point-three percent of the number of hotel rooms was between 191 and 220. Eleven-point-nine percent of the number of hotel rooms was between 101 and 130, and 281 and 310. Nine-point-five percent of the number of hotel rooms was between 161 and 190. Seven-point-one percent of the number of hotel rooms

was between 221 and 250, and 311 and 340. Four-point-eight percent of the number of hotel rooms was between 70 or less, 131 and 160, 251 and 280, and 371 or more. Only 2.4 percent of the number of hotel rooms was between 341 and 370.

Table 3. Number of Full-Time Employees within Hotel

	Frequency N=42	Percent %
1-10	13	31.0
11-20	14	33.3
21-30	5	11.9
31-40	2	4.8
41-50	3	7.1
51-60	1	2.4
61 or More	2	4.8
Missing	2	4.8

According to Table 3, it was clearly seen that 33.3 percent of full-time staff was between 11 and 20 employees, followed by 31 percent of full-time staff which was between 1 and 10 employees. Eleven-point-nine percent of full-time staff was between 21 and 30 employees. Seven-point-one percent of staff was between 41 and 50 employees. Four-point-eight percent of staff was between 31 and 40, and 61 or more employees. In addition, 4.8 percent of respondents did not respond this question. Two-point-four percent of staff was between 51 and 60 employees.

Table 4. Number of Part-Time Employees within Hotel

	Frequency N=42	Percent %
1-5	15	35.7
6-10	12	28.6
11-15	3	7.1
16-20	2	4.8
21-25	2	4.8
26-30	0	0.0
31-35	2	4.8
36 or More	1	2.4
Missing	5	11.9

From Table 4, it was clearly seen that 35.7 percent of part-time staff was between 1 and 5 employees, followed by 28.6 percent of part-time staff which was between 6 and 10 employees. Eleven-point-nine percent of the respondents did not respond this question. Seven-point-one percent of part-time staff was between 11 and 15 employees. Four-point-eight percent of part-time staff was between 16 and 20, 21 and 25, and 31 and 35 employees. Two-point-four percent of part-time staff was between 36 or more employees.

Table 5. Employee Education Levels within Hotel

	Frequency	Percent
	N=42	%
Less than High School	10	11.0
High School	37	40.7
Vocational/Technical School	14	15.4
College/University	25	27.5
Graduate School or Higher	2	2.2
Other	3	3.3
Missing	0	0.0

As shown in Table 5, most of the employee educational levels within the hotel (40.7%) were in the level of high school. Next, 27.5 percent of the employee educational levels were between colleges and universities, 15.4% were between vocational and technical schools, 11% were less than high school level, 3.3% responded with other educational levels, and only 2.2% responded with graduate school.

Table 6. Type of Person who is Responsible for Employee Orientation and OJT Training

	Frequency N=42	Percent %
Manager	33	46.5
Employee	4	5.6
H.R. Director	10	14.1
Professional Trainer	2	2.8
Supervisor	20	28.2
Other	2	2.8
Missing	0	0.0

According to Table 6, most of the people who were responsible for employee orientation and on-the-job training (46.5%) were hotel managers. Next, the order was separately supervisors (28.8%), H. R. directors (14.1%), employees (5.6%), professional trainers (2.8%), and other people (2.8%). The other people included buddy trainers and general managers.

### New Employee Orientation Information

Table 7. The Situation of Carrying Out Periodical New Employee Orientation

	Frequency	Percent
	N=42	%
Yes	39	92.9
No	3	7.1
Missing	0	0.0

According to Table 7, it could be assumed that most of the respondents (92.9%) answered that their hotels carried out new employee orientation periodically. However, only 7.1 percent of the respondents answered that their hotels did not carry out new employee orientation periodically.

