WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Challenges in the Tourism & Hospitality Sector in South Carolina

Workforce Development Challenges in the Tourism & Hospitality Sector in South Carolina

A report by the University of South Carolina for the Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration (EDA)

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Executive summary

Labor and talent shortages in the hospitality and tourism industries are not new, and they ebb and flow depending on the state of the global and local economies. This project investigated the workforce challenges in South Carolina's tourism and hospitality sector, and provides recommendations to industry and policy-makers on how they can best meet these challenges. The research project was conducted in 2019, when the tourism and hospitality industry in the U.S. was experiencing significant problems with recruitment and retention, and many employers were facing substantial skills shortages.

A combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods were employed to enhance the understanding of key issues. The first phase of the research involved conducting 18 in-depth interviews with key stakeholders in the industry across the state, and 23 in-depth interviews with long-term workers at multiple hotels and restaurants. Following the qualitative research, two separate surveys were administered to employees and employers in the state.

During in-depth interviews, employees expressed general satisfaction with their jobs, indicating a high level of commitment, loyalty, and trust of both colleagues and employers. The employees were also engaged and proud of the work that they do, showing a high level of enthusiasm toward their jobs. This finding is not the first to counter the prevalent view that employment in tourism and hospitality work is not satisfying. However, people working in housekeeping positions tend to be less motivated.

The employer interviews identified recruitment, retention (turnover), and skills shortages as the major workforce problems and challenges in the tourism and hospitality industry in South Carolina. The main reason for high employee turnover and labor shortages is the industry's low wages, although some respondents suggested that poor management was the cause of workforce development problems. Absenteeism also appears to be a major workforce problem for employers.

Both the in-depth interviews and survey results suggest that to recruit employees, posting job advertisements online is the most common recruiting strategy. However, the most *effective* recruitment method is via internal promotion. To evaluate new employees during the recruitment process, employers indicated that attitude, customer service skills and personality/appearance were the most important attributes they were seeking, whereas the least important attributes were the college/university attended and GPA. Likewise, employers were looking for candidates with honesty, a willingness to accept responsibility, and the ability to manage guest problems with understanding and sensitivity.

When asked to reflect on the importance of various training topics, employers suggested that service quality and customer relations were the most important. Employees themselves appreciated the importance of general training, believing that service quality, customer relations, and safety were the most useful training areas. Most employees felt that their current job skills and knowledge would be useful for future jobs, but many respondents felt that dealing with customers (or delivering "emotional labor") was a major challenge.

To retain good employees, employers provide a variety of benefit packages to keep themselves competitive, but these offerings are generally quite basic. Most employers said that they offer free meals and uniforms, health insurance, and appreciation and recognition to employees. Few organizations offer educational opportunities, a merit element in their pay packages, or retention bonuses. Employers felt that health insurance was the most important benefit for retaining employees. Other key benefits included a paid vacation and worker appreciation and recognition. Most employees on the other hand, said they would prefer to receive (in order of importance), financial incentives, health insurance, and appreciation and recognition.

Several recommendations were made based on the findings in terms of recruitment, training and retention. To improve recruitment, employers propose seeking help from industry associations or the state government, training employees to become local ambassadors, providing more internship programs, offering a clear career path to new employees, and attracting more minorities to the state. Employers believe that increasing the minimum wage would help solve workforce development problems. Other actions include working closer with colleges and universities to promote careers in this sector, and offering more visas to encourage out of state employees to move to the state.

To improve training, employers need to invest in training employees in the art of customer service. Both employers and employees believe that service quality and customer relations are critical training areas, with many employees feeling that dealing with customers is a major challenge working in hospitality and tourism. However, the study's results suggest that new recruits are not trained in these soft skills; most employers just provided basic training, which tends to comprise a general orientation, shadowing, observation, and knowledge tests.

Finally, to improve retention, employers and employees agree on the most effective strategies to encourage loyalty in the workplace - better salaries, improved benefit packages, and more opportunities for promotion. Employers should therefore consider developing career pathway plans or maps for new workers or students, and they should be continuously teaching them new skills - the study data show a significant positive relationship between training and loyalty.

Employers in South Carolina should also consider providing more appreciation and recognition to their employees, and putting in place systems and processes that protect mental health and wellbeing of employees. Such systems and processes would aid retention, and also reduce absenteeism. Employers could also emphasize the transferability of skills learned in tourism and hospitality.

Background

At the time of writing (March 2020), the tourism and hospitality industry in the U.S. was reeling from the consequences of the COVID-19 outbreak. Projections were that the shutdown in the country would lead to the loss of 3.6 million travel-related jobs, and a decline of $355 billion in travel spending (U.S. Travel Association, 2020). That scenario assumed the industry would start to recover in June. The implications from the COVID-19 outbreak will be felt for some time, but the issues and best practices raised in the current study are relevant beyond this current state of the industry and should be noted as such.

This particular research project was conducted in 2019, when the tourism and hospitality industry in the U.S. was experiencing significant problems with recruitment and retention, and many employers were facing substantial skills shortages (Smith, 2017; Roepe, 2017; McGuire, 2017; Jordan, 2017; Gough, 2017; Wilkinson, 2017). These workforce development challenges were significant, resulting in problems for individual companies and the industry's overall competitiveness (Pearlman & Schaffer, 2013; U.S. Travel Association, 2019). Recent research shows that over 15 million employees work in the nation's tourism and hospitality industry (U.S. Travel Association, 2019), and the sector projects a need to create two to three million more positions over the next six years. However, many employers face difficulties in finding enough American workers, and current immigration and visa policies hinder businesses from recruiting the necessary employees from other countries. For businesses to meet the growing demand for travel and recreation, they need access to well-trained talent pools of qualified individuals who are passionate about this field (Mei, 2019). While a talent shortage occurs across other industries and economies, the impact on the labor-intensive tourism and hospitality industry is of paramount significance (Johnson, Huang, & Doyle, 2019). Furthermore, the tourism and hospitality industry suffers from a 70% employee turnover rate (Book, Gatling, & Kim, 2019). Sakdiyakorn and Wattanacharoensil (2018) summarize the reasons for this 'turnover culture' in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Reasons for turnover culture in the hospitality industry (Sakdiyakorn & Wattanacharoensil, 2018, p. 137)

Employment nature	HR-related issues	Customer-related issues
Labor intensive High number of low skilled jobs Low levels of formal qualifications Poor utilization of student labor High migrant staffing levels	Low pay, Excessive workload Anti-social work hours Low job autonomy, Menial work Repetitive work Limited career progression Poor social status, Unpleasant physical working conditions work-family conflict, Low job security	Excessive interaction with customers Demanding customers Contempt from customers

Turnover culture

Though many private sector organizations recognize the importance of managing and developing talent, skill-sets lack to engineer this undertaking (Baum, 2019; Johnson, Huang, & Doyle, 2019). Likewise, workforce development remains a relatively underexplored topic in the industry and academic research (Ladkin, 2011; Bartlett, Johnson, & Schneider, 2016; Johnson, 2019), and a critical need exists for a more holistic approach to tourism workforce knowledge development (Baum et al., 2016b). As Johnson et al. (2019) suggest, most studies on tourism and hospitality workforce development are largely conceptual, lacking systematic empirical research to investigate such a phenomenon. Specifically, to gain critical academic and industry insight into the issue, future research opportunities should employ mixed methods research - both qualitative and quantitative methods - to understand the phenomena better and to contribute to the existing literature. A need also exists to explore workforce development issues from both employee and employer perspectives (Aynalem, Birhanu, & Tesefay, 2016; Goh & Lee, 2018; Golubovskaya, Solnet, & Robinson, 2019). Further, prior studies specifically note a need to examine generational diversity (Sakdiyakorn & Wattanacharoensil, 2018).

This project's geographic focus is the state of South Carolina, which is highly dependent on a tourism and hospitality industry that employs approximately 250,000 people, roughly 10% of the state's total workforce. A recent Government Task Force identified several key workforce challenges facing the industry (SCRLA, 2017). These challenges include: unattractiveness of the tourism and hospitality industry as an employment choice; recruiting workers into the sector; challenge recruiting workers with the right skills; labor shortages during peak seasonal periods, particularly in light of new tighter immigration policies; retaining workers once they are in tourism and hospitality employment; and a lack of skills within the existing workforce. Therefore, the purpose of this present research project was to investigate these workforce challenges, and to make recommendations to industry and policy-makers on how they can meet the workforce problems facing the State.

Methodology

Tourism and hospitality workforce researchers acknowledge the value of using a mixture of qualitative and quantitative research methods to enhance understanding of key issues (Ladkin, 2011; Cairncross & Buultjent, 2010). The two phases of the research are described below.

Phase 1: In-depth interviews
The first phase of the research involved conducting 18 in-depth interviews with key stakeholders in the tourism and hospitality industry across South Carolina. Interviewees were general managers of hotels, food and beverage directors, industry workforce specialists, restaurant owners, and resort managers. These interviews helped to understand the current: (a) recruitment challenges, strategies and practices used in the industry; and (b) performance problems among employees, including issues with job performance, deviant behavior (e.g., absenteeism, theft, etc.) and/or turnover.

Interviews with employees in the hospitality sector were also conducted to understand the key workforce development issues from the perspectives of workers. More specifically, the research team conducted 23 in-depth interviews with long-term workers at multiple hotels and restaurants in South Carolina. The sample targeted people working at establishments with a strong reputation for retaining workers for a long time period. The intent was to identify success factors behind low employee turnover.

Each interview lasted between 30-60 minutes and was audio-recorded and transcribed into text files. Following Strauss and Corbin (1990), the qualitative data were coded and then analyzed by utilizing the software NVivo.

Phase 2: Surveys
Following the qualitative research, two surveys were administered to employees and employers separately in the hospitality and tourism sector in South Carolina. Findings from the interviews and the previous literature were the foundation for developing the surveys. This phase of the research project provided a scientific assessment of the key labor challenges and issues facing the industry as well as existing and potential solutions to these underlying problems (Hertzman et al., 2015; Paez & Arendt, 2014; Harkison & Poulston, 2011; Sigala & Baum, 2003).

Employees were assessed on their perceived qualifications for their jobs, satisfaction with their jobs (e.g., pay, supervision, role, etc.), and perceptions and attraction to career paths in the tourism and hospitality industry. Measures for perceived organizational support were adopted from Eisenberger et al. (1986) and Coyle-Shapiro and Kessler (2000). Four items measuring social support were adopted from Kim et al. (1996). To measure organizational

affective commitment, a scale using six items was adopted from Meyer, Allen, and Smith (1993) and Dhar (2015). To measure organizational commitment, five items were adopted from Mowday, Steers, and Porter (1979). The measures for interpersonal trust at work were adopted from Cook and Wall (1980). Nine items measuring work engagement were taken from Schaufeli, Bakker, and Salanova (2006). To measure general training, four items were adopted from Kim et al. (1996). Job satisfaction was measured by nine items, adopted from Hartline and Ferrell (1996) and Boshoff and Allen (2000). The measures for benefit packages and retaining strategies were developed from the employee interviews. Finally, three items measuring absenteeism were adopted from Baba and Harris (1998).

Employer surveys assessed the recruitment challenges, strategies, and practices used in the industry. Measures for current recruiting challenges and benefit packages given to employees were developed from the employer interviews. To examine personal recruiting sources, measures were adopted from Çetinel, Yolal, and Emeksiz (2008), and ten items measuring applicant assessment were adopted from Chan and Kuok (2011). To investigate the importance of certain employee skills, measures were adopted from Chan and Coleman (2004). Finally, to measure the factors contributing to labor shortages, items were adopted from Davidson and Wang (2011), Chan and Kuok (2011), and the in-depth interviews.

To ensure the reliability and validity of the measurement, all the measurement items for both surveys were adopted from existing literature and slightly modified to suit the context of this study. All items were measured on a 7-point Likert scale, from 1=strongly disagree to 7= strongly agree or 1= not at all important to 7= extremely important.

