

TRAINING PRACTICES IN INDIAN HOTEL INDUSTRY: AN OVERVIEW

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Accepted: 14.04.2023

Published: 01.05.2023

Keywords: Trainees, Hotel, Training and Employee.

Abstract

The training practices in the Indian hotel industry play a pivotal role in shaping the hospitality workforce. This overview explores the multifaceted landscape of training methodologies employed by hotels across India. Emphasizing the significance of skill development, the study delves into diverse training modules encompassing customer service, culinary expertise, and management proficiency. The analysis reveals a dynamic blend of traditional training approaches and modern e-learning platforms, reflecting the industry's adaptability to technological advancements. Training and development can be seen as a key instrument in the implementation of human resource management practices and policies. Successful hotels always include staff training as their important development strategy. Training is shown to positively impact on employee's productivity, which results in higher levels of customer and employee satisfaction. Evidence from McDonald's suggests that low levels of training give rise to high levels of staff turnover and that the provision of good training has a positive effect on staff retention (Thomas, Lashley, & Eaglen, 2000). Furthermore, the paper highlights the industry's commitment to fostering a customer-centric culture, with an emphasis on soft skills and cultural sensitivity. Challenges such as high turnover rates and evolving guest expectations are addressed through continuous training initiatives. Overall, this overview provides insights into the evolving training paradigms within the Indian hotel industry, underscoring the sector's commitment to enhancing employee capabilities and ensuring a seamless guest experience.

Paper Identification



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Introduction

The Indian hotel industry stands at the intersection of tradition and modernity, blending rich cultural heritage with the dynamic demands of contemporary hospitality. At the heart of this intricate tapestry lies the crucial aspect of workforce training, an indispensable element that shapes the industry's service standards and adaptability. This overview delves into the training practices within the Indian hotel sector, offering insights into the historical trends and contemporary strategies employed by establishments across the country.

Recognizing the paramount importance of skill development, the industry has historically invested in diverse training modules, covering areas such as customer service, culinary expertise, and management proficiency. Traditional training methodologies, including hands-on experience and classroom sessions, have coexisted with the industry's progressive integration of technology. The growing prevalence of e-learning platforms has revolutionized training approaches, ensuring efficiency and widespread accessibility.

In the face of challenges such as employee turnover and evolving guest expectations, the Indian hotel industry has exhibited resilience through strategic training initiatives. The commitment to fostering a customer-centric culture, coupled with an emphasis on soft skills and cultural sensitivity, reflects a nuanced understanding of the diverse clientele that the industry serves. As we embark on this exploration of training practices, it is essential to recognize the evolving nature of the hospitality landscape and the industry's continual efforts to enhance employee capabilities. To glean a comprehensive understanding, we will not only examine historical trends but also consider the contemporary data and reports that encapsulate the state of training practices in the Indian hotel industry.

Objectives of the study

The objectives of this study are to give an overview on training practices in Indian hotel industry, Importance of training for hotel management graduates' and training process followed in Indian Hotel Industry.

Research Methodology

The research is based on literature review including various internet sources, journal articles and some news articles. For this purpose, the researcher reviewed the literature and finds the conclusion.

Training practices in Indian hospitality industry

Tourism and hospitality have one of the highest levels of skill shortages (Health Coverage Tax Credit, 1995; & Higher Education Funding Council for England, 1998). However, training can influence the skill of human resource, then it is interesting to see how seriously and hospitality firm stake training .In current era of hotel business, it is

sum of all core competencies in the employees' skills. The standard of services in hotels will always depend on the qualities of the employees. The qualities of employees are a set of knowledge, skills and thoughts which is the base of hotels' developments. So training is very important in many aspects like, it increases productivity, skills, thought, motivation among the worker and help them to recognize how important their jobs are.

Training and development can be seen as a key instrument in the implementation of human resource management practices and policies. Successful hotels always include staff training as their important development strategy. Researchers in western context have found that the majority of hotels engaging in innovative practice include training and knowledge building as key elements to attaining best practice (Enz & Sigauw, 2000). Therefore, organizations provide training to their existing employees. Along this the industry also provides training to students of hospitality courses because they will be the potential employee to this industry and on the part of students, it is mandatory part of their curriculum.

Importance of Industrial Training for Hospitality Graduates

Researches (Tas, 1988; & Enz, 2000) confirmed that concept of training started around 1940's. It was considered as mandatory for many educational programmes such as nursing, teaching, banking etc. Since then researchers are working continuously to establish its importance, types, tools, evaluations techniques and uses.

