

Staying Afloat in the Hospitality Industry:
The Importance of Intercultural Communication

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the importance of intercultural communication for career development in two segments of the hospitality industry, cruise and hotel. Three topics are explored: (1) the perceived relative importance of intercultural communication skills for career development, (2) whether differences exist between native and non-native English speakers in the importance assigned to intercultural communication, and (3) whether differences exist between cruise and hotel managers regarding the extent to which intercultural communication is perceived as important to career development.

The sample for the original study consisted of 77 cruise ship directors and 111 hotel general managers. All 188 participants completed a Likert-style questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed to collect information on the personal characteristics and skills perceived to be critical to managers' career development in the hotel or cruise industry. Demographic information was also collected. Descriptive statistics, Pearson Product Moment Correlations, Independent Samples t Tests, and content analysis were conducted. Analyses indicated that the respondents perceive intercultural communication to be moderately important in the hospitality industry, that non-native English speakers perceive intercultural communication skills as more important to career development than native English-speakers, and that cruise ship directors perceive intercultural communication skills as more important for career success than hotel general managers. In addition, the results suggest a need for hospitality practitioners to improve upon and hospitality educators to teach intercultural communication skills to facilitate the career development of hospitality managers. Future directions for research are also suggested.

To Professor Judi Brownell,
with admiration, appreciation, and gratitude

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INTRODUCTION

Intercultural communication involves face-to-face interactions among people of diverse cultures (Jandt, 2001). With globalization of the workplace, more researchers are documenting the growing need for intercultural communication skills among managers, especially in the multicultural hospitality industry. These global organizations must learn to capitalize on the benefits of diversity while minimizing the potential costs. Thus, researchers first need to identify, through data collection and analysis, the importance of intercultural communication skills. Next, they must offer resources to assist hospitality managers with their career development in this critical area. Only by identifying the unique challenges and future requirements of effective management in the increasingly intercultural hospitality (hotel and cruise) industry may hospitality practitioners and educators direct the attention necessary to key industry needs and issues.

Little research, however, has been conducted on the perceived importance by hospitality practitioners of intercultural communication for career success, particularly in the growing cruise industry. Thus, the present study examines the relative importance of the skills needed for career development in the hospitality industry, with special emphasis on intercultural communication. Correlations between the perceived importance of intercultural communication and the variables of native language and industry affiliation are also examined.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The strong relationship between effective communication and effective management has been recognized since the 1950s (Reinsch & Shelby, 1997). Over the past few decades, countless studies have found that the ability to communicate, especially in the service industry, proves to be one of the most desired and essential skills required of an effective manager (Weiss, 1999; Greger & Withiam, 1991). Recently, however, businesses are discovering that a completely different kind of leader – one with more than just traditional, strong communication skills – is necessary for career success. Indeed, globalization, the expansion of industries on a worldwide scale, and the resulting diversity of today's employees and guests, necessitate competent intercultural communicators.

Accordingly, this review first examines the key influences on managers' success, namely, interpersonal and leadership skills, and then explores the growing diversity of the hospitality industry and thus the need for intercultural communication. The purpose of the present study is to identify managers' perceptions of the skills critical for career development. Additionally, the present study focuses on the impact of participants' native language and industry affiliation on the degree to which they perceive intercultural communication skills as important for career success.

Interpersonal and leadership skills

Strong interpersonal skills are fundamental to communicating with and motivating employees and thus are critical for effective leaders and managers (Topping, 1997; Tait, 1996). Additionally, researchers have found that managers' creativity, their

ability to release creativity in their employees (Lengnick-Hall, 1999), and the managers' emotional intelligence have become increasingly popular as tools for identifying leaders and developing effective leadership skills (Palmer, Walls, Burgess & Stough, 2001; Goleman, 2000; Tracy, 2000; Goleman, 1998).

Researchers have also documented the specific leadership styles – coercive, authoritative, affiliative, democratic, pacesetter, and coaching – of the most effective executives (Goleman, 2000). Additionally, they have defined the predictors of individual perceptions of career development – demographics, success criteria, family variables, and career choices – in the hospitality industry (Gattiker & Larwood, 1990). Researchers have even discovered the foremost concern, namely human resources issues, for the hospitality industry (Enz, 2001).

Diversity of the hospitality industry

The above listed skills – interpersonal, creativity, and emotional intelligence – prove important for career success, especially as the hospitality industry becomes increasingly global. Indeed, the most recent Census Bureau statistics reveal that the total U.S. population of almost 300 million people includes “over 35 million Latinos, over 34 million African-Americans, more than 12 million Asian and Pacific Islanders, and over 18 million people from a variety of races and ethnic groups” (Reynolds & Valentine, 2004, p. vii). The individuals in these groups, many of them staff or guests of the hospitality industry, represent several cultures, each with distinct communication needs. In fact, Brownell (2005) found that a critical indicator of hospitality leadership effectiveness is “the ability to create inclusive work environments” (p. 7). Furthermore,

studies have shown that culture greatly affects not only the staff but also the guests of the hospitality industry. Tourist activities (Pizam & Fleischer, 2005), motivations for taking a vacation (Teye & Leclerc, 2002), and the voicing of complaints (Yuksel, Kilinc, & Yuksel, 2006) have been found to be shaped by culture as well.

Growing diversity in the hospitality industry affects both the cruise and hotel industries. In the cruise industry, the guests and staffing have become extremely international. For example, it's not unusual for cruise ships to have up to 50 different nationalities represented on board (Peisley, 1999). In the hotel industry, "China and India represent the fastest-growing outbound markets," and "Asian and Indian hotel companies are aggressively expanding into Europe and the U.S. for the first time" (Dickinson, 2006, p. 61). Additionally, Jones & McCleary (2005) found that cultural differences affect the buyer-seller relationship in hotel sales. Thus, a hospitality practitioner's lack of cultural sensitivity can lead to both monetary and personal failure.

Intercultural communication

In combating issues of miscommunication in a diverse workplace, intercultural communication – face-to-face interactions among people of diverse cultures (Jandt, 2001) – is now recognized as an important skill to acquire to be effective in today's multicultural organizations. The increased diversity and cultural differences among employees and guests of the hospitality industry, however, brings not only benefits like "better decision making, greater creativity and innovation, and more successful marketing to different types of consumers" but also potential costs in "higher turnover, interpersonal conflict, and communication breakdowns" (Cox, 1991, p. 34).

