

The effective recruitment, selection and retention practices in the Russian hotel business

Case company: Swissotel Resort Sochi Kamelia

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<p>Abstract</p> <p>Recruitment and selection practices are essential parts for human resource management. Such factors as success, effectiveness and reputation of the company depend on the HR strategy especially in the hotel industry because almost all hotels' employees have a direct interaction with the customers. However, the Russian hotel industry has a poor labor market situation. That is why one of the most challenging problems for the HR is to attract and keep the most effective professionals.</p> <p>The aim of this research was to gather and analyze relevant information about effective tools of recruitment, selection and retention of staff. The core objective was to develop and present of conceivable modifications of the current Human Resource Management practices of the case company.</p> <p>The study outcome indicated the core HR weaknesses of the target company and possible suggestions for improvements. The research revealed that companies that invest in their employees can better retain the top talents. Therefore, it is important to understand how to develop the most effective recruitment, selection and retention practices.</p>			
<p>Keywords Recruitment, selection, retention, human resources, hotel business</p>			

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Appendix 1 Abbreviation Glossary

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Description of the background

Hospitality is one of the most fundamental concepts of human civilization. Long time ago this notion has been turned into an industry which employs millions of professionals. The hospitality field combines tourism, hotel and restaurant business, catering, leisure and entertainment, conferences and meetings organization. This paper is mainly focused on the case company, which is operating in the hotel business.

Notably, a role of hotel business in the domestic economy and the hospitality industry is very important. On the one hand, while spending time within a hotel, tourists lay out half of their expenses on the different activities and purchases. On the other hand, the development of the hotel industry is a major factor in the creation of the additional vacancies; it accelerates the development of the hotel construction and contributes to the preservation of the national culture of regions and countries. According to the forecasts of the World Tourism Organization, a number of tourist arrivals in 2020 will be 1.6 billion of people and the world's tourism revenues in 2020 will grow to two trillions of dollars (UNWTO 2017.)

Generally, the hotel industry has some defining aspects such as focusing on the customer satisfaction, providing the excellent level of service for its customers, using the certain theme to attract clients and hiring employees based on their skills and behavior. All of these factors distinguish this very broad industry from similar fields of businesses (Best Hospitality Degrees 2017.)

Meanwhile, such factors as success, effectiveness and reputation of the company, especially in the hotel industry, depend on employees of the HR (Human Resource) department a lot. Almost all hotels' workers interact with the customers all the time, that is why one of the most challenging problems for the HR department is to recruit, select and retain the most effective professionals.

According to Veller (2007), the Russian hotel industry has a unique but recent start and at the moment it has some problems, especially related to recruiting, selecting and retaining of skilled staff. The salaries and types of work offered do not attract people. That is why the hoteliers have to hire the citizens from «near abroad» which are not able to speak fluent English and sometimes even Russian. Hence, the recruiting and

selecting processes and methods are very essential part of the human resource management and successful company's development.

The reasons for choosing the topic

The idea of this research has been derived from the author's professional internship in the HR department in Swissotel Resort Kamelia that provides the luxury service for its guests and located in Sochi, Russia. The working process has made deeper knowledge about the hotel business, tourism, customer service and human resource management. This experience has facilitated the writer's willingness to work and develop in the hotel business as an HR employee. Thereby, the personal interest and successful internship are the main reasons for choosing this thesis topic.

1.2 Research goals and objectives

The aim of this thesis is to gather and analyze the relevant information about the HR effective methods of recruitment, selection and retention of staff. The empirical part of this paper has been conducted in order to answer to the main research question: «How to select and retain the most effective professionals among all the candidates?» Thus, the findings will aid highlighting several HR challenges particularly in Swissotel.

The core objective to be attained is developing and presenting the several techniques of possible modifications of the current Human Resource Management practices for Swissotel, based on the information provided by the case company, in order to increase the HR effectiveness and, thus, the develop the organization's success. The results will be able to support Swissotel in developing of recruiting, selecting and retaining procedures and different HR projects.