Table 8. Length of Time for Carrying Out New Employee Orientation

	Frequency N=42	Percent %
Less Than 1 Hour	5	11.9
Less Than 1 Day	11	26.2
1-2 Days	8	19.0
3-4 Days	8	19.0
5-6 Days	1	2.4
One Week	1	2.4
More Than One Week	7	16.7
Missing	1	2.4

Table 8 indicated 26.2 percent of the length of time for carrying out new employee orientation was less than one day. In addition, 19 percent of the length of time for carrying out new employee orientation was between one and two, and three and four days. Sixteen-point-seven percent of the length of time for carrying out new employee orientation was more than one week. Eleven-point-nine percent of the length of time for carrying out employee orientation was less than one hour. Finally, only 2.4 percent of the length of time for carrying out new employee orientation was between five and six days, and one week. In addition, 2.4 percent of the respondents did not respond this question.



Table 9. The Emphasis of the Importance of Service Quality Enhancement in the Orientation

	Frequency	Percent
	N=42	%
Yes	41	97.6
No	1	2.4
Missing	0	0.0

Table 9 indicated that 97.6 percent of the respondents answered that their employee trainers always emphasized the importance of service quality in the orientation. Two-point-four percent of the respondents answered that their employee trainers did not always emphasize the importance of service quality in the orientation.

Table 10. The Relationship Between New Employee Professional Skills or Knowledge and Orientation

	Frequency	Percent
	N=42	%
Yes	40	95.2
No	1	2.4
Missing	1	2.4

As shown in Table 10, it could be assumed that most of the respondents (95.2%) answered that their new employees would have more professional skills and knowledge to cope with each customer situations after they completed the formal orientation. However, only 2.4 percent of the respondents did not agree. In addition, 2.4 percent of the respondents did not respond this question.

Table 11. Necessity of New Employee Orientation

	Frequency	Percent
	N=42	%
Yes	40	95.2
No	1	2.4
Missing	1	2.4

Table 11 indicated that 95.2 percent of the respondents answered that their new employee orientation was necessary to exist in the hotel industry if a hotel enhanced and developed better service quality. However, only 2.4 percent of the respondents did not agree. In addition, 2.4 percent of the respondents did not respond this question.

Table 12. Method of New Employee Orientation

	Frequency	Percent
	N=42	%
VCR	30	15.2
Computer	21	10.6
Television	20	10.1
Case Study	1	0.5
Flip Charts	15	7.6
Simulations	14	7.1
Transparencies	10	5.1
Teleconferencing	0	0.0
Online Training	11	5.6
Text and Manuals	27	13.6
Audio-video Tapes	13	6.6
Overhead Projectors	10	5.1
Interactive Multimedia	5	2.5
Lecture-Pupil (Classroom Style)	11	5.6
Other	9	4.5
Missing	1	0.5

From Table 12, it was clear that 1) VCR and 2) text and manuals were the most common methods used for employee orientation in the hotel. However, most of the companies supported it with 1) computer, 2) television, 3) flip charts, 4) simulations, 5) audio-video tapes, 6) online training, 7) lecture-pupil (classroom style), 8) transparencies, and 9) overhead projectors. Other methods, interactive multimedia, and case study were less commonly used for new employee orientation, perhaps because they were not practical and were taken a lot of time to prepare the equipment by trainer. In this survey, no respondents chose teleconferencing method because it might not conform to general hotel orientation needs. However, other methods included DVDs, hands on, property and local area tours, and 1:1 based on checklists to make sure everything covered, etc.

Table 13. Rating of New Employee Orientation

	Frequency	Percent
	N=42	%
Very Satisfying	11	26.2
Satisfying	27	64.3
Neutral	3	7.1
Unsatisfying	0	0.0
Very Unsatisfying	0	0.0
Missing	1	2.4

Table 13 indicated that 27 out of the 42 respondents (64.3 percent) were satisfied with the situation of their new employee orientation. About 26.2 percent of the respondents were very satisfied with the situation of their orientation. However, the employee orientation was rated at a neutral level by only 7.1 percent of the respondents. Two-point-four percent of the respondents did not respond this question.