Although studies in the early 1990s found that only a small percentage of managers wanted stronger intercultural skills to succeed in the industry (Reinsch & Shelby, 1997; Conger, 1993), today those in the hospitality industry often rate cultural sensitivity and intercultural communication skills as one of the most important interpersonal skills required of an effective and successful manager (Kriegl, 2000). Indeed, studies have shown that cultural backgrounds impact managers' perceived leadership styles (Shafer, Vieregge, & Choi, 2005) and that effective persuasive appeals need to match audience preferences, which vary by culture (Aaker & Maheswaran, 1997; Fu & Yukl, 2000).

In the last two years, research in intercultural communication, specifically cultural intelligence (CQ) – the ability to adapt to and work in cross-cultural settings – has exploded. Several studies have defined and explored the history of CQ (Brislin, Worthley, & MacNab, 2006; Triandis, 2006), thus illustrating its relevance to hospitality practitioners. CQ proves especially important in the hotel and growing cruise industries for business success with multicultural staffs and guests (Alon & Higgins, 2005; Thomas & Inkson, 2004). Hospitality educators, those responsible for preparing students to manage these new global industry challenges (Brownell, 2006), recognize the growing need for CQ as well. Indeed, as business and leisure interests grow increasingly global, so does the need to provide an “integrated, worldwide, multi-cultural and consistent customer experience” (Dickinson, 2006, p. 61). Intercultural communication skills seem to provide guests and employees with that opportunity. This is no more readily apparent than in the cruise industry, which, as stated above, is one of the most diverse service industries.

Purpose of the present study

The literature on intercultural communication as a perceived key for success in the hospitality industry, particularly the growing cruise industry, proves limited and leaves many unanswered questions. The present study, however, was designed to identify (through self-reporting by hospitality practitioners) the skills and characteristics critical for career development in the hospitality industry, specifically the hotel and cruise industry. This study was based on a large, diverse sample that was composed exclusively of hotel general managers and cruise ship directors. To provide the groundwork for more research, thereby broadening the present literature, and to help clarify the questions to be asked in future research, the present study examined hospitality practitioners' answers to identical surveys on their perceptions of the key "Ingredients for Success."

Given this setting, this paper presents the following three hypotheses:

(1) *Hospitality practitioners perceive intercultural communication competence as one of the most important skills for career development in the hospitality industry.* More specifically, the present study replicated findings from studies on the importance of intercultural communication skills for business success. Thus, it was expected that the survey respondents would rate intercultural communication abilities as a significantly important skill, especially when compared to the importance of other characteristics and competencies for career development in the hospitality industry. This hypothesis will be referred to as hypothesis one.

(2) *Hospitality practitioners' nationality has an impact on their perceptions of the importance of intercultural communication. Non-native English-speaking hospitality*

practitioners perceive intercultural communication as more important for career development in the hospitality industry than native English-speaking hospitality practitioners. In other words, a positive correlation between a native language other than English and the perceived importance of intercultural communication skills was expected. This hypothesis will be referred to as hypothesis two.

(3) Cruise ship directors (sea-based managers) perceive intercultural communication skills as more important for career development in the hospitality industry than general managers (land-based managers). No empirical work, to date, has directly examined the relation between the perceived importance of intercultural communication skills for career development in the cruise industry and the perceived importance of intercultural communication skills for career development in the hotel industry. Given previous findings on the increasing diversity of the staff and guests of the cruise industry, a positive correlation between cruise industry affiliation and the perceived importance of intercultural communication for career development in the cruise industry was expected. This hypothesis will be referred to as hypothesis three.

METHOD

Participants

This study was based on the survey responses of 188 hospitality practitioners – 77 cruise directors and 111 hotel general managers. The study used two previously collected data samples by Dr. Judith Brownell to investigate the “ingredients for success in the hospitality/cruise industry” (2006).

Procedure

In 2006, two identical Likert-style questionnaires entitled “The Hotel Director Survey: Ingredients for Success in the Cruise Industry” and “General Manager Survey: Ingredients for Success in the Hospitality Industry” were created. Copies of both questionnaires appear in the appendix. The development and structure of the survey, the distribution of the survey, and the incentive for participating in the survey, discussed below, all played important roles in the procedure of the present study.

Development and structure of the survey instrument

The questionnaires were developed through an exhaustive research process. An extensive literature review revealed a diverse list of 43 personal traits and skills determined to be important for effective management from previous studies (between 1995 and 2003). A 40-item survey was subsequently created after a focus group of five general and regional managers eliminated three items that they believed were confusing or less relevant. It should be noted that the survey distributed to hotel general managers included “good judgment” and “initiative” in the characteristic list (creating a 40-item survey), while the survey distributed to cruise ship directors did not include these variables (creating a 38-item survey).

The survey instrument was divided into three parts. Part one, entitled “Characteristics and Competencies,” presented hospitality practitioners with 5-point Likert scales, ranging from 1 (unimportant) to 5 (extremely important), and asked them to evaluate the extent to which they believed the listed skills (divided for convenience into

two different lists and labeled question #1 and question #2) contributed to career development in their industry segment.

Additionally, participants of the cruise manager survey were asked to rate whether they believed each skill was more critical for them (“M”) or less critical for them (“L”) or the same for them (“O”) as a cruise manager as it was for land-based managers. Hotel general managers, however, were not provided with this “comparison scale” to rate the listed skills as more, less, or equally critical for them as a hotel general manager or cruise ship director. When the survey was developed, it was assumed that most cruise directors were coming from land-based hospitality operations and thus would have a basis of comparison. Hotel general managers, however, were less likely to have worked in the more specialized cruise industry; therefore, their “comparison scale” scores would likely have been hypothetical.

Part two of the survey, entitled “Career Development,” asked survey participants to write in answers to six specific questions about personal characteristics, as well as the practices and challenges they face in either the cruise industry or the hospitality industry.

Finally, part three, entitled “Demographic Information,” requested the participants to provide basic demographic information, including the number of years of experience they have had in the industry and in their current managerial position, the size of their current ship or hotel (measured both in the number of rooms and number of employees), their native language, their gender, their marital status, and their willingness to talk further about their insights and experiences.

