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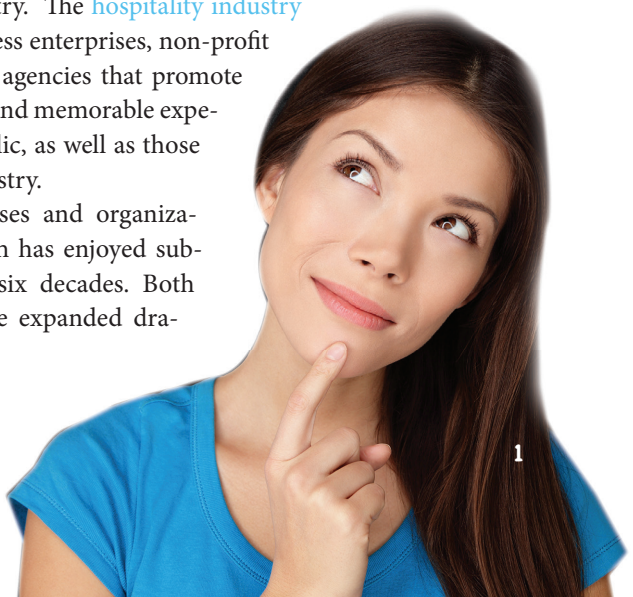
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The Internship Experience: An Overview

INTRODUCTION

The hospitality industry is an exciting area of commerce that has enjoyed rapid expansion over the past five decades. **Hospitality** is defined as, “the friendly reception and treatment of guests or strangers” (Dictionary.com, 2016). Consequently, the core service product delivered by all successful hospitality organizations is genuine care and concern for those seeking its services, which makes the hospitality industry the ultimate people business. At the heart of the industry are warm, personable human interactions that provide customers or guests of hospitality organizations with a sense of well-being, whether they are seeking overnight accommodations, a good meal, or any number of additional services provided by this growing industry. The **hospitality industry** includes a wide variety of business enterprises, non-profit organizations, and government agencies that promote and provide services, products, and memorable experiences to travelers and the public, as well as those that provide support to the industry.

Many hospitality businesses and organizations are fueled by travel, which has enjoyed substantial growth over the past six decades. Both business and leisure travel have expanded dra-



matically due to the improved accessibility of air travel as well as the growth of a global economy. Business travel generated \$280.2 billion in spending in the United States in 2014 (American Hotel & Lodging Association, 2015). In today's knowledge-based economy, business travel is generated by firms for countless reasons including to build fruitful, mutually beneficial business relationships, provide employee training, implement new company initiatives, interface with satellite offices, and to attend industry events and trade shows, just to name a few. Meanwhile, leisure travelers, including travel by both U.S. residents and international travelers visiting the United States, spent \$660.3 billion in 2014 and is the fastest growing segment of the travel industry (American Hotel & Lodging Association, 2015), bringing total travel expenditures in the United States to over \$980 billion in 2014.

Due to the increased affluence of today's retirees, along with their strong desire to travel, leisure travel is expected to drive continued growth in travel as the baby-boom generation continues to transition into their retirement years over the next two decades. This generation traveled extensively for business in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s, fueling the initial growth of the travel industry, and their propensity to travel is anticipated to continue, ensuring the ongoing expansion of the hospitality industry particularly in resort and leisure destinations. While the baby-boom generation initiated the rapid expansion of the industry over the latter half of the twentieth century, the millennial generation is the most rapidly expanding group of travelers today—not only are millennials traveling for business purposes, they also view travel as a leisure activity essential to living a high-quality, meaningful life. Intensified competition in the airline industry, coupled with the rise of a more affluent, larger middle class in many developing countries, have contributed to an increase in the number international travelers, because travel is more affordable and accessible to an ever-expanding proportion of the world's population.

This increase in both business and leisure travel has fueled demand for the wide variety of services, products, and experiences provided by the hospitality industry. Travelers require lodging, food and beverage services, as well as transportation, and support a host of additional hospitality-related enterprises including meeting, conference, and event venues, tourist attractions, theme parks, recreational facilities, entertainment and cultural organizations, and retail shopping. And, while human interactions are at the core of hospitality, these interactions are increasingly facilitated by technology and innovation, which has attracted many technology entrepreneurs to the industry such as the online travel companies (e.g., Expedia, Travelocity) and the sharing economy (e.g., AirBnB, Uber, ZipCar), as hospitality businesses seek to respond to the preferences of the next generation of travelers. Hospitality services are also consumed by the residents of the local community in which the respective businesses operate. Consequently, the hospitality

industry directly impacts nearly everyone and makes a positive contribution to the quality of life within each and every community.

As the hospitality industry has expanded, the number of hospitality management degree programs, at both the associate and bachelor degree levels, has grown in an effort to meet the industry's need for qualified managers. Despite this growth, many hospitality businesses still struggle to find an adequate number of qualified managers and supervisors to meet their needs. As a result, demand for hospitality graduates is strong. Academic preparation alone is not adequate to ensure the success of hospitality graduates—hospitality students also require hands-on industry experiences. In order to ensure that students obtain meaningful professional experiences prior to graduating from hospitality programs, virtually all hospitality degree programs require students to complete some form of professional industry experience or [experiential learning](#). The purpose of this handbook is to provide guidance and structure for hands-on industry experiences in an effort to ensure that students gain maximum benefit from a hospitality [internship](#) or [practicum](#) experience.