### Employee On-the-Job Training Information

Table 14. Reason of Formulating Employee OJT Training

	Frequency N=42	Percent %
Based on Corporation Policy	27	20.9
Based on Employee Needs	27	20.9
Based on Customer Reactions	23	17.8
Based on Suggestion (s) in the Department (s)	13	10.1
Based on Employee Desires	14	10.9
To Respond to a Specific Issue	17	13.2
Other	7	5.4
Missing	1	0.8

Table 14 indicated that the reasons that a hotel formulated employee on-the-job training were mainly based on 1) corporation policy and 2) employee needs. However, some reasons were based on 1) customer reactions, 2) to respond to a specific issue, 3) employee desires, and 4) suggestions (s) in the department (s). Only 5.4% were based on other reasons. However, the reasons included hotel standards, common business practice, and to ensure consistent guest service, etc. Approximately 0.8 percent of the respondents did not respond this question.

Table 15. Type of Employee OJT Training is Conducted within Hotel

	Frequency	Percent
	N=42	%
One-on-One Instruction	33	62.3
One-on-More-Than-One Instruction	20	37.7
Missing	0	0.0

According to Table 15, most of the types of employee on-the-job training conducted (62.3%) were one-on-one instruction. Thirty-seven-point-seven percent of employee on-the-job training was one-on-more-than-one instruction; perhaps because one-on-one instruction was more efficient and did not take more time to conduct than one-on-more-than-one instruction.



Table 16. Length of Time for Carrying Out Employee OJT Training

	Frequency	Percent
	N=42	%
Less Than 1 Hour	1	2.4
Less Than 1 Day	1	2.4
Less Than 1 Week	8	19.0
Less Than 1 Month	8	19.0
It Depends on Requirement(s)	18	42.9
Other	4	9.5
Missing	2	4.8

According to Table 16, the length of time for carrying out employee OJT training (42.9%) mainly depended on requirements. About 19 percent of the length of time for carrying out employee OJT training was less than one week and less than one month. Nine-point-five percent of the length of time for carrying out employee on-the-job training was others, such as on going training, depended on if it is the initial training, all employees are trained on one topic per week, and average two weeks, etc. Four-point-eight percent of the respondents did not respond this question. However, only 2.4 percent of the length of time for carrying out employee OJT training was less than one hour and less than one day.

Table 17. Method of Employee OJT Training

	Frequency	Percent
	N=42	%
VCR	27	14.3
Computer	31	16.4
Television	14	7.4
Case Study	2	1.1
Flip Charts	11	5.8
Simulations	15	7.9
Transparencies	5	2.6
Teleconferencing	1	0.5
Online Training	13	6.9
Text and Manuals	24	12.7
Audio-video Tapes	14	7.4
Overhead Projectors	5	2.6
Interactive Multimedia	6	3.2
Lecture-Pupil (Classroom Style)	12	6.3
Other	9	4.8
Missing	0	0.0

From Table 17, it was clear that 1) computer, 2) VCR, and 3) text and manuals were the most common methods used for front office, housekeeping, or food & beverage employee on-the-job training in the hotels. However, most of the companies supplemented it with 1) simulations, 2) television 3) audio-video, 4) online training, 5) lecture-pupil (classroom style), and 6) flip charts. Other methods, interactive multimedia, overhead projectors, transparencies, case study, and teleconferencing were less commonly used, perhaps because they were not practical and were taken more time to prepare the equipment by trainer. However, other methods included hands-on experience, role-playing, group training, shadowing, and DVDs, etc.

Table 18. The Relationship Between Employee Service Performance and Service Quality Enhancement

	Frequency N=42	Percent %
Yes	39	92.9
No	2	4.8
Missing	1	2.4

Table 18 indicated that most of the respondents (92.9%) were thinking that their employee service performance could become more satisfying to customers through formal on-the-job training. However, only 4.8 percent of the respondents were thinking that there was a close relationship between employee service performance and formal on-the-job training. Two-point-four percent of the respondents did not respond the question.

Table 19. Cost of Investing in Employee OJT Training

	Frequency	Percent
	N=42	%
Yes	37	88.1
No	5	11.9
Missing	0	0.0

From Table 19, most of the respondents (88.1%) answered that their hotels invested funds in employee on-the-job training. However, only 11.9 percent of the respondents answered that their hotels did not invested in employee OJT training.

