

Summary

OPPORTUNITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Broaden job scopes of existing staff to maximise their productivity ▪ Optimise manpower and enhance guest experience by training security staff, who are often stationed in public areas, in guest service (to help out in bell and concierge service), and also training bell staff to undertake security duties
ACTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identified complementary areas in the scope of work of security staff and bell staff ▪ Offered multi-skilling training to each team and supporting staff to make time for training <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ For security staff — in-house concierge training ▪ For bell staff — Singapore Workforce Skills Qualifications System (WSQ) security certification and training ▪ Quick facts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Rollout period of 9 months ✓ Project cost subsidised by Singapore’s Workforce Development Agency (WDA), ~90% of course fees
RESULTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 33-47% ↓ in waiting time for luggage collection, improved guest satisfaction ▪ Expanded skillsets for staff, leading to improved career progression and salary <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 10-15% ↑ in security staff salary ▪ 8-12 % ↑ in bell staff salary

OPPORTUNITY

SECURITY AND CONCIERGE STAFF – SCOPE FOR MULTI-SKILLING

Holiday Inn Singapore Atrium is committed to maximising productivity to enhance customer service and strengthen the skills of its employees; hence, in 2012, the hotel saw the opportunity to further optimise its security and bell staff.

Originally, the security staff focused solely on maintaining guest security throughout their 8-hour shifts. While they were typically deployed in the hotel’s public areas for long periods of time, and thus highly visible to guests, they did not have any training in guest relations and hence had limited interaction with guests.

Similarly, in the course of their duties delivering luggage, the bell staff cover a great span of hotel premises. They informally served as the hotel’s eyes and ears on the ground, reporting suspicious activities, despite not being formally certified in security operations.

For both sets of staff, their existing job scopes only focused on their primary duties and did not fully realise the opportunity for multi-skilling. For example, training security officers in guest interaction could ensure a more memorable experience to guests, as the officers can provide better service or assistance to guests. Similarly, providing security training to bell staff would formalise and step up what they were already doing anyway and empower them to do it even more effectively, equipped with the right skills and tools.

In 2012, the senior management implemented a multi-skilling programme to equip security and bell staff with the necessary skills to take on the roles of the other team, raising operational excellence and productivity for both teams. With enhanced flexibility across two teams, the hotel can deploy staff from either team to help the other during busy periods. E.g. at peak times with high volume of check-ins, some security staff can help with luggage delivery while being able to interact with the guest comfortably, having trained in guest service.

Key Steps

- **Identifying areas that lent themselves well to multi-skilling:** There was a clear opportunity to combine the responsibilities of security, concierge, and bell staff, given the existing duties and the resulting synergies. The respective heads of departments worked to identify complementary skills as well as areas of further training required before actual multi-skilling.
 - **Leveraging government training schemes:** While the hotel conducted much of the training in-house and on-the-job, it tapped on training courses under the Singapore Workforce Skills Qualifications (WSQ). With the Workforce Development Agency (WDA) subsidising up to 90% of the course fees, the hotel could help more employees benefit from expanding their skill set and enhancing their own employability.
 - **Empowering security staff to perform guest services:** Security staff went through 30 hours of in-house concierge training, and 10 hours of bell service and on-the-job training. These employees learned new skills, including baggage delivery facilitation, basic concierge duties, driveway coverage, guest and lobby interaction, and newspaper delivery.
 - **Obtaining necessary certification for bell staff to perform security roles:** The hotel also sent 5 bell staff members for training. They underwent 40 hours of training under the WSQ framework, in addition to on-the-job learning, where they learnt how to carry out security functions such as spotting and handling suspicious activity.
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Key Success Factors

- **Management commitment to productivity:** The hotel's strategic focus on productivity helped to drive management commitment to facilitate training opportunities. A common challenge in the industry is that the hotel staff are too busy to be let off for training; at Holiday Inn Singapore Atrium, with senior management's buy-in, staff involved were supported by supervisors in taking time out for training.
- **Willingness of staff to take up additional training:** The hotel management shared candidly with the staff about the benefits at the company level and also how the staff themselves would benefit through wage adjustment and expanded skill sets that bolster their employability. Hence, the staff kept an open mind and embraced the opportunity to be trained for another role.

Project period: The development of the plans and the roll-out of training (training through courses and on-the-job) for both teams was conducted **over a period of 9 months**.

Estimated cost: The cost of training was heavily subsidised, with Singapore's Workforce Development Agency (WDA) funding 90 per cent of the WSQ SIRD course.

RESULTS

INCREASED PRODUCTIVITY AND BETTER CAREER PROSPECTS FOR STAFF

- **Faster luggage delivery service:** Where previously the shortages in bell staff had resulted in waiting times of up to 15 minutes when guests needed assistance with their luggage, this **waiting period dropped 33 – 47%** to 8 – 10 minutes, with the security team assisting the bell staff.
- **Broadened career prospects for employees:** The broadened skill sets of the staff from the multi-skilled teams provided opportunities for lateral transfer to the other departments. Additionally, a number of security staff who demonstrated leadership potential and participated in the multi-skilling were promoted upon completion of their training. For the staff, the multi-skilling and deployment broadened their exposure beyond their primary roles and deepened their overall understanding of how different hotel operations work together (good preparation for supervisory roles).
- **Improved workflow and remuneration:** The resulting productivity improvements saved costs for the hotel, which in turn shared the gains with the security and concierge teams.
 - Security team: A 10-15% increase in salary (higher end of salary increase includes a promotion for more competent staff)
 - Concierge team: A 8-12 % increase
 - The bell staff's work week decreased from 6 days to 5, as their workload was more evenly distributed among more people
- **Enhanced guest experience:** Considering the security team spends a significant amount of time in guest-facing areas, while the concierge naturally serve as extra sets of eyes on premises as they deliver guest luggage, multi-skilling also creates a more seamless guest experience by thinning the barrier across the different roles—now, even the security staff are able to provide warm, friendly recommendations or directions to guests who need help.