Results: Employee Interviews

Employee interviews revealed that salary, people, flexibility, and working environment are the major influences in retaining employees. These factors also are the reasons that employees would quit their current jobs. Results show that payroll is the top motivation or constraint to retaining good employees. One employee said, *"In this property, you can keep your own tips. The money is pretty consistent and so the expectations about money are met."* Another said, *"Money is important for me. I am always looking for a job with a better salary."*

Many employees indicated that working in the tourism and hospitality industry enables them to meet people from all over the world. *"I love to meet people from different countries and different cultural background. The job provides me this opportunity,"* said one. *"I am able to build up networking with higher*

end customers and I am proud to provide great customer experiences to them," said another. Respondents highlighted the importance of their co-workers and supervisors. One said, *"The people here are good and they are so fun to work with. As time goes by, they are being your friends and family."* Other respondents agreed that good co-workers are the most important job attribute: *"It is lucky for me to be able to talk with my manager who I can rely on. All the employees here are very loyal to the organization and work hard."* Teamwork is also highly valued by employees. As one said, *"Teamwork is extremely important for an organization. Cooperation will make our work much easier."* On the other hand, some respondents emphasized that people are the major challenge of working in hospitality and tourism: *"It is tough to deal with the people who are getting mad at you...meeting new people every day is also a big challenge for me."*

Figure 1. Reasons for turnover culture in the hospitality industry (Sakdiyakorn & Wattanacharoensil, 2018, p. 137)

Many respondents referred to work schedule flexibility as a benefit of the job (see Figure 2). *"There is so much flexibility with our hours, shifts and taking time off."* Another respondent added, *"Our company gives me a lot of freedom and enables me to create and make special items for the day."* Still, many respondents complained about their working hours. *"365 days, 24 hours, 7 days, nonstop job and always on your brain. You have to think forward and make a plan B, C, D, and E...and we have to work on all the holidays ...."* Respondents suggested that the working environment and atmosphere are critical job attributes to consider and these reasons explain why many of them remain with their current employer (see Figure 3). *"I like my current working environment. It is not a corporate environment - the staff is hospitable. I am encouraged to be innovative and use my creativity,"* said one. Another

said, *"The atmosphere here makes you feel like a part of the family. The organization provides equal service to everyone and the managers do care about all the employees...everyone."*

Figure 3. Word cloud generated from the values employees respect in their organizations

Regarding current training and development opportunities in the organization, many respondents referred to training programs, online courses, conferences, and orientations. *"The job motivates me and makes me learn more. There is a lot of hands-on training. You get nudges here and there"* said one. Another mentioned, *"All the online courses and the orientation will tell you how things are going on in the company before you start your job."* Respondents indicated that better opportunities in other organizations for training and development would cause them to quit their current jobs.

Results: Employer Interviews

In the employer interviews, recruitment, retention and skills shortages clearly surfaced as the major workforce problems and challenges in the tourism and hospitality industry in South Carolina. Regarding recruiting strategies, online recruitment like posting job advertisements on Indeed and Craigslist, was the major recruitment strategy (see Figure 4). Online recruitment was followed by walk-in applications, posting openings in newspapers, and assistance from local CVB's or DMOs. As one interviewee said, *"Most of the recruitment is done via Indeed, Craigslist, etc., those types of things...also the CVB has started a task force."* Respondents also indicated that referrals and job fairs are important ways to recruit new employees. *"We usually post recruiting information on Indeed or use word of mouth. When we have openings, our current employees*

may spread the words to their friends, or the people they know who are looking for a job at a restaurant. Sometimes, we may spread the word to the UofSC to look for some students to work here," said one. Finally, a major hotel chain's manager said that he was increasingly reliant on specialist recruitment agencies to fill vacant positions. *"We do realize a lot of contract outsourced labor here too. We have about twenty-five contracts in the housekeeping type roles, and that is good because as your occupancy goes up and down. We only need ten tomorrow, but may need twenty Friday."*

Figure 4. Word cloud generated from recruiting strategies used by employers

When asked to identify major recruitment challenges, over one-half of the respondents indicated "employee turnover" (see Figure 5). For the tourism and hospitality industry in general, as one said, *"The hardest challenge is keeping good people…the turnover rate of this industry is pretty high compared to other industries."* Another said, *"Housekeeping would be the largest challenge. It's hard to keep people in that department. The turnover rate of housekeeping is the highest."* Others agreed: *"Housekeeping is a challenging job. It is hard to recruit people for housekeeping and also hard to keep good people."* The main reasons for housekeeping's high turnover rate were low compensation/wages and poor management. *"The wages are probably the biggest issue. People leave their jobs because of money,"* said one. Another added, *"I feel people leave their jobs because of poor management. What happened in my organization is that the entire management team was turned over due to a major violation of company standards and ethics."*
For popular travel destinations in South Carolina (i.e., Charleston, Myrtle Beach, and Hilton Head Island), housing and transportation are major recruiting challenges for new employees. One manager stated, *"Workforce housing is really an issue in Myrtle Beach… rent is pretty high compared*

with other locations." Another employer from Charleston said, *"We are having serious transportation and housing issues here…there are no parking spots for our employees. They have to park at the meter and pay extra money for parking."* Other respondents reported that finding the required skills is difficult. *"We are having a hard time with the new generation. They would rather sit behind a desk and work on their phones. Sometimes, they don't even talk with our customers."*

Figure 5. Word cloud generated from the major challenges in recruiting new employees

After recruitment, most employers provide training opportunities. One said, *"It depends on the positions. We provide at least one-week training."* Common training processes include shadowing, observation, knowledge tests, retention bonuses, and orientation. One restaurant employer said, *"The new staff will observe the interactions between a server and customers, such as how to serve the food, how to recommend our signature food, and how to introduce our wines and beer…."*

To retain good employees, organizations provide benefit packages to keep themselves competitive, but these offerings are generally quite basic. As one said, *"We only offer health insurance, some medical vision and dental insurance to our managers. 401K is only available to full time staff."* The most common employee benefits are free meals, free uniforms, and a paid vacation. One said, *"We provide employee meals twice a day and we cover their uniforms."* Another said, *"We give one week of vacation after working with us for one year, two weeks of vacation after working two years…."* Only one organization offers educational opportunities and reimbursement for classes.

Generally, most respondents thought that their own organizations provide comparative benefit packages. As one said, *"We are providing a very competitive wage for our staff…We are not providing health insurance to our staff but they have a one week break."* Respondents did suggest that to reduce the turnover rate, employers should try to provide a better working environment, and all the managerial people should be friendly to employees. Some manager also mentioned, *"We try to provide flexible schedules to our employees, especially to mothers…."* Meeting employees' expectations are important to retain employees as well. As one said, *"The quality of work life and laying out expectations are critical to keeping good people. I think everyone should know what the expectation is of them. Always praise your staff when they are doing things right."*

In addition to recruiting and retaining good employees, other workforce problems emerged from the interviews. A skills shortage is one major concern. As one manager noted, *"Experience is the most important thing for this industry. Students learned a lot of knowledge at universities, but they don't have any on-hands industry experience."* Another added, *"Skill gaps exist in our industry. The older employees are less and less able to keep up …especially in the housekeeping department."* Absenteeism is also a big workforce problem. *"The new generation is not on time and they are not ready to work,"* said one. However, some respondents felt that the new generation adds new blood to the industry. *"Younger generations are very in tune with technology, which will be a great benefit for the industry especially for hotels."* When asked what could be done to deal with the current workforce challenges, respondents proposed seeking help from industry associations or the state government, training employees to become local ambassadors, providing more internship programs, offering a clear career path to new employees, and attracting more minorities to the State.

Results: Employee Surveys
One screening question qualified respondents: "Are you currently an hourly employee in the tourism and hospitality industry." Of 816 potential respondents, 320 respondents passed the screening question, attention check questions, and completed the survey. The survey response rate was approximately 39.22%. The respondents are mostly Caucasian (78.4%), with more females (80.5%) than males (19.5%). The respondents' education level is high. Most workers (72%) have either a college or associate degree, a bachelor's degree, a master's degree, or a doctoral degree. Most respondents are full-time employees (74.5%), and the rest are either part-time employees (24.9%) or temporary employees (0.06%). In addition, 79% of employees work in the front of the house positions

(customer service positions), and 21% are employed in the back of the house positions (non-customer service positions).

Respondents represent various tourism and hospitality industry sectors. Figure 6 shows 188 respondents working in the food & beverage industry, 94 in the lodging industry, 20 from the attraction/recreation sector (parks, zoos, museums, sports, events, etc.), 14 from clubs (social clubs, golf clubs, etc.), and 13 respondents from other sectors such as casinos, condos for timeshares, yachts, and conventional centers.

Figure 6. Number of employees from each sector

- Lodging
- Food & Beverage
- Clubs (social clubs, golf clubs etc.)
- Attraction/Recreation (parks, zoos, museums, sports, events etc.)
- Other
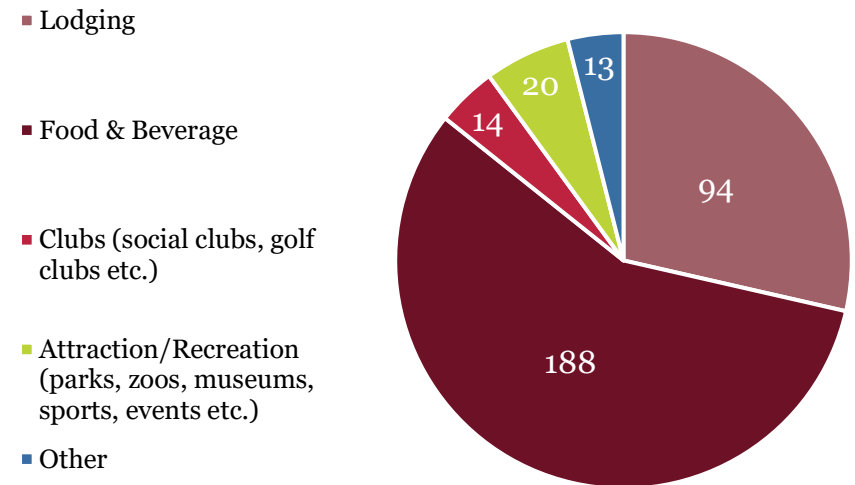
Within the lodging industry, 48.9% employees are in front desk/customer service positions, 36.2% in housekeeping, and 14.9% in the reservation/sales area (see Figure 7).

Figure 7. Positions in the lodging industry

- Front desk/customer service
- Housekeeping
- Reservations/sales

48.90%
36.20%
14.90%

Generally, employees in the tourism and hospitality industry also gain strong support from their organizations. The top three statements about their support from their organizations are: 1) my employer values my contributions to its well-being; 2) my employer is willing to help me when I need a special favor; and 3) my employer cares about my general satisfaction at work.

Table 2. Organizational support

		Mean	SD
1	My employer values my contributions to its well-being.	5.24	1.62
2	My employer is willing to help me when I need a special favor.	5.12	1.59
3	My employer cares about my general satisfaction at work.	4.98	1.73
4	My employer really cares about my well-being.	4.89	1.80
5	My employer cares about my opinions.	4.81	1.75
6	My employer strongly considers my goals and values.	4.76	1.77
7	My employer shows very little concern for me. *	2.88	1.75
	Average	4.67	1.72

Note. SD=standard deviation; * represents reverse-coded items; level of agreement on mean scores of 1 to 7 where 1= strongly disagree and 7= strongly agree.

Results shown in Table 1 indicate that most respondents receive strong support from their co-workers. For example, respondents were very friendly with one or more of their co-workers (Mean=6.04). Please note that this study did not consider the immediate supervisor a co-worker. The co-workers consist of the people whom the respondents have the most contact in the organization. However, a *t*-test indicates that employees in front of house positions felt that they get significantly more support from their co-workers than workers at the back of the house (e.g., Mean=4.58, t (233) =2.24, *p*<0.05).

Table 3 indicates that employees generally rate their affective commitment to organizations as high. Most respondents reported that they appreciate their supervisors, always feel a sense of respect for their supervisors and feel proud to work with their supervisors. However, an ANOVA test indicates that some significant differences exist across jobs. For example, housekeeping employees had significantly lower affective commitment than other lodging sector employees do (Mean=4.21), whereas reservations employees (Mean= 5.71) and sales employees (Mean=6.36) had a significantly higher commitment to their organizations and supervisors (F (2, 91)=4.47, *p*<0.05).

Table 1. Co-worker support

		Mean	SD
1	I am very friendly with one or more of my co-workers.	6.04	1.47
2	I regularly do things outside of work with one or more of my co-workers.	4.29	2.01
3	I rarely discuss important personal problems with my co-workers. *	3.79	1.97
4	I know almost nothing about my co-workers as persons. *	2.52	1.57
	Average	4.16	1.75

Note. SD=standard deviation; * represents reverse-coded items; level of agreement on mean scores of 1 to 7 where 1= strongly disagree and 7= strongly agree.

Table 3. Affective commitment to organizations

		Mean	SD
1	I appreciate my supervisor.	5.50	1.52
2	I feel a sense of respect for my supervisor.	5.47	1.54
3	I feel proud to work with my supervisor.	5.17	1.58
4	My supervisor means a lot to me.	4.77	1.68
5	I am not really attached to my supervisor. *	3.99	1.88
6	I feel little admiration for my supervisor. *	3.50	1.90
	Average	4.73	1.68

Note. SD=standard deviation; * represents reverse-coded items; level of agreement on mean scores of 1 to 7 where 1= strongly disagree and 7= strongly agree.

Regarding organizational commitment, Table 4 shows that employees have a strong commitment to their organizations. Respondents agreed to the statement, "I am willing to put high efforts in order to help this organization be successful" (Mean=5.97, SD=1.19). Other top statements include "I talk positively about this organization to others" and "I am proud to tell others that I am part of this organization."