1.3 Structure of the thesis

This study is comprised of seven parts. In the first chapter, there is an introduction of the thesis topic, the description of the main goals and objectives of the research and thesis structure. The second part describes the case company, its activities and current situation of the Russian hotel business. The general overview of recruitment and selection processes is comprehensively described in the third chapter. Based on the theoretical research, the strategies of retaining employees are established in the next part.

The paper continues with the discussion of the research methods and its implementation. The sixth chapter examines all of the results and findings, including the current HR situation in the target organization, the HR strengths and weaknesses and ideas for possible improvements, based on the conducted research. Finally, the last part indicates the summary of findings, the overall suggestions for the case company, the reliability and validity of the study, recommendations for further research as well as contains the writer's self-assessment.

2 THE CASE COMPANY AND HOTEL INDUSTRY IN RUSSIA

In this section, the discussion will point to the case company and its products and services. In addition, a short description of the Russian hotel industry is needed to highlight the possible HR challenges in the target organization.

2.1 Background of the case company

To begin with, Swissotel Resort Sochi Kamelia is a unique combination of a great history, a modern level of comfort and high standards of Swiss hospitality. This is a five stars hotel opened in 2014 for the seventh Olympic Winter Games in Sochi, Russia (Swissotel 2017.)

Based on the publication of TripAdvisor website (2017), Swissotel is considered as number two of 199 hotels in Sochi. Almost all of the reviews from the customers are positive and well-disposed. More than that, the one of the leading tourist's website Bookingcom has posted a statistics of guests' satisfaction (Bookingcom 2017). The figure one illustrates the real opinions of the customers. It has been shown that the review score and almost all feedback responses are high enough.

Due to the reason that the hotel has several competitors such as Hyatt Regency, Pullman and Mercure, Swissotel must recruit and retain the most qualified, polite and effective professionals that will aim to increase the organization's success and particularly help to become the hotel number one in Sochi.

Reviews About Swissôtel Resort Sochi Kamelia



FIGURE 1. The customers' reviews about Swissotel (adapted from Bookingcom 2017)

2.1.1 Products & services of the case company

One of the main sources of the company's income is the accommodation facilities including 203 rooms with balconies and terraces with the favorable views on the park and the sea (Swissotel 2017).

More than that, the hotel has at one's disposal six points of food and beverage sales such as two restaurants, three bars and a confectioner's shop «Swiss Gourmet» that has been opened in 2016. Besides, Swissotel provides the SPA services, various entertaining programs, dinners and concerts (Swissotel 2017.) In terms of the reasons that the case company has a large variety of facilities, the HR professionals need to attract and retain «the right» employees and, thereby, to improve a quality of service.

2.2 The hotel industry in Russia

On the one hand, the Russian hotel industry has a great opportunity of growth and development due to the growing investments, the high occupancy rates and increase in the domestic trips. Every year the market is expanding with the international hotel chains such as Rezidor, Accor, InterContinental, Marriott, etc (Selina 2010.)

On the other hand, Euromonitor International (2016) suggests that the condition of Russian hotel industry is at the primary level in comparison with other countries. The ineffective training of the professionals working in the tourism sector, a lack of skilled staff and quality service are the major reasons of this poor situation of hotel business in Russia.

Therefore, due to the facts described above, the case company needs to learn and adapt the international experience of training and retraining programs in the hospitality industry and solve the problem of recruiting of highly qualified staff in order to be successful and stay ahead of the competition.

3 RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION DEFINED

The recruitment process is one of the most essential and indispensable parts of Human Resource Management. This chapter will define a role and purposes of recruitment procedures as well as an overview of the process in order to identify the importance and consistency of this part of HRM.