Distribution of the survey instrument

Once the surveys were created, eight hotel companies were invited to represent the full-service luxury hotel and resort industry segment in North America. Seven of these companies, selected from JD Power and Associates 2005 Domestic Hotel Guest Satisfaction Listing, ultimately participated in the study. General Manager addresses for each hotel company were provided by a corporate representative. Surveys then were sent directly to all 187 General Managers whose names were provided, and 111 useable surveys were returned in self-addressed envelopes (a 59.3% return rate).

Additionally, eleven cruise lines, all with corporate offices in the United States, were invited to participate in this project and complete the cruise industry survey. Ten lines accepted the invitation and survey packets were subsequently sent to the Vice President of Operations (or the corporate executive with the closest position description) for the respective line. This individual, or a company representative, then forwarded questionnaires to every cruise ship director. Altogether, 118 hard copy surveys were distributed and 77 useable, completed surveys were returned in self-addressed envelopes (a 65.2% return rate).

Incentive to complete the survey

Participation was voluntary, and no compensation for participation was given. The incentive for participation was the satisfaction each participant received knowing their insights will help direct attention to key industry needs and issues as well as an individualized report provided to each participant of the general results of the survey.

Additionally, corporate vice presidents distributed the surveys to both hotel general managers and cruise ship directors. Thus, the hospitality practitioners had an extra incentive to complete the survey because their supervisors, and not the researchers, directly asked them to do so.

Measures and Analysis

Although the surveys contained a lengthy list of skills critical for career development in the hospitality industry, five variables were selected to be examined. Because both guests and employee diversity in the hospitality industry is growing rapidly, it was decided that participants' views on intercultural communication would be one of the most important measures on which to focus.

Unanswered questions were infrequent and not included in the analysis; thus, each variable was not analyzed with a constant $n = 188$. Descriptive statistics (*i.e.*, mean and standard deviation) were used to provide both simple summaries of demographics and the overall perceived importance of intercultural communication and comparisons between the perceived importance of intercultural communication and participants' native language (*i.e.*, English or other language) and industry affiliation (*i.e.*, cruise or hotel). Descriptive statistics were also used to evaluate the perceived importance of all of the skills included in the "comparison scale" of the cruise industry survey. Additionally, content analysis was used to examine the qualitative data obtained from Part II of the survey.

Next, a Pearson Product Moment Correlation was conducted to examine the relation between the perceived importance of the variables intercultural communication,

global perspective, and managing diversity (*e.g.*, hospitality practitioners' ability to manage a diverse staff and guests).

Finally, two Independent Samples t Tests were used to compare the mean scores of the two groups on the perceived importance of intercultural communication and participants' native language and industry affiliation.

RESULTS

This section provides both a summary of the demographics and the results of the statistical analyses related to each of the three hypotheses.

Demographics

Descriptive analyses were run on the demographics section of the questionnaires to provide a more detailed representation of the participants. Of the 188 hospitality practitioners who participated in the study, 174 of them were male, representing 92.6% of the sample size, and 14 were female, representing 7.4% of the sample size. Females were especially underrepresented (5.2%) in the cruise ship director data, with only four female respondents out of the seventy-seven respondent total (see Table 1, p. 14).

The participants ranged in their experience in the hospitality industry and their managerial positions. The majority of the survey participants, 102 of 188 (54.3%), had over 20 years of experience in the hospitality industry (see Table 2, p. 14). Additionally, the majority, 82 of 111 (73.9%), of hotel general managers had over 20 years of experience in the hospitality industry. Cruise ship directors varied in their experience in the cruise industry, although the majority of them, 40 of 77 (51.9%), had 11 to 20 years

of experience. Years of experience in the participants' managerial positions varied greatly. Overall, hotel general managers tended to have more experience in their positions than cruise ship directors (see Table 3, p. 14).

The sizes of the properties varied as well, with survey participants managing an average of 564 rooms (SD = 384) and 517 employees (SD = 344). Hotel general managers managed an average of 438 rooms (SD = 323), ranging from 72 to 2400 rooms, and 410 employees (SD = 337), ranging from 28 to 2000 employees. Cruise ship directors managed an average of 752 rooms (SD = 393), with a minimum of 74 and maximum of 1557 rooms, and 671 employees (SD = 294), with a minimum of 90 and maximum of 1242 employees.

Furthermore, 113 of the participants (60.1%) spoke English as their native (first) language and 75 (39.9%) spoke a language other than English as their native language. The cruise industry participants appeared more diverse with 62.3% of participants speaking a native language other than English. Of the hotel general manager respondents, only 24.3% spoke a language other than English as their native language (see Table 4, p. 14).

Finally, the majority of the participants were married (67.6% of all participants and 82.9% of the hotel general managers). In the cruise industry, however, 45.5% of participants were single, 9.1% separated or divorced, and 45.5% were married (see Table 5, p. 14).

Table 1.

Gender Demographics (N=188)

| | All | | Hotel | | Cruise | |
|---------|-----|------|-------|------|--------|------|
| | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| Males | 174 | 92.6 | 101 | 91.0 | 73 | 94.8 |
| Females | 14 | 7.4 | 10 | 9.0 | 4 | 5.2 |

Table 2.

Experience in Hospitality Industry Demographics (N=188)

| Number of Years | All (N=188) | | Hotel (N=111) | | Cruise (N=77) | |
|-----------------|-------------|------|---------------|------|---------------|------|
| | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| 1-5 | 5 | 2.7 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 6.5 |
| 6-10 | 12 | 6.4 | 0 | 0 | 12 | 15.6 |
| 11-20 | 69 | 36.7 | 29 | 26.1 | 40 | 51.9 |
| Over 20 | 102 | 54.3 | 82 | 73.9 | 20 | 26.0 |

Table 3.

Experience in General Manager Position Demographics (N=188)

| Number of Years | All (N=188) | | Hotel (N=111) | | Cruise (N=77) | |
|-----------------|-------------|------|---------------|------|---------------|------|
| | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| Less than 1 | 11 | 5.9 | 6 | 5.4 | 5 | 6.5 |
| 1-5 | 61 | 32.4 | 29 | 26.1 | 32 | 41.6 |
| 6-10 | 52 | 27.7 | 28 | 25.2 | 24 | 31.2 |
| Over 10 | 63 | 33.5 | 48 | 43.2 | 15 | 19.5 |

Table 4.