Table 4. Organizational commitment

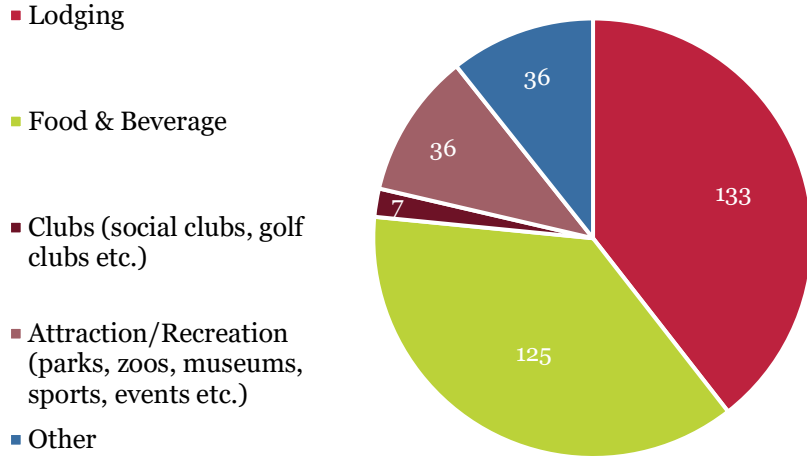|		Mean	SD
1	I am willing to put high efforts in order to help this organization be successful.	5.97	1.19
2	I talk positively about this organization to others.	5.74	1.38
3	I am proud to tell others that I am part of this organization.	5.67	1.41
4	I really care about the status of this organization.	5.69	1.44
5	For me, this is one of the best organizations for which to work.	5.09	1.73
	Average	5.63	1.43

Note. SD=standard deviation; level of agreement on mean scores of 1 to 7 where 1= strongly disagree and 7= strongly agree.

Employees also tend to trust their organizations (see Table 5). They tend to trust their co-workers, feel confident that workmates will help in times of difficulty, and think that fellow workers can do their jobs even if supervisors are not around. However, an ANOVA test indicates that housekeeping employees reported a significantly lower level of trust than other employees (Mean=4.74, F (2, 91) =3.25, $p<0.05$). Also, a *t*-test shows that employees in the back of the house positions (Mean=5.44) feel a significantly lower level of trust than their front of the house co-workers (Mean=5.95, t (233) =2.30, $p<0.05$).

Table 5. Trust at work

		Mean	SD
1	I can trust the people I work with to lend me a hand if I needed it.	5.67	1.36
2	If I got into difficulties at work, I know my workmates would try and help me out.	5.56	1.46
3	Most of my fellow workers would get on with their work even if supervisors were not around.	5.40	1.57
4	I have full confidence in the skills of my workmates	5.29	1.33
5	Management at work seems to do an efficient job.	5.21	1.62
6	Most of my workmates can be relied upon to do as they say they will do.	5.21	1.45
7	Management can be trusted to make sensible decisions for the organization's future.	5.11	1.64
8	I feel quite confident that the organization will always try to treat me fairly.	5.09	1.71
9	Management at my organization is sincere in its attempts to meet the workers' point of view.	4.95	1.76
10	I can rely on other workers not to make my job more difficult by careless work.	4.91	1.72
11	Our organization has a poor future unless it can attract better managers.	3.32	1.94
12	Our management would be quite prepared to gain advantage by deceiving the workers.	3.21	1.85
	Average	4.91	1.62

Note. SD=standard deviation; level of agreement on mean scores of 1 to 7 where 1= strongly disagree and 7= strongly agree.

As Table 6 indicates, employees reported a high level of job engagement. The top three statements regarding work engagement are: 1) I am proud of the work that I do; 2) I feel happy when I am working intensely; and 3) I am enthusiastic about my job.

Table 6. Work engagement

		Mean	SD
1	I am proud of the work that I do.	5.93	1.30
2	I feel happy when I am working intensely.	5.35	1.51
3	I am enthusiastic about my job.	5.27	1.51
4	I am immersed in my work.	5.19	1.57
5	At my job I feel strong and vigorous.	5.03	1.58
6	At my work, I feel bursting with energy.	4.83	1.60
7	My job inspires me.	4.71	1.69
8	I get carried away when I am working.	4.63	1.66
9	When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work.	4.21	1.91
	Average	5.02	1.59

Note. SD=standard deviation; level of agreement on mean scores of 1 to 7 where 1= strongly disagree and 7= strongly agree.

Respondents also indicate that training is important and their current job skills and knowledge will be useful for future jobs (see Table 7). However, an ANOVA test analysis shows that housekeeping employees expressed significantly lower agreement on the statement, "Most of my present job skills and knowledge would be useful to me if I left my present employer" (Mean=5.29, F(2, 91) =5.93, $p<0.01$). Relatedly, housekeeping employees reported higher agreement on "My job skills and knowledge are mostly limited to my present employer" (Mean=3.12, F (2, 91) =3.15, $p<0.05$).

Table 7. Use of skills and knowledge

		Mean	SD
1	Most of my present job skills and knowledge would be useful to me if I left my present employer.	5.90	1.28
2	The skills and knowledge used in my job are needed with other employers.	5.74	1.26
3	My job skills and knowledge are mostly limited to my present employer. *	2.46	1.62
4	It would be difficult to use the skills and knowledge of my job outside of my present employer. *	2.38	1.56
	Average	4.12	1.43

Note. SD=standard deviation; * represents reverse-coded items; level of agreement on mean scores of 1 to 7 where 1= strongly disagree and 7= strongly agree.

Reflecting on the importance of various training topics (see Figure 8), respondents rated service quality (Mean=6.78), customer relations (Mean=6.71), and safety (Mean=6.43) the top three. The lowest three were diversity (Mean=5.30), orientation (Mean=5.01), and foreign language (Mean=3.30). After further analysis, only ethics as a training topic ranked differently across full-time, part-time, and temporary employees. Ethics training was more important for full-time employees (Mean=6.23), followed by part-time employees (Mean=5.72) and temporary employees (Mean=4.00).

According to a series of ANOVA tests, some significant differences exist in responses to training questions across positions. Customer relations training was significantly more important for front desk/customer service employees (Mean=6.93, F (2, 91)=5.60, $p<0.05$), whereas sales and marketing training was significantly more important for reservations/sales department (Mean=6.71, F (2, 91)=12.58, $p<0.01$). Finally, a series of *t*-test indicated that front of house employees rated the training topics of customer relations (Mean=6.82, *t* (233)=3.66, $p<0.05$), service quality (Mean=6.84, *t* (233)=2.83, $p<0.05$) and safety (Mean=6.58, *t* (233)=2.17, $p<0.05$) significantly higher than the back of the house workers.

Figure 8. Importance of training topics
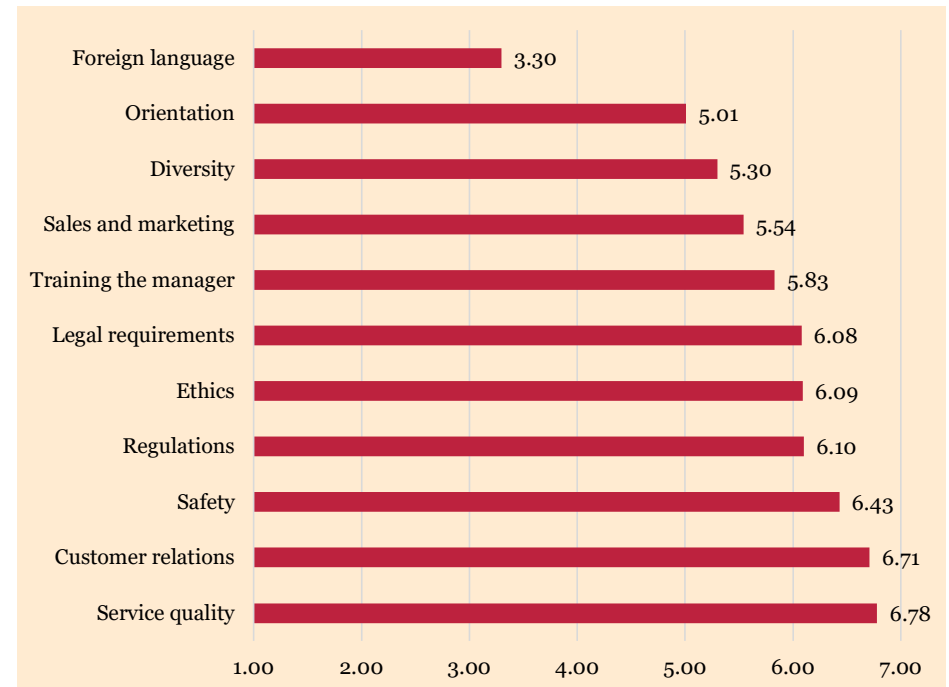
Topic	Mean
Foreign language	3.30
Orientation	5.01
Diversity	5.30
Sales and marketing	5.54
Training the manager	5.83
Legal requirements	6.08
Ethics	6.09
Regulations	6.10
Safety	6.43
Customer relations	6.71
Service quality	6.78

Note. Level of importance on mean scores of 1 to 7 where 1= not at all important and 7= extremely important.

Participants were asked to rate the importance of various benefits (see Figure 9). Most prefer financial incentives (Mean=6.05), followed by health insurance (Mean=6.04), and social appreciation and recognition (Mean=5.68). Meanwhile, retention bonuses (Mean=5.27), formal appraisals (Mean=5.06), and a sponsored vacation (Mean=4.62) were the least important benefits to respondents. Only a few significant differences exist across sectors regarding the importance of these benefits, according to a series of ANOVA tests. Specifically, employees from clubs (Mean= 6.57) rated health insurance higher than other respondents (F (3, 231) =2.98, $p<0.05$). Also, food & beverage employees perceived free meals and uniforms to be more important than other respondents (Mean=5.75, F (3, 231) =6.42, $p<0.01$).

Figure 9. Importance of benefits
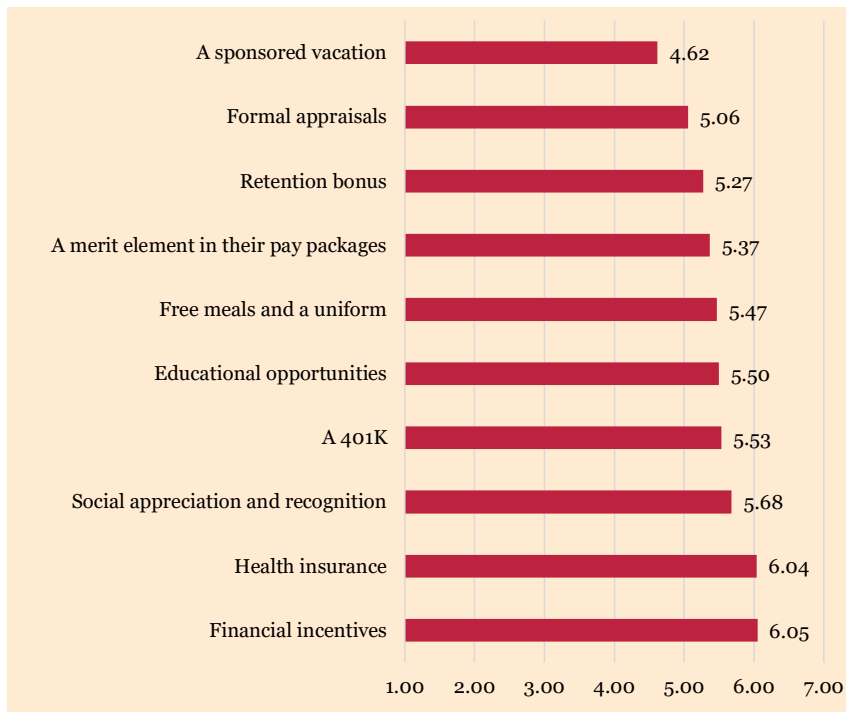
Note. Level of importance on mean scores of 1 to 7 where 1= not at all important and 7= extremely important.

Figure 10 shows that the top three strategies for retaining good employees are providing better salaries (Mean=6.48), offering promotion (Mean=6.30), and giving better benefit packages (Mean=6.26). The lowest ranked retention strategies are training programs (Mean=5.96), educational opportunities (Mean=5.74), and job enlargement (Mean=5.60).

Figure 10. Importance of retaining strategies

Note. Level of importance on mean scores of 1 to 7 where 1= not at all important and 7= extremely important.

In general, respondents report high job satisfaction toward their jobs (see Table 8). Respondents were most satisfied with their overall jobs (Mean=5.59), supervisor(s) (Mean=5.33), and working conditions (Mean=5.32). Employees were least satisfied with their opportunities for advancement with the organization (Mean=4.62), financial rewards (Mean=4.41), and fair pay (Mean=4.40).

