TOWARDS AN INTEGRATED CAREER CHANGE MODEL IN THE HOTEL INDUSTRY: A GROUNDED THEORY APPROACH

A Thesis in
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by
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to deepen our understanding of why young professionals in the hotel industry change their careers to work in different industries. A grounded theory approach was employed to explore a broad range of issues that are a part of the decision to change careers. Through a series of open-ended interviews with people who have left the hotel industry, a model explaining their behavior has been developed. The findings indicate that in contrast to much of the literature regarding career change, job satisfaction and professional identity were not key factors in the decision to change careers. However, dissatisfaction with career progression did seem very important, as well as the issue of work to life conflict, which is seldom studied in career change literature, was found as a key driver of career change. Career change in general has received scant attention in hospitality settings and, to the knowledge of the author, none in a hotel setting. This paper contrasts current literature by exploring the viewpoint of those who have actually changed careers to better understand the phenomenon, and seeks to identify the key reasons why young hotel professionals change their careers.
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Chapter 1
Introduction

Career change is a burgeoning topic of research as evidenced by recent publications from a variety of perspectives (Blau, 2007; Blau, 2009; Carless and Arun 2010; Khapova, Arthur, Celeste and Jorgen, 2007; Parry, 2008; Shropshire and Kadlec, 2012). However, there has been scant attention paid to the phenomenon as it relates to young professionals, and, to my knowledge, no research conducted in the unique operating environment of hotels. The purpose of this study is to understand the career change process within the hotel industry and to better understand the process of career change from the perspective of young professionals who have already changed careers.

Career change is defined here as the movement to a new occupation that is not a part of an expected or typical career progression (Lawrence, 1980). Career change differs from turnover, which would also encompass a movement from an employer to a competitor. The term turnover also incorporates the concept of job change, as in the movement to a similar job, or to a job that is part of a normal career path. Examples of career change from this study include an informant who left her job as a front office supervisor to pursue a career in teaching, and another informant who left his job as a housekeeping manager to start his own fire safety business. It should be noted that this definition of career change overlaps with both voluntary and involuntary turnover, as a person who changes careers will by definition turnover. An example of turnover before changing careers is one informant who had worked with two separate hotel companies, first in Las Vegas, then in Phoenix as an assistant front office manager before she ultimately changed careers to work as an administrator in higher education. Another example of turnover is an
informant who left a position within a hotel as a guest services manager to work for a competitor before changing careers to do marketing for a brewery.

The integrated career change model (Rhodes and Doering, 1983) attempts to predict the behavior of people who change their careers. However, the majority of research on career change focuses on the intent to leave a career (e.g., Blau, 2000; Carless & Bernath, 2007; Donohue, 2007; Higgins, 2001; Rhodes & Doering, 1993) as opposed to the actual behavior of individuals. The relationship, in the related field of turnover, between intention and behavior is at best a moderate one (Griffith, Hom and Gaertner, 2000; Tett and Meyer, 1993). A study by Lee, Gerhart, Weller and Trevor (2008) indicated that people with turnover intentions were less likely to leave an organization than people who received unsolicited job offers. Rhodes and Doering, (1983) state that intention to leave a career is part of the withdrawal process, however, that specific part of the process has yet to be tested.

**Research Questions**

This study aims to explore career change through the individual’s point of view to examine the factors that contributed to the decision to change careers, through an exploratory, grounded theory approach. This study’s approach builds a model from the research data without a priori theoretical assumptions about the phenomenon (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Strauss and Corbin, 1990). Results from semi-structured interviews with career changers have been developed into a model demonstrating what factors induce career change in young hotel professionals. This grounded model summarizes the challenges and experiences individuals faced while both working in and changing careers from the hotel industry, and in doing so provides a base for future research in career change. The purpose of this grounded theory study is to develop a career change theory for hotel managers and is based on two major research
questions: Why do entry-level hotel managers change careers? What are the major processes through which entry-level hotel managers go through to change careers?
Chapter 2

Theoretical Background

Rhodes and Doering (1983) presented a theory of career change, which integrates the turnover literature with the career change phenomenon. The model was primarily drawn from Mobley, Horner and Hollingsworth’s (1978) turnover model. The Mobely et al. (1978) model has received strong empirical support throughout the years (Coverdale and Terborg, 1980; Spencer, Steers and Mowday, 1981; Hom, Caranikas Walker, Prussia, and Griffeth, 1992; Hom and Kinicki, 2001; Michaels and Sepctor, 1982). The integrated career change model (Rhodes and Doering, 1983) is broken down into 17 blocks, and can be seen below in Figure 2-1.
The integrated career change model separates career change from turnover as a distinct dependent variable and adds organizational factors, environmental influences and personal factors into career change. Additionally, the model posits that job satisfaction, career satisfaction, career progression, and job performance are key drivers of career change. Several recent studies examine career change with factors not included as a part of the integrated career change model: Work Stress (Shrophshire and Kadelc, 2012; Carless and Arnup, 2011), job security (Shropshire and Kadlec, 2012), and social pressure and professional identity (Shapova, Arthur, Celeste and Jorgen, 2007; Lee, Carsweel and Allen, 2000). A critique of the integrated career change model will next be discussed.
Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction, as defined by Williams (2004), is the overall or global affective reactions that people have toward their jobs, and is one of the most heavily studied constructs in turnover literature (e.g., Mobley, et al, 1978; Hom and Kinicki, 2001). Job satisfaction has also been identified as a key driver of career change (Rhodes and Doering, 1983). It remains unclear, however, whether or not job satisfaction can explain career change. In studies in which samples’ responses are tied to intention to change careers, job satisfaction appears to be related to career change (Perry, 2008; Blau 2009; Lee, Carswell and Allen, 2000) as Rhodes and Doering (1983) suggest. However, in one of the rare papers regarding career change that measured the actual behavior (the paper measured how frequently people changed careers rather than just their intentions) of a group of people, job satisfaction did not appear to have a significant explanatory relationship with career change (Carless and Arunp, 2011). The mixed results relating job satisfaction to career change suggest the model may not fully explain the phenomenon. Furthermore, studies have been conducted that have proposed other explanations for career change altogether.