Definition of Experiential Learning

[Experiential learning](#) is a category of pedagogy that facilitates deep learning through planned, authentic activities that allow participants to engage in and reflect upon these activities in order to develop a better understanding of how the world works. There are many forms of experiential learning, including service learning, cooperative learning, immersion programs, simulations, design projects, research projects, as well as internships and practicums, among others. The focus of this handbook is on internships and practicums, which are two similar forms of experiential learning, defined as follows:

INTERNSHIP: A temporary position, which emphasizes on-the-job training versus traditional employment, in a professional industry environment that may provide future career opportunities for the participant. An example includes a short-term, summer work experience for a college student with a firm, with which the student may aspire to be employed following graduation, during which the student rotates through three different functional departments in order to allow the intern to further refine his/her career aspirations.

PRACTICUM: A temporary, professional hands-on experience, particularly in an educational or clinical setting, that allows for the supervised application of previously studied theory. Examples include student teaching; a nursing student vac-

cinating children in a public health clinic; or a hospitality management student forecasting a hotel's occupancy and revenue supervised by the hotel's revenue manager.

Internships and practicums typically target students, or other clearly defined groups of individuals, that the industry seeks to attract to the industry for future employment, as well as groups that may provide a reciprocal benefit since they work in partnership with the industry. For example, many hospitality firms offer faculty internships to improve hospitality educators' abilities to deliver meaningful educational experiences that relate business theory with actual industry practices; the reciprocal benefit to the industry, of course, is the improved educational experiences provided by these faculty interns, to students preparing to work in the hospitality industry following graduation, when they return to the classroom.

While internships and practicums are similar forms of experiential learning, it should be noted that these terms may be used interchangeably within the context of this manual. The focus of this handbook is to help hospitality students, hospitality educators, and hospitality organizations ensure that an experiential learning activity, regardless of its specific type, delivers the maximum benefit to all participants. Ultimately, hospitality management students must take responsibility for their own education. While hospitality educators and hospitality employers will facilitate experiential learning opportunities, students must take full advantage of these opportunities by aggressively seeking and securing appropriate internships and practicums; engaging in hands-on activities; properly preparing in advance of the activities by asking coworkers, supervisors, and facilitators appropriate questions before, during, and after the experiences; reflecting upon their experiences; and actively recording and articulating the lessons learned from the experiences.

A career in the hospitality industry requires strong interpersonal skills, a flexible work schedule, and a gracious demeanor, among many other attributes that make a hospitality career both emotionally and, at times, physically demanding. As a result, it is important that students assess whether the industry is the right fit for them through a hands-on internship experience. Ultimately, hospitality industry professionals will agree that the opportunity to positively impact the lives of others, including both guests and coworkers on a daily basis, makes a hospitality career even more rewarding.

The Breadth of Hospitality

The hospitality industry may be subdivided into multiple segments and provides a nearly unlimited number of career options. As a result, the industry provides



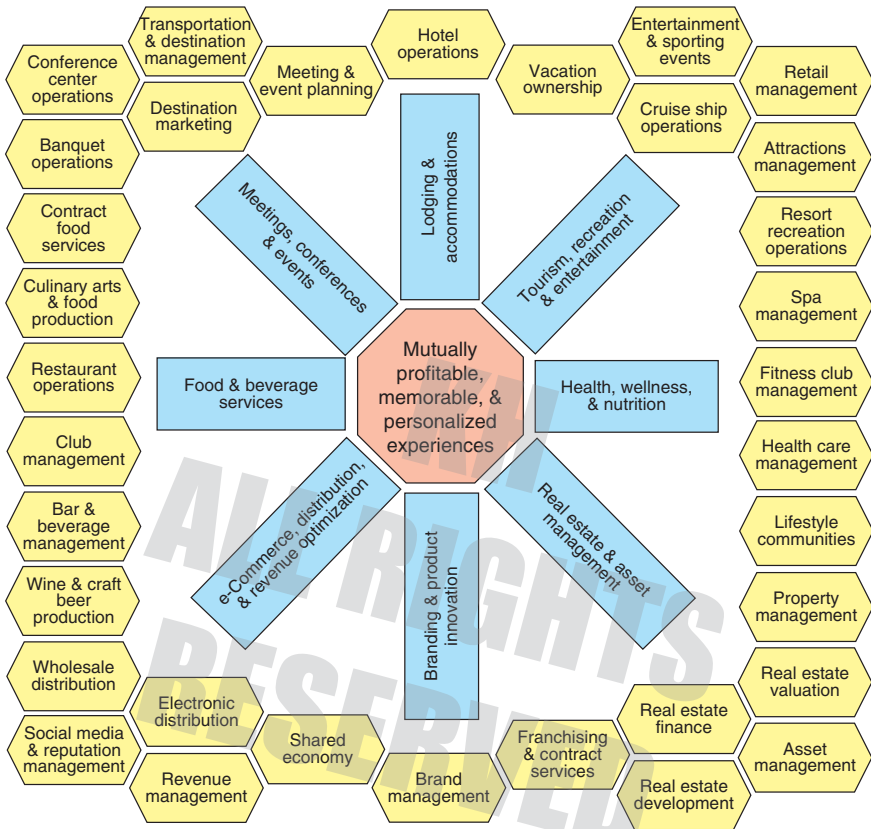


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The core competency of successful hospitality organizations is the ability to consistently demonstrate genuine care and concern for each guest.