Table 8. Job satisfaction

		Mean	SD
1	I am satisfied with my overall job.	5.59	1.50
2	I am satisfied with my supervisor(s).	5.33	1.73
3	I am satisfied with my working conditions.	5.32	1.50
4	I am satisfied with my organization's policies.	5.24	1.56
5	I am satisfied with the support provided by my organization.	5.11	1.70
6	I am satisfied with my opportunities for advancement with the organization.	4.62	1.94
7	I am relatively well rewarded financially for my work.	4.41	1.94
8	Given the work I do, I feel I am paid fairly.	4.40	2.00
	Average	5.00	1.73

Note. SD=standard deviation; level of agreement on mean scores of 1 to 7 where 1= strongly disagree and 7= strongly agree.

Interestingly, front of the house employees reported significantly higher work satisfaction than back of the house employees (see Table 9).

Table 9. Work satisfaction across positions

	Mean	F	Sig.
I am satisfied with my overall job.		6.26	0.01
Front of house (customer service position)	5.74		
Back of house (non-customer service position)	5.16		
I am satisfied with my organization's policies.		6.76	0.01
Front of house (customer service position)	5.40		
Back of house (non-customer service position)	4.76		
I am relatively well rewarded financially for my work.		6.66	0.01
Front of house (customer service position)	4.68		
Back of house (non-customer service position)	3.90		
Given the work I do, I feel I am paid fairly.		6.71	0.01
Front of house (customer service position)	4.66		
Back of house (non-customer service position)	3.86		

Note. Level of agreement on mean scores of 1 to 7 where 1= strongly disagree and 7= strongly agree.

For absenteeism, respondents recognize the importance of a good attendance record (Mean=6.15) (see Figure 11).

Figure 11. Absenteeism
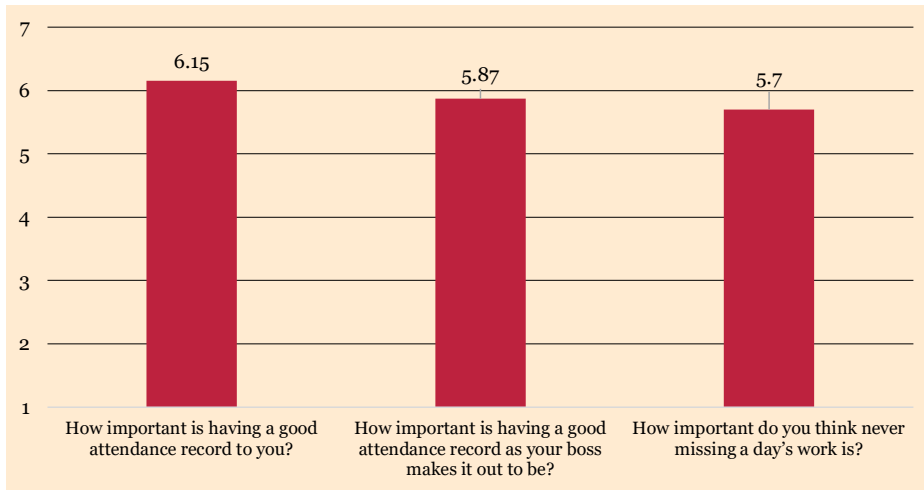
Note. Level of importance on mean scores of 1 to 7 where 1= not at all important and 7= extremely important.

When asked about turnover intentions (see Figure 12), most respondents indicated that they would not look for another job soon or not think about resigning. Not surprisingly, respondents professed a high level of loyalty to their organizations (average=5.45), speaking positively about their employers when talking to customers (Mean=6.06), and recommending their organization's products and services (Mean=5.86) (see Table 10).

Figure 12. Turnover intentions
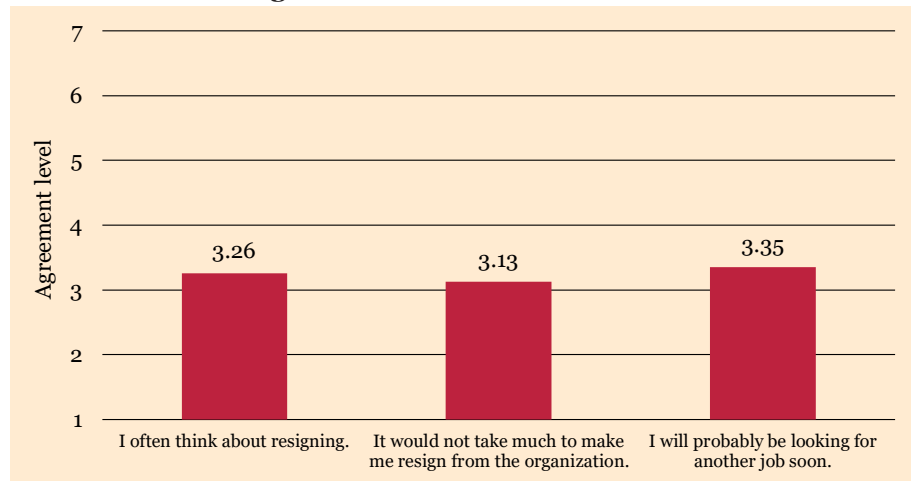
Note. Level of importance on mean scores of 1 to 7 where 1= strongly disagree and 7= strongly agree.

Table 10. Employee loyalty

		Mean	SD
1	I speak positively about my organization when talking to customers.	6.06	1.22
2	I can recommend the products and services of my organization to others.	5.86	1.34
3	I speak positively about my organization when talking to friends and relatives.	5.40	1.67
4	I would like to stay with this organization in the future.	5.16	1.78
5	I would not change immediately to another organization if I got a job offer.	4.79	1.86
	Average	5.45	1.57

Note. SD=standard deviation; level of agreement on mean scores of 1 to 7 where 1= strongly disagree and 7= strongly agree.
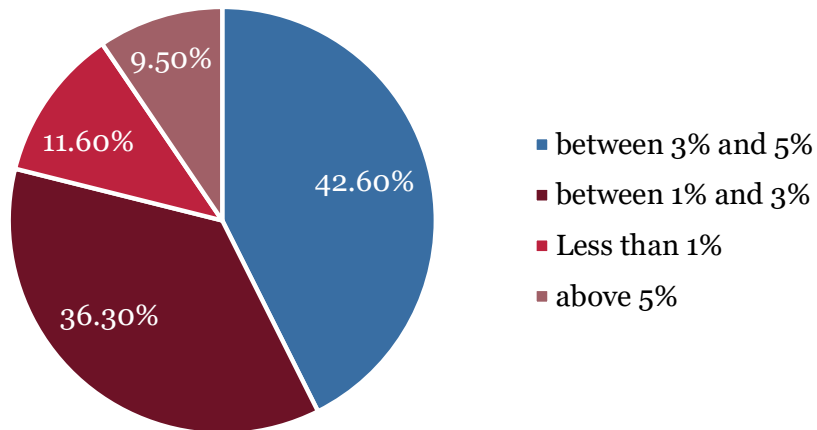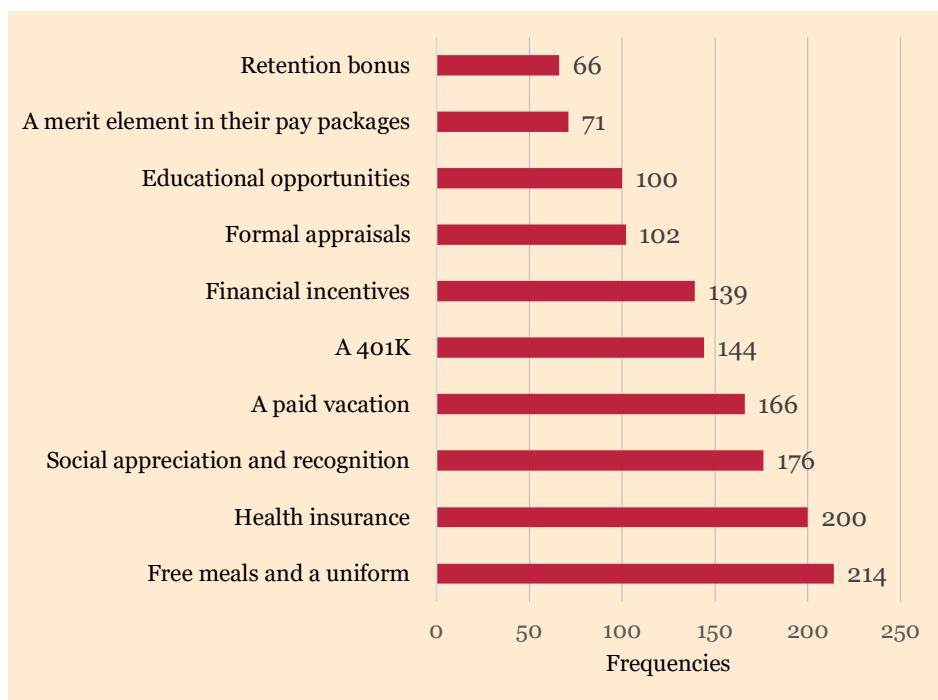
Results: Employer Surveys

Two screening questions identified qualified respondents: 1) are you currently working in the tourism or hospitality industry; and 2) are you currently in a managerial position (salary-based)? Respondents who failed to answer the questions affirmatively were excluded from the study. Of 1,405 potential respondents, 337 respondents successfully passed the screening questions, attention check questions, and completed the survey. The survey response rate was approximately 24%. The respondents are mostly Caucasian (70.2%), with more females (72.3%) than males (27.7%). The education level of respondents is high with 82% having achieved either a college or associate degree, a bachelor's degree or a master's or doctoral degree. Employers represent various sectors of the tourism and hospitality industry: lodging sector (133), food & beverage (125), attractions (36), clubs (7), and other sectors (36) such as boat charters, healthcare, car rental, and event design (see Figure 13).

Figure 13. Sectors represented by employers

- Lodging
- Food & Beverage
- Clubs (social clubs, golf clubs etc.)
- Attraction/Recreation (parks, zoos, museums, sports, events etc.)
- Other

Among the respondents, employer titles include 109 general managers, 18 human resource managers, 40 supervisors, 54 department managers, 55 assistant managers, and 61 work in other positions such as tour manager, project manager, or CFO (see Figure 14).

Figure 14. Positions held by employers

- General manager
- Human resource manager
- Supervisor
- Department manager
- Assistant manager
- Other
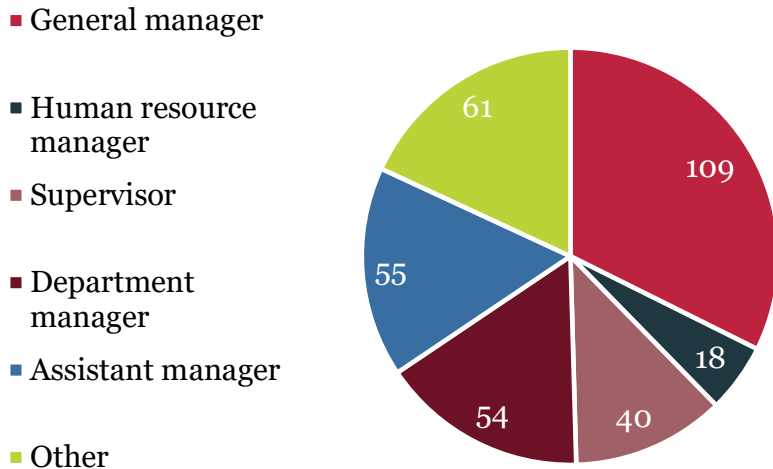
Figure 15 shows that employers identified the three most widely used recruiting sources as online sources (e.g., Indeed and Craigslist), word of mouth and referral, and walk-in applications. The bottom three recruitment sources were local recruitment agencies/specialists, national employment agencies such as CVB, and sponsors, and trade magazines or job boards for trade organizations.