Native Language Demographics (N=188)

| | All | | Hotel | | Cruise | |
|---------|-----|------|-------|------|--------|------|
| | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| English | 113 | 60.1 | 84 | 75.7 | 29 | 37.7 |
| Other | 75 | 39.9 | 27 | 24.3 | 48 | 62.3 |

Table 5.

Marital Status Demographics (N=188)

| | All | | Hotel | | Cruise | |
|--------------------|-----|------|-------|------|--------|------|
| | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| Single | 47 | 25.0 | 12 | 10.8 | 35 | 45.5 |
| Separated/Divorced | 14 | 7.4 | 7 | 6.3 | 7 | 9.1 |
| Married | 127 | 67.6 | 92 | 82.9 | 35 | 45.5 |

Hypothesis 1: The overall perceived importance of intercultural communication

To determine whether hospitality practitioners perceive intercultural communication competence as one of the most important skills for career development, descriptive statistics and a Pearson Product Moment correlation were conducted.

The means and standard deviations are shown in Table 6 for perceived importance of intercultural communication among all survey respondents. The mean scores were used to compare the perceived importance of intercultural communication to that of other skills for career development in participants' respective industries. Of the list of forty job skills/characteristics, participants ranked intercultural communication as the twenty-second most important skill for career development in their respective industries. The mean for the perceived importance of intercultural communication for all participants ($n = 188$) was 4.18 out of 5 ($SD = .959$). The scores ranged from a minimum score of two to a maximum score of five. When compared to the perceived importance of other skills, the perceived least important skill, lucky breaks, received a 2.59 ($n = 186$), while the perceived most important skill, the ability to lead teams, received a 4.70 ($n = 188$).

It should be noted that two characteristics, "good judgment" and "initiative," were included on the hotel general manager survey but not on the cruise industry survey. These additional two skills were added to the hotel general manager survey, which was distributed after the cruise industry survey, when a new study came out listing these variables as important to managers' career success. Thus, the n value is lower ($n = 88$ instead of $n = 188$) for these two variables (see Table 6, p. 17).

Additionally, a Pearson Product Moment correlation was performed on the variables of intercultural communication ($n = 188$), managing diversity ($n = 187$), and

global perspective ($n = 186$). The results revealed that participants who perceived intercultural communication as significantly important for career development also perceived the skills of managing diversity and possessing a global perspective as important as well. There were positive correlations (see Table 7, p. 18) for all three variables (intercultural communication and managing diversity, $r = .602$, $p < 0.01$; intercultural communication and global perspective, $r = .312$, $p < 0.01$; and global perspective and managing diversity, $r = .263$, $p < 0.01$).

Because intercultural communication skills were perceived as only moderately important (ranking 22 out of 40 variables), hypothesis one is partially supported.

Table 6.

Perceived Importance of Skills for Career Success (N=188)

| Variable | Mean | Standard Deviation | N |
|-----------------------------|------|--------------------|-----|
| Leading teams | 4.70 | .544 | 188 |
| Effective listening | 4.65 | .530 | 188 |
| Initiative | 4.61 | .535 | 88 |
| Hard work | 4.60 | .609 | 188 |
| Positive attitude | 4.60 | .617 | 188 |
| Trustworthiness | 4.59 | .676 | 188 |
| Integrity | 4.56 | .647 | 188 |
| Communication ability | 4.55 | .578 | 188 |
| Human relations skills | 4.53 | .587 | 188 |
| Flexibility | 4.51 | .698 | 188 |
| Perseverance | 4.47 | .727 | 188 |
| Good judgment | 4.47 | .642 | 88 |
| Coaching employees | 4.46 | .649 | 188 |
| Managing conflict | 4.46 | .705 | 187 |
| Problem-solving ability | 4.46 | .615 | 188 |
| Confidence | 4.39 | .658 | 188 |
| Managing crises | 4.39 | .797 | 188 |
| Decision making ability | 4.39 | .649 | 188 |
| Providing feedback | 4.33 | .662 | 186 |
| Managing diversity | 4.21 | .793 | 187 |
| Time management | 4.21 | .770 | 188 |
| Intercultural communication | 4.18 | .959 | 188 |
| Knowledge of the field | 4.16 | .852 | 188 |
| Appraising employees | 4.13 | .777 | 188 |
| Personal sacrifice | 4.04 | .939 | 188 |
| Conducting meetings | 4.04 | .797 | 188 |
| Strategic planning ability | 3.99 | .877 | 188 |
| Creativity | 3.98 | .871 | 187 |
| Persuasive ability | 3.95 | .825 | 187 |
| Personality fit | 3.80 | .960 | 185 |
| Negotiating | 3.70 | .959 | 187 |
| Presentational speaking | 3.68 | .920 | 186 |
| Writing memos & letters | 3.58 | .893 | 186 |
| Mentoring | 3.56 | .991 | 186 |
| Global perspective | 3.52 | 1.072 | 186 |
| Preparing reports | 3.52 | .868 | 188 |
| Using technology | 3.40 | .968 | 188 |
| Educational background | 3.34 | 1.053 | 187 |
| Technological expertise | 2.75 | 1.002 | 185 |
| Lucky breaks | 2.59 | .956 | 186 |

Table 7.

Correlations between Hypothesis 1 Variables (N=188)

| Variable | Intercultural Communication | Managing Diversity | Global Perspective |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Intercultural Communication | --- | | |
| Managing Diversity | .602** | --- | |
| Global Perspective | .312** | .263** | --- |

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Hypothesis 2: The impact of nationality on the perceived importance of intercultural communication

To determine the validity of hypothesis 2, that non-native English-speaking hospitality practitioners perceive intercultural communication as more important for career development than native English-speaking hospitality practitioners, descriptive statistics and an Independent Samples t Test were conducted.

Two different descriptive statistics tests were run to determine if hospitality practitioners' native language (*i.e.*, nationality) influenced their perceived importance of intercultural communication. First, the means for the perceived importance of intercultural communication were compared between native English speakers (n = 113), 3.94 (SD = .994), and non-native English speakers (n = 75), 4.55 (SD = .776), respectively.