Practical application of theoretical Knowledge is very important for teaching-learning process, as it helps in fulfilling the theory and practice gap (Nichols, 1992). This becomes more vital where direct customer contact or service delivery happens e.g. hospitality industry.

The industry preferred candidates with some kind of practical exposure over others even for the post of fresher's. (Craig-Smith, Davidson, & French, 1994). They asserted that their programmers should have industry linkages in the form of training. Lewis (1982) presented a summary of several researches on tourism & hospitality teaching programmers. He found that the syllabi should be in-line with the industry requirements and students should be ready to face challenges in the field of technology, economy etc. Practical exposure can help them a lot in this regard.

Likewise many researchers (Tas, 1992; Spencer et.al, 1993; & Eaton and Christou 1997) have supported the use of practical or industry exposure of students to make them more acceptable in the hotel industry.

These integrated programmers have been found to be more beneficial to all the stakeholders i.e. student, industry and academia.

Training refers to the designed effort by an organization to provide employees and trainees learning of job-related competencies, which include knowledge, Traits, Motives and skills that are critical for successful job performance at their workplace.

Oribabor (2000) stated that "Training and development aim at developing competencies such as technical, human, conceptual and managerial for the furtherance of individual and organization growth."

Armstrong (1999) said that "Training is the systematic modification of behaviour through learning which occurs as a result of education, instruction, development and planned experience".

Nadler (1992) in his book on "*Developing Human Resources*" describes training as "those activities, which are designed to improve performance on the job the employee is presently doing or is being hired to do."

According to the Manpower Services Commission's (1981) glossary of training terms, training is a planned process to modify attitude, knowledge or skill behavior through learning experience to achieve effective performance in an activity or range of activities.

Training is recognized as the systematic and continuous development of that knowledge and those skills and attitudes, which will prove beneficial both to the organization and to the individual in achieving the objective of the organization as given by ILO (1972).

According to Sah (1991), management training denotes planning of a learning situation by selective appropriate management of knowledge and skills suitable to the requirement of pre-specified jobs so that the learner after learning can perform the jobs effectively in the organization. The main purpose is to improve managerial practices with the help of modern management practices in the organization.

Virmani and Seth (1985) define training as 'the acquisition of concepts, theories, knowledge, skills and attitudes and development as the application of acquired knowledge, skills and attitude to the job for increasing organizational effectiveness'

The primary objective of training and development in a hospitality organization is to provide skilful human resource to a hotel. However, the main aims are; *Development of core competences, assist workforce to grow, provide the opportunities to the employee to become more competent as soon as possible* (Armstrong, 1999).

Training provides better opportunities' for the organization in terms of workforce required in future. It is consider as a valuable basis of recruitment in the hotels. Almost all the hospitality organization takes fresh graduates as trainee as they absorbed after completion of their courses.

Appiah (2010) suggested there are few steps for effective training planning for achieving training objective in hospitality organizations that includes; *establishing needs of training; whom to train; how to train; evaluation of trainees; and making training plans.*

Advantages of Training Program

Peterson & Hicks (1996) pointed out the benefits of training in hospitality industry. They said that training is an ongoing process and develop the latest core competences required for competitive advantages over their competitors. The benefits of training can be studied from following different perspectives:

From Students' Perspective: Internship provide many advantages to graduate students such as they can enhance the confidence level by internship training (Hejmadi, Bullock, Gould, & Lock, 2011), improve their educational performance and security of job after graduation (Cannon & Arnold, 1998; Zopiatis, 2007). Researchers found that students who have under gone some kind of training demonstrate more active performance than the students without such type of training. Further, some studies show that the students or graduates with internship experience have more chances to be selected for a job rather than the students without internship experience (Knouse, Tanner, & Harris, 1999; Kwok, Adams, & Price, 2011). Therefore, many organizations' managers stress upon internship training so that the communication skills as well as analytical thinking could be developed in the students under training which is not possible under classroom teaching (Busby, 2003; Knouse & Fontenot, 2008; Lee, 2008).

From the employers' perspective: The program is also useful for employers because they get educationally qualified students as employees who are available at low cost. These fresh employees work with already existed employees of the organization (Beggs, Ross, & Goodwin, 2008). Therefore, internship provide more staff to the organization and the managers can make more deep assessment of the fresh employees' abilities and their work as

compared to the assessment of employees by job interview (Yiu & Law, 2012). Another study conducted by Hildebeitel, Leaby, Larkin, & Morris, 2000 also added to the statement that the present employees of the organization would feel more satisfaction from their job if they have worked as interns in the same organization. The reason is that their expectations from the job are correspondent with their experiences obtained in the internship and it is more practical approach.