Alternative Explanations

Recent research has uncovered possible alternative explanations for why people change careers from the integrated career change model. Two recent studies (Shropshire and Kadlec, 2012; Carless and Arnup, 2011) suggest that work stress itself is a good predictor of career change. Each study sampled different groups—IT professionals (Shropshire and Kadlec 2012) and a group of workers that were not specific to one industry (Carless and Arunp, 2011)—and between the two studies, intent to change careers and career change behavior were both
measured. Shropshire and Kadlec (2012) also claim that job security influences career change intentions. Job security influenced a person both when the individual was under the impression that his or her job was in jeopardy and also when a person felt the industry in which he or she was working was not providing growth opportunities. The concepts of professional identity and social pressure are also possible explanations for why an individual changes his or her career (Khapova, Arthur, Celeste and Jorgen, 2007; Lee, Carswell and Allen, 2000). Professional identity, “the constellation of attributes, beliefs, values, motives and experiences in terms of which people define themselves in a professional role” (Ibarra, 1999, p. 764-765), has an inverse relationship with the intention to change a career. While, social pressure, the perceived expectation of important people or groups in one’s life (Khapova et al, 2007) has a positive relationship with the intention to change a career, it was not measured with actual behavior. Measuring intentions to change careers rather than behavior may not provide the literature with a robust understanding of the career change phenomenon.

**Measuring Intentions of Career Change**

To address the research questions, a sample of 12 informants were gathered for this study who were young, entry-level hotel managers who have changed careers. The hotel industry has adopted the term “entry-level” to describe managers who hold managerial roles that may not require previous management experience, such as an assistant front office manager. In a meta-analytic report by Lee, Carswell, and Allen (2000), the demographic variables of age and occupation tenure (the length of time working in a given occupation) were shown to have a very weak positive relationship with occupational commitment of (β = .067) and (β = .088), respectively. Occupational commitment has been broken down into three parts: affective, which refers to a person’s emotional connection to an occupation; normative, which refers to a person’s
sense of obligation to an occupation; and continuance, which refers to a person’s perceived assessment of the costs associated with leaving an occupation (Meyer, Allen and Smith, 1993). Overall, occupational commitment was found to have the single strongest effect on career change, and is especially true for professional employees, those with professional expertise or high occupational status, like hotel managers (Lee et al. 2000). Chang, Chi, and Miao (2007) claim that people in nonprofessional occupations, front line service workers, are more likely to leave when they have lower professional identity. Hotel managers fall into the professional category, which allows us to examine the interplay between commitment to an occupation and a young professional’s career change process. However, in one of the rare studies that measured career change behavior, age was found to be a significant and impactful predictor of career change (Carless and Arnup, 2011). Previous research has not focused specifically on the young professional demographic, creating a gap in the literature regarding how a new entrant into a profession entertains the idea of changing careers.

The lack of a thorough understanding of career change demonstrates the need for studies to identify why people are in fact choosing alternate careers, and, in the case of this study, leaving the hotel industry. Hotel managers’ work environments (to be discussed later) may differ from individuals who were the subjects of other career change studies, such as nurses (Parry 2008), football coaches (Cunningham and Sagas, 2004), teachers (Rhodes and Doering, 1993), human resource professionals (Snape and Redman, 2003), medical technologists (Blau and Holladay, 2006), and IT professionals (Shropshire and Kadlec, 2012). It is also clear from the literature that few studies gather information on actual career change behavior, and instead measure career change intentions, though notable exceptions are Carless and Arunp (2011) and Blau (2007). Measuring the actual behavior of a group of people may help to resolve some of the questions regarding career change of why these people have chosen to change careers.
Summary

The current literature does not appear to provide a clear and comprehensive model of career change. The lack of a thorough understanding of career change demonstrates the need for studies to identify why people are in fact choosing alternate careers and, in the case of this study, leaving the hotel industry. It is also clear from the literature that few studies gather information on actual career change behavior, but instead measure career change intentions.
Chapter 3
Methodology

The investigation for this study employs a qualitative approach, which is used to introduce a new way of thinking about and exploring the topic of career change (see Creswell 2007). The integrated career change model has yielded some conflicting results as well as studies that suggest variables outside of the scope of current theory, which suggests that a qualitative approach may provide a picture of career change that is clearer than exists in the current literature. A qualitative approach is effective especially for this study, because the career change phenomenon has yet to be studied with hotel managers, and may not be fully understood in relation to current career change models. Cresswell (2007) also suggests that qualitative approaches are particularly salient when conducting an investigation with an understudied group, such as young hotel managers. It is important to note that while hotel managers have been the subject of turnover studies, no study has focused on the process that young hotel managers follow when they change careers. Finally, the qualitative approach will add to the dialogue and understanding of career change as Barritt (1986) suggests about the use of qualitative designs,

…is not the discovery of new elements, as in natural scientific study, but rather the heightening of awareness for experience which has been forgotten and overlooked. By heightening awareness and creating dialogue, it is hoped research can lead to better understanding of the way things appear to someone else and through that insight lead to improvements in practice (p. 20).
Using a qualitative design will not only open future discussions regarding career change, but also give a voice to an underrepresented group and explain the social process that career changers go through.

**Grounded Theory**

Grounded theory was selected for the analysis in this study. Grounded theory requires that a theory be “grounded” in the field through data collection (Glaser, 1978; Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Strauss, 1987; Strauss and Corbin, 1990). “Grounding” the theory is done by collecting first-hand data from the population of interest and using the data collected to generate a theory, which in turn is based on the collected information. It is especially important to understand theory through the collection of data in the field when discussing the actions, interactions and social processes of people (Cresswell, 2007). Career change easily falls into the arena of the actions, interactions and social processes that people follow in their lives, which makes grounded theory an appropriate choice for this study. Corbin and Strauss (1990) state that the grounded theory approach generates an explanation of action. A thorough explanation for the action of career change is currently lacking in the literature. Grounded theory is best used when an existing model or theory does not apply to the population of interest or does not address all variables of interest (Cresswell, 2007). Understanding why a person chooses to abandon his or her profession for an alternate one, should provide broad theoretical implications for future studies, as well as, pointed practical implications for operating companies.

**Contextual Background**

Hotels were chosen for this study, because they employ many young professionals who
would be able to give insight as to why this demographic group is choosing to leave the industry. Hotel managers work in an environment where they and their teams are a large part of the product being sold, and therefore interact with their customers on a regular basis. They are also service providers with a perishable fixed stock of hotel rooms to sell and require management presence to interact pleasantly with guests at all times. Entry level jobs in hospitality can often be fast paced (Chuang and Dellmann-Jenkins 2010), low paying (O’Leary and Deegan, 2005), team based (Testa and Sipe, 2012) and requiring a broad set of managerial skills (Testa and Sipe, 2012). The nature of the hotel industry requires managers to work various shifts throughout the day and night, as well as during weekends and holidays. The study’s informants described that even in departments traditionally thought of as operating during regular work-day hours, like accounting, there are requirements for managers to work nights for “duty shifts” and weekends for end of the month projects. Young hotel professionals have received, to the knowledge of the author, little research attention as it relates to career change. Due to the unique work environment hotel managers encounter these individuals may give insight into how they fit into the broader topic of career change.

