

Summary

OPPORTUNITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To alleviate manpower challenges and provide job expansion to employees, Park Hotel Group took the initiative to be one of the first in the hotel industry to kick start structured multi-skilling efforts
ACTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Piloted the job-redesign scheme – Hotel Operations Specialist Team (H.O.S.T.); multi-skilled employees in mainly Food & Beverage, Housekeeping, and Front Office ▪ Quick facts : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 3 months to roll out initial launch in 2011 ✓ No additional cost involved ✓ Required coordination and training efforts by different department heads
RESULTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Greater flexibility in workforce deployment and enhanced overall productivity ▪ Expanded job scope led to 40-50% ↑ in wage (S\$1800) ▪ Better learning opportunities and career advancement

OPPORTUNITY

EXPANDING EMPLOYEE SKILL SETS WHILE ALLEVIATING MANPOWER CRUNCH

At Park Hotel Group, prior to 2011, hotel employees were traditionally recruited at the entry level to perform single-job functions. As these jobs are largely physically demanding, there were natural limitations in the recruitment of suitable staff. During peak periods, deployment of staff was also a challenge as the lean group of employees were only able to carry out their own roles and were not fully equipped to help out on other tasks.

At the same time, the National Trade Union Congress (NTUC) and the Employment and Employability Institution (e2i), with the Food, Drinks and Allied Workers' Union (FDAWU), Singapore Hotel Association (SHA), Singapore Tourism Board (STB), as well as Workforce Development Agency (WDA), were encouraging hotels and industry players to innovate and operate in a new way that is more productive and efficient.

Heeding the call, in 2011, Park Hotel Group piloted the job-redesign scheme – Hotel Operations Specialist Team (H.O.S.T.) to groom a team of multi-skilled employees to enhance workforce flexibility.

“Given the challenge of labour crunch in the hospitality industry, the IGP better equips us to upgrade our employees’ work capabilities and raise their employability. As we answer the call to improve operational processes, we are also able to achieve sustainable growth in the long run. In addition to acquiring proficiency in three skill sets, staff members of H.O.S.T. are remunerated accordingly with the increased job demands and expectations. They receive a substantial wage increase in comparison to staff performing a primary job function.”

-- Mr. Allen Law
CEO
Park Hotel Group

Tapping on the Inclusive Growth Programme (IGP), administered by e2i, H.O.S.T. allows staff to be deployed in three primary hotel operations, namely Housekeeping, F&B and Front Office. In a typical day, H.O.S.T. members can be assigned to one or two departments, either 8 hours in one division or 4 hours each in two divisions. Being multi-skilled, they can render manpower assistance as required at any of the three departments during peak hours (e.g. help out at F&B during breakfast service, assist Housekeeping during check-out hours). They will have a work-week of 44 hours, similar to employees performing single job functions.

Key Steps

- **Identifying suitable members:** Members are selected based on competencies and openness to picking up more skills for accelerated career progression. Remuneration matched the job's increased demands as an added incentive. As a highly dynamic team, H.O.S.T. reports directly to the General Manager, for timely coordination across department on any leave of absence and/or urgent deployment needs.
 - **Equipping members adequately with training by Park Hotel Academy:** Members undergo 7 weeks of training at the Park Hotel Academy, an internal Continuing Education and Training (CET) centre certified by the Workforce Development Agency. This includes 1 week of core corporate training programmes and relevant WSQ courses, and 2 weeks practicum at each department.
 - **Refining the mechanism:** The initial implementation saw early benefits alongside some challenges that arose when employees worked across different departments throughout the day (e.g. burning out, not having a sense of belonging to a team). Gathering feedback, the Group launched Phase 2 that incorporated refinements to address those challenges and instil sustainability in the H.O.S.T. efforts.
-

Key Success Factors

- **On-going feedback collected from employees:** Management is committed to help H.O.S.T. become a successful programme by improving on the first phase of launch, through gathering feedback from the supervisors as well as H.O.S.T. members themselves. For example, besides hard technical skills, the H.O.S.T. members receive support from a community of senior members who can provide coaching.
- **Concrete measures taken to launch improved Phase 2,** including efforts to:
 1. Facilitate better cross-department communication to minimise misunderstandings over scheduling and deployment
 2. Lengthen training in each department to hone their skills and deepen camaraderie with colleagues from various departments
 3. Structure mentoring by more senior members who understand the challenges through personal experience; there are unique learning points for those exposed to multi-skilling (compared to traditional single-function jobs). This community of support and coaching beyond the teaching of hard skills has been useful in helping to engage the H.O.S.T. members who face demanding tasks daily.

Project period: The H.O.S.T effort launched in 2011. It took the hotel **3 months** for the initial launch.

Estimated cost: The effort requires **no additional cost investment; mainly investment of time for training by HR and department heads.**

RESULTS

BETTER PROSPECTS FOR EMPLOYEES, GREATER OPERATIONAL FLEXIBILITY FOR THE HOTEL

In recognition of its contribution towards enhancing productivity, the H.O.S.T. programme was awarded the special mention in the FDAWU/NTUC/ SHA “Productivity Idea” Award (Group category) in 2012. This scheme, pioneered by Park Hotel Group, is now adopted by NTUC’s Hospitality and Consumer Business Cluster for the implementation of a new Progressive Wage model for Singaporeans in the hotel sector.

- **Reduced overtime/reliance on part-time or casual labour:** With H.O.S.T. as an additional skilled resource, there is less need for the regular operations team to carry out overtime work, as well as decreased reliance on part-time/casual labour. This improves quality control in service delivery and standards. In turn, guests experience reduced service waiting time, resulting in more positive feedback.
- **Enhanced appeal and prospect of operations job through variety:** The re-designed job functions of H.O.S.T. present prospective employees with a more appealing career in hospitality with greater exposure to various departments. Remuneration packages are also significantly higher by 40-50% compared to single-function jobs. Combined with WSQ courses and certification offered at Park Hotel Academy, the Group is able to provide greater prospects and job progression opportunities.
- **An avenue to further localisation efforts:** One of the Group’s long-term goals is to see more young Singaporeans joining the industry. For aspiring individuals, the scheme also provides fast-track career progression. After a minimum of 12 months of service, high-performing H.O.S.T. employees who meet the required qualifications are eligible to enter the Park Hotel Group’s management trainee programme and leverage their job experiences gained on the ground as they take on management roles.

Having started with 5 members when H.O.S.T. was first implemented, the early successes have led to the expansion of around 20 members with 6-8 H.O.S.T. members at each of the 3 Park Hotel Group properties in Singapore, namely Grand Park Orchard, Grand Park City Hall and Park Hotel Clarke Quay. Once scattered across multiple departments, H.O.S.T members themselves today form a department within each property, creating a network that provides support, camaraderie and mentoring.