Figure 15. Employee recruitment sources
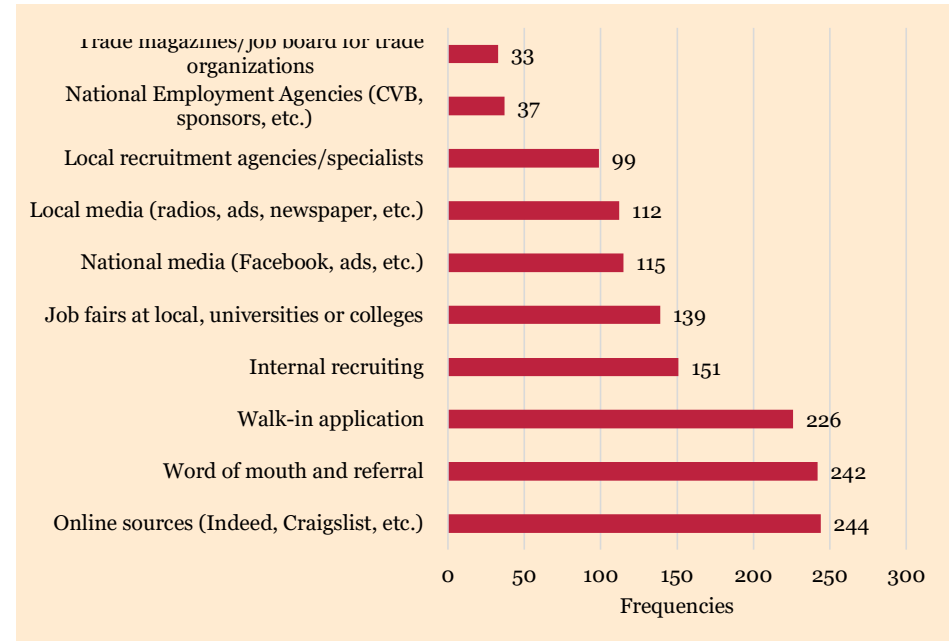
When asked to indicate *the effectiveness* of each recruiting source, the results show that internal recruiting (Mean=5.49), online sources (Indeed and Craigslist), and word of mouth and referral (Mean=5.36) were the most effective methods (see Table 11). The least effective sources were walk-in applications (Mean=5.05), local media (radios, ads, newspaper) (Mean=5.00), and trade magazines (Mean=4.97). An ANOVA analysis finds the three strategies significantly differ depending on positions. Specifically, online sources (Indeed, Craigslist, etc.) were the most effective strategy for general managers (Mean=5.78, $F(5, 236)=2.36$, $p<0.05$), and national media (Facebook, ads, etc.) was the most effective for human resource managers (Mean=5.88, $F(5, 236)=2.51$, $p<0.05$). Supervisors rated walk-in applications as the most effective strategy (Mean=5.43, $F(5, 236)=3.71$, $p<0.01$).

Table 11. Effectiveness of the recruiting source

		Mean	SD
1	Internal recruiting	5.49	1.26
2	Online sources (Indeed, Craigslist, etc.)	5.48	1.35
3	Word of mouth and referral	5.36	1.38
4	Job fairs at local, universities or colleges	5.33	1.52
5	National media (Facebook, ads, etc.)	5.26	1.57
6	National Employment Agencies (CVB, sponsors)	5.26	1.57
7	Local recruitment agencies/specialists	5.23	1.54
8	Walk-in application	5.05	1.55
9	Local media (radios, ads, newspaper, etc.)	5.00	1.55
10	Trade magazines/job board for trade organizations	4.97	1.63
	Average	5.24	1.49

Note. SD=standard deviation; level of agreement on mean scores of 1 to 7 where 1= not effective at all and 7= extremely effective.

To evaluate new employees, respondents indicated that attitude (Mean=6.68), customer service skills (Mean=6.44), and personality/appearance (Mean=6.18) were the most important attributes an interviewee can possess (see Table 12). The least important three aspects were college/university attended (Mean=3.50), GPA (overall) (Mean=3.06) and GPA (major) (Mean=3.01). However, a series of ANOVA tests indicate that employers from the attraction/recreation industry ranked college/university attended (Mean=4.31, $F_{(4, 332)}=5.20$, $p<0.01$), major GPA (Mean=3.72, $F_{(4, 332)}=4.38$, $p<0.01$), and overall GPA (Mean=4.11, $F_{(4, 332)}=5.65$, $p<0.01$) significantly higher than employers from other sectors. In addition, both general managers and human resource managers ranked GPA (major) (Mean=3.37, Mean=3.11) and GPA (overall) (Mean=3.39, Mean=3.61) significantly higher than other respondents.

Table 12. Criteria for evaluating new employees

		Mean	SD
1	Attitude	6.68	0.76
2	Customer service skills	6.44	0.97
3	Personality/appearance	6.18	1.18
4	Qualifications	5.40	1.38
5	Previous experience	5.33	1.37
6	Resume	5.15	1.70
7	Local resident	4.78	1.92
8	References	4.64	1.47
9	College/University attended	3.50	1.90
10	GPA (overall)	3.06	1.86
11	GPA (major)	3.01	1.81
	Average	4.92	1.48

Note. SD=standard deviation; level of agreement on mean scores of 1 to 7 where 1= not important at all and 7= extremely important.

Table 13 presents the importance of selection strategies. The results show that the initial interview (Mean=6.17), structured interview (Mean= 5.47), and background check (Mean=5.45) were the most important selecting strategies. The least important selection strategies were clinical assessment (Mean= 3.63), graphology (Mean= 2.70), and genetic screening (Mean=2.49).

Table 13. Importance of selection strategies

		Mean	SD
1	Initial interview	6.17	1.15
2	Structured interview	5.47	1.43
3	Background check	5.45	1.74
4	Performance test	5.37	1.76
5	Integrity test	5.23	1.87
6	Job knowledge test	5.12	1.83
7	Personality test	5.07	1.90
8	Literacy test	4.30	2.16
9	Clinical assessment	3.63	2.16
10	Graphology	2.70	1.98
11	Genetic screening	2.49	2.03
	Average	4.64	1.82

Note. SD=standard deviation; level of agreement on mean scores of 1 to 7 where 1= not important at all and 7= extremely important.

Exploring the importance of employee abilities, employers rated all abilities high (average= 5.83) (see Table 14). Specifically, the top three were honesty (Mean=6.58), ability to accept responsibility (Mean=6.42), and managing guest problems with understanding and sensitivity (Mean=6.42). The bottom three abilities were effective writing skills (Mean=5.41), ability to use relevant computer software (Mean=5.01), and foreign language competency (Mean=3.25).

Table 14. Importance of employee abilities

		Mean	SD
1	Be honest	6.58	0.94
2	Be able to accept responsibility	6.42	1.04
3	Manage guest problems with understanding and sensitivity	6.42	1.02
4	Have a professional attitude	6.40	1.05
5	Be able to work co-operatively as a team member	6.38	1.02
6	Have a genuine desire to help people	6.35	1.00
7	Have a good personal presentation	6.30	1.00
8	Be adaptable and be flexible to cope with a changing work environment	6.24	1.19
9	Be able to work autonomously with minimal supervision	6.18	1.13
10	Be able to define and solve problems	5.94	1.33
11	Be able to lead others effectively	5.84	1.29
12	Possess effective reading skills	5.82	1.32
13	Be creative	5.56	1.42
14	Have a certain degree of practical knowledge in at least one area	5.46	1.67
15	Be able to update their professional knowledge	5.43	1.60
16	Possess effective writing skills	5.41	1.68
17	Be able to use relevant computer software	5.01	1.91
18	Be able to communicate in a foreign language (Spanish, Mandarin, etc.)	3.25	1.93
	Average	5.83	1.31

Note. SD=standard deviation; level of agreement on mean scores of 1 to 7 where 1= not important at all and 7= extremely important.

Looking at the perceived importance of these abilities across sectors (see Table 15), "be able to use relevant computer software" was significantly more important to the club sector employers (Mean=5.43, $F_{(4, 332)}=2.62$, $p<0.05$), whereas the attraction/recreation sector valued "a foreign language" significantly higher than others (Mean=3.83, $F_{(4, 332)}=4.53$, $p<0.01$), according to an ANOVA test. "Managing guest problems with understanding and sensitivity" was the most important employee ability to the lodging sector (Mean=6.53, $F_{(4, 332)}=5.26$, $p<0.01$), and other sectors such as boat charters, healthcare, car rental rated "have a genuine desire to help people" as the most important ability (Mean=6.61, $F_{(4, 332)}=3.19$, $p<0.05$).

Table 15. Importance of abilities across sectors (showing significant differences only)

	Mean	F	Sig.
Be able to use relevant computer software.		2.62	0.04
Lodging	5.32		
Food & Beverage	4.60		
Clubs (social clubs, golf clubs, etc.)	5.43		
Attraction/Recreation (parks, zoos, museums, sports, events, etc.)	5.28		
Other	5.00		
Be able to communicate in a foreign language (Spanish, Mandarin, etc.)		4.53	0.00
Lodging	3.64		
Food & Beverage	2.78		
Clubs (social clubs, golf clubs, etc.)	2.86		
Attraction/Recreation (parks, zoos, museums, sports, events, etc.)	3.83		
Other	2.92		
Manage guest problems with understanding and sensitivity.		5.26	0.00
Lodging	6.53		
Food & Beverage	6.51		
Clubs (social clubs, golf clubs, etc.)	6.14		
Attraction/Recreation (parks, zoos, museums, sports, events, etc.)	5.72		
Other	6.44		
Have a genuine desire to help people.		3.19	0.01
Lodging	6.44		
Food & Beverage	6.33		
Clubs (social clubs, golf clubs, etc.)	6.29		
Attraction/Recreation (parks, zoos, museums, sports, events, etc.)	5.86		
Other	6.61		

Note. Level of agreement on mean scores of 1 to 7 where 1= not at all important and 7= extremely important.

Table 16 shows that managing employee absenteeism (Mean=4.51), recruiting staff with the necessary experience (Mean=4.50), and retaining staff were the top three workforce challenges. Meanwhile, the lowest ranked workforce challenges were providing housing (Mean=3.75), offering parking (Mean=3.68), and finding staff with the required educational qualifications (Mean=3.75).

Table 16. Workforce challenges

		Mean	SD
1	Managing employee absenteeism	4.51	1.90
2	Recruiting staff with the necessary experience	4.50	1.86
3	Retaining staff	4.23	1.99
4	Attracting Millennials to work in the tourism/hospitality/restaurant industry	4.13	1.90
5	Promoting from within because of a lack of experience	3.81	1.77
6	Recruiting staff with the required educational qualifications	3.75	1.84
7	Providing housing to staff	3.75	1.97
8	Providing parking to staff	3.68	2.18
	Average	4.05	1.92

Note. SD=standard deviation; level of agreement on mean scores of 1 to 7 where 1= strongly disagree and 7= strongly agree.

Figure 16 displays the average time for different department employees to become proficient and productive in the workplace. The results indicate that departments of administration and finance, human resources, and sales & marketing require the longest time to become proficient – over four months. Employees of the kitchen, restaurant/bar, and housekeeping need only three months or less to become proficient and productive.

Figure 16. Average time (in months) for employees to become proficient in different departments

Reflecting on the importance of various training topics (see Figure 18), employers suggest that service quality (Mean=6.64), customer relations (Mean=6.46), and safety (Mean=6.44) ranked the top three, which is consistent with employees' responses. The lowest three training areas were sales and marketing (Mean=5.30), orientation (Mean=5.02), and foreign language (Mean=3.13).

Note. Level of importance on mean scores of 1 to 7 where 1= not at all important and 7= extremely important.

How much do employers invest in training employees? Figure 17 shows that 42.6% of the organizations spent between 3% and 5% of payroll on training, 36.3% of organizations spent between 1% and 3% of payroll on training, and 11.6% spent less than 1% of their payroll on training.

Figure 17. Percentage of payroll spent on training

- between 3% and 5%
- between 1% and 3%
- Less than 1%
- above 5%

Figure 18. Importance of training topics
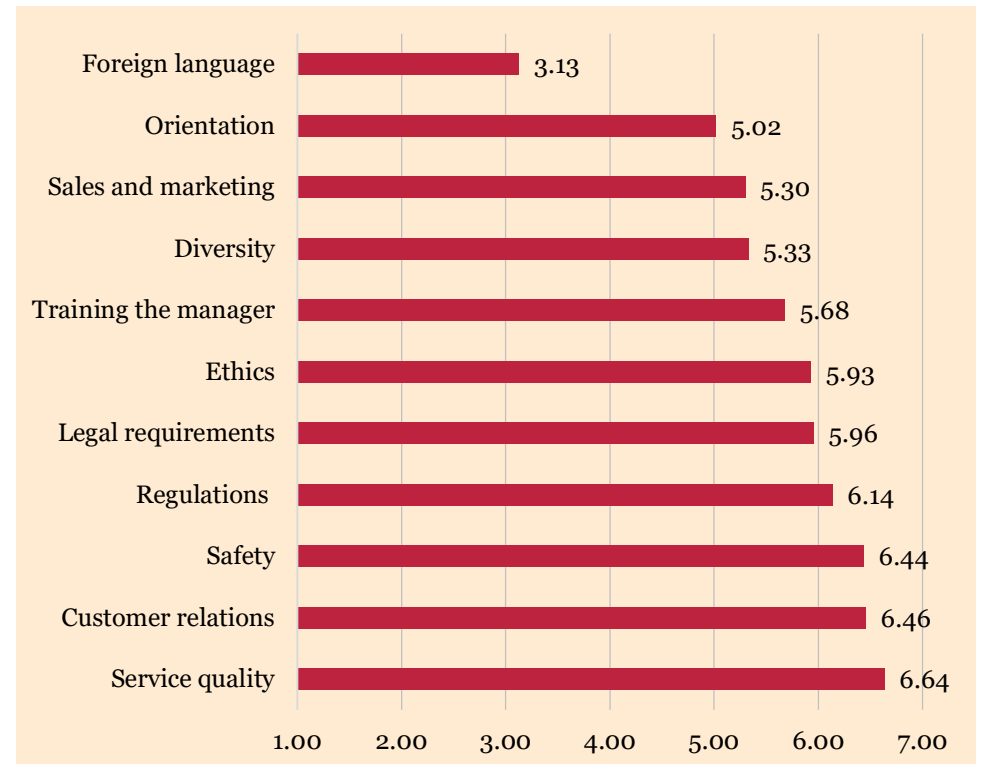
Regarding benefits offered, most respondents said that they currently offer free meals and uniforms, health insurance, and social appreciation and recognition in their properties (see Figure 19). Only a few organizations offer educational opportunities, a merit element in their pay packages and retention bonuses.