Hotels experience a high rate of turnover, which has been estimated to be 50% (Smith Travel Research, 2003) and reportedly remained level at 52% in 2006 (US Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2006). Turnover in hospitality appears to be rising, with a 62% rate in 2011 (US Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2012). Deery and Shaw (1997) suggest that one of the most common issues for service organizations are the turnover rates among mid and low level managers. The high turnover factor in hotels and hospitality indicates that many young professionals in the hotel arena are engaging in turnover, which could lead to a unique career progression environment. Additionally, the hotel industry is unique in that hotels are 24-hour operations that do not typically close during weekends or holidays.
Sampling Method

A total of 12 informants who had changed careers from the hotel industry were recruited for this study. The initial four informants were a part of the author’s professional network, and basic codes and ideas regarding career change were identified through those initial interviews. Additional informants were recruited, guided by the principle of theoretical sampling, consistent with a grounded theory approach (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Strauss and Corbin, 1990). The purpose of theoretical sampling is to both refine and expand upon the emerging theoretical framework to the point at which no new categories emerge from the data (Charmaz, 2006). Informants who were recruited were former entry-level hotel managers who were currently working outside of the hotel industry. More women were included in the sample to reflect the gender composition in the industry that was being studied (Wang and Mattila, 2010). Interviews were conducted face-to-face, via Skype and also over the telephone. All but one informant agreed to have the interview audio recorded, and the principle investigator transcribed each recorded interview. The informant who was not audio recorded, was still included into the study. A field memo was written directly after all interviews to capture the essence of the interview. Data were collected using semi-structured interviews; for a review of the questions in the interviews please see Appendix 1, and a breakdown of the informants can be seen in Table 3-1.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Informant Number</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Tenure (Years)</th>
<th>Age (Years)</th>
<th>Degree</th>
<th>Institution Granting Lowest Degree</th>
<th>Last City Worked</th>
<th>Last Brand</th>
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<td>NYC</td>
<td>Luxury</td>
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<td>F</td>
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<td>Auckland</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>6 ½</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>Masters</td>
<td>University of Nevada, Las Vegas</td>
<td>Hong Kong</td>
<td>Online Travel Agent</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
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<td>30</td>
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<td>NYC</td>
<td>Luxury</td>
</tr>
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<td>F</td>
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<td>Dublin</td>
<td>Economy</td>
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<td>Luxury</td>
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</table>

**Table 3-1 The Informant List**
The sample of the study consists of former hotel managers who left the hotel industry when they were still considered to be in entry-level positions. The study’s informants had worked for a very diverse set of hotels ranging from luxury properties to select service hotels. The informants’ employers ranged from large multi-national corporations to independently owned and operated hotels. The informants worked in equally diverse locations such as a lakeside resort in the Midwest and hotels in metropolises like New York City. All of the informants were educated beyond high school and their level of education ranged from an associate’s degree to a master’s degree. Eight of the informants were women and four were men, the tenure as a hotel manager ranged from three months to six and a half years, and the age range at the time of interview was 26 to 32 years old. There may be examples of hotel professionals who have experienced a fantastically quick career progression, while others have enjoyed long careers while never advancing beyond their entry-level positions. Given the extreme cases for career progression within the hotel industry this sample was targeted at the middle or what an expected early career experience would look like. The informants were all in entry-level positions who thought that they had the capacity for success in the hotel industry and were interested in advancing their careers, before ultimately deciding to change careers.
Chapter 4

Data Analysis

In contrast to the constructivist approach of Charmaz (2005, 2006), which allows for great flexibility in analyzing data, this study employs the more systematic analytic procedures of Strauss and Corbin (1998) and Corbin and Strauss (1990). The systematic procedures focus on an individual’s process and experience. In the context of this study, the aim is to understand, from the individual’s perceptive, what went into the decision to change careers, hence the systematic approach is more appropriate for data analysis. Interviews were conducted until the data became saturated (Cresswell, 2007), i.e., no new information was being discussed by the informants. Open coding was used to find broad properties and narrow subcategories that the informants described during the semi-structured interviews. During the open coding process, each statement made by the informants was labeled and organized. First, the broad categories were identified then subcategories were filled in using the statements made by each informant. The statement and who made the statement were included, and at times a singular statement was placed into two categories depending on what the informant said.

Axial Coding

Continuing with the use of the systematic process of grounded theory analysis, axial coding was used. Axial coding is used to develop a central phenomenon that is described in the data, and is broken down into four stages. First, the causal conditions, or conditions of influence, were identified. The conditions of influence in this study were found to be two push factors: work to life conflict and dissatisfaction with career progress. These two factors were identified due to the informants’ emphasis on these two categories during the interview process. Each
informant brought up both work to family conflict and dissatisfaction with career progress, most often without being prompted through the interview and both topics often resurfaced in different parts of the interview. Some informants expressly stated that one or both of these factors is what pushed them out of the hotel industry.

The second step, in the axial coding process, is to map out the strategies that people use to negotiate the phenomenon, in other words, to explain the actions that result from the phenomenon. The informants of the study often changed jobs or engaged in turnover before changing their careers. Typically, two or three positions were held before a person decided to pursue a position not related to the hotel industry. The ease at which the informants were able to change careers should also be noted, as they uniformly felt as though they had a set of marketable and transferable skills. The evidence of the speed at which they were able to find work outside of the hotel industry, supports their feelings of having skills that are valued in the labor market. The informants indicated that it was just as easy, or even easier, to find a job outside of the hotel industry than another position within the industry.

Next, the intervening conditions are explained. The intervening conditions are both the broad and narrow factors that influence a person’s strategies. The intervening conditions were very interesting in the study, as the informants spoke about a concept that has not been emphasized in the career change literature, their future oriented thinking. The strategies that went into changing careers were engaged in because they felt as though the future outlook was not bright within the hotel industry. They felt that they would experience an imbalance of working hours to pay, and that they would be socially isolated from family and friends in the future. These themes were identified when follow-up questions were asked after the informants expressed their concerns over work to life conflict, and their dissatisfaction with their career progression. The informants consistently expressed their concern for staying in the industry for the long term. The future oriented thinking of the informants exacerbated the initial push factors,
and held an influence over what types of positions they sought when changing careers. Due to their future perceptions of what their working hours, in relation to pay, would be, and how socially isolated they would be, the informants sought positions that would minimize those concerns.