3.1 The role and overview of the recruitment process

According to O'meara & Petzall (2013, 8), *recruitment* is a company's ability to attract the suitable potential workers for an open vacancy in a cost effective timely manner while providing a list of candidates for the selection phase. It has to be mentioned that an organization recruits only the employees that link into the company's directions, goals and objectives at the moment or in the future. The management of the company must be certain that each position and applicant fit into an overall financial, economical and strategic plan.

The figure 2 below illustrates the overview of recruitment process leading to the selection step in human resource management planning.

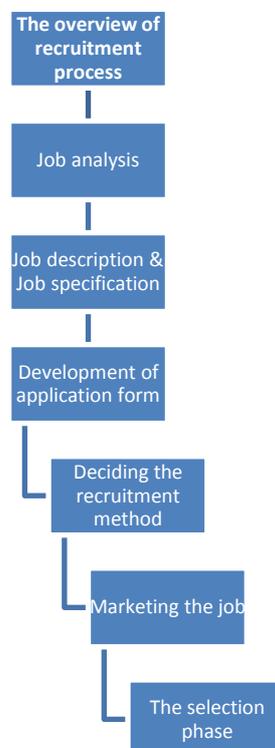


FIGURE 2. The overview of recruitment process in an organization (adapted from O'meara & Petzall 2013, 6)

The figure 2 perfectly describes the steps of the recruitment process. It begins with a determination which vacancies should be opened; followed by a description of these vacancies. After that, the company needs to develop its own application form and decide upon the most appropriate recruitment and advertisement sources that will fit into a financial budget.

Importantly, the hotel industry has the same recruitment process as was described on the figure 2. However, the term «hotel business» assumes providing the best quality of service, hence, it brings several challenges to the entire process of recruitment. As it was mentioned in the subchapter 2.2, the hotels of all levels, ranging from the "five stars" and ending with the small family hotels, experience a shortage of qualified personnel, which is able to give a real result. The hotels of different levels require managers, administrators, concierges, bartenders, waiters, cooks, porters, maids, etc.

Nevertheless, the graduates of Russian universities and colleges do not express a great desire to begin their career in the hotels due to a low level of wages and types of positions such as maids, waiters, administrators, etc. Therefore, there is a fact that the hiring managers need to attract the candidates from existing labor market and develop the most effective trainings strategies to make them the employees which are suitable for providing excellent level of communication to customers.

3.1.1 Job analysis, description & specification

The recruitment process begins with a *job analysis* that means the systematic process of collecting relevant information about work environment, a job performance, the work relationships and training considerations. It enables to determine a list of responsibilities, job breakdowns and job performance standards (Hartley 1999, 1.)

In the hotel business, the recruitment of staff begins with a definition of the need for personnel of a profile that has the certain qualifications, a work experience, the moral and business qualities (Atelika 2017).

The recent studies pointed to the fact that job analysis is one of the *most important steps* of HRM. There are some **advantages** of this primary tool such as a contribution of job analysis to select the «right person» to the «right position»; establishing a need for training or retraining; evaluating the job positions and its performance appraisal; developing the compensation and benefits plans (Management Study Guide 2017.)

At the same time, a *job description* is a written documentation of the results of job analysis process including the job tasks and duties, the working conditions, the reporting relationships and supervisory competences (Deb 2006, 106).

Besides, the HR department prepares a *specification of job* where they communicate that the vacancy exists as well as the wage, the responsibilities and tasks, also the experience, the skills, the competencies and knowledge needed to fulfill the position. For this purpose, the managers must analyze and review the job tasks and scope to make it more attractive for candidates.

Needham, Dransfield, Coles, Harris & Rawlinson (1999, 248) state that the job description and job specification are the main outcomes of job analysis. For instance, the job specification for a marketing and sales manager position in a hotel may consist of the following information:

«The international hotel is looking for the high-skilled and talented professionals, who have the skills of effective team-working, communication and sales. They are expected to have a knowledge of MS Office and show a productivity and responsibility.»

All in all, the job description and job specification of open vacancies in the hotels contains the requirements of candidates in general, with focus on the specific working experience, skills, knowledge and competencies for the particular position. The applicants should realize that they are expected to have special skills to work in the hospitality industry.

