

Summary

OPPORTUNITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Optimise existing workforce and offer employees additional skill development by broadening their job scopes ▪ Provide management with more flexibility and control
ACTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Designed multi-deployment pathways (by HR and relevant department) ▪ Trained and deployed employees mainly across different roles within a department (e.g. F&B, Front Office) ▪ Quick facts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Official rollout period of about 10 months (planning, training and implementation) ✓ No monetary investment was required
RESULTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Participating employees receive S\$100 allowance per month through GIRO ▪ Employees realize opportunity to expand their own skill sets (and employability), in line with InterContinental Hotel Group's corporate HR programme "Room to Grow"

OPPORTUNITY

INSUFFICIENT MANPOWER, SUFFICIENT ABILITY

Crowne Plaza Changi Airport, part of the InterContinental Hotels Group (IHG), has been looking at ways to develop their human capital in order to value-add to the employees' working experience, as well as to optimize the capabilities of their existing workforce.

In 2012, the Ministry of Manpower (MOM) and the Singapore Tourism Board (STB) jointly launched the "Job Flexibility for Productivity" (JFP) initiative where licensed hotels and hostels can offer their employees, both local workers and foreign Work Permit Holders (WPHs), opportunities to work across different job functions within the same hotel or hostel.

The hotel felt it was opportune to tap JFP to multi-skill their employees. For the hotel, there was **scope to reduce barriers between occupations such that a leaner team could be deployed more flexibly**. For an employee, there lay the opportunity to learn new skills within the same company; which is in line with IHG's overall HR effort to develop its human capital under their 'Room to Grow' programme.

Crowne Plaza focused its initial efforts to enable employees within a department to be trained across different occupations within the same function. Due to natural synergies **within a department**, for Food & Beverage, servers in Azur, the hotel's all-day dining restaurant, can now be trained to work in the Lobby Lounge, its bar, Bar 75, or in-room dining. This also provides each department head better oversight on the different deployment for each employee, allowing for easier reporting and control.

In mid-2012, the hotel implemented multi-skilling for Food & Beverage, Front Office, and Housekeeping departments. As those departments were understaffed, the hotel decided to tailor the job flexibility initiative to deploy employees across selected occupations within each department. This enabled the management to reallocate resources within the department to match operational peaks and lulls.

Key Steps

- **Redesigning deployment structure:** HR worked with department heads to map out the different roles within each department and to analyse the scope for multi-skilling by leveraging internal talent. They identified suitable talent to groom through further training. Department heads studied how to **structure scheduling** to maximise overall productivity, while ensuring operations continue running smoothly.
- **Conducting training:** All training occurred on-the-job during lull periods. This maximised employee productivity, as they were either learning or teaching new skills, growing the overall team's capability. During busy periods, employees are trained during overtime (and compensated accordingly).
- **Developing a rubric to determine employee readiness:** The hotel's internal training standards mandated all participants **must first be trained and assessed** using each department's Task Competency Index (TCI) checklist. Participants must be certified as "competent" for at least 2 job functions (the "competent" certification must be received by HR) before deployment starts.
- **Creating relevant incentives:** To reward employees willing and able to multi-skill, they will receive S\$100 allowance per month upon deployment. The employee must be deployed outside of the primary role at least 4 times in a month. Procedures for internal checks were also put in place.

*"Our job flexibility programme has allowed us to **optimise the use of our existing staff**. We can deploy the same pool of employees to perform more functions, helping us better meet customer service with our current resources on one hand, and giving them additional incentives on the other hand."*

-- Diana Goh
Asst. HR and Training Manager
Crowne Plaza Changi Airport

Key Success Factors

- **Employee buy-in:** Employees are briefed early on in the process and presented with clear plans on how multi-skilling might occur, and what it means for their overall career development. Transition challenges such as scheduling arrangements are discussed candidly. This transparency has helped employees become comfortable with the concept of taking on different roles.
- **Full management support:** The hotel's senior management therefore played an integral role in the success of the programme—ensuring middle management was committed and prepared to make these changes, and building in support such that employees can **find time to be properly multi-skilled** and hence equipped for the different roles.

Project period: The multi-skilling programme was **implemented and officially launched over a 10-month period**. Prior to this, the hotel ran a pilot for 2 years with a select group of employees.

Estimated cost: The programme **required minimal down-time and investment** on the part of the hotel, with employees being trained primarily during working hours.

As at Jan 2014, 15 employees have participated in the multi-skilling efforts across the F&B, Front Office, and Housekeeping departments. Thus far, the initiative has primarily focused on advancing employee opportunities. With additional skill sets, employees are better able to meet hotel demand and move toward more senior positions.

For example, Annalyn Gulapa (“Anna”) started as a Guest Services Officer in Front Office, performing check-in, check-out, and meeting typical guest requests.

Through multi-skilling, she is now able to also operate as a Guest Relations Officer and a One Stop Service Agent, providing amenities and supporting hotel VIPs and special occasions.

Overall, Anna has helped offset peak demands in Front Office, as she can tackle a wide variety of requests. Her ability to do so – combined with her insight and understanding of other Front Office functions– led to her promotion to Supervisor.



Anna working at Front Office



Working at Concierge desk



Serving at Club Lounge



Managing One-Stop Service



Training at Club Lounge

Other general benefits for the hotel and the employees:

- **More seamless service for guests:** With wider exposure, employees have a better overview of various roles and are more familiar with *wider department operations beyond their primary roles*. A single employee is now empowered and equipped to handle a wider range of guest requests. .
- **Enhanced manpower productivity in the long term:** By re-examining its traditional use of manpower, the hotel has greater operational flexibility – better matching the staffing against changing demands. This flexibility also has been useful in helping the hotel cope with peak periods such as festive seasons (e.g. Christmas, Chinese New Year) without adding excessive headcount.
- **Enhanced career prospects:** The multi-skilling provided employees with new skillsets and career opportunities, aligning with IHG’s ‘Room to Grow’, a corporate programme helping employees to develop themselves and pursue rewarding careers. This multi-skilling effort furthers the hotel’s promise to enhance employees’ long-term employability, as well as IHG’s image as a progressive employer.