**Selective Coding**

Finally, the consequences or outcomes of a person’s strategy are organized in the coding process. The outcomes in this study were straightforward, as each informant ultimately changed their career. Some informants did indicate that they would return to the hotel industry, if the conditions were favorable. Favorable conditions were commonly expressed as the absence of the two initial push factors: high work to life conflict and poor career progression. To return informants either wanted the position that they were unable to acquire while in the hotel industry or some unspecified position that had a schedule that would not contribute to the high levels of work to life conflict that they experienced while in the hotel industry.

Throughout the axial coding process, the constant comparative method was used (Glasser and Strauss, 1967). The constant comparative method goes back and forth from the data from one interview to the next and back again constantly comparing the data from each informant against the rest. Consistent with the constant comparative method, new interviews were added while existing data was being analyzed. The newly injected data was compared against the existing data, until theoretical saturation was achieved.
Chapter 5
Themes

Job Satisfaction

One of the more heavily researched areas of career change is job satisfaction. The informants of this study had both high and low levels of satisfaction, with their last hotel position before they changed careers. Informants reported being both highly satisfied and unsatisfied with their positions, which are represented by the following examples:

- I was um, with the position that I left the hotel industry, I was completely dissatisfied. (Informant 1, Female)
- I wasn’t satisfied. Highly unsatisfied. (Informant 7, Female)
- Not at all satisfied, with my work in hotels, and less so with my last position (Informant 2, Female)
- Um, I was quite satisfied, because for my age and for, because my education background, I was able to get an official position in a good hotel (Informant 3, Female)
- I enjoyed that work, [even though] it was stressful (Informant 10, Female)

Despite the mixed response to the general satisfaction levels on the job, most people’s job satisfaction was trending down when they changed their careers, as is summarized by one informant below:
It was lower; my first hotel job had a lot more, a lot more satisfaction and then the second one, which led me to leave the industry that was a lot more dissatisfying. (Informant 12, Male)

One interesting result was that even though job satisfaction impressions were mixed, a trend was that people were more satisfied with their jobs after hotel work. Statements regarding increased job satisfaction can be seen below:

I really, really, enjoy what I’m doing now, so it was definitely a good switch for me. (Informant 5, Male)

I would say that it is a little less stressful, um... I’m a lot happier now, because I get to see a lot of different areas of my industry, in my current position, I get to meet a lot of people, and kinda’ get to utilize my experience from when I was in the hotel industry to help other people, but not be there in a whole other industry that’s there just for that. (Informant 3, Female)

In contrast to much literature, job satisfaction appears to have little influence on entry-level hotel managers’ decisions to change their careers.

Work to Life Conflict

An area that has received much research attention in the hospitality literature is work to life conflict. Yet, my findings suggest that work to life conflict appears to be a major factor in people’s decisions to change careers, and has a powerful effect on the way people live their lives while working in the hotel industry. Informants of the study brought up their experience with work to life conflict, without being prompted by the interviewer, and often had vivid and powerful stories to tell. Very early in the interview process it became evident that work to life conflict was a major factor in the decision for these young hotel professionals to make the
decision to change careers. Time-based work to life conflict (the amount of time spent at work interfering with life outside of work) appears to be the key driver of career change, at least in a hotel setting, as is evidenced by the following statements:

Yeah definitely, because I was on the eh, overnights, for over a year, probably closer to a year and a half. And that definitely was in conflict with my wife, who was working normal daytime hours, and I was on the complete opposite schedule. That definitely caused some issues and conflict between us. (Informant 5, Male)

Um, as an example of something, I once put in a request to go to a football game, at [my alma mater] and it was denied because a football game was not a reason to request off. So, it was like unless, it was a funeral or a wedding or a planned vacation, you couldn’t request a day or a weekend off; especially if it was a weekend, you couldn’t request a weekend off, to go to a football game. (Informant 12, Male)

My own personal story, was that I was at the [hotel] in New Jersey and I was literally working 80 hours a week, uh and I worked 6 days a week for I think about, ah 10 weeks working 6 days a week, and the only reason I got a 5-day work week was because I was graduating from college, and they gave me an extra day off. And I was like, “Oh, thanks, so I don’t really get to celebrate, I’ll be so tired, I get to drive straight up to Buffalo after working an overnight shift and then I graduate, the next day I sleep, graduate the next day, then I have to be back at work.” (Informant 9, Male)
What personal life? Yes. There is a big conflict, there is, you really don’t have a personal life. I worked 6 days a week. Every day is at least a 12 hour day. (Informant 6, Female)

The effect of time-based work to life conflict may go beyond long hours for young hotel professionals. The sense of the informants is that they were socially isolated due to their schedules. The hotel managers found that the combined impact of working “weird” shifts and long hours that they were isolated from not only friends and family, but were also cut off from getting involved with their communities. The informants felt as though the hours required by their hotel positions propelled them into an insular culture, which revolved around people and events that stemmed from work. All of the informants had to work nights, days, evenings, holidays, and weekends. Even informants who worked in departments like accounting and human resources, that offer more stable schedules, experienced much of the same time-based work to life conflict as their counterparts working in hotel operations. Hotel schedules affected their dating lives, family lives and social lives, as evidenced by the following quotes:

As a hospitality industry [professional], you do work weird shifts. For example, sometimes you have graveyard shift or morning and night shift so um, for especially, for the night shift and graveyard shift you don’t really have time to spend with your family, with your boyfriend or girlfriend. So um, I do find that in the hotel industry, that um, personal relationship is normally built with your workplace. I know people who have dated people from their job. And that happens a lot. So I think, it’s because of our weird working times. So you don’t really have a big social circle, because you don’t get to hang out with people at the normal time, so you are only socializing with people with the same schedule as you. So it’s definitely affecting your personal life. (Informant 3, Female)
I missed having that work-life balance, I had lost a lot of my really good friends, who were lost, and I mean a meaningful [romantic] relationship [as well]. (Informant 9, Male)

It would be challenging to, you know, work all weekends and every holiday, and not be able to spend any holiday time with your family, and not see them. That would create conflict between my family, wanting to know why I couldn't come home at Christmas, and my job telling me that, you know, you can't take off because it's a busy time. (Informant 7, Female)

You don't have time to participate in any normal life activities, so you don't have time to maintain those relationships... I met my fiancé on Match.com, we met a little over three years ago, so yeah we had our first date on a Tuesday. (Informant 7, Female)

When these young professionals did finally get a much-needed break from their work lives, work often called on them. The responsibilities of being a manager in a hotel did not end at the door for these informants, and when work called there was a feeling of obligation, stated or unstated, by a supervisor to answer that call. Work reaching out to managers when they were home further exacerbated the work to life conflict that they were experiencing sometimes in extreme circumstances as evidenced below:

I [had] my Blackberry on me, and there was no way to escape work when I wasn't at work. If I wasn’t due in until noon the next day, my phone would go off at 5:30 the next morning. (Informant 9, Male)

Even when I came back, there was a period of time when I was sick in the hospital, not eating and on drugs, and my phone would keep going off and off
and off and off, and if I didn’t pick up my blackberry, my personal phone would go off: ‘Well how did you do this? Where is this?’ (Informant, 2, Female)

Um, you know taking over all 24 hours, instead of just your 10 hours out of the day, you know getting calls, um, from the especially employees at any time of the day or night, um, with issues they’re having, and they can’t come in and I have to find coverage. So, definitely it’s just an overflow of those responsibilities into you know it’s 24/7. (Informant 7, Female)

I think it’s me, um, they tell me at least the GM says to me now, ‘why did you pick up your phone,’ but I do it because, I don’t know I feel that’s expected from my job, even though they don’t expect it. (Informant 6, Female)

Though time-based work to life conflict was the focus of many of the informants, strain-based work to life conflict (the stress of the workplace spilling over to a person’s non-work life) was also commonly discussed. Young managers often left their shifts with the stress of the job weighing on their minds, and this strain-based work to life conflict could be just as impactful as the time-based conflict that is driving career change. A sampling of quotes regarding the strain-based work to life conflict can be read below:

I think you do spend a day with so, much going on that it does make it difficult to leave what’s going on, and separate it and say that was just work, ‘let’s go home.’ I’m leaving with a splitting headache it’s hard to leave that when, the moment you walk off the property. (Informant 8, Female)

You know, it can get so frustrating that you need to vent. Obviously you can’t vent to your managers and your employees because that’s not professional, so you come home and vent to your significant other or whoever’s there um, just to talk about it. But, and even if you are out and you have to put out a fire, it
interrupts your day. So no matter who’s with you, you know people are nosy they always want to know what’s going on. It always ends up being a conversation outside of work, no matter what. (Informant 6, Female)

Strain-based work to life conflict appears to have been a chronic condition, which inspired a vast and interesting array of coping mechanisms. Sleep as well as alcohol abuse were two of the most common ways to handle the stress of the job coming home, as evidenced below:

*I had the issue, it started when I was in management, that I think I was abusing alcohol when I was in management, ’cause I think I found a lot of other managers doing it because of the stress and the all the abuse. Because when you are in middle management, has it toughest in our industry…* (Informant 9, Male)

*Oh yes, when you spend an entire day being yelled at by angry guests or say your hotel water boiler breaks, the day after St. Patrick’s Day, when you have over 600 rooms, and not all those rooms are not single occupancy, um, yes you leave with a strong desire for a stiff drink.* (Informant 8, Female)

*Especially when you are in stressful job, you need that ability that wears down on your body, it wears down on your basic cognitive skills things that you need to comprehend. All you want to do when you leave work is go to sleep, because you’ve been going nonstop.* (Informant 3, Female)

*You know you’re not at home, you don’t see the people you love, you don’t see the people you want to spend time with, and when you get home, all you want to do is pass out and go to bed.* (Informant 2, Female)

Work to life conflict appears to manifest itself in both a time-based and strain-based form with entry-level hotel managers. The work to life conflict that they
experience was passionately explained during the interviews, which suggests that it is a key push factor leading these professionals to seek alternate careers.

**Career Progression**

Dissatisfaction with career progression surfaced as another key driver of career change among the informants, as was initially hypothesized by Rhodes and Doering (1983). Informants were dissatisfied not only with the speed at which their careers were progressing, but also with the scope of the individual promotions and career moves that they achieved. The informants eloquently described the dissatisfaction with their career progress often before being prompted by the interview. Many informants expressed that they were able to make the short term sacrifice for long term gains or to “pay their dues,” however, they felt that the payoff was either too far away, or not great enough to continue in their careers in the hotel industry. Although from a manager’s perspective, the most concerning trend might be the lack of a clear path to progression. Evidence outlining the lack of a clear path to progression can be seen below:

*I do feel that there is a gap, especially, as a front-line person in the hotel, you do feel that the managers that were working on the 28th floor of the building, compared with us managers working on the 1st floor of the building. So, um, you do see that they um, you’re not in the decision making process, you don’t know what’s going on and normally you are passed, I mean and facing the decision they’ve already made. (Informant 3, Female)*

*I kind of don’t feel that the people above me thought about my career that much, because, I don’t think in hospitality you expect to move. (Informant 7, Female)*
No, wasn’t sure of what I wanted for my own career path, which made it difficult to discuss long-term plans with my managers. Though there also didn’t sound like there were any short-term options, as well, for my immediate career. (Informant 1, Female)

Not only did the path to progressing seem unclear, but also the process was at a pace that was not satisfactory to the informants. Pace refers to the time between individual promotions, as well as the length of time expected to achieve a desirable position in the future. Perspectives regarding the dissatisfaction with the pace of the informants’ promotions are represented below:

I definitely thought I could, [make the short term sacrifice] you know, I stuck it out for three years and was in the same situation, and I felt like I paid my dues. Working overnight for a year-and-half and thought there would be a reward coming in the future for making that sacrifice. Um yeah, that’s how I’d put it. You know, if I had better prospects in the near future, I might have stuck it out longer. But I didn’t really see that coming... (Informant 5, Male)

My expectations were to continue growing at a pace that I earned so that if I am progressing and creating success and moving ahead, then my expectation would be that I could control when I could continue on to the next level or a department and may become of interest to me. Where my superiors treated everyone the same and everyone was on the same track where if you create success in a year or two years in that department, it doesn’t matter because everyone is in that department for 5.4 years and then move over here. (Informant 7, Female)

...I think it’s just a matter of being able to grow your skills, develop your potential, and move anywhere within the industry, the only way really to do that
is to switch hotels often. Um, you end up eh, kinda being stuck in a position at any given hotel... (Informant 2, Female)

What seems to be the most problematic career progression issue, in terms of this study, was a lack of opportunity. Managers in departments outside of operations seemed to have nowhere to grow in their departments and those in operations perceived few or poor opportunities for advancement as evidenced below:

Um, when you decided to move somewhere [from] our location to another location, from NYC back to Denver, Colorado, I applied for hospitality positions in Denver but not finding much luck getting hired there, so I had to look outside, you know, the hotel operations environment. (Informant 5, Male)

I don’t expect my boss to think that I’m thinking about a promotion, I guess in some ways and revenue managers there’s not that much place to go. There’s just one in a hotel, so unless I become a GM or maybe...maybe give me a new title. Maybe department or director of revenue management, but I don’t think the work will be different honestly. (Informant 4, Female)

...because from the position where I was, I had the chance for the reservations manager or the front office manager, and honestly I wasn’t interested in either of those. (Informant 11, Male)

Especially, if you go into some departments, you can’t really advance up to GM. You might only have a promotion ahead of you, and then you can’t move up beyond that. (Informant 10, Female)

So I’ve tried, and I make every effort to be the, quote unquote, director of guest relations when my director is off, to show that I have the skills to be a manager, to be a director, but there’s just there’s nothing open at this point that
I'm interested in. It's all front desk manager at a two-star hotel, that I don’t, that’s not my goal, my goal is not to go back to a two-star, three-star hotel.