3.1.2 Application form

The next step of recruitment process is the development of an *application form* for the various positions in the company. These forms must contain the basic information that the hotel requires from the applicants in their resumes while determining the most appropriate ways of communicating with suitable candidates, deciding on the type of interviews to be used and questions to be asked, establishing the evaluation and selection criteria and the hurdles to reject inappropriate applicants (O'meara & Petzall 2013, 9-10.)

For example, the hotel may ask for the general information about a candidate such as a first name, a surname, an address, a mobile number, etc. Moreover, there could be the questions about the employment history, the education, the knowledge of foreign

languages. The company has to acknowledge that all the information will be treated as confidential and require the confirmation of legally eligibility for employment. The Russian hoteliers have similar type of application forms. However, each particular case company may ask for more detailed information based on the requirements of security department.

3.1.3 The internal and external sources of recruitment

The sources of recruitment can be *internal* where the company attracts the applicants among the existing employees. By contrast, *the external sources* of recruitment are used when hiring the new staff from outside the enterprise. The internal sources include such methods as a promotion of an existing employee to a higher position, salary and competences; transferring of a candidate in the job place but without any changes in the salary and responsibilities; then the vacancy may be communicated via intranet, the notice boards, the corporate newsletters and word of mouth. Also the organization may recall the retired or long leave managers until they solve the situation (Akrani 2011.)

Nevertheless, the position can be advertised externally though the radio, television, newsletters, journal and magazines, universities and colleges, associations, outsourcing agencies, social media, special websites and bulk e-mail (Applegate 2017).

Meanwhile, there are some **advantages and disadvantages** of both types of recruitment. The table 1 shows the main difference between them.

TABLE 1. The advantages and disadvantages of recruitment sources (adapted from Peterson 2017)

Sources of recruitment	Advantages	Disadvantages
Internal sources	the growth and development of current workers	the limited choice of applicants
	the increased level of motivation and satisfaction	a coverage of the relative need for staff
	the time and cost effective source	the rivalry among the employees
	the shorten period of orientation to a new position	a lack of innovations and new ideas
	the increased loyalty of employees	a possible discrimination based on age, religion, etc
	the improvement of competition in a team	losing of other employees because of jealousy
External sources	a wide choice of candidates	a risk of hiring an unsuitable candidate
	the new experiences, ideas and knowledge	a long period of orientation; a risk of failing
	a coverage of the absolute need for staff	more time- and cost consuming

On the one hand, the easiest way to close a vacant job is to transfer the company's trained worker to this position (Cross 2017). On the other hand, each organization needs an influx of new people, new skills and ideas, which can provide a development and growth of the organization (Accounting Management 2017). Thus, each type of sources has to be analyzed in details in order to attract «the right» employees in a cost-effective way.

To summarize all the recruitment sources described above, the hotel chains with a sufficient budget can afford a large-scale placement of advertising in the media to attract the employees; besides, the advertisement may be marketed at the subway or job fairs. This method is indisputably effective, although it requires a lot of financial costs as well as attracting the additional workforce.

However, the hotel operators, which can not afford to spend a budget on global attracting the line staff, would use the services of recruiting agencies. Moreover, it

relates to searching of employees, which are required to have the knowledge of foreign languages and work experience in the hotel industry.

The main point is that the competitors try to attract the best candidates faster. That is why the hoteliers need to use a complex of different recruitment sources. For instance, the managers may market a job through television, the subway, the social networks, but the main focus would be on the special websites. In Russia, there are two of the most popular websites: «HeadHunter» and «Superjob». Almost all people, who are looking for a job, try to use these sources firstly. Thus, by using the «right» recruitment methods, the hotels will definitely have a success in attracting the best employees.

3.2 The role and overview of the selection process

The results of selection procedures have a significant impact on the whole working process of HR department. Since time is money in the world of business, the selection methods must be considered in more details.

