

What Do Hotel Professionals Expect From Hospitality Institutes And Fresh Hospitality Graduates In India?



BY CHEF MANOJ PATKAR

There are three parts to the understanding of the Food & Beverage Trends of the future, as follows:

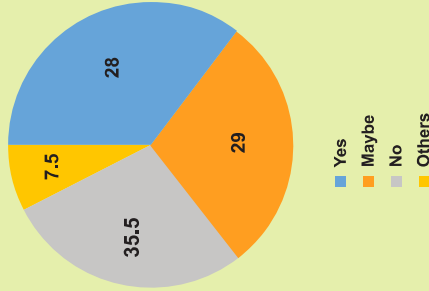
A. Ensuring commercial success

This article is based on research survey responses received from hotel professionals who are majorly employed in four / five star hotels across India. The author has made a sincere attempt to highlight employer expectations from hospitality institutes and fresh hospitality graduates in India. The points listed in this article can be considered by hospitality institutes to bring changes across various spectrum of the curriculum.

Respondents range from being hotel owners, vice presidents, general managers, HR managers, training managers, executive chefs, sales and marketing

A few sample survey questions and their responses given by hotel professionals are listed below for ease of understanding.

Q Is the current generation of hospitality graduates committed and dedicated in the hotel industry?
Manoj Patkar: Below answers are in percentage



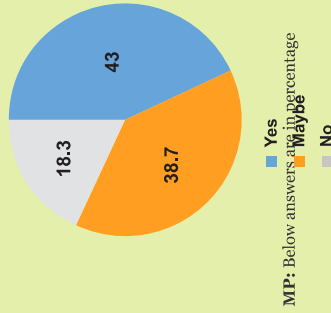
Analysis: More than one third of the respondents are of the opinion that current generation of hospitality graduates are not committed and dedicated in the hotel industry.

managers, food and beverage managers, front office managers, housekeeping managers etc. across various category of hotels of India. 58.1% respondents are associated with five star hotels, 23.7% respondents are associated with four star hotels in India and the others are spread across various other hotel categories, one thing being common is that all recruit fresh hospitality graduates. Thus, the feedback and suggestions received from such hotel professional stalwarts should be taken seriously by hospitality academicians.

The author, Manoj Patkar is currently associated with Symbiosis School of Culinary Arts, Pune as Deputy Director and possess a decade experience working in the hotel industry in India and abroad along with more than a decade experience in hospitality / culinary education in India.

The author is thankful to all the hotel professionals who have taken time out from their busy schedules to guide hospitality institutes and young hospitality aspirers.

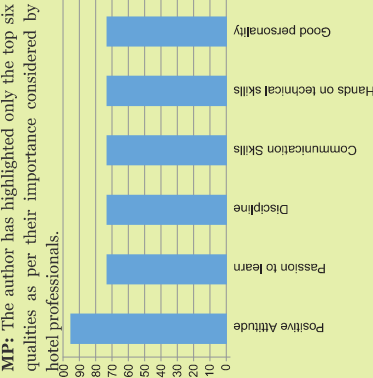
Q Would you prefer to employ a person without educational qualifications but with specific skills?
to basic with



MP: Below answers are in percentage

Analysis: Surprisingly, skill sets are given more weightage above educational qualification by hotel professionals. Thus, hospitality institutes need to focus on specific skill sets in their curriculum rather than delivering generic education to all.

Q Which qualities according to you are most important to assist a fresh hospitality student gain employment in the hotel industry?
MP: The author has highlighted only the top six qualities as per their importance considered by hotel professionals.



Analysis: Theoretical knowledge, general knowledge and computer skills do not feature in the top six quality expectations from fresh hospitality graduates.

The author has highlighted below important expectations / suggestions from a huge list provided by hotel professionals for academicians and students.

Expectations from academicians by hospitality professionals

Student selection:

- Students should be selected through a rigorous process than just with an objective of filling up seats.
- The intake in hotel schools has to be very strict. Either enrol only those students who possess hospitality understanding and good communication skills or the colleges must provide more than one class before campus recruitment for personality development.
- These days the number of colleges is much higher and they just keep enrolling students and are not bothered about industry expectations. They churn out students like a factory, their job is done and they don't care if it is the industry that is suffering in spending so much time in providing the skills to these students when this could have been done at the college level.
- The problem is not with students, it is with institutes who have driven standards to a commercial level. So they don't take in students who have compatible skills but anyone who can pay.
- Admit only those students who are psychologically aligned to the hospitality industry.