(Informant 9, Male)

Career progression was what most informants wanted to discuss at the start of the interviews, and no informant waited until questioned about their career progression to discuss it. The informants were all uniformly dissatisfied with the way that their careers were progressing, which suggests that this was a powerful push factor leading to the decision to change careers for these hotel managers.

**Professional Identity and Social Support**

The young professionals in this study, who changed their careers, received lackluster social support from their families and friends to remain in the hotel industry. The missing social support created a situation where there was no anchor tying them to their careers in the hotel industry, and hence the decision to ultimately change careers was easy to make. Some informants were actively counseled to leave their profession by family and friends, while others received only conditional support, as evidenced below.

... I mean my family, you know, they were very open that they didn’t want me in it for too long, ’cause they didn’t think it was a very healthy lifestyle...(Informant 7, Female)

My parents and husband thought that I was overworked and underpaid. Though everyone was supportive, only if I was happy, then they too were happy.

(Informant 1, Female)
I um, most of my family friends, the older generation, they suggested me not to go into the hospitality industry...Because of the service ehh, the service industry people, they don’t get as much respect. (Informant 3, Female)

The informants’ professional identities varied widely between those who still consider themselves as hoteliers and those who never did even while working in hotels. The overall impression was that a person could still use the professional skills learned in hotels in alternate and more attractive professions. Some informants even found that hotels remained a prominent part of their professional identities, when remaining in the service sector; others expressed a deep, almost visceral connection with the hotel industry even after they had changed their careers. Other informants positively identified with being an hotelier, but more as a profession by default, and not as a life passion. Examples of the informants’ professional identities can be seen below:

It was a fantastic experience, as I think after a long time from 10 years, 20 years, I’ll still consider myself as a hospitality person. I think it’s related to my education background, as well. I still have this deep down, I still have this special feeling for the hotel industry...Um, actually from now on, because as I told you, I reserve a piece of my heart for, the hospitality industry. (Informant 3, Female)

No, I’m a hippy artist at heart, but I have always liked the aspect of helping somebody feel more at home while away from home. (Informant 8, Female)

Yeah, I think I was a hotelier. And I do. I still I’m still kind of attached to it. In a way, and and.... Yeah I like myself as a hotelier, I do. (Informant 5, Male)
No, I never did. [in reference to identifying with the hotel industry] (Informant 1, Female)

I think I was for a short period of time during my first full-time job when I was working on the strip in Las Vegas, and I felt like I was part of this really exciting group, and that was probably a very short period of time, probably just a couple of months. Then I started to really feel like I didn’t fit in with that group. (Informant 7, Female)

It was a job where after a, you know a time in my position, I came to the realization that I don’t know how far it’s going to go and how long I’m going to be in it, so after that point, it just became a job, you know? I was more enthusiastic coming out of school, but that faded over time. (Informant 9, Male)

The social support received from family and friends, and the professional identities of the informants failed to anchor them to the hotel industry. These factors were not strong enough to overcome the powerful push factors that the same people were experiencing, and career change in turn occurred.

**Perceptions of the External and Future Environment**

Young hotel professionals can engage in successful strategies to exit the hotel industry. The informants did perceive themselves to be benefitting from an industry that provides them with many transferable skills. One informant complained about a retail company continuing to recruit her after she became a teacher, as they are so enamored with her experience as a manager in a hotel. The skills that help young hotel professionals to change careers the most are their
ability to manage teams and engage with guests. At times, the informants even found themselves as being sought after by employers in other industries, as is evidenced below:

The education industry that I’m working for right now, it has some similarities between the hospitality industry because, it’s not like in public schools where it is mass produced, you have a lot of kids in front of you, but in the place where I’m working right now, it’s more focused on the quality of the education and...the quality of service, as well. As I told you, my position was academic and service director, so it has some service part inside, as well, so it is that customer caring and, and service so I do see some similarities, so it does give me some edge when I entered the education industry. (Informant 3, Female)

So it happened, that this company is a real estate management company in luxury buildings, but they are very heavily interested in hospitality and the service side of their business, it’s part of their slogan... The GM of the building where I work now was with Hilton for 26 years and the Assistant Manager was with Marriott and Renaissance for 10 or 15 years, so it’s pretty much what they do. (Informant 12, Male)

You know hotels relate to a lot of different fields, when you work in hotels, you’ve worked with a lot of different people from guests, employees and managers. And you have a lot of different options when you are looking for work outside of the hotel industries. It’s not like if you want to get out you can only go into this one type of work. (Informant 9, Male)

These young hotel professionals found themselves in the favorable position of being desired in the labor market when they sought work outside of the hotel industry. The informants
worked in many different departments, companies and in labor markets, yet all uniformly perceived ample opportunities for work outside of the hotel industry.

Additionally, the informants felt as though there was little to no advantage to continue working in the hotel industry for a prolonged period of time. The informants felt as though working their way up the hotel hierarchy would create an imbalance in the number of hours worked to the amount of pay earned. The unsatisfactory mix of hours and pay that was perceived to accompany a future in the hotel industry contributed to the informants changing their careers. The perceived concept of, poor working hours as compared to pay, is explained below:

And then you find yourself getting that bitterness, because you meet all these people, with all this free time and, you know, make great money, and don’t work nearly the hours that you have to work, and then you question what are they doing and what are you doing, and why am I doing it? (Informant 7, Female)

As I was saying, with working conditions, there were no benefits offered at all. Um, not even to full time employees either. There was no wage increases at all. And only holidays that were federals holidays did you get time and a half. (Informant 10, Female)

That’s personal feeling as to what happens, basically corporate world money-wise, any day anything would be better than that. Because, you will get more salary you will probably get a better full of benefits, as far as monetary itself. (Informant 11, Male)
Chapter 6

Theory

The first order analysis highlighted several factors that may lead young professionals to change their careers. To understand how these factors relate to each other and to enrich theoretical interpretations, a second order analysis was conducted. The central concept is that work to life conflict and poor career progression could jointly create the conditions that are conducive to career change. Contrary to current career change and turnover models (Rhodes and Doerling, 1983; Mobley et al, 1978; Hom and Kinicki, 2001), but in concert with Carless and Arnup (2010), job satisfaction did not appear to be a significant factor related to career change. Two push factors were identified as possibly initiating the career change process—work to life conflict and dissatisfaction with career progression.