Figure 19. Benefits package offerings

Benefit	Frequency
Retention bonus	66
A merit element in their pay packages	71
Educational opportunities	100
Formal appraisals	102
Financial incentives	139
A 401K	144
A paid vacation	166
Social appreciation and recognition	176
Health insurance	200
Free meals and a uniform	214

Table 17. Importance of benefit packages

		Mean	SD
1	Health insurance	6.53	1.11
2	A paid vacation	6.37	1.18
3	Social appreciation and recognition	6.28	1.22
4	A 401K	6.22	1.12
5	Financial incentives	6.20	1.19
6	Retention bonus	6.09	1.16
7	Educational opportunities	6.07	1.23
8	Formal appraisals	6.01	1.25
9	Free meals and a uniform	5.92	1.42
10	A merit element in their pay packages	5.87	1.37
	Average	6.16	1.22

Note. Level of importance on mean scores of 1 to 7 where 1= not at all important and 7= extremely important.

Participants also rated the importance of benefits packages to employees (see Table 17). Most managers rated health insurance as the most important (Mean=6.53), followed by a paid vacation (Mean=6.37), and social appreciation and recognition (Mean= 6.28). Meanwhile, formal appraisals (Mean=6.01), free meals and uniforms (Mean=5.92), and a merit element in their pay packages (Mean=5.87) were the least important benefits to respondents. Looking across sectors, respondents from the club sector rated social appreciation and recognition significantly higher than other sectors (Mean=7.00, F=3.12, $p<0.05$).

What factors contribute to labor shortages? Employers ranked the top three factors as poor pay (Mean=5.28), lack of appropriate skills (Mean=5.07), and unsuitable work hours (Mean=4.95). The least contributing factors were location (Mean=4.21), poor organization image (Mean=3.99), and lack of autonomy (Mean=3.82) (see Table 18).

Table 18. Factors contributing to labor shortages

		Mean	SD
1	Poor pay	5.28	1.89
2	Lack of appropriate skills	5.07	1.86
3	Unsuitable hours of work	4.95	1.96
4	Discontent with superiors	4.60	2.06
5	Lack of career development	4.57	2.06
6	Uneven work patterns	4.43	1.99
7	Low regularity of employment	4.34	2.03
8	Poor management	4.32	2.22
9	Poor working environment	4.30	2.25
10	Lack of training	4.27	2.01
11	Location	4.21	2.12
12	Poor organization image	3.99	2.19
13	Lack of autonomy	3.82	1.87
	Average	4.47	2.04

Note. Level of importance on mean scores of 1 to 7 where 1= not at all important and 7= extremely important.

The results for the question "How do employers retain good employees?" are presented in Table 19, which lists the strategies ranked as important by respondents (average Mean of 5.8). Employers indicated that offering better salaries, better benefit packages, and opportunities for promotion were the top three strategies. These results are consistent with employees' responses.

Table 19. Strategies for retaining good employees

		Mean	SD
1	Offering better salaries	6.27	1.12
2	Offering better benefit packages	6.02	1.33
3	Offering promotion	6.01	1.27
4	Meeting employees' expectations	5.9	1.37
5	Providing a better work environment	5.89	1.43
6	Developing a good organizational culture	5.85	1.39
7	Offering flexible working time/schedules	5.82	1.48
8	Offering training programs	5.6	1.52
9	Offering educational opportunities	5.33	1.68
10	Job enlargement	5.27	1.65
	Average	5.8	1.42

Note. Level of importance on mean scores of 1 to 7 where 1= not at all important and 7= extremely important.

Looking at variations across the sectors under investigation, employers from the food and beverage sector ranked "meeting employees' expectations" significantly higher than other groups (Mean=6.10, F=2.82, $p<0.05$) (see Table 20).

Table 20. Importance of retaining strategies

	Mean	F	Sig.
Meeting employees' expectations		2.82	0.03
Lodging	5.98		
Food & Beverage	6.10		
Clubs (social clubs, golf clubs, etc.)	5.29		
Attraction/Recreation (parks, zoos, museums, sports, events, etc.)	5.47		
Other	5.50		

Note. Level of agreement on mean scores of 1 to 7 where 1= not at all important and 7= extremely important.

As Figure 20 shows, respondents believe that increasing the minimum wage is a long-term solution to solving workforce development problems. This action is followed by working closer with colleges and universities to promote careers in this sector, offering more visas (H1B) to encourage international employees to move to the state, and using robotics to replace employees.

Note. Level of importance on mean scores of 1 to 7 where 1= not at all important and 7= extremely important.

Figure 20. Long-term solutions to solve the workforce development problems
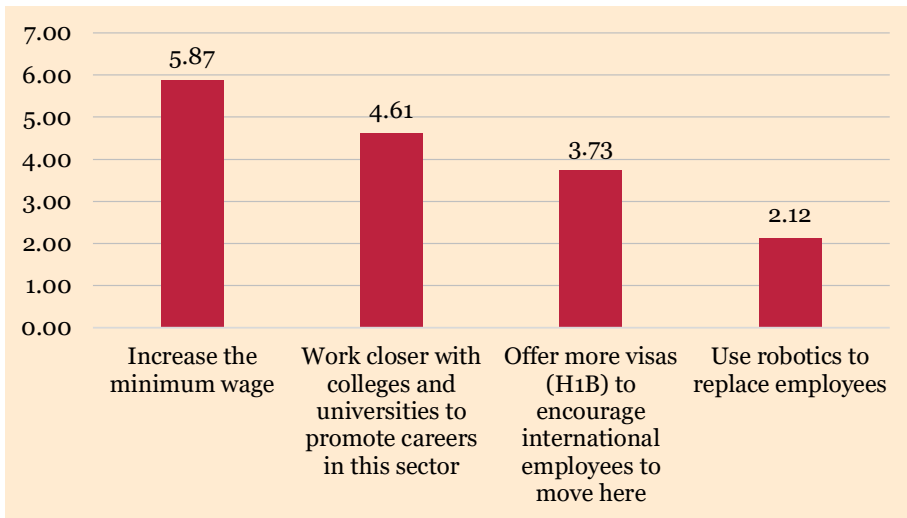
Some response variations exist across sectors. Table 21 shows that the attraction/recreation sector placed more importance on using of robotics to replace employees (Mean=3.44, $F_{(4, 332)}$=6.27, $p<0.01$), and offering more visas (H1B) to encourage international employees (Mean=4.25, $F_{(4, 332)}$=2.99, $p<0.05$). Lodging industry employers felt that promoting careers within universities or colleges was more important than other tourism and hospitality sectors (Mean=4.93, $F_{(4, 332)}$=4.30, $p<0.01$).

Table 21. Importance of workforce development solutions

	Mean	F	Sig.
Use robotics to replace employees		6.27	0.00
Lodging	2.08		
Food & Beverage	1.94		
Clubs (social clubs, golf clubs, etc.)	1.57		
Attraction/Recreation (parks, zoos, museums, sports, events, etc.)	3.44		
Other	1.67		
Work closer with colleges and universities to promote careers in this sector		4.20	0.00
Lodging	4.93		
Food & Beverage	4.10		
Clubs (social clubs, golf clubs, etc.)	4.57		
Attraction/Recreation (parks, zoos, museums, sports, events, etc.)	4.53		
Other	5.22		
Offer more visas (H1B) to encourage international employees to move here.		2.99	0.02
Lodging	4.07		
Food & Beverage	3.30		
Clubs (social clubs, golf clubs, etc.)	3.86		
Attraction/Recreation (parks, zoos, museums, sports, events, etc.)	4.25		
Other	3.36		

Note. Agreement level on mean scores of 1 to 7 where 1= not at all important and 7= extremely important.

Discussion

A number of significant findings emerging from this study are worthy of discussion. From an employee perspective, several important workforce development problems exist in South Carolina's tourism and hospitality industry. Interviews with hospitality sector employees help to understand the key workforce development issues from the workers' perspectives. The research team conducted a total of 23 in-depth interviews with long-term workers at

multiple hotels and restaurants across different regions in South Carolina. The focus was employees at establishments with a strong reputation for retaining workers in order to understand the success factors behind the low turnover of employees.

From the in-depth interviews, employees expressed general satisfaction with their jobs, often discussing the importance of their co-workers and supervisors. This response is not surprising given that the researchers specifically targeted employees at establishments with a strong reputation for retaining workers for the long-term. Employees generally have positive attitudes toward their jobs, supervisors, and working conditions. Most employees get strong support from both their co-workers and their organizations. They indicated a high level of commitment, loyalty, and trust of both colleagues and employers. The employees are also engaged and proud of the work that they do, showing a high level of enthusiasm toward their jobs. This finding is not the first to be reported to counter the prevalent view that employment in tourism and hospitality work is not satisfying (Santa Cruz, López-Guzmán, & Sánchez Cañizares, 2014; Baum, 2019). Understandably, not all employees are satisfied with their jobs. For example, people working in housekeeping positions tend to be less motivated. Furthermore, many employees would like to receive better compensation and more opportunities for career advancement.

The employer interviews identified recruitment, retention (turnover), and skills shortages as the major workforce problems and challenges in South Carolina's tourism and hospitality industry. The main reason for a high turnover rate and labor shortages was found to be the industry's low wages, although some respondents suggest that poor management also causes problems. Absenteeism also appears to be a major workforce problem for employers in South Carolina. This finding is consistent with previous workforce studies in the hospitality sector (Pallarès et al., 2014), with many suggesting this absenteeism comes from stress at work (O'Neill & Davis, 2011; RSPH, 2019).

In this research project, in-depth interviews and surveys suggest to recruit employees, employers post job advertisements online most often; however, the most *effective* recruitment method is internal recruiting. One least effective – but common – recruiting method is walk-in applications. Common hiring practices include an initial interview, a structured interview, and a background check as selection strategies. To evaluate new employees during the recruitment process, employers indicate that attitude, customer service skills, and personality/appearance are the most important attributes, whereas the least important attributes are the college/university attended and GPA. Likewise, abilities sought in employees are honesty, willingness to accept responsibility, and managing guest problems with understanding and sensitivity.

When asked to reflect on the importance of various training topics, employers suggest that service quality and customer relations are the most critical. Employees themselves appreciate the importance of general training, believing that service quality, customer relations, and safety are the most useful training areas. Most employees feel that their current job skills and knowledge will be useful for future jobs, but some respondents feel that dealing with customers (or delivering "emotional labor") is a major challenge in the hospitality and tourism industry. Certainly, managing guest problems with empathy is an important skill for employees to develop in the lodging sector.

To retain good employees, employers provide a variety of benefit packages to keep themselves competitive, but these offerings are generally quite basic. This topic was explored further in the surveys, and most employers said that they offer free meals and uniforms, health insurance, and appreciation and recognition to employees. Few organizations offer educational opportunities, a merit element in their pay packages, or retention bonuses. Employers feel that health insurance is the most important benefit for retaining employees. Other key benefits include a paid vacation and worker appreciation and recognition. Most employees on the other hand, said they would prefer to receive (in order of importance) financial incentives, health insurance, and appreciation and recognition. This finding confirms prior research that suggests social appreciation and recognition are important items in any reward system (Chan & Katou, 2011). Meanwhile, retention bonuses, formal appraisals, and a paid vacation are the least important benefits for employees. Employees feel that employers could offer better salaries, promotion opportunities, and better benefit packages to keep them loyal.

Recommendations

a) Recruitment
At a state or industry level, this study offers several recommendations to improve recruitment in the hospitality sector. Employers in the in-depth interviews propose seeking help from industry associations or the state government, training employees to become local ambassadors, providing more internship programs, offering a clear career path to new employees, and attracting more minorities to the state. Survey results indicate employers believe that increasing the minimum wage would help solve workforce development problems. Other actions include working closer with colleges and universities to promote careers in this sector, and offering more visas to encourage out of state employees to move to the state. Many resorts in the U.S. hire overseas workers to fill seasonality gaps (Taylor & Finley, 2009). The H2B visa program, for example, allows employers to hire international employees to work temporarily in the U.S. for up to nine months. The H2B visa program would assist employers to recruit international workers for entry-level positions such as housekeeping. Similarly, the J-1 Exchange Visitor Program allows international students to complete their summer internships in the U.S.

