

**Desktop Reference
Of Good People
Management –**

**Talent Management and
Labour-management
Communication –**

**In Hotel and Tourism
Industries**



Produced by:

Tripartite Committee on Hotel and Tourism Industries

Workplace Consultation Promotion Division, Labour
Department

Contents of the Desktop Reference

Talent Management 3

Labour-Management Communication 12

Action Planners 20

Useful Contacts 23

Hotel and tourism industries are two of the economic pillars of Hong Kong. Through the joint efforts of both management and labour, Hong Kong has always been providing a premium quality of service to the visitors. Upon realizing the importance of harmonious labour relations, individual enterprises have implemented a wide array of good management practices that suit their needs. Such practices, albeit different in nature and format, share the same principles of “employee oriented”, “law abiding” and “equal and fair”. These good people management practices enable employers and employees to establish partnership and therefore better cope with the challenges and opportunities ahead.

With an emphasis on the two major aspects of people management, namely talent management and labour-management communication, the **Tripartite Committee in Hotel and Tourism Industries** (the “Tripartite Committee”) has consolidated a number of examples of good people management practices of the industries as references. Given the great variety in the nature and format of such practices, we have not covered all of them. That said, it is hoped that the examples illustrated in this booklet could stimulate employers to implement good practices in daily management. Besides, this guide provides some tips to help evaluate the existing management practices and useful planners to assist in organising various talent management and communication projects.

The members of the Tripartite Committee are as follows (in alphabetical order):

Employers' Associations

- Hong Kong Association of China Travel Organizers Ltd
- Hong Kong Association of Travel Agents Limited
- Hong Kong Hotels Association
- Hong Kong Outbound Tour Operators' Association Limited
- Hongkong Japanese Tour Operators Association Limited
- Hongkong Taiwan Tourist Operators Association Limited
- International Chinese Tourist Association Ltd.
- The Federation of Hong Kong Chinese Travel Agents Limited
- The Federation of Hong Kong Hotel Owners
- Travel Industry Council of Hong Kong

Employees' Trade Unions

- Hong Kong & Kowloon European Hotel & Restaurant Workers Union
- Hong Kong Tourism Industry Employees' General Union
- Hotels, Food & Beverage Employees Association

TALENT MANAGEMENT

Talent management includes such aspects as recruitment, selection, staff training and development.

Recruitment

Matching suitable employees for the job is essentially the first step of recruitment. To attract and look for the best suitable candidates, an employer should, before actual recruitment exercise, –

- Conduct job analyses to identify the job requirements and necessary attributes of the applicants.
- Draw up the job specifications objectively and precisely, and list out the tasks, responsibilities and terms and conditions of employment, as well as the qualifications for assuming the post.

Selection

In the course of preliminary screening and deciding on who is the most suitable candidate, an employer should –

- Adopt a set of standardized selection criteria to assess the capabilities of the applicants so as to reduce prejudice and avoid discrimination.

- Solicit from the applicant essential information pertaining to the selection and refrain from making unnecessary enquiries, in order not to give an impression of discrimination against the applicant.
- Abide by the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance and keep the employees' particulars in confidence.

Apart from the above, an employer should also observe the principles of equal employment opportunities and let the job-seekers and employees –

- Compete on equal terms based on their abilities, competencies and knowledge.
- Not be discriminated on grounds of sex, marriage status, pregnancy, disability, age, family responsibilities, race, nationality or religion.

By so doing, an employer would not only gain the trust and respect from the employees, but also attract more talents to come.

Examples of Good People Management Practices

- A hotel works in cooperation with a consultancy firm to design a set of instruments for talent selection, in which it includes a questionnaire on the potentials of candidates as against different job requirements. Based on the principle of objective analysis, the whole recruitment system

enables the potentials of applicants to be on trial, hence verifying the reasonableness of recruitment decisions. At the same time, representatives of various departments would involve in the selection process to ensure its objectivity and comprehensiveness. Representatives include officers of human resource department, direct supervisors, registered assessors and general managers.

- To ensure the selection process be fair and comprehensive, a hotel offers two interview opportunities to all eligible interviewees.
- Quite a number of hotels have already adopted a fair policy. Some of them even state it clearly in their employees' handbook as: "We treat colleagues of all levels in respect and fair at all times. Therefore, the appointment, promotion or training of colleagues are completely based on their qualifications, and has nothing to do with their race, colour, sex, religion, age, seniority, disability and other aspects." Some hotels introduce a code of conduct on equal opportunity to ensure all job-seekers will receive fair treatment in appointment and promotion. They actually put their measures into practice by engaging disabled persons to work in different departments.