In this section, the selection tools such as interviews and various types of tests will be explained to indicate a variety and usefulness of assessment tools. Besides, there are several problems in interview techniques that should be stated with a purpose of avoiding possible selection mistakes. After all, the selection decision strategies will be discussed in a more comprehensive way.

After development of recruitment plan, an indispensable and important procedure of HRM is the selection process. This step includes screening the candidates in order to ensure that the most suitable applicant is chosen (HR council 2013). Kokemuller (2017) states that this phase adds production and performance value by successful selection decisions.

Nevertheless, Anson (2014) proposed that the companies require staying updated on the newest HR trends and demands to shorten the hiring process and reduce the costs. However, despite the current tendencies, the firm needs to develop the effective selection model to choose the top talents.

The role of HR employees is to guide the managers or supervisors in the selection process which may include five essential aspects. The figure 3 below shows all the steps in the selection process.

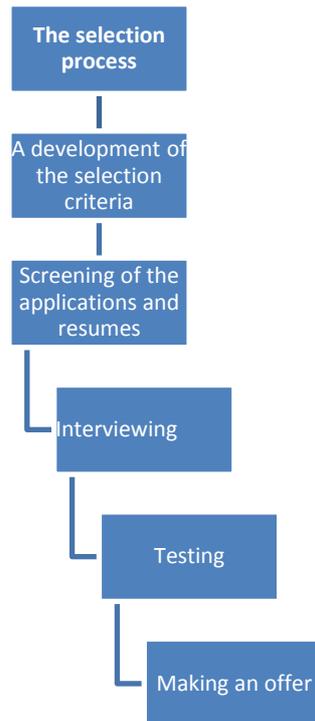


FIGURE 3. The selection process in the organization (adapted from O'meara & Petzall 2013, 10)

The figure 3 indicates that the selection process begins with a development of criteria, which are the core basis for assessment of candidates. In order to find out which applicants will be invited for the interview, the managers screen all the applied resumes out. Sometimes the companies conduct testing as an additional method of adequate evaluation. When all the procedures are successfully completed, the managers make a final decision, followed by a job offer to the best candidates.

A problem of selection is the duration of this process. If any applicant for a position, for example, a waiter, can see an advertisement of hiring on the street, he or she will go to the specified address and start fulfilling the duties on the same day. However, in the hotel the candidate must pass through several stages of the interview, as well as through psychological testing, and then wait two or three days for a solution. Often people can not waste their time and try to find another job faster. Thus, the managers should try to shorten the time interval between the primary call and the first working day of the job seeker.

3.2.1 The selection criteria

The selection criteria are the sources that applicants should have in order to be suited for the vacant job. This is also known as KSC that aims to make the match between the

requirements of vacancy and the competencies of applicant (State Government of Viktoria 2016.) The criteria development must be connected directly to the job analysis and specifications.

The selection criteria for hotel staff

In the hotel sector, the criteria for selection should not be too broad; otherwise it will be difficult to choose among the applicants. The main ones are: the education, the practical experience, the business qualities, the professionalism, the physical characteristics and personality type of candidate. The applicants should meet the requirements of workplace and the entire specifics of the hotel, its traditions and culture. Therefore, the HR specialists of the hotel takes into account both the professional qualifications and personal qualities, for example, an ability to maintain the good relationships with other people, work in a team, etc (Mafin 2015.)

It is has to be noted that the selection criteria for the hotel's potential employees often include the professional working experience in the hospitality industry and a fluent knowledge of English language. As for personal characteristics, a stress resistance and politeness are very important criteria.

After the manager have developed the selection criteria, he or she will screen all the applications and resumes in order to match the candidates' competencies and requirements of opened position and will create a shortlist of applicants for future assessment (O'meara, Petzall 2013, 11).

3.2.2 The selection interview

Once the list of suitable candidates has been produced, these applicants will be invited for an interview with a hiring manager. *An interview* is the process that gives an opportunity for each participant to share and gain the relevant information (HR Council 2013.)