Employees themselves seek more opportunities for advancement within organizations, so perhaps recruitment would be easier if organizations at a local and state level stress such opportunities. The South Carolina Department of Education has developed a *Pathways to Success* career planning guide for students interested in entering the tourism and hospitality sector, but this material has not been updated since 2003. More recently, Charleston-area tourism leaders announced a new industry-wide diversity initiative called Heart for Hospitality, designed to improve both the recruitment of workers from underrepresented communities and the opportunities for workers after they are hired (Williams, 2019). At the national level, the American and Hotel Lodging Association currently has an awareness campaign to showcase the career advancement opportunities, called *Dreams Happens Here.*

Apparently, employers do not view robotics to replace employees as a viable solution to labor shortages. This finding is somewhat surprising, given how robotic technology is rapidly gaining popularity within the tourism and hospitality industry elsewhere (Ivanov et al., 2019). For example, Japan's Henn na Hotel in Tokyo uses robots on the front desk as customer information points, and for storage purposes - making use of voice, facial recognition, and AI technology. However, Ivanov et al. (2019) suggest that a disconnect exists between academic researchers, industry representatives, and policy makers in this area. Perhaps employers are not fully aware of possible robotics application areas. In the U.K., the government recently urged employers to move away from relying on cheap labor from Europe and to invest in retaining staff and developing automation technology (Castle, 2020).

On employee recruitment operations, the data suggest that employers should be wary of walk-in applications. More emphasis needs to be placed on promotion within. Although walk-in applications were a common method of recruitment, they are not perceived as effective, whereas recruiting within is perceived as a better way of keeping quality employees.

b) Training
As the results indicate, nearly one-half of employers spent between 3% and 5% of payroll on training, approximately one-third of organizations spent between 1% and 3% of payroll on training, and about 12% spent less than 1% of their payroll on training. This rate seems consistent with industry averages. Most medium and large organizations invest anywhere from 2 to 5% of salary budgets back into training (Andriotis, 2017).

For training content, "soft" or people skills seem to be more important than formal qualifications when evaluating new recruits. Again, this result is consistent with previous studies (Chan & Coleman, 2004; Chan & Kuok, 2011). In fact, nearly one-third of the total skills gap facing the U.S. economy is due to a death of "human skills" (Oxford Economics, 2017). However, the in-depth interviews also suggest that new recruits are not trained in these "soft" skills. Most employers just provided basic training, which tends to comprise a general orientation, shadowing, observation, and knowledge tests. Employers need to invest in training employees – particularly in the art of customer service. Unfortunately, many service oriented firms (i.e., the hospitality sector) reluctantly invest in training initiatives (Beeton & Graetz, 2001; Hyken, 2017). In particular, small companies are wary of investing time, finance, and other resources in training, despite evidence showing a strong relationship between training and employee retention.

Study results also show that employees believe that service quality and customer relations are critical training areas. Many employees feel that dealing with customers is a major challenge in hospitality and tourism. This finding reinforces the importance of training employees in the art of dealing with customers. For frontline employees to be consistently empathetic, responsive, friendly, and courteous towards customers, they expend considerable "emotional labor," a term coined by Arlie Hochschild (1983). He suggests that emotional labor goes beyond the physical or mental skills required to deliver quality service. Actions such as making eye contact, delivering smiles, showing sincere interest, and engaging in friendly conversation with people who are essentially strangers are critical. Employees may need to suppress their real feelings if they do not feel well or just have a bad day.

Successful service companies carefully select people who can handle such emotional stress, and then train them in the necessary skills to cope with emotional labor, such as listening and problem solving skills. Top-notch service providers in the tourism and hospitality sector also have a philosophy of continuous improvement – a continuous training of employees (Hudson, 2018). However, continuous training is the exception rather than the rule. For example, one lodging sector study finds that only about one in ten hotels train their employees on a regular basis (Çetinel, Yolal, & Emeksiz, 2008).

c) Retention
Employers report that most employees in this sector require three to four months of experience before they are proficient and productive in the workplace. Retention is therefore critical, and employers and employees agree that the most effective strategies to encourage loyalty in the workplace include offering higher salaries, better benefit packages, and opportunities for promotion. Employers should therefore consider developing career pathway plans or maps for new workers or students (Pallarès et al., 2014). In the lodging sector, housekeepers tend to have less loyalty than other employees. They do not believe that their present job skills are transferable. Housekeepers and all

the back of the house employees surveyed show significantly lower trust level at work than other employees. Perhaps lodging managers neglect these employees and they should be teaching them new skills. Although the employers surveyed do not think training programs are as important as other strategies for retaining good employees, the study data show a significant positive relationship between training and loyalty.

Employers in South Carolina should also consider providing more appreciation and recognition to their employees. According to Herzberg's (1959) two-factor motivation, intrinsic factors motivate employees more than extrinsic factors. Employers could award gift cards to the front of the house employees, especially those people in housekeeping when positive guest reviews mention their names. To encourage autonomy, employee empowerment is a good strategy to adopt, offering employees authority to make their own decisions. Related to employee empowerment, a recent report on the mental health of hospitality workers suggests that employers need to create systems and processes that protect employees' mental health and wellbeing (RSPH, 2019). Such systems and processes would aid retention, and also reduce absenteeism (Pallarès et al., 2014).

Employers could also emphasize the transferability of skills learned in tourism and hospitality. As a recent report on workforce development in travel demonstrates: "*Understanding and anticipating customer needs, providing prompt responses, establishing themselves as reliable and demonstrating empathy and sensitivity by dealing with travelers across the globe, travel industry employees are encouraged to develop the essential skills that employers seek - skills that transfer well to any workplace. Rough direct experience and on-the-job training, travel provides a strong foundation for successful careers*" (U.S. Travel Association, 2019, p. 9). The data show that people who start their careers in the travel industry ultimately go on to have highly successful careers - whether within or outside the travel industry. In addition, the experience, transferable skills, and knowledge gained from a first job in travel opens doors for individuals to own their own business and become entrepreneurs. Seventeen percent of Americans whose first job was in travel now own their own business and 19% consider themselves entrepreneurs - higher than the finance, manufacturing and health care industries (U.S. Travel Association, 2019).

As previously mentioned, absenteeism is perceived by employers as a major workforce problem in South Carolina. Pallarès et al. (2014) note that

understanding what factors influence absenteeism helps facilitate effective action pathways. Generic action will never get results because a broad policy does acknowledge the root cause of the problem. Although this study did not explore specific reasons for absenteeism, the data does suggest that employees recognize the importance of a good attendance record, although they are not quite as concerned about never missing a day's work.

Employers can help employees to meet the company's expectations by discussing attendance expectations during orientation and training. They can close the gap between what employees perceive good attendance is and what actual good attendance is in their specific company. With organizations adapting to new generations, the communication about this issue is critical for both sides.

Miscommunication between employees and employers is a critical issue. Building a healthy and sustainable work environment is essential. Internal surveys and interviews will help organizations get honest feedback from current employees about working schedules, training/educational opportunities, benefits and management. A recent report on the U.K. hospitality sector suggests that regular one-to-ones and appraisals between employees and managers should be standard. *"This helps create space for discussion about individual needs, and mental health and wellbeing in the workplace"* (RSPH, 2019, p. 4). If employers are going hire overseas workers, then perhaps they could place a higher emphasis on foreign language training in order to alleviate any miscommunications.

Given the discrepancies between employers and employees in response to the question "what benefits are most effective," employers may need to re-think their benefits packages. For example, employers feel that health insurance is the most important benefit for retaining employees, whereas financial incentives are most important for workers. Also, the in-depth interview results suggest that housing and transportation are major challenges in recruiting new employees to popular South Carolina travel destinations. Benefits that include housing and parking may help attract new employees into the industry at these destinations.

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Employer Survey

Dear Participant,

The purpose of the survey is to examine workforce challenges in the tourism and hospitality industry in the state of South Carolina. We would appreciate you taking approximately 15 minutes to provide your honest feedback and input. Your opinions are very important to us, and all the responses are anonymous. By completing the survey, you are giving your consent to participate.

If you have questions at any time about the survey or procedures, please contact the primary researcher Dr. Simon Hudson at shudson@hrsm.sc.edu or research assistant Jing Li at jingl@email.sc.edu.

If you have any questions about your rights as a participant, please contact the University of South Carolina's Office of Research Compliance at 803-777-7095.

Thank you for your participation and support!

Sincerely,

Simon Hudson, Ph.D.
Professor
College of Hospitality, Retail and Sport Management
University of South Carolina
701 Assembly St. Columbia, SC 29208, USA

SCREENING QUESTIONS

Are you currently working in the tourism or hospitality industry?
□ Yes
□ No (Please exit the survey. Thank you for your time!)

Are you currently taking a managerial position (salary-based)?
□ Yes
□ No (Please exit the survey. Thank you for your time!)

GENERAL EMPLOYER QUESTIONS

1. How long have you worked in the tourism or hospitality industry?
_____

2.How long have you been working in this current company?
_____

3. What is your current position?
□ General manager
□ Human resource manager
□ Supervisor
□ Department manager
□ Assistant manager
□ Other (Please specify) _____

4. What industry are you working in?
□ Lodging
□ Food & Beverage
□ Clubs (social clubs, golf clubs etc.)
□ Attraction/Recreation (parks, zoos, museums, sports, events etc.)
□ Other (Please specify) _____

5. Please indicate the number of employees that in each of the following categories your property has in each department. If you don't know the answers, please put "don't know" in the space.
□ Room Division _____
□ Sales and Marketing _____

□ Food & Beverage _____
□ Human Resources _____
□ Engineering _____
□ Accounting _____

6.Please indicate the number of employees that your organization has in each department. If you don't know the answers, please put "don't know" in the space.
□ Front of house (customer service position) _____
□ Back of house (non-customer service position) _____

7.Which of the following best describes your organization?
□ Independent Chain operation (company-owned)
□ Chain operation (franchised)

8.Please indicate the total number of employees that in each of the following categories you have in the property you are working in. If you don't know the answers, please put "don't know" in the space.
□ Managerial Employees _____
□ Operational Employees (Full-time) _____
□ Operational Employees (Part-time) _____
□ Operational Employees (Seasonal/Casual) _____

RECRUITING AND SELECTION STRATEGIES

1. Which of the following sources do you use to recruit employees? (Select all that apply)
□ Word of mouth and referral
□ Local media (radios, ads, newspaper, etc.)
□ Online sources (Indeed, Craigslist, etc.)
□ Internal recruiting
□ National media (Facebook, ads, etc.)
□ National Employment Agencies (CVB, sponsors, etc.)
□ Local recruitment agencies/specialists
□ Job fairs at local, universities or colleges
□ Trade magazines/job board for trade organizations
□ Walk-in application
□ Other (Please specify)

2. Please indicate the effectiveness of the recruiting source you choose (from Not effective at all to Extremely effective).

	Not effective at all			Neutral			Extremely effective
Word of mouth and referral	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Local media (radios, ads, newspaper, etc.)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Online sources (Indeed, Craigslist, etc.)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Internal recruiting	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
National media (Facebook, ads, etc.)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
National Employment Agencies (CVB, sponsors, etc.)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Local recruitment agencies/specialists	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Job fairs at local, universities or colleges	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Trade magazines/job board for trade organizations	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Walk-in application	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Other (Please specify)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

What are your top three challenges recruiting new employees? If you don't know the answers, please put "don't know" in the space.

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

4. Please indicate how important the following items are in evaluating new employees (from Not at all important to Extremely important)?

	Not at all important			Neutral			Extremely important
Resume	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
College/University attended	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
GPA (major)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
GPA (overall)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Attitude	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Personality/appearance	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Customer service skills	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
For this particular question, please select "Not at all important"	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
References	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Qualifications	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Local resident	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

5. Please indicate how important each of the following steps is when you select new employees (from Not at all important to Extremely important)?

	Not at all important			Neutral			Extremely important
Initial interview	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Structured interview	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Background check	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Genetic screening	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Graphology	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Literacy test	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Job knowledge test	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Performance test	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Integrity test	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Personality test	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Clinical assessment	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Other (Please specify)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

6. Based upon your work experience, please indicate the level of importance of the following employee abilities in your job applicant selection process (from Not at all important to Extremely important).

	Not at all important			Neutral			Extremely important
Have a certain degree of practical knowledge in at least one area	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Be able to use relevant computer software	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Be able to update their professional knowledge	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Be able to communicate in a foreign language (Spanish, Mandarin, etc.)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Be able to define and solve problems	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Be able to work co-operatively as a team member	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Be able to work autonomously with minimal supervision	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Be able to accept responsibility	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Be adaptable and be flexible to cope with a changing work environment	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Have a good personal presentation	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Have a professional attitude	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Manage guest problems with understanding and sensitivity	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Have a genuine desire to help people	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Be able to lead others effectively	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Be honest	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Be creative	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Possess effective reading skills	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Possess effective writing skills	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

7. On a scale of 1 to 5, please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements (from Strongly disagree to Strongly agree).