Table 20. Situation of Employee Demands Towards OJT Training

	Frequency	Percent
	N=42	%
Yes	38	90.5
No	4	9.5
Missing	0	0.0

As shown in Table 20, most of the respondents (90.5%) answered that their hotels carried out employee on-the-job training as soon as possible when their employees lacked professional skills or knowledge to meet customers' demands. However, 9.5 percent of the respondents answered that their hotels did not carry out employee on-the-job training as soon as possible when their employees lacked professional skills or knowledge to meet customer demands.

Table 21. Necessity of Employee OJT Training

	Frequency	Percent
	N=42	%
Yes	41	97.6
No	1	2.4
Missing	0	0.0

From Table 21, most of the respondents (97.6%) answered that their employee on-the-job training was necessary to exist in the hotel industry in order to provide better service quality to customers. Only 2.4 percent of the respondents answered that their employee on-the-job training did not necessarily exist in the hotel industry.

Table 22. Rating of Employee OJT Training

	Frequency	Percent
	N=42	%
Very Satisfying	9	21.4
Satisfying	31	73.8
Neutral	2	4.8
Unsatisfying	0	0.0
Very Unsatisfying	0	0.0
Missing	0	0.0

Table 22 indicated 27 out of the 37 respondents (73.8 percent) were satisfied with the situation of their front office, housekeeping, or food & beverage employee on-the-job training. About 21.4 percent of the respondents were very satisfied with the situation of their employee on-the-job training. However, employee on-the-job training was rated at a neutral level by only 4.8 percent of the respondents.



### **Other Issues and Comments**

For question twenty-five in the survey, parts or issues of front office, housekeeping, or food & beverage employee orientation and on-the-job training needed to be improved at the current stage in their hotels as soon as possible in order to develop better service quality, the researcher used open-ended questions. Therefore, the researcher would summarize all of the respondents' answers for this question in the following paragraph.

According to respondents, employee language or language materials, responsibility and attendance, orientation, training courses or training program, service standards, professional knowledge and skills on the computer, job contents, and hotel operations, needed to be further reinforced. In addition, employees should have better abilities to resolve customer complaints. Moreover, employees will be asked to have hands-on experience where trainees will work with a trainer at the front desk to get the real experience, and also receive more real world examples and role-playing. As a supervisor or manager, they should understand how to resolve employee conflicts and control customer turnover.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **SUMMARY, DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

#### **Summary**

The purpose of the study was to evaluate hotel employee initial orientation and on-the-job training in mid- to large-sized hotels in the Twin Cities with regard to service training to model current service training practices. This study helped define the local process for front office, housekeeping, or food & beverage employee orientation and on-the-job training regarding service training. The three objectives of this study were:

1. To assess the level of service training during orientation and on-the-job training in mid- and large-sized hotels in the Twin Cities, Minnesota.
2. To model the process of the front desk, housekeeping, and food & beverage employee orientation and on-the-job training in mid- to large-sized hotels in the Twin Cities, Minnesota.
3. To provide front office, housekeeping, and food & beverage managers with data to evaluate and improve employee orientation and on-the-job training with regard to service training.

This review of literature discussed employee orientation and on-the-job training in hotels with regard to service training, the focus of this review centers on the introduction of the mid- to large-sized hotels in the Twin Cities, the importance of quality of customer service in the hotel industry, the relationship between quality of customer service and satisfaction, the definition of hotel service quality, and the main service duties and responsibilities in front office, housekeeping, and food & beverage departments. In addition, it also discussed the need for service training, the definition of orientation, the

importance of orientation towards development of quality of service, successful new employee orientation, the definition of on-the-job training, benefits of on-the-job training, and procedures and methods for conducting on-the-job training.

The purpose of the study was to evaluate hotel employee initial orientation and on-the-job training in mid- to large-sized hotels in the Twin Cities with regard to service training to model current service training practices. The researcher distributed questionnaires to front office, housekeeping, and food & beverage managers in hotels with 70 to 370 rooms in Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota. Finally, of the 60 distributed questionnaires, 42 were returned by mail and e-mailed. The overall response rate for the study was 70 percent. This included responses to the follow-up effort by e-mail that generated one-third of the total responding population.