From Academic Institutions' Perspective: Academic institutions emphasize on students' industrial training to provide practical knowledge to the students. By providing practical knowledge to the students, academic institutions can get extra advantage over other institutions because internship training provided through these institutions create a positive image before potential college students and their parents consider that the internship experience would help to search a job quickly (Yiu & Law, 2012). In addition to it, Cook, Parker, & Pettijohn, (2004) also advocated this viewpoint and stated that it is possible to earn more credibility of academic institutions if their students/interns give good performance during internship.

Therefore, it is clear that internship experience program provide benefits to all the three parties: Students/Interns, Employers and Academic institutions. The benefits of internship indicate that these support inclusion of training module in the curriculum of hospitality programmers (Yiu & Law, 2012). Along with these benefits, internship has one drawback i.e. if students are not satisfied with their internship training then, they can have negative feeling towards their job and they would be discouraged to join such type of job after graduation. Studies (Chen, Ku, Shyr, Chen, & Chou, 2009; Lam & Ching, 2007; Singh & Dutta, 2010) supported the view and described that it is essential for the organization to sustain the satisfaction of students under training during internship experience.

To sum up, training provides right techniques to organization and manager for develop their competencies in a competitive market. There is need of implement the training programs in the hospitality organization.

Training Process

Training is a process of systematic planning of organization vision and perspective, assessing training needs, setting up training objectives and developing training policy and plan, designing training programmes, implementing training programmes and evaluation of results & feedback for action. The various steps of training process are explained as under:

The first step is to decide the vision of organization and to make future plan with respect to mission, strategies and objectives of the business. To attain the vision of the organization, various divisional business plans are formulated and all the activities are performed accordingly. In actual sense, training process is started with the assessment of training need but it is also necessary to link training needs with organizational objectives. So, the first step involves the decision regarding organization vision and perspective plan.

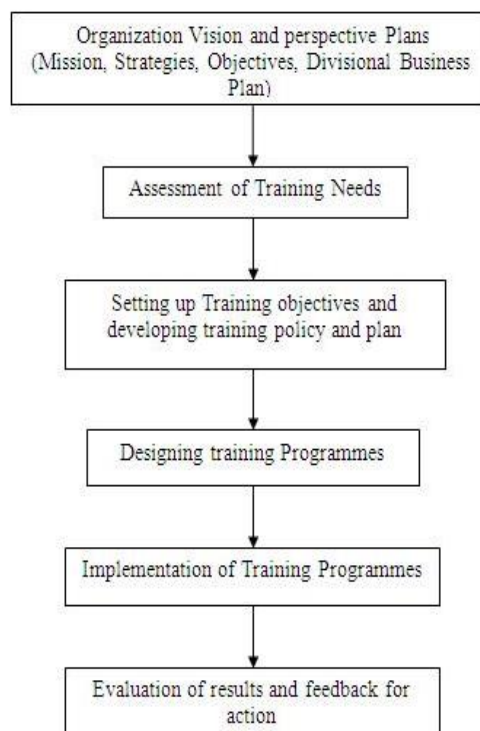


Figure No. 1 Training Process

The second step is to assess the training needs of the organization. The training need is the result of the difference between the HR managers' expectation with respect to employees' performances and actual performances of employees. The requirement of training may be felt for fresh employees to make them familiar with their work. Therefore, HR managers consider related aspects such as job analysis, job description, job evaluation and performance objectives etc.

After assessing training needs, training objectives are decided and then, overall plan & Policies are developed to attain the training objectives.

Fourth step of training process is related to designing the training programme in which HR managers select training methods, types of training, duration, programme structure, tools of training, location and selection of trainees etc.

After successfully designing the training programme, actions are taken to implement the training programme following the rules and policies. The implementation of training programme will be successful only when the trainer is well prepared & skilful and trainees are actively participating in the training programme.

The last step of training programme is to evaluate the results/outcomes of the training programme and take necessary action on the basis of feedback. It is very important and unavoidable step of training process because it ensures the success of training programme and ultimately contributes to the fulfilment of overall organisations' objectives.

Training Needs Identification

Training needs refers to first phase of training and consider as evaluations or needs assessment. All trainings should only be conducted to meet specific identified training needs.

Yang (2010) argued that difference between actual and expected results from employees' leads to requirement of a training program for an organisation. To fill up this gap there are needs of few core competencies which can be developed in employs by training (Bediako, 2002).