Next, the "comparison scale" means from the cruise director survey were compared. Unlike the general manager's survey, the cruise industry survey asked cruise ship directors (n = 77) to compare each job skill as more, less, or equally critical for them as for land-based managers. (Again, as mentioned above, the characteristics "good judgment" and "initiative" were included only on the hotel general manager survey and

not the cruise industry survey; thus, these two skills could not be included in the “comparison scale” ratings.)

Intercultural communication received the highest mean, 0.78 (SD = .479), of all the means of each job skill (see Table 8, p. 20). Thus, cruise ship directors rated intercultural communication as the skill that they perceive as the most critical when working as a cruise ship director compared to a land-based manager. Codes of 1 for “more critical,” 0 for “the same,” and -1 for “less critical” were used to interpret the comparison scale. Therefore, means above 0.0, displayed in Table 8 in descending value, represent skills that are perceived as “more critical” as a cruise manager, and negative means represent skills that are perceived as “less critical” as a cruise manager than a land-based manager. No skills received a mean of 0.0, signifying a skill’s perceived importance as “the same” for a cruise ship director and hotel general manger.

Additionally, an Independent Samples t Test was conducted to investigate the significance of the difference in perceptions of the importance of intercultural communication by native and non-native English speakers. The t Test indicated that a participant’s perception of the importance of intercultural communication was strongly correlated with the variable native language ($t = -4.474$; $df = 186$; $p = .000$). Therefore, hypothesis two is supported.

Table 8.

Descriptive Statistics of Skill Comparison Scale for Cruise Ship Directors (N=77)

| Variable | Mean | Standard Deviation | N |
|-----------------------------|-------|--------------------|----|
| Intercultural communication | 0.78 | .479 | 76 |
| Managing crises | 0.67 | .551 | 76 |
| Managing diversity | 0.61 | .568 | 76 |
| Managing conflict | 0.58 | .572 | 76 |
| Flexibility | 0.58 | .595 | 76 |
| Personal sacrifice | 0.58 | .638 | 76 |
| Personality fit | 0.52 | .530 | 73 |
| Human relations skills | 0.47 | .621 | 76 |
| Communication ability | 0.43 | .525 | 76 |
| Problem solving ability | 0.41 | .593 | 76 |
| Coaching employees | 0.37 | .512 | 76 |
| Hard work | 0.37 | .538 | 76 |
| Trustworthiness | 0.34 | .505 | 76 |
| Perseverance | 0.34 | .555 | 76 |
| Leading teams | 0.33 | .528 | 75 |
| Time management | 0.31 | .636 | 75 |
| Positive attitude | 0.30 | .517 | 76 |
| Decision making ability | 0.30 | .566 | 76 |
| Effective listening | 0.30 | .490 | 76 |
| Creativity | 0.26 | .661 | 76 |
| Knowledge of the field | 0.24 | .654 | 75 |
| Appraising employees | 0.24 | .513 | 76 |
| Providing feedback | 0.23 | .509 | 75 |
| Integrity | 0.22 | .479 | 76 |
| Global perspective | 0.18 | .747 | 74 |
| Confidence | 0.17 | .500 | 76 |
| Persuasive ability | 0.16 | .638 | 75 |
| Conducting meetings | 0.13 | .442 | 76 |
| Using technology | 0.12 | .677 | 75 |
| Strategic planning ability | 0.11 | .826 | 76 |
| Gender | 0.03 | .548 | 74 |
| Preparing reports | 0.01 | .643 | 76 |
| Mentoring | 0.01 | .643 | 76 |
| Technical expertise | -0.03 | .653 | 76 |
| Lucky breaks | -0.03 | .496 | 74 |
| Educational background | -0.05 | .609 | 76 |
| Negotiating | -0.05 | .792 | 74 |
| Writing memos & letters | -0.08 | .610 | 75 |

Hypothesis 3: The effect of industry affiliation on the perceived importance of intercultural communication

To determine the validity of hypothesis 3, that cruise ship directors (sea-based managers) perceive intercultural communication skills as more important for career development than general managers (land-based managers), descriptive statistics and an Independent Samples t Test were performed on the variables of intercultural communication and industry affiliation.

The means for the perceived importance of intercultural communication were compared between general managers and cruise ship directors. The mean for the perceived importance of intercultural communication was 3.79 (SD = .964) for general managers (n = 111) and 4.74 (SD = .616) for cruise ship directors (n = 77), respectively.

Additionally, content analysis was conducted on the qualitative data, which was obtained in Part II of the surveys. Cruise ship directors mentioned “diversity,” “global knowledge,” “working with many nationalities,” “understanding cultural differences,” and “intercultural communication” in 25.5% of their responses to Part II survey questions, while hotel general managers mentioned these terms only half as much, in 12.8% of their responses.

Furthermore, the highest percentage of diversity and intercultural communication statements occurred for question three, when participants were asked what the most unique aspect of management was in their respective industry. Almost fifteen percent of cruise ship directors cited managing diversity and intercultural communication, compared to seven percent of hotel general managers. These percent differences (calculated for each question by subtracting the n for hotel general managers from the n for cruise ship

directors, dividing the answer by the n for cruise ship directors, and then multiplying by 100) support the quantitative data results. Table 9 displays the breakdown of participants' write-in responses for each question.

Finally, an Independent Samples t Test confirmed the significance of the above findings, the comparison of the variables of intercultural communication and industry affiliation (cruise or hotel). The t Test results indicated that industry affiliation was strongly correlated with a participant's perceived importance of intercultural communication ($t = -7.611$; $df = 186$; $p = .000$). Therefore, hypothesis three is supported.

Table 9.

Qualitative Data (N=188)

| Part II Career Development Questions | All | | Hotel | | Cruise | | % Diff. |
|--|-----|------|-------|------|--------|------|---------|
| | N | % | N | % | N | % | |
| What personal characteristics or competencies do you believe will be most essential for effectiveness as a Hotel Director <i>in the future</i> ? | 12 | 6.4 | 4 | 2.1 | 8 | 4.3 | 50.0 |
| What do you view as the most significant challenges (i.e., what keeps you up at night?) | 3 | 1.6 | 2 | 1.1 | 1 | 0.5 | 50.0 |
| What do you feel is the <i>most unique aspect</i> of management in the cruise industry? | 41 | 21.8 | 13 | 6.9 | 28 | 14.9 | 50.0 |
| What aspect of cruise management gives you the most <i>personal satisfaction</i> ? | 10 | 5.3 | 4 | 2.1 | 6 | 3.2 | 33.3 |
| Is there an issue or topic where research would be of particular value to you in your job? | 4 | 2.1 | 0 | 0.0 | 4 | 2.1 | 100 |
| Do you have a "best practice" on your ship with regard to some human resources and/or management activity? | 2 | 1.1 | 1 | 0.5 | 1 | 0.5 | 0 |
| Total | 72 | 38.3 | 24 | 12.8 | 48 | 25.5 | 50.0 |

DISCUSSION

Findings from the present study offer direction for future research as well as highlight the need for future programs that are developed to improve hospitality practitioners' intercultural communication skills.