Tips of Good Practices

- In the process of recruitment and selection, have you provided precise and objective information on the job requirements, responsibilities and

conditions of employment to the job seekers, so as to allow them to get hold of relevant information and to help them accommodate with the company culture if selected?

- Have you made every effort to ensure the application form and interview questions contain no discriminatory elements?
- Is the recruitment and selection process reliable (i.e. not leading to wrong decisions) and effective (i.e. the selection criteria are only job-related)?
- Is the recruitment and selection methodology able to match with the corporate direction and development strategy?

Staff Training and Development

To move with the times and seize opportunities for corporate development, an employer should at the earliest possible set out talent management plans. As a matter of fact, employers become increasingly aware that outstanding staff is the key behind success. By proper nurturing of employees and letting them excel in their posts, an employer does not only benefit its employees, but also enhance the competitiveness and service quality of the company.

The training aspects offered by an employer to its employees should include –

- Proper induction training on the familiarization with the company's operations, working environment, workflow, company policy as well as rights and obligations of employees themselves.

- Other work-related training to top up the employees who have less exposure in terms of education, training and experience in the past.
- Training on occupational safety and health.

An employer should also offer continuous training for the employees to enhance their job-related skills and knowledge and to provide them with opportunities for development. This facilitates an employer to retain the talent and sustain their enthusiasm at work.

To ensure the training is effective, an employer should make an assessment on the employees' training needs, which are mainly originated from –

- Forthcoming job responsibilities that require new skills.
- Problems arose from work performance.
- Skills and career development.

When training opportunities are available, an employer should ensure all employees be considered fairly, and take out objective and standing criteria in the selection process.

Examples of Good People Management Practices

Induction Training

- Many travel agents provide pre-employment training to their employees. These training

courses include tourist guiding skills, marketing, ticketing, customer service, internet applications, first-aid and so on so forth. Some travel agents also offer new recruits airport attachment courses. To have a better experience sharing, part of the courses are organised and tutored by experienced tour escorts.

- Some established travel agents recommend and subsidize their employees to enroll in professional courses organised by outside training bodies, while some may arrange training classes in conjunction with post-secondary institutions and tourism training organisations. There are companies offer comprehensive attachment opportunities and induction training to those students of tourism department as well. These companies offer jobs to some of these trainees so that they may join the service as soon as they get graduated.
- To assist new recruits to be familiar with the company culture, most of the hotels provide them with induction training for a period ranging from 15 to 90 days. Some hotels arrange the employees as guests during training, which helps them understand the workflow of hotel service from the perspective of visitors.

On-the-job Training

- Many travel agents organise talks on new travel routes and overseas visits for their existing employees, who may then experience personally the customs of different countries and enhance

their sales techniques and escorting skills.

- Apart from induction training, many hotels offer various training activities to improve the employees' know-how. These enable employees to know the company in greater detail and adapt to the new environment, which in turn facilitate them to handle daily routines and develop their strengths. Moreover, to facilitate exchange of work experience, some hotels assign their employees to be trained under another hotel of the same Group.
- Some hotels regard training events as part of the job routines. They assign a staff as instructor in every department to take care of the newcomers and offer the latter with appropriate training. Some other hotels implement a "15-minute Training Course", which is hosted by departmental manager or supervisor on a daily basis.
- Furthermore, some hotels have designated in every department a trainer, who is responsible for devising tailor-made on-the-job training for his/her department on a monthly basis. This helps ensure the training contents be really met the needs of the staff.
- Many hotels arrange regular training workshops on service, people management, computer usage and occupational safety to their employees. To encourage the staff to continuously upgrade themselves, some hotels also offer allowances for their staff to study outside, such as language and management courses.
- Computerization is also applicable to training. By means of computer software, a hotel provides

training on telephone answering skills, check-in procedures and handling complaints from guests. Employees may therefore be more flexible in taking these courses outside their working hours.