Push Factors

Work to life conflict has attracted recent research attention in the hospitality literature (O’Neill, 2012; McNamara, Bohle and Quinlan, 2011; Xiao and O’Neill, 2010; O’Neill, Harrison, Cleveland, Almeida, Stawski and Crouter, 2009; Cleveland, O’Neill, Himelright, Harrison, Crouter, and Drago, 2007). Much of the recent research has focused on the time-based work to life conflict, which has been echoed by the informants of this study as being impactful towards career change. Also, the time-based nature of work to life conflict is related to turnover with hotel professionals (O’Neill, 2012; O’Neill et al, 2009; and McNamara et al, 2011). The stress that comes home with hotel professionals potentially exacerbates the conflict that results from the time spent away from home. The double effect of strain and time based work to life conflict...
affects many aspects of the worker’s life (Mulvaney, O’Neill, Cleveland, Crouter, 2006) and could contribute to career change. The link between work to life conflict and turnover has been established in hospitality and appears to hold true with career change as well. Hom and Kinicki (2001) posit that work to life conflict is an antecedent of turnover which is a related concept to career change.

Career progression is also an important factor leading to career change. Rhodes and Doering (1983) posit that career progression is an important factor in the decision to remain in or change a career. There has been scant research attention in this area with Shropshire and Kadlec (2012) as an exception. Analyzing the data from this study shows that it is both the length of time between promotions and the overall growth opportunities available that maybe the most impactful. The informants corroborate the Rhodes and Doering (1983) integrated career change model’s statement that career progression is a key factor in career change.

Other Factors of Influence

The informants suggest that young hotel professionals change their careers because there is a perfect storm of influences that align to make that change possible. Dissatisfaction with their career progression and high levels of work to life conflict are the factors that push them towards changing careers. Possessing a set of marketable skills that are easily transferred to other industries in today’s service-driven economy provide, them the opportunity to change careers. Equally important, there is a lack of an anchor to the industry by the absence of a strong social support network and a sense of professional identity that pales in comparison to the factors pushing them out of the industry. Finally, the previously discussed concept of social isolation that results from the career schedule and a perceived imbalanced of working hours to pay makes the future outlook of a career in hotel management grim.
In the model presented in Figure 5-1, it can be seen that factors could push people out of their careers, while the perceptions of the future of remaining in their careers exacerbates those push factors. The lack of strong anchor factors prevents retention in a career, and the availability of careers that satisfy the individuals’ preferences for work creates the possibility of changing careers. The push factors in tandem with the perceptions of the future could be likened to motivation, while the lack of strong anchor factors creates the conditions that allow for mobility. Finally, when there are favorable alternatives, the opportunity is presented for individuals to ultimately change careers.

Figure 5-1  A General Flowchart of the Career Change Process
The Integrated Career Change Model in Hospitality

Two factors which appear to push people towards career change in a hotel setting are the dissatisfaction with a person’s career progression and a high level of work to life conflict. The future perception of life while working in hotels is one that is perceived to be rife with social isolation and the perception that the amount of working hours compared to pay is unfavorably slanted towards work, makes staying in the profession for the long haul appear unfavorable. In today’s service based economy, many other employers in other fields either seek out or welcome professionals with strong service skills, especially those with customer contact and managerial skills. In the absence of a strong social support network for staying in the industry, and a professional identity that is not strong enough to anchor them in their current career, career change is able to materialize. The availability of professions that desire service professionals and the motivation to change careers based on current working conditions and an unfavorable view of the future in the hotel industry allows for a person to change careers. The integrated model of career change processes in hospitality can be seen in Figure 5-2.

Figure 5-2 The Integrated Model of Career Change Processes in Hospitality

The model of career change is broken down into two parts, the general and the hospitality specific. The general model (which may be referenced in Figure 5-1) may be able to be applied
to young professionals across industries with additional studies, because it makes no assumptions as to what any of the specific factors may be. The general model is presented as a guideline to the general process people flow through when changing careers, and will need to be tested rigorously for acceptance. The hospitality specific model expresses the general themes that were discussed by the informants of this study regarding their experiences and processes of changing careers. The integrated process of career change in hospitality may be applied to the hotel industry specifically. Industries outside of hospitality from which people change careers may not, for example, have high levels of work to family conflict; therefore, future studies should be conducted in those specific areas.
Chapter 7

Conclusion

The integrated model of career change processes in hospitality is presented as an explanation for why young hotel professionals may have decided to change their careers. The model suggests that work to family conflict and dissatisfaction with a person’s career progression act as factors that push young professionals out of their chosen careers. As they experience these push factors, they may also look to the future. When the informants of this study thought about their future career circumstances, they anticipated that staying in the hotel industry would create conditions which would require them to work too many hours for the corresponding salary, and they would also be isolated from their families and friends. The mix of being dissatisfied with their current circumstances and the perception that they would be dissatisfied with their future in the industry is suggested to be a powerful motivational force leading to career change. In the absence of a strong identity with the industry, and a lack of social support for remaining a part of the hotel industry, there is essentially no anchor to combat the aforementioned push factors. The hotel industry is perceived to equip young professionals with valuable skills in the labor market, which creates the opportunity for dissatisfied hotel professionals to change careers.
Chapter 8

Limitations

There are several limitations to this study, and one is that the model explains career change from the perspective of those who were working in a westernized cultural setting. Though there were informants of other opposing cultural orientations, they either worked for western companies or in western countries, like the United States and New Zealand. Further empirical testing in other cultural contexts is needed to ensure that the model has global implications.

The principal investigator has changed careers and was a former entry-level manager in the hotel industry. He worked for three different companies in three different cities and might have biased the results of this study with his own personal narrative of career change.