Hypothesis one predicted that hospitality practitioners would perceive intercultural communication competence as one of the most important skills for career development in the hospitality industry. Descriptive statistics showed that hospitality practitioners perceived intercultural communication to be of medium importance, with a ranking of 22 out of 40 listed skills. Perhaps if the participants had been asked to actually rank the skills from one to forty along with ranking their importance for career development from one to five, intercultural communication may have ranked higher on the list, especially for cruise directors.

Additionally, the Pearson Product Moment correlation confirmed a positive correlation between the variables of intercultural communication, managing diversity, and global perspective. Thus, hospitality practitioners rate these three skills similarly for career development in their respective industry.

Perhaps intercultural communication skills received an overall lower ranking than expected because hotel general managers, unlike international cruise ship directors, do not yet recognize the need and importance of this ability. As the hospitality industry globalizes, hotel general managers are likely to agree with their cruise director counterparts and acknowledge the growing value of intercultural communication skills. Consequently, hospitality practitioners will see the need for improving diversity training programs and intercultural communication skills.

Lastly, the results between the present study and previous studies could differ because the questionnaire did not focus on intercultural communication but rather included managerial basics as well, like the ability to lead teams and listen effectively. Moreover, the present study, unlike previous studies, focused on the importance of intercultural communication skills for overall career development, specifically in the hospitality industry.

Hypothesis two, which was supported, predicted that hospitality practitioners' nationality would impact their perceived importance of intercultural communication for career success. It was hypothesized, and ultimately confirmed, that non-native English speaking hospitality practitioners would perceive intercultural communication as more important for career development than native English-speakers. This finding proves quite interesting, especially because the American hospitality industry proves extremely diverse.

To help interpret this finding, it would have been helpful if the survey had asked participants the location of their property (large city, medium-sized city, small city, or suburb), assuming that a more diverse staff would be found in a large city. Furthermore, statistics on the actual diversity of the guests (which may be difficult to estimate) and staff would have helped, such as data on how many employees were foreign born or spoke a native language other than English. The additional figures would have further helped interpret the data. For example, if a New York City hotel general manager is Mexican and the majority of his staff is Mexican, that manager most likely would not perceive intercultural communication skills as important to career development as a manager whose nationality differed from that of the majority of his staff. Expanding the

demographics section for the survey participants would have proved helpful as well, with more direct questions like, “Where were you born?” or “What is your ethnic background?”

Hypothesis three, which was supported, predicted that the participants’ industry affiliation (cruise or hotel) would affect their perceived importance of intercultural communication. The results showed that cruise ship directors (sea-based managers) did perceive intercultural communication skills as more important for career development in the hospitality industry than general managers (land-based managers). No empirical work, to date, has directly examined this association.

The correlation between industry affiliation (cruise or hotel) and perceived importance of intercultural communication was highly significant. This result makes sense because, as shown by the results of the demographic information, cruise ship directors not only work in a more diverse environment but also tend to manage more employees and more guests (almost 1.5 times that of hotel general managers).

Finally, the demographic results provide additional insight into the survey participants. As noted above in the results section and later in the implications section, the survey results showed a lack of females in the hospitality industry, particularly in the cruise industry. Perhaps the scarcity of female managers, especially cruise ship directors, corresponds with the hospitality industry’s “on-call” work environment, which practitioners might regard as less “family friendly” than that of other industries.

Furthermore, the job requirements of the cruise industry appear particularly demanding, with cruise ship directors “at the office” twenty-four hours a day, making it difficult to spend time with their spouse or family. The demographic results on marital

status, displayed in Table 5, support this speculation, as almost 83% of hotel general managers are married, compared to 45% of cruise ship directors. Additionally, forty-five percent of cruise ship directors are single, while only ten percent of hotel general managers are single.

Demographic results also confirm the diversity of hospitality practitioners in the cruise industry. Almost 76% of hotel general managers spoke English as their native language, compared to about 38% of cruise ship directors. The majority of cruise ship directors, 62%, spoke a language other than English as their native language. These demographic results, which show the great diversity of the cruise industry, help explain why cruise ship directors perceive intercultural communication as more important than hotel general managers.

Finally, as Tables 2 and 3 show, the industry experience of the survey participants varied by their industry affiliation. Interestingly, hotel general managers appear to be an older and more experienced group than cruise ship directors, as 74% of the hotel general manager participants have over twenty years of experience. The majority of cruise ship directors, about 52%, have eleven to twenty years of experience. Only 26% of cruise ship directors had over twenty years of experience. Additionally, hotel general managers seem to remain in their job positions longer than cruise ship directors, with 43% of hotel general managers having over ten years of experience, compared to the 20% of cruise ship directors. This difference may reflect the long work hours, time away from home, and constant “on-call” nature of the cruise industry and ship directors’ desire for a job change after a few years in the industry.

Future Directions

The results of the present study suggest future directions, which are discussed below in “Implications of Findings” and “Future Research.”

Implications of Findings

The findings of this study suggest that employees of the cruise industry should hone their intercultural communication skills. Perhaps managers should distribute CQ tests to identify their own and employee strengths and weaknesses and implement strategies to improve CQ and intercultural communication skills (Earley & Mosakowski, 2004). Given the growing diversity of the hospitality industry, especially the cruise industry, hospitality educators and practitioners must be committed to the task of creating an inclusive work environment (Brownell, 2005).

Whether through a diversity training program, required diversity coursework, or a one-day seminar, approaches aimed at improving intercultural communication skills have important, tangible implications for both personal and business success in the hospitality industry.