Data analysis for this study applied frequency accounts, percentage distribution, and qualitative analysis to all the questions, to gain an understanding of the nature of responses.

The findings could assist front office, housekeeping, or food & beverage managers in determining whether to develop and improve their employee orientation and on-the-job training. If a hotel has well trained employees, customers will have a good impression of employee service performance and attitude. In that way, satisfied guests tend to be returning customers; guest service training of employee most likely impacts guest satisfaction.

## **Discussion**

First of all, through the review of literature, while the manufacturing industries mostly deal with both product and human interaction, service industries mainly focus on

human interactions. In addition, research indicates that customers are more likely to repurchase and/or recommend the product or service to others if they have a good perception of employee service performance (Kandampully, Monk, & Sparks, 2001). It seems that there are antecedents and consequences of this simple relationship. According to studies in 2001, “service quality may be only one of a number of factors that influence ‘value’ and that it is value, rather than service quality alone, that determines people’s willingness to buy and subsequent satisfaction” (Kandampully et al., 2001, p. 105). Thus, a hotel manager should recognize the relationship of service quality and front office, housekeeping, or food & beverage employee orientation and on-the-job training in their hotels. As long as a hotel manager can carry out periodical employee orientation and on-the-job training, their employees would change their service performance and attitude towards service quality and would be motivated. Therefore, to maintain 100% service quality, to leave a good impression for customers, and to potentially increase revenue through returning business, the hotel industry should adopt different methods of training to reinforce front office, housekeeping, or food & beverage employee professional skills and knowledge to meet customer needs and resolve customer sudden situations. After all, front office, housekeeping, and food & beverage employees are a hotel’s main front-line service personnel. Thus, as a hotel trainer, they cannot overlook essential front-line employee orientation and on-the-job training to enable quality services.

Secondly, after evaluation of employee orientation and on-the-job training, the following conclusion can be drawn.

From the analysis of personal information, it was found that the majority of the respondents' position (73.8%) was area general managers, assistant general managers, directors of operations, directors of human resource, sales managers, and room division managers, etc. In addition, most of the respondents (81%) answered that they had worked in a hotel for over one year.

From the analysis of a hotel and its employee information, most of the numbers of rooms within the hotel (16.7%) were mainly between 71 and 100. In addition, the main person who was responsible for employee orientation and on-the-job training was the hotel manager (46.5%).

From the analysis of new employee orientation information, most of the hotels (92.9%) carried out new employee orientation periodically. According to the respondents, the length of time for carrying out new employee orientation, on average, was less than one day (26.2%). Most of the respondents (97.6%) said that their hotel orientation trainer emphasized the importance of service quality for new employees in the orientation. Most of the respondents (95.2%) agreed that their new employees would have more professional skills and knowledge to cope with each customer situation after they completed the orientation. In addition, the majority of the respondents (95.2%) agreed that their new employee orientation was necessary to continue in a hotel in the following days if a hotel enhanced and developed better service quality. According to respondents, the main method of their new employee orientation used VCRs (15.2%). The majority of the respondents' rating for their new employee orientation satisfaction towards the delivery of service quality enhancement was satisfying (64.3%).

From the analysis of employee on-the-job training information, the main reason of formulating employee on-the-job training was based on corporation policy and employee needs (20.9%) while the main type of employee on-the-job training that was conducted within the hotel was one-on-one instruction (62.3%). The length of time for carrying out employee on-the-job training mainly depended on requirements (42.9%) and the main method of employee on-the-job training was the computer (16.4%). The majority of respondents (92.9%) agreed that there was a relationship between employee service performance and service quality enhancement. Most of the hotels (88.1%) invested in employee on-the-job training. Moreover, the majority of the respondents (90.5%) agreed that their hotels carried out on-the-job training for employees who lacked professional skills or knowledge. This was done as soon as possible when employees lacked professional skills or knowledge to meet customer demands or needs. Ninety-seven-point-six percent of the respondents agreed that their employee on-the-job training was necessary, and needed to continue for several days in order to develop employees to provide better service quality to customers. The majority of the respondents' rating for their employee on-the-job training satisfaction towards the delivery of service quality enhancement was satisfying (73.8%).

