



International Recruiting Can Fill Jobs

Morrison & Co. | Indexed March 31, 2008

March 31, 2008 | Reaching around the globe for employees can help erase the lack of quality candidates needed to staff hotels, writes Michelle Morrison.

Could 'Going Global' with international recruiting help your U.S. property? | By Michelle K. Morrison, I SHC

International recruiting can be a key to:

- *uncovering hard to find entry level management talent,*
- *decreasing employee turnover,*
- *improving guest satisfaction,*
- *elevating the attitude and professionalism of your staff,*
- *potential bottom line cost savings*

One of the top issues facing the hospitality industry is the labor and skills shortage; much has been written about this challenge from many perspectives. International recruiting from European hospitality programs, using the 12-month J-1 Visa for entry level management, is an alternative staffing approach that can deliver qualified candidates for various types of properties.

International team members come to the USA for a 12-month period equipped with:

- Industry experience,
- Hospitality education,
- Excellent English language skills,
- And...that golden spark of the right attitude.

The **positive attitude and elevated professionalism of many international recruits can be impressive**. In the US, we struggle with a perception that our industry is a place for people to earn money while waiting to land their "real job," perhaps as an actor or lawyer. In other parts of the world our industry is more often viewed as a valued profession. Some of these countries have excellent hospitality programs (apprenticeship programs, bachelor programs, etc.) that nurture and train individuals for hotel management careers. These factors combine to produce entry level management talent, who typically show a high level of dedication and professionalism in their job performance. Their commitment, typically coupled with a strong focus on guest service, can seed and support these behaviors with your existing team.

A decrease in turnover can be another plus with international recruiting.

International students are eager to learn US management techniques, and know that the year-long program is also a significant resume builder for their next job - whether in the US or in another country.

There's the possibility of a longer term relationship with international recruits at the end of the 12 month time period. Selected individuals might return to your property, on additional visas, to become your long-term supervisors and department heads.

So how do you select candidates with "the right stuff?"

Many students view the USA as the "Land of Opportunity" and want to come here for the next step in their career.



The key to success is to recruit at professional schools in Europe, which have a diverse student body from all over the world. It's crucial to meet candidates on their "home turf," learn about their program and personally screen and interview them. Analyzing potential hires in comparison to their peers, and receiving feedback from their faculty (and employers) enables the recruiter to assess whether their experience would fit with your property's culture, size, and business environment.

It's imperative to follow-up with a telephone interview. This confirms the level of English language skills (without visual cues - and exactly as guests and staff would hear the candidate) and allows for in-depth follow-up questions by both the candidate and recruiter.

A careful and thorough candidate analysis, utilizing a well designed and executed recruiting process, helps to ensure that you are getting "the best and the brightest" for your hotel or resort.

An international hiring program can yield cost savings. The hard costs to implement a successful J-1 Recruiting Program are more than offset by the savings in payroll taxes and employee benefits. The likely decrease in employee turnover, along with an increase in guest satisfaction; also contribute to the bottom line.

Finally, in order for your J-1 Recruiting Program to be a success, it must be explained to management (GM, HR, Dept heads) and their questions answered so that they buy into and are supportive of the program.

Your hotel will reap the benefit of "word of mouth" praise as your J-1 individuals become your link to future potential candidates and their schools see the positive results of your program.

While this program may not be appropriate for every resort and hotel, in our experience those properties that have a well conceived and executed program are very pleased with the caliber of international team members and the results of the program.

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