Future Research

Generalizations from the results of this study should be made with caution. Although the male to female ratio of participants is representative of that found in the hospitality industry, female hospitality practitioners may want to view the results of this study with care; no statistical analyses could be run to compare responses between male and females because the female sample size proved too small. Additionally, a more

detailed, targeted survey, with questions about participants' birth country and staff diversity, would have helped to better explain and support the present study's findings.

The present study also offers direction for future research. First, as the survey participant demographics show, there is a shortage of women in managerial positions in the hospitality industry. Of the 111 hotel managers who participated in the study, only 10 were female; and of the 77 cruise ship respondents, only 4 were female. In other words, females represented just seven percent, 14 out of a 188 participant total, of the data. Most likely, fewer females than males participated in the study because the upper echelons of the hospitality industry, which includes positions like cruise ship director and general manager, is largely still male-dominated (Vaughan, 2006). Future research should target women hospitality managers and focus questions to help identify the challenges they face in the industry and the measures that they took to overcome those obstacles (Urell, 2006; Mutch, 2002; Soehanovic et al, 2000; Brownell, 1993).

Second, future research may concentrate on the difference of views on the importance of intercultural communication between native and non-native English speakers. Questions should attempt to interpret the disconnect between the diversity of the American hospitality industry and the perceived lesser importance of intercultural communication skills than that of non-native English speakers. Perhaps Europeans' tendency to learn more languages and travel more than Americans and Europeans' lifelong exposure to other cultures affect their views of intercultural communication (i.e., their increased exposure to other cultures and languages may impact their understanding of the need for intercultural communication skills).

Third, future research could include a follow up study in five or ten years to further investigate the difference in the higher perceived importance of intercultural communication in the cruise industry than the hospitality industry. The study may be difficult because many of the managers may have retired (as the majority of the participants of the present study had over twenty years of experience in the hospitality industry). If several of the participants remained in their current positions, they could be asked to complete an identical survey to the one used in the present study as well as a few additional questions, soliciting information about their birth country and staff diversity. This new data would serve as an excellent way to monitor the growing importance of intercultural communication skills in the hospitality industry as well as gain new insight into the skills perceived to be the most important for career success in the cruise and hotel industries. More exhaustive on-site studies of guests and staff could also provide a wealth of information about the importance of intercultural communication in the hospitality industry.

APPENDIX: QUESTIONNAIRES

This appendix contains the two questionnaires on which the present study was based. The survey was developed for hospitality practitioners to rate the importance of different skills and characteristics for career development in their respective industries and provide demographic information.

Hotel Director Survey: Ingredients for Success in the Cruise Industry

The Cornell Hotel School is sponsoring a research project aimed at identifying the unique challenges and future requirements of effective management in the cruise industry. Several select cruise lines have been invited to participate in this study. As a Radisson Seven Seas Hotel Director, your views on the key competencies and personal traits required for career development in this unique industry segment are critical. Your insights into future challenges will help direct attention to key industry needs and issues.



Your participation in this important study is greatly appreciated.

Warm regards,

Judi Brownell, Professor
School of Hotel Administration

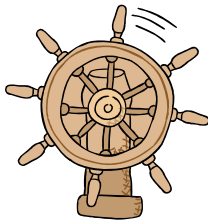
Part I: Characteristics and Competencies

1. To what extent do you believe the following skills *were critical to your career development/advancement in the cruise industry*? Please circle the appropriate number from 1=unimportant to 5=extremely important.

In addition, please indicate in the right hand column whether you believe each skill is “M” more critical for you, “L” less critical for you, or “O” the same for you (as a cruise manager) as it is for land-based managers.

| | <u>Unimportant</u> | <u>Somewhat important</u> | <u>Important</u> | <u>Very important</u> | <u>Extremely important</u> | <u>Comparison</u> |
|----------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|
| a. presentational speaking | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | M L O |
| b. conducting meetings | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | M L O |
| c. writing memos & letters | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | M L O |
| d. effective listening | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | M L O |
| e. using technology | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | M L O |
| f. managing conflict | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | M L O |

| | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| g. preparing reports | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | M | L | O |
| h. intercultural communication | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | M | L | O |
| i. negotiating | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | M | L | O |
| j. managing diversity | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | M | L | O |
| k. leading teams | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | M | L | O |
| l. appraising employees | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | M | L | O |
| m. coaching employees | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | M | L | O |
| n. providing feedback | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | M | L | O |
| o. managing crises | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | M | L | O |
| p. time management | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | M | L | O |
| q. other _____ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | M | L | O |



2. Please indicate the extent to which each of the following characteristics or circumstances *contributed to your career development/advancement in the cruise industry*.

Again, please indicate in the right hand column whether you believe that each item is “M” more critical for you, “L” less critical for you, or “O” the same for you as it is for land-based general managers.

| | <u>Not at all</u> | <u>Just a little</u> | <u>A fair amount</u> | <u>Quite a lot</u> | <u>Substantially</u> | <u>Comparison</u> |
|---|-------------------|----------------------|----------------------|--------------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| a. Knowledge of the field | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | M L O |
| b. Personal sacrifice | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | M L O |
| c. Lucky breaks | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | M L O |
| d. Hard work | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | M L O |
| e. Mentoring | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | M L O |
| f. Personality fit | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | M L O |
| g. Gender | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | M L O |
| h. Decision making ability | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | M L O |
| i. Positive attitude | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | M L O |
| j. Educational background | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | M L O |
| k. Problem-solving ability | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | M L O |
| l. Communication ability (clear, direct) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | M L O |
| m. Human relations skills | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | M L O |
| n. Persuasive ability | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | M L O |
| o. Integrity | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | M L O |
| p. Confidence | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | M L O |
| q. Creativity | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | M L O |
| r. Strategic planning ability | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | M L O |
| s. Global perspective | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | M L O |
| t. Technological expertise | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | M L O |
| u. Trustworthiness | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | M L O |
| v. Perseverance | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | M L O |
| w. Flexibility | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | M L O |
| x. Other _____ | | | | | | |

PART II: Career Development

1. What personal characteristics or competencies do you believe will be most essential for effectiveness as a Hotel Director *in the future*? (List up to three.)
a. _____ b. _____ c. _____
2. What do you view as the most significant challenges (i.e., what keeps you up at night?):
(a) confronting the *cruise industry* in the next decade?