Training needs refer to the development of core competencies (Knowledge, skills, Traits and motives) with help of learning process in hospitality professionals for performing well in the organization. It is very important to find out the deficiencies in terms of competencies that are needed to be performing their task. These deficiencies can be removed by conducting appropriate training programs for the staff.

Primary phase of the entire training program is to congregate the identified training needs as it involves cost and time. This is very important for developing right types of training program. There are various procedures and methods for identifying the training need. All organizations adopt those methods which are most suitable and effective for the organizations needs. The output of training needs will emphasize the peoples who need training, what area needed to be covered, types of training during the training program.

There are various reasons for doing training needs assessment i.e. determine the: competencies gap, training is needed or not, content, scope, outcomes, basis of measure effectiveness and management support.

Once the training needs are finalized the next step is to point out the employee who needs training to meet the organizational objectives.

Laing (2009) stated that that organization should identify which employee require training, "A training policy (to provide guidelines for those responsible for planning and implementing training and to provide an equal opportunity for each employee to be trained in the organization), which spell out whom to train, in what, and on what frequency".

Beyazen (2011) said that it is very necessary for trainer to collect the information about the trainees in an organization for knowing the problems faced by the individual. Further there are various tools "questionnaires, records of critical incidents, job knowledge tools, data from assessment centre skill tests, role-playing results, and attitude surveys" are useful for the same.

Appiah (2010) concluded that training plans provides a map for trainer and the trainee to achieve the objective of training successfully. Once this step is completed, training lesson is designed in the organization.

In this study the focus will be on training needs for the hospitality students those who did their training in the hospitality industry.

Types of Trainings

Different industries follow diverse training practices. There are no such specific ways for classifying the types of training. However, hotel industry uses following types of trainings:-

- Apprentice
- Certification
- Practical/ Industrial
- On-the-Job
- Language
- Cross
- Management
- Industrial

- Vocational
- Hotel Services and Administration
- Internship
- Just in Time

Methods of training

There are numerous methods of training are used to train students and employees. As the time passes the birth of new training methods comes into existence according to the needs of the industries. Now these days, there are two approaches of training methods that are used i.e. “on the-job” or “off-the-job” methods. First ones are applied in the organization; and later ones are performed elsewhere from the organization are used away from the organization.

Numbers of factors are to be considered for selection of training methods like investment on training, level of knowledge required, history of trainee, objectives for training and number of trainees etc.

Solem (1960) stated that case study and role playing methods of training play an important role in finding solutions of problems. Although, role playing method was perceived better to learn how to get acceptance of solutions as compared to case study.

Harris (1995) argued that one-to-one method is flexible method and used most frequently over the other methods of training. However this method is one of the complex training methods.

According to Garavan (1997), training and development in hospitality industry is play a very important for enhancing the level of guest satisfaction by using social skills, certain behavior and attitudes. This can be done only by role-plays, sensitivity training, computer case study aided training etc. These all methods relate to personal interaction with the trainees and develop the problems solving skills in to the trainees.

Moscardo's (1997) did her research on thinking skills of HR professional in hotel industry and found that these HR professionals had limited thinking approaches towards employee training. As they use only those training methods which are more accessible and already tested and also have no interest in understanding of employee training. This causes lack of employee retention rate in the hotel industry. Furunes and Mykletun (2005). This view is also supported by Jakobsen et al. (2002) and Engstrøm (2005) and said that there is negative attitude towards training which results shortage of training program in the hotel industry.

Curran and Blackburn (2001) highlighted the advantages of SMEs using on-the-job training methods.

Furunes (2005) has conducted a study in Norwegian hospitality industry on training methods which include case study, videotape, lecture, one-to-one training, role-play, games, computer simulations, paper and pencil programmed instruction, audiotapes, self-assessments, movies/films, multi-media presentations, computer-assisted instruction, video conferences, and sensitivity training. The study found one-to-one training method most effective method of training but role play method of training play effective role in interpersonal skill development as compared to one-to-one method. Further, the study found that large organizations use instructional videotapes, case study, role play, self assessment, multi-media presentation, computer-assisted instruction and programmed instructions method in employees training process whereas one-to-one training method and lecture is used in small organizations. In addition, case study and role-play has direct relation on the one hand whereas computer assisted instruction, films/movies and a videotape has on the other.

Feedback and attention are important elements of training program because these elements motivate (Mayer, 2002) and inspire employees to give better performance. Past studies also supported this view by arguing that training

methods facilitate instant feedback and attention to the trainees (Fedor, Eder & Buckley, 1989; Leung, Su & Morris, 2001; Macky & Johnson, 2000). At the outset, some studies demonstrate that training methods used in the organization prejudiced by time and costs (Barrows, 2000; Harris, 1995; Jameson, 2000).