Based upon my work experience, I have a difficulty…

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly agree
Recruiting staff with the necessary experience	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Promoting from within because of a lack of experience	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Recruiting staff with the required educational qualifications	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Retaining staff	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Providing housing to staff	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Attracting Millennials to work in the tourism/hospitality/restaurant industry	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Managing employee absenteeism	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Other (Please specify)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

TRAINING

1. How long does it take each type of employee below to become proficient and productive in the workplace?

Positions	Time required (months)
Human Resources	
Sales & Marketing	
Front office	
Kitchen	
Restaurant/Bar	
Housekeeping	
Admin & Finance	
Maintenance/grounds	

2. Please estimate the percentage of payroll spent on training in your organization? (*Circle only one*).

☐ Less than 1%

☐ between 1% and 3%

☐ between 3% and 5%

☐ above 5%

☐ Don't know

3. Please indicate how important each of the following topics is when training new employees (from Not at all important to Extremely important?

	Not at all important			Neutral			Extremely Important
Customer relations	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Service quality	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Sales and marketing	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Foreign language	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Orientation	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Training the manager	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Diversity	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Safety	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Regulations	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Legal requirements	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Ethics	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

1. What training topics do you think are important but yet missing from your training of new employees? If you don't know the answers, please put "don't know" in the space.

☐ 1 _____

☐ 2 _____

☐ 3 _____

BENEFIT PACKAGES

1. In your property, do you offer the following benefits? (Check all that apply).

☐ A merit element in their pay packages

☐ Formal appraisals

☐ Financial incentives

☐ Social appreciation and recognition

☐ Health insurance

☐ Free meals and a uniform

☐ A 401K

☐ A paid vacation

☐ Retention bonus

☐ Educational opportunities

☐ Other (Please specify) _____

2. How important do you think those benefits are (from Not at all important to Extremely important)?

	Not important at all			Neutral			Extremely Important
A merit element in their pay packages	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Formal appraisals	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Financial incentives	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Social appreciation and recognition	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Health insurance	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Free meals and a uniform	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
A 401K	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
A paid vacation	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Retention bonus	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Educational opportunities	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Other (Please specify)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

EMPLOYEE TURNOVER

1. Please answer the following questions about employee turnover in your property. If you don't know the answers, please put "don't know" in the space.

☐ What is your average monthly turnover rate? _____

☐ What is your annualized turnover rate? _____

☐ How many total employees left during the past 12 months? _____

☐ How many total employees do you have on your current roster? _____

2. Please indicate how important the following items are in contributing to labor shortages and recruitment problems in your property (from Not at all important to Extremely important)?

	Not important at all			Neutral			Extremely Important
Poor pay	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Unsuitable hours of work	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Lack of appropriate skills	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Location	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Poor working environment	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Lack of career development	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Discontent with superiors	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Low regularity of employment	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
For this particular question, please select "Not at all important"	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Lack of autonomy	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Lack of training	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Poor organization image	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Poor management	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Uneven work patterns	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Other (Please be specify)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

4. How important do you think are the following strategies for retaining good employees (from Not at all important to Extremely important)?

	Not important at all			Neutral			Extremely Important
Offering better salaries	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Offering better benefit packages	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Offering promotion	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Offering training programs	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Offering educational opportunities	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Job enlargement	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Providing a better work environment	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Developing a good organizational culture	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Offering flexible working time/schedules	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Meeting employees' expectations	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Other (Please be specify)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

MAJOR WORKFORCE PROBLEMS

1. What are the top three workforce problems facing your property? If you don't know the answers, please put "don't know" in the space.

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

2. For each of the issues stated above, what are the most effective potential solutions? If you don't know the answers, please put "don't know" in the space.

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

3. What long-term solutions could be found to solve the workforce development problems in our state (from Not at all important to Extremely important)?

	Not important at all			Neutral			Extremely Important
Use robotics to replace employees	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Work closer with colleges and universities to promote careers in this sector	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Offer more visas (H1B) to encourage out of state employees to move here	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Increase the minimum wage	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Other (Please specify)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

DEMOGRAPHICS

Please indicate your residency zip code: _____

What is your gender?
□ Male
□ Female

In what year were you born? _____

What is your marital Status?
□ Single (never married)
□ Married
□ Widowed/Divorced/Separated

What is your ethnic group?
□ Caucasian
□ African-American
□ Hispanic
□ Asian
□ Native American
□ Multi-racial
□ Other (Please specify)

What is the highest level of education you have completed? Please mark only one.
□ High school degree or lower
□ Some college or Associate degree
□ Bachelor's degree
□ Master/Doctorate degree

Thank you for completing the survey!

Employee Survey

Dear Participant,

The purpose of the survey is to examine workforce challenges in the tourism and hospitality industry in the state of South Carolina. We would appreciate you taking approximately 15 minutes to provide your honest feedback and input. Your opinions are very important to us, and all the responses are anonymous. By completing the survey, you are giving your consent to participate.

If you have questions at any time about the survey or procedures, please contact the primary researcher, Dr. Simon Hudson at shudson@hrsm.sc.edu or research assistant Jing Li at jingl@email.sc.edu.

If you have any questions about your rights as a participant, contact the University of South Carolina Office of Research Compliance at 803-777-7095.

Thank you for your participation and support!

Sincerely,

Simon Hudson, Ph.D.
Professor
School of Hotel, Restaurant, & Tourism Management
University of South Carolina
701 Assembly St. Columbia, SC 29208, USA

SCREENING AND GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. Are you currently an hourly employee in the tourism and hospitality industry?

☐ Yes
☐ No (Please exit the survey. Thank you for your time!)

2. What industry are you working in?

☐ Lodging
☐ Food & Beverage
☐ Clubs (social clubs, golf clubs etc.)
☐ Attraction/Recreation (parks, zoos, museums, sports, events etc.)
☐ Other (Please specify) _____

3. What is your current position?

☐ Front desk/customer service
☐ Housekeeping
☐ Food/room service
☐ Reservations/sales

4. What is your current position?

☐ Front of house (customer service position)
☐ Back of house (non-customer service position)

5. Which of the following best describes you?

☐ I am a full-time employee
☐ I am a part-time employee
☐ I am a temporary employee

6. How long have you worked in the tourism or hospitality industry?

_____

7. How many years have you worked in this current property?

_____

QUESTIONS

1. Thinking about the support from your co-workers (your co-workers consist of the people with whom you have the most contact in the company. Do <u>NOT</u> consider your immediate supervisor as a co-worker), please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements (from Strongly disagree to Strongly agree).

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly agree
I am very friendly with one or more of my co-workers.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I regularly do things outside of work with one or more of my co-workers.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I rarely discuss important personal problems with my co-workers.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I know almost nothing about my co-workers as persons.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

2. Thinking about the support from your organization, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements (from Strongly disagree to Strongly agree).

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly agree
My employer really cares about my well-being.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
My employer cares about my opinions.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
My employer values my contributions to its well-being.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
My employer strongly considers my goals and values.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
My employer cares about my general satisfaction at work.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
My employer shows very little concern for me.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
My employer is willing to help me when I need a special favor.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

3. Thinking about your supervisor, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements (from Strongly disagree to Strongly agree).

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly agree
I am not really attached to my supervisor.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I feel proud to work with my supervisor.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I feel a sense of respect for my supervisor.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
My supervisor means a lot to me.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I appreciate my supervisor.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I feel little admiration for my supervisor.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

4. Thinking about your commitment to your organization, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements (from Strongly disagree to Strongly agree).

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly agree
I am willing to put high efforts in order to help this organization be successful.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I talk positively about this organization to others.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I am proud to tell others that I am part of this organization.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I really care about the status of this organization.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
For me, this is one of the best organizations for which to work.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

5. The following questions ask you about your trust at your work, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements (from Strongly disagree to Strongly agree).

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly agree
Management at my organization is sincere in its attempts to meet the workers' point of view.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Our organization has a poor future unless it can attract better managers.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
If I got into difficulties at work, I know my workmates would try and help me out.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Management can be trusted to make sensible decisions for the organization's future.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I can trust the people 1 work with to lend me a hand if I needed it.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Management at work seems to do an efficient job.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I feel quite confident that the organization will always try to treat me fairly.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
For this particular question, please select "Strongly disagree"	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Most of my workmates can be relied upon to do as they say they will do.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I have full confidence in the skills of my workmates	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Most of my fellow workers would get on with their work even if supervisors were not around.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I can rely on other workers not to make my job more difficult by careless work.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Our management would be quite prepared to gain advantage by deceiving the workers.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

6. The following questions are about how you feel at work, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements (from Strongly disagree to Strongly agree).

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly agree
At my work, I feel bursting with energy.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
At my job I feel strong and vigorous.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I am enthusiastic about my job.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
My job inspires me.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I feel happy when I am working intensely.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I am proud of the work that I do.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I am immersed in my work.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I get carried away when I am working.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

7. Thinking about the training at your organization, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements (from Strongly disagree to Strongly agree).

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly agree
The skills and knowledge used in my job are needed with other employers.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Most of my present job skills and knowledge would be useful to me if I left my present employer.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
It would be difficult to use the skills and knowledge of my job outside of my present employer.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
My job skills and knowledge are mostly limited to my present employer.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

8. Please indicate how important the following topics are when training new employees (from Not at all important to Extremely important).

	Not at all important			Neutral			Extremely important
Customer relations	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Service quality	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Sales and marketing	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Foreign language	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Orientation	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Training the manager	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Diversity	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Safety	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Regulations	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Legal requirements	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Ethics	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

9. What training topics do you think are important but yet missing from your training of new employees? If you don't know the answers, please put "don't know" in the space.

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

10. How important do you think the following benefits are (from Not at all important to Extremely important)?

	Not at all important			Neutral			Extremely important
A merit element in their pay packages	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Formal appraisals	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Financial incentives	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Social appreciation and recognition	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Health insurance	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Free meals and a uniform	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
A 401K	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
A sponsored vacation	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Retention bonus	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Educational opportunities	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

11. How important do you think are the following strategies for retaining good employees (from Not at all important to Extremely important).

	Not at all important			Neutral			Extremely important
Offering better salaries	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Offering better benefit packages	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Offering promotion	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Offering training programs	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Offering educational opportunities	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Job enlargement	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Providing a better work environment	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Developing a good organizational culture	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Offering flexible working time/schedules	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Meeting employees' expectations	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

12. The following questions ask you about your job satisfaction, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements (from Strongly disagree to Strongly agree).

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly agree
I am satisfied with my overall job.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I am satisfied with my supervisor(s).	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I am satisfied with my organization's policies.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I am satisfied with the support provided by my organization.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I am satisfied with my opportunities for advancement with the organization.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I am relatively well rewarded financially for my work	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I am satisfied with my working conditions.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Given the work I do, I feel I am paid fairly.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

13. The following questions ask you about your thoughts of absenteeism, please indicate the extent to which you feel important or not important with the following statements (from Not at all important to Extremely important).

	Not at all important			Neutral			Extremely important
How important do you think never missing a day's work is?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
How important is having a good attendance record to you?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
How important is having a good attendance record as your boss makes it out to be?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

14. The following questions ask you about your turnover intentions, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements (from Strongly disagree to Strongly agree).

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly agree
I often think about resigning.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
It would not take much to make me resign from the organization.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
For this particular question, please select "Strongly disagree"	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I will probably be looking for another job soon.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

15. Thinking about your organization, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements (from Strongly disagree to Strongly agree).

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly agree
I speak positively about my organization when talking to customers.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I speak positively about my organization when talking to friends and relatives.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I can recommend the products and services of my organization to others.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I would like to stay with this organization also in the future.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I would not change immediately to another organization if I got a job offer.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

DEMOGRAPHICS

1. Please indicate your residency zip code:

_____

2. What is your gender?

☐ Male
☐ Female

3. In what year were you born?

_____

4. What is your marital status?

☐ Single (never married)
☐ Married
☐ Widowed/Divorced/Separated

5. What is your ethnic group?

☐ Caucasian
☐ African-American
☐ Hispanic
☐ Asian
☐ Native American
☐ Multi-racial
☐ Other (Please specify)

6. What is the highest level of education you have completed? Please mark only one.
☐ High school degree or lower
☐ Some college or Associate degree
☐ Bachelor's degree
☐ Master/Doctorate degree

7. Which of the following brackets does your annual income fall into?
☐ Less than $20,000
☐ $20,000-$40,000
☐ $40,001-$60,000
☐ $60,001-80,000
☐ $80,001-$100,000
☐ $100,001 or above
☐ Prefer not to disclose

Thank you for your participation!