employment opportunities too numerous to list and requires workers with a wide variety of skills and aptitudes. Diagram 1 illustrates the [hospitality career mosaic](#), which provides a framework for visualizing the full scope of industry segments offering career opportunities within the hospitality industry. While the mosaic is not intended to be exhaustive, it does attempt to identify the many facets of the hospitality industry including, of course, the traditional hotel and lodging, food and beverage services, meetings and events, and tourism and recreation segments of the industry. In addition, it identifies the aspects of health and wellness, real estate and asset management, branding and product innovation, as well as e-commerce, distribution, and revenue optimization segments of the industry—segments that provide many interesting career options of which many students may not initially be aware. While the traditional segments provide many outstanding career opportunities, and offer a wide variety of rich and valuable internship experiences,

aspiring industry professionals may also want to consider a less traditional path for at least a portion of the time that they invest in experiential learning activities in order to prepare for a hospitality career in the twenty-first century.



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DIAGRAM 1: *Hospitality Career Mosaic*

The hospitality career mosaic has, at its center, “mutually profitable, memorable, and personalized experiences” since these experiences are the common element that connect all hospitality organizations. When considering the hospitality industry as a career field, the segments of the industry that undoubtedly come to mind include the hotel, food service, meetings, and tourism disciplines. Consequently, these segments represent **traditional hospitality**. These four segments of the industry offer a wide variety of career opportunities as outlined here.

LODGING AND ACCOMMODATIONS The hotel industry is big business! A single hotel property typically requires an investment of tens (or even hundreds) of millions of dollars, generates millions of dollars in revenue, and employs dozens, if not hundreds, of employees. See Box 1 for a profile of the hotel and lodging industry in the United States. A full-service hotel operates businesses in several segments of the hospitality industry—hotel accommodations, a restaurant and bar, as well as meeting and conference facilities. Consequently, a career in hotel operations management can be professionally rewarding. In addition, there are a variety of exciting lodging-related career opportunities available in the closely related segments of vacation ownership, vacation property management, and the cruise line industry.

MEETINGS, CONFERENCES, AND EVENTS In 2012, nearly 225 million delegates attended the more than 1.8 million meetings that were held in the United States, generating direct spending of \$280 billion. Of this spending, 54 percent or \$150 million was invested in meeting planning and production, venue rental, and to purchase other meeting-related commodities. The remaining \$130 million of direct spending was on a wide variety of hospitality services including hotel accommodations, food and beverage, transportation, recreation and entertainment, and retail shopping (PricewaterhouseCoopers, LLP, 2013). Career opportunities in this segment of the hospitality industry may be found in destination marketing organizations, conference center and venue management, meeting and event planning, and destination management, among many others.

FOOD AND BEVERAGE SERVICES Not only was nearly \$30 billion spent on food and beverage services by meeting attendees in the United States in 2012 (PricewaterhouseCoopers, LLP, 2013), but the restaurant industry enjoyed \$782.7 billion in sales in 2015 and employed over 14 million workers, which represents 10 percent of the total workforce in the United States; there are also anticipated to be 1.7 million new jobs added by the restaurant industry within the next ten years. A career in the restaurant industry provides exceptional upward mobility—nine of ten restaurant managers and eight of ten restaurant owners started their restaurant careers in entry-level positions. For students that aspire to own their own business, the restaurant industry may provide just that opportunity—seven of ten restaurants are single-unit operations and nine of ten employ fewer than fifty people, which means that the great majority of restaurants are operated by small-business owners (National Restaurant Association, 2016). A career in the food and beverage industry is not just restricted to the restaurant segment, however. Food and beverage careers are available in banquet and catering operations, culinary

BOX 1: Profile of the Hotel and Lodging Industry



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The hotel industry is big business! Outlined below are several significant facts about the hotel and lodging industry in the United States (American Hotel & Lodging Association, 2015):

- There are 53,432 hotel properties in the United States representing nearly 5 million hotel rooms.
- 2014 hotel revenues totaled over \$176 billion.
- The industry employs over 1.9 million people at hotel properties across the country.
- An average of 4.8 million travelers stay in hotels each night in the United States.
- Globally, there are approximately 5,500 luxury hotels, which include hotel brands such as Four Seasons, Ritz-Carlton, St. Regis, and others; and over 11,000 upper-upscale hotels, which include the Hilton, Hyatt, Intercontinental, Marriott, Sheraton, and Westin brands, among others, worldwide (Smith Travel Research, 2013).
- The typical luxury or upper-upscale hotel has 168 rooms, enjoys an average daily rate (ADR) of approximately \$187.50, and generates room revenue of over \$7.5 million annually (Smith Travel Research, 2013).
- When you include food, beverage, and ancillary revenue, the typical luxury or upper-scale hotel is generating well over \$10 million annually in total revenue, with many of the largest upper-upscale hotels in major destination markets generating well over \$100 million annually.