Staff Development

- A travel agent sets out the policy on staff development, in which it lists out any employees with outstanding performance and strong potentials will be given rooms for development. When there are vacancies, priority will be given to internal staff who are interested and suitable. Staff postings will be arranged where circumstances fit. In this case, comprehensive assistance and training will be given in accordance with the nature of the new posts, such that the staff concerned may excel in their personal career.
- A hotel provides suitable employees with potential to be promoted to managerial level appropriate training, such as supervisor-trainee and manager-trainee schemes. Being blended with theory and practice, staff may acquire different sorts of work knowledge and managerial skills through these schemes. Some hotels work in collaboration with universities to co-organise training courses for their existing managerial staff. By way of computer learning and lecturing, these trainees learn and exchange ideas among themselves.
- Some hotels launch job standard verification schemes, which analyze job specifications for each competency and level and set out respective

performance standards. These are aimed at assessing the staff performance and enhancing the overall efficiency and service standard. Outstanding employees will be awarded with a medal and certificate as tokens of commendation.

Tips of Good Practices

- Has the staff training plan been endorsed and supported by senior management, frontline supervisors and employees?
- In recommending employees to undergo training, have you ensured all of them receive the same training opportunities, including those with low educational level or aged ones?
- Have you evaluated the effectiveness of the training plan regularly and revised it where necessary?
- In devising the training plan, have you taken into consideration of its alignment with the staff development policy?

LABOUR-MANAGEMENT COMMUNICATION

Labour-management Communication

Establishing good communication channels is one of the ways to fully acknowledge the needs of employees, and is fundamental to good people management. Communication does not only understand the needs of employees but also explain to them company strategies in the speediest manner, which helps reduce any possible misunderstandings between management and employees. In fact, it would be easier for an employee to excel in his job and make achievements if he/she knows well about the situation of the company, its requirements and targets to achieve. To formulate effective labour-management communication, an employer should take note of the followings –

- An employer should prepare to communicate and consult with employees on any changes affecting them, such as work pattern, procedures or something pertaining to the employment.
- An employer should also consult, if any, staff associations, trade unions or joint consultative committees.

An effective labour-management communication should possess the following features –

- Support from both senior managerial staff and general employees.
- Information to be communicated should be objective, clear and concise.
- Regular and systematic.
- Bilateral communication to ensure free exchange of views.

Examples of Good People Management Practices

Establishing Communication Channels

- Many travel agents make use of various channels to increase the opportunities to communicate with staff, such as questionnaires, interview and counseling, staff suggestion schemes, working group meetings, tea gatherings and other informal exchange meetings. Through these means the management acknowledge the genuine concerns and difficulties of the employees. Management may also respond to views of employees on company policy or work assignments, and give them proper counseling and assistance.
- Some travel agents disseminate the management's information effectively and timely to employees of all level through channels like weekly briefing sessions, employees' handbook and staff bulletin.
- To enable employees to understand the management philosophy, department's vision and mission statements and code of service, a hotel

has specially redecorated a common passageway displaying such information in texts and images for staff. This creates a warm, colourful and energetic working environment and the morale of staff has been greatly improved.

Rewarding schemes

- Some travel agents organises, on a regular basis, versatile and interesting contests, such as "Courtesy Ambassador Award", "Corporate Image Ambassador Award" and "Best Customer Service Employee for the Month", to inculcate employees' commitment and service mindset. Through these awards, employers are able to recognize outstanding staff and effectively arouse the awareness of employees on good service attitude and professional image.
- To commend and motivate outstanding employees for their positive working attitude, there are travel agents arranging a feast of reward schemes on performance, telephone service, marketing and business promotion aspects. For those high performers on tourist guiding or escorting, management will present them each with a Certificate of Merit. The names of the recipients, along with the commendation letter, will be displayed on the notice board as well.
- Likewise, many hotels have incentives and rewards programmes to select the best department, supervisors, and service ambassadors regularly. There are also some service awards, such as loyalty awards and long

service awards to motivate the employees to keep up their good work. Such awardees, who are first nominated by their supervisors and are elected by all staff, will receive the award in a presentation ceremony conducted by senior management such as the General Manager.