From the analysis of comments or opinions about the improvement of a hotel's employee orientation and on-the-job training at the current stage, most of the respondents thought that employee training or training program should be reinforced.

Finally, the researcher suggests that a hotel manager and their staff train their employees through formal orientation and on-the-job training to maintain 100% service quality, leave a good impression for their customers, and potentially increase revenue

through returning business.

### **Recommendations**

This study has shown that hotels in Minneapolis and St. Paul conduct orientation and on-the-job training. What has emerged from the study results is a view that more can be done to enable orientation and OJT training.

The study indicated that most of the responding hotels have some structure that they use to train employees. From a service perspective it was felt that additional time was still needed to enable service quality for the hotel product and purchasing guest. It was also understood that budgetary issues could hinder the best efforts if funds are not expended to meet the goal of creating an environment centered on quality service.

- Additional time is needed to enable the new employee to get more professional knowledge about their job.
- Additional time is needed for OJT to structure details and responses for guests to enhance service quality.
- The appointment of key trainers is necessary to enable a uniform service response.
- Reinvestment in training methods on a continued basis is constantly needed as the expectation of customer changes.

For future study, this study examined a very narrow perspective of employee orientation and OJT reinvestment. This study could be redone or completed in a way that expands on the target population, use multiple cities for cross comparison and/or restructure the survey to target only specific parts of this study.

The use of mail or Internet survey methods could be expanded or even an interview process with a modified approach to sampling.

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## APPENDICES

Dear Manager:

Congratulations that you have been chosen one of the samples for this study. My name is Hung-Che Wu. I am a graduate student in the Department of Hospitality & Tourism at the University of Wisconsin-Stout. I am conducting a research project on the evaluation of employee initial orientation and on-the-job training in mid- to large-sized hotels in the Twin Cities with regard to service training. Please take a few minutes of time to go to this website <http://studentweb.uwstout.edu/wuh> to complete this survey. Your opinions are very important to us. All information gathered will be kept strictly **confidential and anonymous.**

Your participation in this survey is completely voluntary. If at any time you wish to stop participation in this research, you may do so, without coercion or prejudice, just inform the researcher. Questions or concerns about participation in the research or subsequent complaints, should be addressed first to the researcher, Hung-Che Wu, 1315 15<sup>th</sup> Ave. E #6, Menomonie, WI, 54751, phone 715-235-4105, or research advisor, Bob Davies, 715-232-1480, and second to Sue Foxwell, Chair, UW-Stout Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research, 11 Harvey Hall, UW-Stout, Menomonie, WI, 54751, Phone, 715-232-1126.

Please submit this survey back before **November 7, 2002**. Once the study is completed, the analyzed findings will be available for your information. Thank you for your cooperation. Have a nice day!

Sincerely Yours,

Hung-Che Wu

Dear Manager:

Congratulations that you have been chosen one of the samples for this study. My name is Hung-Che Wu. I am a graduate student in the Department of Hospitality & Tourism at the University of Wisconsin-Stout. I am conducting a research project on the evaluation of employee initial orientation and on-the-job training in mid- to large-sized hotels in the Twin Cities with regard to service training. Please take a few minutes of time to complete this survey. Your opinions are very important to us. All information gathered will be kept strictly **confidential and anonymous.**

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Please submit this survey back before **November 7, 2002**. A pre-paid mailing envelope is enclosed for your convenience. Once the study is completed, the analyzed findings will be available for your information. Thank you for your cooperation. Have a nice day!

Sincerely Yours,

Hung-Che Wu

# Survey of Evaluation of Employees Initial Orientation and On-the-Job

## Training

Please place an "X" in the box that matches you and fill out information needed. Thank you.