In summary, each individual hotel property is a significant business enterprise that requires a substantial financial investment; generates millions of dollars in revenue; employs dozens, if not hundreds, of workers; and requires a well-educated professional management team to ensure the success of the business. Therefore, the hotel industry provides exceptional long-term career opportunities for hospitality management graduates.

arts and food production, contract food services, bar and beverage management, and club management, just to highlight a few of the many opportunities in this dynamic segment of the hospitality industry.

TOURISM, RECREATION, AND ENTERTAINMENT Tourism supports over 8 million or one in nine jobs in the United States generating \$1.4 trillion in economic impact, and representing 8 percent of the U.S. **gross domestic product** (GDP) (American Hotel & Lodging Association, 2015). When people travel, they are seeking to escape their daily routine in an effort to enjoy new experiences, pursue their favorite pastime, connect with loved ones, or explore new worlds. Consequently, they are seeking entertainment and recreation, which draws these travelers to various attractions and theme parks; recreational facilities including beaches, golf courses, and mountain resorts; and to adventures that may include whitewater rafting, rock climbing, or parasailing. The range of tourist, cultural, and recreational activities available to travelers today is nearly unlimited. Hospitality professionals provide fishing or hunting expeditions, helicopter tours of active volcano craters, and educational adventures for children in resort destinations—just to illustrate a small range of unique opportunities available to hospitality professionals and entrepreneurs.

Consider, too, additional segments of the hospitality industry, as discussed here.

HEALTH, WELLNESS, AND NUTRITION Many of the skills necessary for success in the traditional areas of hospitality are fully transferable to the health, wellness, and nutrition segment of the hospitality industry. Career paths in this area are available in the spa, health, and fitness industries, as well as in the increasing number of lifestyle communities, and extend into the world of health care management—including the management of health care facilities and food and nutritional services.

E-COMMERCE, DISTRIBUTION, AND REVENUE OPTIMIZATION The purchase of many hospitality services initially involves an information exchange, which occurs as part of a reservation process. For example, a traveler planning a trip to a specific destination needs to explore hotel, transportation, recreational, and entertainment options and, once selections have been made, payment information is typically provided by the traveler in exchange for a reservation or confirmation number from the vendor; the traveler then consumes the actual travel experience or service on the dates the service has been reserved. Since no tangible product has to be shipped to the consumer or warehoused to facilitate the online purchase, electronic distribution is the ideal channel for the distribution of many hospitality services such as hotel, airline, spa, or recreational activities. In addition, travelers increasingly rely upon consumer reviews to guide their selections. As a result, the

electronic distribution of hospitality services has expanded dramatically in recent years through services such as Expedia, Google Travel, Open Table, Travelocity, and TripAdvisor, as well as through the proprietary smartphone applications and the websites of hospitality firms. This change in how hospitality services are marketed, sold, and distributed has increased the number of career opportunities in revenue management, electronic distribution, and reputation management. Food delivery services, such as Eat24 and GrubHub, may eventually replace room service, as it is currently provided, in many hotels. So, if you are interested in combining a penchant for technology with your passion for hospitality, a career in hospitality related e-commerce may be an option for you.

BRANDING AND PRODUCT INNOVATION Hospitality firms are working to expand their brands to represent a range of lifestyle experiences. For example, Hyatt Hotels Corporation just announced the launch of a new brand—*Unbound*—that will provide its guests with “unique, high-end experiences that will extend beyond hotels” (Wroten, 2016). Consequently, in addition to attaching the *Unbound* brand to hotels, the brand may also be associated with other guest experiences that the brand’s target market may enjoy, such as a river cruise down the Nile. Relative to product innovation, the hospitality industry is ever evolving due to the creative mindset of hospitality professionals, which has resulted in whole new segments of the industry being established, such as the shared economy that has spurred the creation of AirBnB, Zipcar, and many other new hospitality business models. Finally, many operators of hospitality businesses want to align their business with a proven business model that has a positive reputation with consumers. As a result, there are many opportunities in the areas of brand management and franchising available within the hospitality industry since many hospitality brands, particularly restaurants and hotels, have successfully expanded the distribution of the service experiences through a **franchise model**.

REAL ESTATE AND ASSET MANAGEMENT Many hospitality businesses, particularly hotels and attractions, require a significant investment in a **real estate asset**. A hotel, for example, is a multimillion-dollar commercial real estate investment; and these investments are considered high risk due to the unique characteristics of hospitality businesses. Unlike an office building or retail center, for example, in which tenants make long-term, multiyear commitments to lease space, hotel rooms are rented by the night, which makes hotels particularly vulnerable to fluctuations in economic conditions. In addition, a hotel requires a more intensive capital investment. Again, in comparison to an office building or retail shopping center, in which the tenant makes all the necessary investment in **furniture, fixtures, and equipment (FF&E)** within the leased space, a hotel owner must pro-