Faculty selection & development:

- Faculty with industry experience to be given more weightage over faculty's academic qualification. Include hoteliers in the panel of faculty selection.
- The faculty engagement with the industry should go up at various levels to keep each other updated about the latest trends. Faculties to refresh and update their knowledge.
- The teacher needs to have at least five years of practical experience of a five star hotel as a Supervisor... Oberoi, Taj or the foreign chains like Marriott, Hyatt, etc. in that particular field and needs to excel in the same.
- During the interview, the teacher needs to demonstrate theoretical and practical skills. Look out for passion in the teacher as the graduate performs the task. English grammar is essential.

Hotel exposure:

- A system of constant hotel exposure to students and faculty members is a must to improve on the overall front. Regular visits to hotel back area. Internships should increase. Better connection with industry.
- They need to work in the industry for a month every year to understand the emerging trends in the industry. Also the institutes should put in an effort to

understand the global changes and make it a point to teach it to the students.

- Please tell students truth about industry, industry is not easy as it is shown in colleges.

Academics:

- Syllabus to be designed by industry experts & training to be in line with practical applications. Syllabus should be revised as per today's norms. Practical's classes should increase. Industrial training objectives and syllabus needs to be re-worked seriously.
- Need to impart real time education to graduates instead of still making them do courses which were set in 1960-70. They need to understand the latest trends as hospitality is a very dynamic ever evolving business which waits for no one to catch up. You are either ready to run the race from the word go or might as well stand and watch.
- Research projects should be assigned to students so that they can create their own individualistic reports on their analytical skills and improve on their creativity skills, no copy pasting from the internet.
- 1st year basics to be revised on regular intervals in the course of 3 years. As in the 3rd year in spite of the back to basics program it does not really help the student to refresh and re-memorize the portion.

Discipline:

- Inculcate discipline n pride among the students. They need to be told that no industry is easy and they will not get anything on a platter.
- If they quit this industry without putting in a sincere effort it's highly unlikely that they will succeed in any other because everywhere there is lots of hard work.

Holistic development of student:

- Experiential learning and grooming while in hotel school. Stop pampering them in colleges and show them the true picture of the industry.
- Kindly work on the students basic practical skill. Most of the time student doesn't know what is the course all about, when they come to hotel for practical exposure, they get scared when they realize that they have to broom the floor etc.
- Re modify the attitude level of the students. Re modify the professional growth, as most of the students are Mommy's boy (highly pampered by parents).

Guest lectures:

- Should always tell the actual condition of industry in terms of salary and promotions.
- Should hire professionals to visit institute on regular basis to share their experience.

Hotel – Institute symbiosis:

- Institutes must have better software's like POS and Micros etc.
- Institutes to become a part of hotel operations rather than functioning like a separate educational institute.
- Inculcate a sense of ownership for the hospitality industry. Students should be made to realize that they are the custodians of the trade they follow.

Placements:

- When we talk about hospitality we make it a point only to talk about hotels, the kid who graduates doesn't have a clue of what options he or she have after the course other than hotels and unfortunately we tend to see kids moving out within a year of their new job.



Expectations from students by hospitality professionals

Updated knowledge:

- Always be updated through the sources in the industry.
- Do not depend on books and bookish knowledge.
- Be practical. Put yourself in the guest shoes and think about the expectations.
- Always keep on researching on new trends of hospitality.
- Stay abreast with current trends, stay focused.

Discipline:

- More disciplined approach towards work and attitude.

During internship / placements:

- They lack mental & physical ability to cope up during on the job training.
- Do not know how to maintain a work life balance.
- Need to learn to set their priorities of socializing secondary and make utmost use of the training imparted with dedication, willingness & ability to strive to reach their goal. Generally they are not mentally prepared to invest time & effort.
- The graduates need to understand the stress and pressures of work and not to take things lightly.

Placements:

- Debates, presentation and knowledge of interviews

is very important.

- But it all begins with communication.

Suggestions:

- It's a passion and not a 9 to 5 job There are no holidays when everyone is celebrating you are working more.
- We in India still ask students to read books like theory of cookery and modern cooking where as the world has reached to a level of books like modernist cuisine.
- Make the best use of internet as its not possible for everyone to travel the world and buy books it can be of great help to understand what's happening in the outside world. End of the day no matter what profession you tend to choose you have to dedicate 100% and in the hospitality industry there is no compromise.
- Students should be more passionate and not focus more on the monetary value or the end result would be jump over to different job field.
- knowledge - industry update - passion , attitude & discipline - patience - dedication in performance to expect growth.
- Gain as much practical knowledge at college level as possible. Strive to achieve the best. Extract most from your teachers at all levels for your own knowledge. ■