Finally, the model was developed through a qualitative, grounded theory approach. This approach was selected because, there is very little known about people who have already changed careers, and because of this, the exploratory approach is acceptable. No quantitative methods were used to test the theory that was generated from the qualitative nature of the study. Although the findings might inspire discussion and dialogue in the hotel industry and among academics, specific recommendations regarding actions are beyond the scope of this study. Empirical, quantitative testing of the model is the next logical step and will enhance the generalizability of the concepts presented, while providing strong managerial implications.
Chapter 9

Future Studies

The model presented in this study identifies variables that, at this point in time, have received little research attention as they relate to career change. Quantitatively exploring work to life conflict as it relates to career change is an important component for conducting future studies. Understanding the critical factors that lead to career change should provide meaningful implications to managers of hotel companies. The aim of future studies should seek to determine the strength of the relationship between a person’s career expectancy and work to life conflict and their likelihood to change careers.

Another concept to explore is job satisfaction as it relates to career change. Job satisfaction was not shown to relate to career change in a consistent way throughout the course of this study. Using a longitudinal design to see how and if job satisfaction relates to career change behaviors will advance our understanding of the career change phenomenon.

A third direction future research could take would be to examine the outlined career change process as it applies to other industries and levels of tenure. Both the broad and narrow themes of the presented theory could be tested to see if the relationships are true in non-hospitality professions such as nursing or teaching. The relationships could also be tested among older demographics to see if they relate the same way to those who have less tenure in their professions.

The final direction proposed for future studies is to understand how this model applies to populations that are not from a western cultural orientation, as many hospitality organizations are multi-national. Understanding what is important for retention across the globe will assist managers in hotel companies with understanding how to advance their organizational goals.
Appendix

Interview Questions

1) When making the decision to change industries from your hotel management position, how satisfied were you with the position that you held at the time? [How would you compare your level of satisfaction with your last hotel job to previous hotel jobs]

2) What about your coworkers, can you describe in general what your relationship was like with them? Potential Follow-up Question [Did generational issues influence your relationship with them a great deal?]

3) Can you describe what you were feeling about your career and profession when making the decision to resign? Potential Follow-up Question [Did you feel that the stresses and strain were specific to the hotel industry?]

4) Can you describe if there was a general level of connection or gap regarding career expectations and what the work environment should look and feel like between yourself and your superiors in the hotel organization? Potential Follow-up Question [Did generational issues influence your relationship with them a great deal?]

5) Did you experience any conflict between your job and personal life while working in the hotel industry? Potential Follow-up Question [How did your supervisor help to reconcile any conflict you experienced?]

6) How were you viewed outside of work as a hotel industry professional? Potential Follow-up Question [How did people you were close to (friends/family) view your profession?]

7) How did you personally identify as being a hotel professional? Potential Follow-up Question [In your heart of hearts, were you an hotelier, if so what changed?]

8) Additionally, how did you personally identify with your employers? Potential Follow-up Question [Were you personally committed to the organization or were you working there for the paycheck?]

9) When you were looking for work outside of the hotel industry were you also exploring options that would have continued your career in hotels? Potential Follow-up Question [Why or why not?]
10) In what ways did your formal education factor into how you left the hotel industry? Potential Follow-up Question [Did you feel as though because you had a degree(s), you were more marketable or did your education give you a broad network to make applying for work outside of the industry more appealing?]

11) How has your level of professional work (or school work) satisfaction or strain changed since you have left the hotel business? Potential Follow-up Question [What do you contribute the lack of change or the change to?]
REFERENCES


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• 2012 Recipient of the American Hotel & Lodging Educational Foundation Graduate Scholarship
• 2012 Recipient of the Grace Henderson Scholarship in the College of Health and Human Development at The Pennsylvania State University
• 2002 Recipient of the Trump Hotels and Resorts Internship Scholarship

Association Memberships/Activities

• Penn State Hotel and Restaurant Society

• Hospitality Management Graduate Student Association

• Global Connections Conversation Partner
Professional Experience

Fairmont, Pittsburgh, PA February 2010 – July 2011 Opening, Assistant Front Office Manager

- Led a team of 5 Receptionists, 6 Concierges, 6 Supervisors, 6 Bell and Door Staff and 1 Manager
- Developed SOP’s for the Front Office during the pre-opening phases of the hotel
- Created and conducted service training pre-opening and during the operation
- Instilled service standards contributing to the hotel premiering first in Fairmont’s guest satisfaction index
- Championed colleague engagement programs to foster empowerment and productivity
- Conducted interviews for new employees and organized succession planning throughout the department

Crowne Plaza, Auckland, New Zealand April 2008 – January 2010 Duty Manager

- Led a team of 4 Supervisors, 9 Concierges, 4 Operators, and 12 Receptionists
- Developed and conducted service training which resulted in an increase in problem resolution scores by 18% an increase in speed and efficiency of check-in score by 6% and overall satisfaction by 9% as measured by GSTS
- Championed sustainability projects throughout the hotel which doubled the hotel’s recycling output
- Developed an up-selling program which contributed up to $10,000 in monthly upsells
- Initiated Hotel’s Environmental Team to organize days of volunteering in the local area
- Restructured the Front Office roster to reduce payroll while increasing our service scores as measured by GSTS
- Mentored three team members’ succession planning and created Personal Development Plans for each

Waldorf=Astoria, New York, NY June 2005 – March 2008 Housekeeping Manager

- Graduated from Waldorf=Astoria Management Development Program (2nd Qtr. 2007)
- Led a team of 4 Housekeeping Supervisors, 1 Housekeeping Coordinator and 42 Housekeeping Team Members
- Managed all operations during Turndown, Overnight, and Morning shifts for both Public Areas and Guest Rooms
- Reduced departmental accident rate by 10% through comprehensive training and safety awareness programs
- Created shift specific productivity spreadsheets and reports to analyze trends in performance
- Developed cyclical cleaning project calendars
- Organized energy saving projects and conducted environmental training classes
Guest Services Manager

- Led a team of 5 Bell Captains, 3 Assistant Bell Captains, 8 Concierges, 45 Bellmen, and 16 doormen.
- Developed and implemented new training standards to ensure compliance with all corporate training requirements
- Audited and managed the payroll for 77 union and nonunion team members
- Conducted and delivered performance based reviews for nonunion team members
- Oversaw arrivals, departures, and package room logistics for all group functions at the hotel

Front Office Manager

- Team Impact Award Winner (4th Qtr. 2005); Commitment Award Nominee (1st Qtr. 2006)
- Led a team of 2 Front Office Supervisors, 20 Guest Service Agents, 5 Pre-Arrival Agents, 4 VIP Service Agents and 10 Hotline Agents
- Managed Front Office operations for a 1416 room hotel with a 94% yearly occupancy
- Increased problem resolution scores by 15% as measured by Hilton’s satisfaction and loyalty tracking program
- Created new standard operating procedures for welcome calls and follow-up calls with guests