vide not only a completely finished physical space, but also the furnishings, linens, electronics, and guest supplies; and, depending on the selection of peripheral services provided by the hotel, the hotel investor may also be required to invest in a number of support facilities including a commercial laundry, to service the guestroom linens; a commercial kitchen, to provide food and beverage services; as well as meeting and conference space and/or recreational facilities, such as a health club, pool, or spa. Meanwhile, the management of hotels is typically performed by hotel management firms that are **asset light**, which means that they do not own the physical real estate assets that they manage; as outlined in *The Structure of Hospitality Organizations* section of this handbook, hotel management firms typically gain control of a hotel asset by entering into a **management agreement** or contract with the hotel's owners to manage the day-to-day operation of the hotel. Consequently, **real estate investment trusts (REITs)** and other investors that own hotel real estate often employ hospitality professionals to help evaluate and oversee their hotel investments, employing them as asset managers to manage their relationship with the hotel management company, as well as with the hotel brands, with whom they may have entered into a **franchise agreement** to provide the hotel with a recognized brand affiliation, reservations services, marketing support, and guest loyalty program.

In conclusion, the hospitality industry provides a wide variety of career options in both traditional areas of hospitality management, including lodging, food services, meeting and conference services, and tourism, as well as in nontraditional fields, such as e-commerce and revenue optimization, branding and product innovation, real estate, and health, wellness and nutrition. Consequently, when exploring internship opportunities, it is important for students to consider the full range of both the traditional and nontraditional segments of the industry, which together comprise the entire **hospitality career mosaic**.

PURPOSE OF AN INTERNSHIP

In order to be appropriately prepared to step into a supervisory capacity, a properly educated hospitality professional will not only have acquired appropriate theoretical knowledge through academic preparation, but must also be able to practically apply this knowledge in an industry setting. As a result, nearly all hospitality programs at colleges and universities throughout the United States require some form of practicum or internship experience. The purpose of this experience is to ensure that students have practical, hands-on experience, which will allow them to not only understand how a hospitality organization functions as a business en-

terprise, but to also understand the perspective of the firm or organization's associates that these future industry leaders may one day supervise. In other words, as the adage states, an internship prepares the student to "walk the walk" not simply to "talk the talk."

Gaining Skills, Application of Knowledge, and Perspective

As students complete the internship experience, they will undoubtedly gain and sharpen skills essential to working in a hospitality environment. A properly designed internship experience, however, will do more than this. It will assist students in accomplishing the following goals:

1. Learn basic skills and procedures
2. Apply knowledge and problem-solving skills gained through classroom learning
3. Understand an employee's perspective
4. Identify a potential career path

Consequently, a student intern must understand that the internship experience is about much more than simply learning how to execute specific tasks. The process of learning a task may only take a few minutes. The far more important outcome of an experiential learning process is to understand the types of obstacles an associate may encounter when executing a given task, the resources available to the associate to overcome the obstacle, and the mindset that an employee may be likely to develop due to the redundant execution of the task for an entire workday, for several consecutive days and, potentially, for many years.

For example, if an intern is assigned to work in the laundry, the intern's objective is about much more than learning to operate the various pieces of laundry equipment and the wash cycles of various types of linen that must be serviced. Through the internship experience, the intern may encounter an equipment malfunction that hinders productivity, which impacts various other departments. The intern may gain better insight as to how the production cycle can be improved or laundry associates may be cross-utilized in an effort to improve labor productivity as was discussed in an operations management course. Finally, and most importantly, the intern will understand how it feels to work in a hotel's laundry operation day-after-day, week-after-week. How it feels to have other associates from the different hotel departments literally "dump their dirty laundry" at your work station, sometimes not properly sorted, while other associates may be demanding a "rush job" on some specific linen item due to a breakdown in communication, which has resulted in a specific item that is needed in the operation not being properly

BOX 2: The Value of Experience



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Shortly after graduating from college, I entered a corporate management training program for a major, rapidly expanding hotel chain. Following a new management orientation program conducted in the company's corporate offices, I was assigned to a hotel for training. On my first day of training at the property, I reported to the hotel's executive offices with great enthusiasm ready to launch my career. My assigned training coach explained that I would initiate my training program in the housekeeping department. The Executive Housekeeper instructed me to change into a uniform and to job shadow one of the hotel's Room Attendants. I was told that I would not be moved out of housekeeping and rotated into another department until I could clean a "full board" of 18 rooms in an 8-hour day that each passed the Executive Housekeeper's personal inspection.

After two weeks on the job, one thing was clear. I was able to clean rooms so that they met the Executive Housekeeper's inspection and I was able to clean 18 rooms in an eight-hour workday. The challenge was doing both simultaneously! The experience was eye-opening and gave me incredible respect for the job that Room Attendants consistently execute on a daily basis. It made me realize the many obstacles a Room Attendant faces; how one management error, such as management's failure to maintain a proper linen par, can negatively impact an associate's work environment; and how management's recognition of a job well-done can lift an associate's spirit.

After more than 35-years in the hospitality industry, this experience remains one of my most vivid memories. Over the years, I have conducted literally thousands of room inspections. All of these inspections have been influenced and tempered by this experience early on in my career. Because of the perspective that I gained relative to the challenges that Room Attendants face on a day-to-day basis, I have always had a great appreciation for the contribution that these hotel associates make to the success of a hotel operation.