### Section 1 Personal Information

1. What is your gender?

Male

Female

2. What is your position in your hotel?

Front Office Manager

Food & Beverage Manager

Housekeeping Manager

Other (Please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

3. How long have you worked in this hotel?

Under 3 Months

10-12 Months

3-6 Months

Over 1 Year

7-9 Months

4. What is your educational level?

Less than High School

College/University

High School

Graduate School or Higher

Vocational/Technical School

Other (Please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

### Section 2 Hotel's Front Desk, Housekeeping, and Food & Beverage Information

5. How many rooms are there in your hotel?

70 or less

161-190

281-310

71-100

191-220

311-340

101-130

221-250

341-370

131-160

251-280

371 or over

6. How many front office (or housekeeping or food & beverage) employees are there in your hotel?

Full-Time Employees: \_\_\_\_\_

Part-Time Employees: \_\_\_\_\_

7. What are the education levels of your front office (or housekeeping or food & beverage) employees? (Check all that apply.)
- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Less than High School       | <input type="checkbox"/> College/University           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> High School                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Graduate School or higher    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Vocational/Technical School | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please specify) _____ |
8. Who is responsible for front office (or housekeeping or food & beverage) employee orientation and on-the-job training in your hotel? (Check all that apply.)
- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Manager       | <input type="checkbox"/> Professional Trainer         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Employee      | <input type="checkbox"/> Supervisor                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> H.R. Director | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please specify) _____ |

**Section 3 Orientation**

9. Does your hotel carry out orientation for new front office (or housekeeping or food & beverage) employees periodically?
- |                              |                             |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
10. How long is your new front office (or housekeeping or food & beverage) employee orientation carried out on average in your hotel?
- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Less Than 1 Hour | <input type="checkbox"/> 5-6 Days           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Less Than 1 Day  | <input type="checkbox"/> One Week           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1-2 Days         | <input type="checkbox"/> More Than One Week |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3-4 Days         |   |
11. In the orientation, does a person who is responsible for new front office (or housekeeping or food & beverage) employee orientation procedures, emphasize the importance of service quality?
- |                              |                             |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
12. Do you think new front office (or housekeeping or food & beverage) employees will have more professional skills and knowledge to cope with each customer situation after they complete the formal orientation?
- |                              |                             |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
13. Do you think it is necessary for new front office (or housekeeping or food & beverage) employee orientation to continue in your hotel in the following days if enhancing and developing better service quality?
- |                              |                             |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|

14. Which methods does your hotel often use for new front office (or housekeeping or food & beverage) employee orientation? (Check all that apply.)
- |                                      |  |  |
|--------------------------------------|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> VCR         | <input type="checkbox"/> Simulations       | <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-video Tapes               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Computer    | <input type="checkbox"/> Transparencies    | <input type="checkbox"/> Overhead Projectors             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Television  | <input type="checkbox"/> Teleconferencing  | <input type="checkbox"/> Interactive Multimedia          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Case Study  | <input type="checkbox"/> Online Training   | <input type="checkbox"/> Lecture-Pupil (Classroom Style) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Flip Charts | <input type="checkbox"/> Texts and Manuals | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please specify) _____    |
15. How would you rate the new front office (or housekeeping or food & beverage) employee orientation level of satisfaction towards the delivery of service quality enhancement?
- Very Satisfying  Satisfying  Neutral  Unsatisfying  Very Unsatisfying

**Section 4 On-the-Job Training**

16. Why does your hotel formulate front office (or housekeeping or food & beverage) employee on-the-job training? (Check all that apply.)
- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Based on Corporate Policy    | <input type="checkbox"/> Based on Suggestion (s) in the Department (s) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Based on Employee Needs      | <input type="checkbox"/> Based on Employee Desires                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Based on Customer Reactions  | <input type="checkbox"/> To Respond to a Specific Issue                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please specify) _____ |  |
17. What kind of front office (or housekeeping or food & beverage) employee on-the-job training is conducted in your hotel? (Check all that apply.)
- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> One-on-One Instruction | <input type="checkbox"/> One-on-More-Than-One Instruction |
|---|---|
18. How long is the front office (or housekeeping or food & beverage) employee on-the-job training carried out on average in your hotel?
- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Less Than 1 Hour | <input type="checkbox"/> Less Than 1 Month             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Less Than 1 Day  | <input type="checkbox"/> It Depends on Requirement (s) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Less Than 1 Week | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please specify) _____  |



19. Which methods does your hotel often use for front office (or housekeeping or food & beverage) employee on-the-job training? (Check all that apply).