Bilateral communication

- To strengthen communication with employees working at different locations, a hotel group sets up service kiosks at every member hotel. Manned by staff of the human resource department three days a week, these kiosks operate to resolve staff problems.
- A hotel arranges for each department quarterly lunch gathering, which is hosted by respective department head, to let employees express their opinions and queries. Any decisions and feedback of the management towards staff enquiries will be posted on the notice board for employees' attention.
- To take special care for the new recruits, some hotels organise forums for employees who are under probation to exchange views among themselves. This helps intensify the management's communication with and understanding of employees.
- In addition to usual meetings and communication channels, some hotels have daily briefings conducted by respective departments. Such briefings last for only 15 to 20 minutes, and serve as a discussion avenue with employees on

company operations and routines.

- To encourage staff communication, a hotel has an “Open Door Policy”, where staff may make use of different ways to reflect their views to the management, including monthly departmental meetings, quarterly staff general meetings, round-table meetings attended by General Manager and Human Resource Director, as well as “Owl Morning Meetings” for employees working overnight.

Management Commitment

- No matter how busy, a Chairman of a travel agent insists to having lunch with frontline supervisors in exquisite eateries to enhance the communication and exchange with one another, and show management’s concern towards employees. This helps reduce the communication barrier between them.
- Some hotels convene quarterly sharing sessions with employees. Chaired by the General Manager, the management may share the business performance, marketing strategies and latest developments with staff during these sessions, so as to further strengthen internal communication. At the same time, employees may enquire and express their opinions, hence enabling different employees to share their views and be equipped with the business situation. The more the employees know, the stronger the team spirit.
- To ensure all employees have the same opportunity to communicate with the

management, some hotels, by means of drawing lots, select different staff to have lunch gatherings with General Manager. Staff may therefore freely express their views to the General Manager and Human Resource Director. To foster an open communication atmosphere, all ideas and opinions collected during such gatherings will be followed-up and announced.

Service Pledge

- Apart from handling all personnel issues, many hotels' human resource departments provide other services for their employees, such as preparing testimonials of work, application forms for various Government allowances, replacement of staff-identity cards and badges and even arranging visits to hospitalized staff. Some human resource department has even implemented a performance pledge on their service to assure timely handling of staff requests. As employees are clear about the processing time of their applications, they will be more confident in the management.

Tips of Good Practices

- Has your organisation set out effective machinery to ensure all the opinions and suggestions put forward by employees will be followed-up and announced openly to them?
- Do senior managerial staff and general employees support the existing communication machinery?

- Are the existing communication channels able to encourage effective and open bilateral communication between management and staff?
- Have you regularly evaluated the existing communication policy and channels on their effectiveness and any rooms for improvement?

ACTION PLANNERS

Recruitment Plans				
<i>Vacancies</i>	<i>Recruitment Channels</i>	<i>Interview Dates and Particulars</i>	<i>Outcome</i>	<i>Remarks</i>

Staff Training Plans

<i>Training Item</i>	<i>Target Employees</i>	<i>Course Providers and Details</i>	<i>Completion Date</i>	<i>Remarks</i>

Staff Communication Activities

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Target Employees</i>	<i>Organiser and details</i>	<i>Remarks</i>

USEFUL CONTACTS

Labour Department

- Homepage: <http://www.labour.gov.hk>
- Interactive Employment Service: <http://www.jobs.gov.hk>
- Enquiry Hotline: 2717 1771 (the hotline is handled by "1823")

Recruitment and Selection

- Job Vacancy Processing Centre
Tel. 2503 3377 Fax 2566 3331
- Selection Placement Division
Tel. 2852 4801 Fax 2541 5290
- Employment Information and Promotion Programme
Tel. 2852 3232 Fax 2850 5191

Workplace Consultation

- Workplace Consultation Promotion Division
Tel. 2121 8690 Fax 2121 8695

Other Government Departments/Organisations

Recruitment and Selection

- Equal Opportunities Commission
Tel. 2511 8211 Fax 2511 8142
Website: <http://www.eoc.org.hk>
- Office of the Privacy Commissioner for Personal Data,
Hong Kong
Tel. 2827 2827 Fax 2877 7026
Website: <http://www.pcpd.org.hk>

Staff Training

- Employees Retraining Board
Tel. 182 182 Fax 2369 8322
Website: <http://www.erb.org>
- Hong Kong Productivity Council
Tel. 2788 5678 Fax 2788 5900
Website: <http://www.hkpc.org>
- Hospitality Industry Training and Development Centre of
Vocational Training Council
Tel. 2751 5808 Fax 2538 2538
Website: <http://www.vtc.edu.hk/>