Sincerely,
Michael D. Collins
Former Hotel General Manager and Author, *Make It Count!*

scheduled for cleaning in the day's production schedule. Or to know the satisfaction a Laundry Attendant feels when the Banquet Manager delivers freshly baked, chocolate-chip cookies to the laundry associates in appreciation for "rushing" the white table linens needed for that evening's banquet.

These are the realities of a hospitality operation that are not often discussed in the classroom, but are only experienced by working in a real-world hospitality environment. By living real-world experiences, both positive and negative, interns will gain valuable experiences that will influence their management approach, positively impacting the interns' effectiveness throughout their career, as outlined in Box 2, *The Value of Experience*.

Finally, an internship experience will assist learners in identifying an appropriate career path within the industry. As students are exposed to different disciplines within a hospitality operation, they will be able to identify their best competencies, as well as the aspects of the industry that they most enjoy. Consequently, students will be able to identify possible entry points that may be pursued upon graduation and career paths within the areas of interest. While interns must focus on the job at hand, they will undoubtedly have opportunities to discuss the career paths of other hospitality industry professionals, with whom they work, in order to better understand the skills needed to advance, as well as the career paths typically traveled, within the specific hospitality discipline.

Diagramming Processes and Creating Flow Charts

In order to facilitate an intern's understanding of key processes and procedures within a hospitality setting, students should be encouraged to diagram common practices within the industry. As examples, students working in a food and beverage setting should understand the flow of a guest's dining experience; in a hotel, the guest registration or guestroom cleaning procedures should be thoroughly understood; while in a human resource setting, experiential learners should be aware of the employee hiring process step-by-step. To facilitate this level of understanding of basic hospitality procedures, students should be encouraged to diagram the processes that they encounter throughout their hands-on learning experiences.

A **flow chart** or **service blueprint** is a detailed, step-by-step illustration of a process or service experience. It clearly identifies each step in a process and the sequence in which the steps are to be performed. A flow chart also articulates divergent paths, based upon one specific variable, and may be utilized to illustrate parallel processes. Flow charts are very useful as training tools and are commonly utilized to evaluate or streamline a process as well as to identify bottlenecks within a process. Consequently, it is critical that managers are able to properly diagram



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organizational processes—both internal procedural processes, such as the employee hiring process, and customer experiences, such as the guest registration process in a hotel. In order to develop this skill, experiential learners are encouraged to diagram as many processes as possible while completing an internship experience.

Three primary shapes are utilized in a typical service blueprint. The process begins with an oval, which identifies the initial input or start of the process, and ends with one or more ovals, which identify the potential output(s) or outcome(s) of the process. Rectangles represent each step in the process and diamonds are utilized to represent points within the process at which alternative paths are possible. At times, it may be useful to utilize inverted triangles, which appear much like a yield sign, to identify bottlenecks and/or critical steps in a process; inverted triangles also represent support processes that are not being detailed step-by-step in the diagrammed process since they are performed by a different team of associates.

The flow of the process is designated with arrows, which connect the various shapes. Arrows utilized to direct the flow of the process should never cross

since this may create confusion relative to the sequencing of steps. Flow charts generally flow from top-to-bottom or left-to-right; however, depending upon the complexity of the process, space available to illustrate the process, or the number of divergent paths, the illustrator may need to deviate from this convention. The key is that the flow of the process is logical and clear to the reader. It is critical that all paths lead to a possible outcome of the process and that there are no dead-end paths. Each step in a process is assigned its own box and no single process should be listed multiple times. When appropriate, divergent paths may merge back together if, at a specific point, two or more paths flow into a common or shared step in the process.

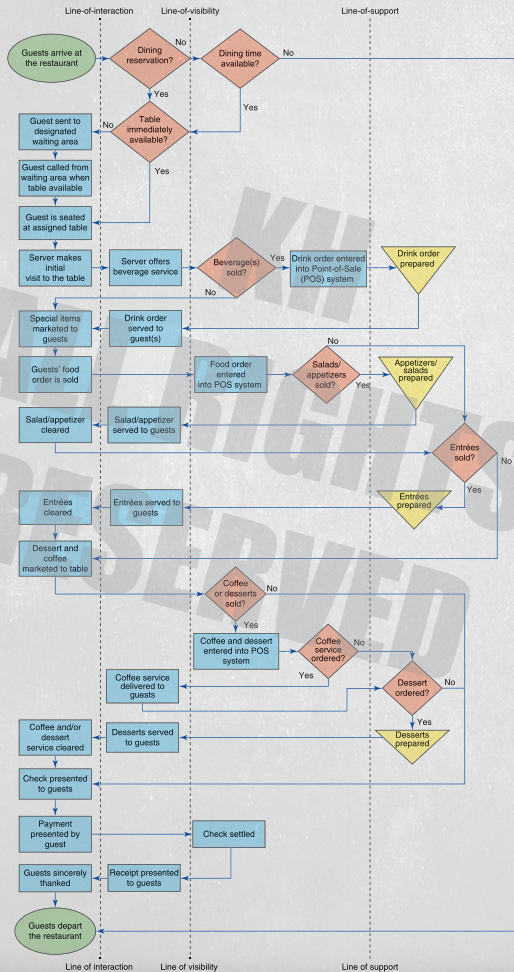
As previously mentioned, flow charts or service diagrams may be utilized to illustrate both **customer processes** and **internal processes** for a single job position, department, an entire organization, or subsets of an organization. A flow chart that illustrates a specific customer service process is often referred to as a service blueprint. A service blueprint will often include a **line of visibility**, which is illustrated as a dotted line that clearly separates the steps in the process that are visible to the customer from the steps that are not visible to the customer. A flow chart that depicts customer processes or service blueprint may also include a **line of interaction**, which defines points at which customers of the firm interact to provide input into the process with the firm's associates or surrogates of the firm (e.g., the firm's website, an automated telecommunications system); the line of interaction therefore identifies the "**moments of truth**" within the process. Finally, a **line of support** may also be included, again represented by a dotted line, which illustrates the points at which management or another support function or department within the organization interacts with the process or service provider in order to provide additional inputs, direction, guidance, or support. While each step of a process should have its own box, multiple steps of a support process may be designated in a single shape if it falls behind the "line of support." An example of a service blueprint is provided in Box 3, which illustrates a restaurant dining experience.