The study also highlighted that one-to-one method of training can be cost effective if, the training is provided by experienced worker who is working with the organization from beginning. Lecture method is also found second most popular method of training but this method fails to make interaction between trainees.

Training Tools

There are various training tools are used for the students and employees training in the hospitality organizations such as photographs/chart/diagram, text and manual, transparencies and simulation tools.

Therefore, in order to meet the higher expectations and more diverse needs of both students and employees, a training system should be designed in a more individualized and educational format. For example, diversity in workforce has encouraged hospitality operators to implement effective and efficient training tools for their employees. Training programs offering specific training tools for students and employees.

In order to maintain, enhance and utilize industrial skills, Know-how and experiences, training multimedia resources such as training software, internet, computer assisted learning platforms and online & offline help resources play critical role through independent, flexible, interactive, time and cost effective ways (Pollard, 1992; Hosie, 1993; Murphy, 1993; Howard, 1995; Fankhauser and Lopaczuk, 1996; Reynolds and Iwinski, 1996). Moreover, these ways enable training multimedia resources to identify key strategic problems related to skill maintenance, just in time training, knowledge obsolescence and multi-skilling in the organizations (Oktem, 1996; Wagner and Flannery, 2004).

According to (Axtell, Maitlis, and Yearta, 1997; and Bates, 2003), the training tool/product should be 'content valid'. Here, 'content valid' refers to the transfer of information, knowledge, idea, expertise and experience are sound and broadly articulated, recognized, tested and designed (Stein and Frolick, 2001; Dobbs, 2006). The training tool/product will be 'content valid' only if the knowledge designer extracts the relevant information/knowledge from content experts and after that, plan and incorporate it into technology based training tools in order to provide training to the trainees.

It is also essential for the persons who design and develop training program to create materials focused on two approaches of learning i.e. cognitive based learning approach and behavior based learning approach Dobbs (2006, p. 500). Therefore, a sound learning theory and research must be incorporated in designing and developing training program.

Training Outcomes

It is defined as systematic collection of descriptive and judgmental information necessary to make effective training decisions related to selection, adoption, value and modification various instructional activities. For hospitality industry main outcome of the students training are students able to perform more effectively after training program. Training outcomes means what is the total output of training program.

Woods (1997) stressed upon the employees training and considered it as an employee- retention strategy. This view is also supported by many researcher Jakobsen et al. (2002) observed that this strategy is applied on those industries where recruitment of skilled employees is very difficult task. If they provide proper training to their employees, they

can minimize employees' turnover rates significantly. Consequently, they will not require the recruitment of fresh employees in the organization.

Zopiatis (2007) analyzed that internship provides more job opportunities after their education. Many studies also favours that with experience of training the students have more job offers then the others. The findings have confirmed the results of Cannon and Arnold (1998); Knouse, Tanner and Harris (1999); Kwok, Adams and Price (2011)

Mani (2010) in their research paper, "Evaluating Effectiveness of Executive Training" examined empirically four levels of measuring training effectiveness by using a sample of trainees who attended a management development program in 2010, targeting future managers. This study reveals that the training program can be further equipped with technology which is practiced during job functions. The interest among the employees can be sustained and increased by adopting new methods in teaching the course content .The positive attitude of the employees towards the training program could be increased by concentrating on the few steps suggested by HRM department.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the training practices within the Indian hotel industry emerge as a dynamic force, continually adapting to the evolving needs of the sector. This overview has illuminated the historical trajectory, revealing a commitment to skill development and a blend of traditional and modern training methodologies. As the industry strides forward, the integration of technology, particularly through e-learning platforms, underscores a forward-thinking approach to employee education.

Despite persistent challenges such as high turnover rates, the industry's investment in retention programs and career development initiatives reflects a dedication to cultivating a skilled and motivated workforce. The emphasis on soft skills and cultural sensitivity stands out, reaffirming the industry's understanding that the essence of hospitality extends beyond technical proficiency.

Looking ahead, the data-driven insights into training practices provide a foundation for strategic decision-making. As the Indian hotel industry continues to navigate a complex and competitive landscape, the role of training remains pivotal in ensuring a seamless and exceptional guest experience. By fostering a culture of continuous learning and adaptability, the industry is poised not only to meet but to exceed the expectations of a diverse and discerning clientele. Ultimately, the success of the Indian hotel industry hinges on its ability to invest in, evolve, and optimize its training practices to meet the demands of the future.

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