- |                                      |  |  |
|--------------------------------------|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> VCR         | <input type="checkbox"/> Simulations       | <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-video Tapes               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Computer    | <input type="checkbox"/> Transparencies    | <input type="checkbox"/> Overhead Projectors             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Television  | <input type="checkbox"/> Teleconferencing  | <input type="checkbox"/> Interactive Multimedia          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Case Study  | <input type="checkbox"/> Online Training   | <input type="checkbox"/> Lecture-Pupil (Classroom Style) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Flip Charts | <input type="checkbox"/> Texts and Manuals | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please specify) _____    |

20. Do you think that front office (or housekeeping or food & beverage) employee service performance (e.g. professional skills, knowledge, service attitudes, service behaviors, service consistency, etc.) can become more satisfying to customers through formal on-the-job training in your hotel?

- Yes  No

21. Does your hotel invest any cost on front office (or housekeeping or food & beverage) employee on-the-job training?

- Yes  No

22. When front office (or housekeeping or food & beverage) employees lack professional skills or knowledge to meet customer demands, does your hotel carry out on-the-job training for employees who lack professional skills or knowledge as soon as possible?

- Yes  No

23. Do you think it is necessary for front office (or housekeeping or food & beverage) employee on-the-job training to continue for several days in order to develop and provide better service quality to customers?

- Yes  No

24. How would you rate the front office (or housekeeping or food & beverage) employee on-the-job training level of satisfaction towards the delivery of service quality enhancement?

- Very Satisfying  Satisfying  Neutral  Unsatisfying  Very Unsatisfying

### **Section 5 Other**

25. Which parts or issues of front office (or housekeeping or food & beverage) employee orientation and on-the-job training need to be improved at the current stage in your hotel as soon as possible in order to develop better service quality (Please specify).

***Thank you for your valuable time and your cooperation!***

I understand that by returning this questionnaire, I am giving my informed consent as a participating volunteer in this study. I understand the basic nature of the study and agree that any potential risks are exceedingly small. I also understand the potential benefits that might be realized from the successful completion of this study. I am aware that the information is being sought in a specific manner so that no identifiers are needed and so that confidentiality is guaranteed. I realize that I have the right to refuse to participate and that my right to withdraw from participation at any time during the study will be respected with no coercion or prejudice.

## **A List of Respondents Answers for Survey Question 25**

### **Respondents Answers**

1. Consistent commitment to weekly training; following-up and coaching and counseling on trained topic on a regular basis.
2. We have a solid training foundation at my hotel. At other hotels, I have worked in, but it has not been the case. Little to no time was spent training new employee hires. You see a world of difference between guest satisfaction and retaining employees.
3. Language is an issue that is overlooked. Some members of our team use English as a second language. All of our training is based in English.
4. Control turnover, development of consistent positive attitude toward providing excellent guest service.
5. We just initiated a new training program.
6. Having materials in different languages should be available.
7. Employees should be asked to have more responsibility and attendance.
8. To need more ongoing and remedial training reinforcement for housekeeping employees.
9. To resolve employee conflicts.
10. Customer complaints.
11. To receive more real world examples and more role-playing. The importance of these things should be clearly stated.
12. Skills enhancement for those that have been on the job more than one year.
13. Employee job contents need to become more specific.

14. We use the freeman method of task-based training. This training program has been in place for about two and half a year.
15. To need more time on refreshing training courses.
16. Long-term training to reinforce issues overtime must be addressed in order to help our employees at the top of their game.
17. Front office employees need more knowledge on computer and hotel operations.
18. Service standards need more re-enforcement.
19. To conduct a measure of competency and follow-up and reinforcement.
20. Employee will also have on-hand experience where trainees will work with a trainer at the front desk to get the real experience.
21. Bringing in employee on busy but not crazy night to orientate with employee seeing what the deal actually is.