BOX 3: Service Blueprint: A Restaurant Dining Experience

The guest experience, starting with the guests' arrival at the restaurant and ending with the guests' departure from the restaurant, is outlined in the service blueprint provided in the diagram. Ovals are utilized to designate the guests' arrival at the start of the process and to identify the end of the process, which is when the guests depart the restaurant, as instructed in the *Diagramming Processes and Creating Flow Charts* section of this handbook. Rectangles are utilized to detail each step in the process and arrows designate the flow of the process, indicating the sequence in which the various steps must be completed. Diamonds indicate divergent paths in the process (for example, when the guest is asked if she has a dining reservation), and inverted triangles identify support processes, which may be diagramed separately, such as the fulfillment of an order for an alcoholic beverage or the preparation of an appetizer, entrée, or dessert; these "warning signs" also identify potential bottlenecks in the process. A line of visibility illustrates the processes that are executed in view of the customer, a line of interaction indicates points at which the restaurant guests interact and provide input into the process, and a line of support identifies the processes that may be fulfilled by support personnel within the organization, such as bartenders and the food preparation or culinary team. In the example illustrated, the items to the left of the line of visibility are performed in view of restaurant guests, items to the left of the line of interaction require input from the guest or engagement between the service provider and the guests, while processes positioned to the right of the line of support are performed by supporting personnel or departments.

Service blueprints are not a replacement for detailed policies and procedures; however, they are a good first step when creating an effective policy. Quality organizations establish [standard operating procedures \(SOPs\)](#) in order to ensure that guests consistently receive quality experiences that meet or exceed their expectations, to make certain that appropriate control procedures are in place, and/or to ensure effective, efficient internal processes to support the operation. In addition, SOPs establish clear expectations for employees and help drive labor productivity. A service blueprint will identify all of the steps included in the procedure, designate the sequence of those steps, and illustrate the flow of a process; the SOP fills in the details regarding each step of the process and is much more descriptive, often providing a suggested script for an associate to follow when appropriate. A service blueprint, used in conjunction with a detailed SOP, is an effective training tool since it helps an employee visualize a process step-by-step. To use an analogy, a service blueprint is like a skeleton, which frames out the process, while the SOP fills in the details and is like the flesh on the bones.

By constructing service blueprints, as part of the experiential learning process, hospitality students will gain a much deeper understanding of how a successful hospitality enterprise operates and further develop their ability to dissect, analyze, and improve service processes—a skill critical to the long-term success of a hospitality professional.



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THE EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING PROCESS

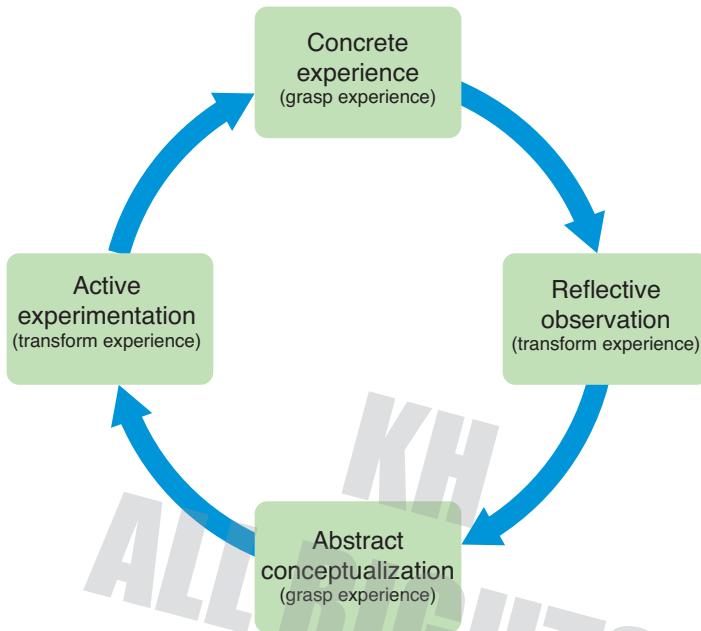


DIAGRAM 2: *The Kolb Model of the Experiential Learning Process*

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Learning does not occur as a result of experiences alone; experiences must be transformed into knowledge through a cognitive process during which the learner thinks about and reflects upon the experience, relating it to his or her current knowledge base. As theorized by David Kolb (1984), a concrete, hands-on experience begins the learning process in which the learner participates in an activity or series of activities which allows the learner to “do” and/or to “feel” something. Following this **concrete experience**, the learner reflects on the experience to determine what parts of the experience are useful and important to remember—a process that Kolb refers to as **reflective observation**. The learner will then begin the process of **abstract conceptualization** during which the learner connects the concrete experience and the valuable components of that experience, identified through reflection process, to other concepts that are known and understood by the learner; or the learner may form new theories and explanations relative to the phenomena experienced. **Active experimentation** is the next step in the experiential learning cycle. Depending upon the learner’s learning style, the reflection and abstract conceptualization processes