(b) confronting *cruise Hotel Directors* in the next decade?
3. What do you feel is the *most unique aspect* of management in the cruise industry?
4. What aspect of cruise management gives you the most *personal satisfaction*?
5. Is there an issue or topic where research would be of particular value to you in your job?
If so, please explain or indicate the question(s) you would like answered.
6. Do you have a “best practice” on your ship with regard to some human resources and/or management activity? (i.e., employee recognition, handling guest complaints, communicating service standards, enforcing safety guidelines, etc.)
(a) Yes _____ (b) No _____
If yes, please briefly describe:

Would you be willing to discuss this practice further?
(a) Yes _____ (b) No _____

Part III: Demographic Information

1. How long have you worked in the cruise industry?
- a. ____ 1-5 years c. ____ 11-20 years
b. ____ 6-10 years d. ____ over 20 years

2. How long have you been in the position of Hotel Director?
- a. ____ less than 1 year d. ____ 6-10 years
b. ____ 1-5 years e. ____ over 10 years



3. Size of current ship:
- a. ____ number of cabins b. ____ number of employees

4. Your native (first) language:
- a. English ____
b. Other: _____

5. Gender:
- a. ____ male
b. ____ female

6. Marital Status
- a. ____ single c. ____ married
b. ____ separated/divorced (1) ____ number of children

7. Would you be willing to talk with us further about your insights and experiences? If so, please provide the contact information below:

In all circumstances, please feel confident that your individual responses will be completely confidential.

Name _____ Ship _____

E-mail address _____

Thank you!

Judi Brownell, PhD jlb18@cornell.edu
336 Statler School of Hotel Administration Cornell University

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General Manager Survey: Ingredients for Success in the Hospitality Industry

The Cornell Hotel School is sponsoring a research project aimed at identifying the unique challenges and future requirements of effective management in the hospitality industry. As a xxx General Manager, your views on the key competencies and personal traits required for career development in this dynamic industry are critical. Your insights into future challenges will help direct attention to key industry needs and issues.

Your participation in this important study is greatly appreciated.

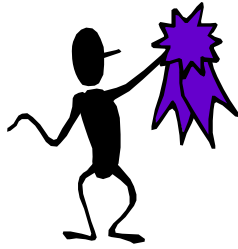
Warm regards,

Judi Brownell, Professor
School of Hotel Administration

Part I: Characteristics and Competencies

1. To what extent do you believe the following skills *were critical to your career development/advancement in the hospitality industry*? Please circle the appropriate number from 1=unimportant to 5=extremely important.

| | <u>Unimportant</u> | <u>Somewhat important</u> | <u>Important</u> | <u>Very important</u> | <u>Extremely important</u> |
|--------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| a. presentational speaking | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| b. conducting meetings | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| c. writing memos & letters | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| d. effective listening | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| e. using technology | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| f. managing conflict | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| g. preparing reports | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| h. intercultural communication | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| i. negotiating | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| j. managing diversity | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| k. leading teams | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| l. appraising employees | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| m. coaching employees | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| n. providing feedback | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| o. managing crises | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| p. time management | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| q. other _____ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |



2. Please indicate the extent to which each of the following characteristics or circumstances *contributed to your career development/advancement in the hospitality industry*.

| | <u>Not at all</u> | <u>Just a little</u> | <u>A fair amount</u> | <u>Quite a lot</u> | <u>Substantially</u> |
|---|-------------------|----------------------|----------------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| a. Knowledge of the field | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| b. Personal sacrifice | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| c. Lucky breaks | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| d. Hard work | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| e. Mentoring | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| f. Personality fit | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| g. Gender | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| h. Decision making ability | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| i. Positive attitude | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| j. Educational background | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| k. Problem-solving ability | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| l. Communication ability (clear, direct) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| m. Human relations skills | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| n. Persuasive ability | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| o. Integrity | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| p. Confidence | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| q. Creativity | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| r. Strategic planning ability | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| s. Global perspective | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| t. Technological expertise | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| u. Trustworthiness | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| v. Perseverance | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| w. Flexibility | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| x. Good judgment | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| y. Initiative | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| x. Other _____ | | | | | |

PART II: Career Development

1. What personal characteristics or competencies do you believe will be most essential for effectiveness as a General Manager *in the future*? (List up to three.)

a. _____ b. _____ c. _____

2. What do you view as the most significant challenges (i.e., what keeps you up at night?):

(a) confronting the *hospitality industry* in the next decade?

(b) confronting *hospitality General Managers* in the next decade?

3. What do you feel is the *most unique aspect* of management in the hospitality industry?

4. What aspect of hospitality management gives you the most *personal satisfaction*?

5. Is there an issue or topic where research would be of particular value to you in your job? If so, please explain or indicate the question(s) you would like answered.

6. Do you have a “best practice” at your hotel with regard to some human resources and/or management activity? (i.e., employee recognition, handling guest complaints, communicating service standards, enforcing safety guidelines, etc.)

(a) Yes _____

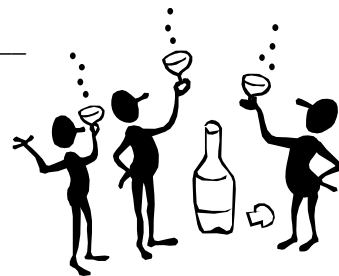
(b) No _____

If yes, please briefly describe:

Would you be willing to discuss this practice further?

(a) Yes _____

(b) No _____



Part III: Demographic Information

1. How long have you worked in the hospitality industry?
 - a. ____ 1-5 years
 - b. ____ 6-10 years
 - c. ____ 11-20 years
 - d. ____ over 20 years

2. How long have you been in the position of General Manager?
 - a. ____ less than 1 year
 - b. ____ 1-5 years
 - d. ____ 6-10 years
 - e. ____ over 10 years

5. Size of property:
 - a. ____ number of rooms
 - b. ____ number of employees

6. Your native (first) language:
 - a. English ____
 - b. Other: _____

5. Gender:
 - a. ____ male
 - b. ____ female

6. Marital Status
 - a. ____ single
 - b. ____ separated/divorced
 - c. ____ married
 - (1) ____ number of children

7. Would you be willing to talk with us further about your insights and experiences? If so, please provide the contact information below:

In all circumstances, please feel confident that your individual responses will be completely confidential.

Name _____ Hotel _____

E-mail address _____

Thank you!

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