will lead to a series of questions, that may include *what*, *what if*, *how*, and/or *why*, in response to the experience—questions that lead the learner to actively experiment. The learner may then replicate or modify the experience in order to confirm or test his or her previous understanding or new theories developed. In other words, the active experimentation process results in another concrete experience that either confirms or modifies previously held beliefs or hypotheses, deepening the learner’s understanding of how the world works and reinitiating the learning cycle. This repetitive, circular process facilitates the transformation of the learning experience into useful knowledge as the learner works to “grasp” and “transform” the experience as illustrated in Diagram 2 (Yeganeh & Kolb, 2009).

Practices Critical to a Meaningful Internship Experience

An effective **experiential learning** process must not only allow, but must be designed to require the learner to engage in each step of the experiential learning cycle so that the learner can transform the experience into knowledge, skills, and competencies. Consequently, the National Society for Experiential Education (1998) has outlined eight practices critical to a meaningful internship or experiential learning experience. These eight practices are as follows:

1. **INTENTION:** Everyone involved in the experience must clearly understand the reason why experiential learning is the selected pedagogy and the specific knowledge that is to be gained from the experience. “Intention represents the purposefulness that enables experience to become knowledge and, as such, is deeper than the goals, objectives, and activities that define the experience” (National Society of Experiential Education; 1998).
2. **PREPAREDNESS AND PLANNING:** All parties involved must have established a sufficient foundation upon which to build a meaningful experience. Goals, objectives, and activities must be defined to create a plan that supports the specified intention. A well-designed plan will allow some flexibility so that it can be modified based upon the realities of the internship environment, while still serving as a roadmap throughout the process to ensure that specific learning goals are achieved.
3. **AUTHENTICITY:** The learning experience must take place within the context of a real-world environment and/or be applicable to an actual situation that may be encountered in an applied hospitality industry setting. In other words, the learning should take place in an actual hospitality industry workplace and/or should include activities that are designed to address real situations actually encountered within the industry.

4. **REFLECTION:** As previously outlined, the experiential learner must be required to think about the experience, or to reflect, in order to transform the experience into an educational activity. During the reflection process, the learner will think about the experience and attempt to relate it to known concepts and theories on how the world works. The reflection process may involve challenging previously held beliefs, hypothesizing relative to new possible alternative outcomes or solutions, and/or the confirmation of the learner's current understanding.
5. **ORIENTATION AND TRAINING:** Prior to the learning experience, all parties must be engaged in a process to ensure that the learner fully appreciates and is acclimated to the learning environment; the facilitators must also understand the intention and purpose of the learning experience. By ensuring that a base of knowledge is established at the start of the process, with all participants, the learner and facilitators can work in concert to expand the learner's appreciation of the context as well as his or her knowledge-base and skills.
6. **MONITORING AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT:** An actual industry environment is dynamic and ever changing. As a result, the initial training plan will undoubtedly require some degree of adjustment as the learning experience unfolds. In order to ensure that effective adjustments are made, the progress of the learner must be evaluated on an ongoing basis and changes in the learning plan made, as appropriate, to ensure the most desirable learning outcomes possible. The evaluation process should evaluate not only the progress of the learner, but also include an assessment of the specific learning activities, environment, and facilitators. This evaluation process is only meaningful if appropriate adjustments are made, by all parties involved, based upon the feedback received.
7. **ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION:** As part of the planning process, a strategy to assess the level of achievement by the learner must be defined, not only relative to the learning objectives and the quality of execution of the assigned tasks and activities by the learner, but also relative to the overall intention and purpose of the internship. The assessment plan must track and document the progress of the learner over the course of the experiential learning process and may be utilized to adjust or refine specific learning goals.
8. **ACKNOWLEDGMENT:** The accomplishments of the learner, as well as the contributions of the facilitators, should be recognized over the course of the experiential learning process. This acknowledgement should be documented and celebrated, which will help maintain a high level of engagement by all participants in the experiential learning process while ensuring that best practices are identified. Acknowledging the achievements and contributions of the participants also assists in bringing closure to the experiential learning process.

The next section of this internship handbook provides practical guidance on how to structure an internship, practicum, or similar experiential learning activity in order to ensure that these best practices are appropriately executed. This will enable all participants involved to gain maximum benefit from their efforts. It also provides step-by-step guidance on successfully completing an internship experience. In addition, Section 2 provides guidance on how to locate an internship opportunity, prepare a resume that will get noticed, successfully interview for a position, and then select an experiential learning opportunity that will provide a meaningful learning experience.

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