The main purpose of the selection interview is to predict the applicant's behavior in a particular employment situation (Farrington 2008). This step has to be considered in details as it is one the most influencing factors of the final manager's decision.

The interview can be considered as the most widespread type of candidates' evaluation in the hotel industry. On the one hand, this procedure is important for the interviewer to

properly evaluate the candidate and collect the most valuable information to determine the suitability of the person. On the other hand, the interview is essential for the candidate to realize if the position, hotel, its culture, criteria, growth opportunities are appropriate for this job seeker.

Preparing for interviews

Due to the importance and cost-consuming of the process, interviewers must have a knowledge of the hotel, its financial, economical and strategic goals and objectives as well as the tools that help to reveal if the candidate suitable for the position or not (MaRS 2017).

More than that, the interviewer may prepare a set of consistent questions relevant to the job position based on the selection criteria in advance whilst avoiding issues related to age, personal life, marital status, religion, political affiliation or disability. By conducting several interviews for the same vacancy, manager, prepared in advance, will be able to compare the results later (Tourism Human Resource Society 2016.)

Conducting interviews

The essential circumstance of the successful interview is an appropriate location of this event. There is no doubt that a candidate will feel comfortable and more relax if a lighting, heating, seating place and office layout is in a satisfactory condition. Importantly, the reception arrangements and interview room must be available for disabled people. Moreover, the placement should be quiet without any other employees, phone calls etc that will gun the process and make the applicant nervous. Thus, these factors are essential in conducting of favorable interview that is the important part of the selection process (O'meara & Petzall 2013, 113.)

It is highly recommended for the HR managers to introduce a hotel and review the job responsibilities, then begins to ask the general issues about the background and past experience, followed by the specific questions related to the vacancy. Likewise, the applicant should be informed about the timeline of approximate final selection decision (Tourism Human Resource Society Society 2016.)

Types of interviews

According to Doyle (2016), there are several different types of employment interviews that range from traditional structured one-to-one to more informal unstructured lunch interview. Each method should be developed based on the requirements of the vacant position.

One-to-one interviews

To begin with, structured or one-to-one interview is the most widespread type of interviewing where the representative of the company, most likely the manager of the position, asks the questions, prepared in advance, particularly about a candidate's characteristics, skills, attitudes, competencies and past working experience (Right Management 2014).

Phone and video interviews

Furthermore, the organizations fairly often conduct phone and video interviews. According to Hughes (2015), a *primary advantage* of these methods is an opportunity to reach the candidate who is not local. The study of Arthur (2012, 182) supports that the phone and video interview is an appropriate tool for screening the applicants to achieve one of the two objectives:

- to determine that a candidate has characteristics suitable for a position and, consequently, to appoint for a preliminary interview or,
- on the contrary, the individual will not undertake the required role.

Nonetheless, the most recent studies approved that there would not be a chance to evaluate the body language of candidate and the connection could be interrupted due to the bad signal (Wallis 2017). However, this method is time- and cost effective, that is why many companies is using this selection tool.

Behavioral interviews

The next type of the interview where the hiring manager aims to reveal how a candidate will act in the specific work-related situations is the behavioral interview. Basically, this method is relevant to the selection of managers and may be described by open-ended questions about different stressful tasks, actions and results. The level and amount of the questions depend on the job position and the company's industry (Skillings 2017.)

On the one hand, the behavioral interviews have been defined as more effective and valid than other methods (McQuerrey 2017). On the other hand, due to the limited time and organizational costs, they are not widely used (O'meara & Petzall 2013, 113-114).

Competency-based interviews

When the manager asks for the specific examples of cases where the candidates show their particular attitudes, skills and abilities, it is called competency-based interviews (Right Management 2014). This is the structured type of interview with the usage of behavioral questions based on the theory that the past experience is the best predictor of future success. Nowadays, almost all successful global firms are using the competency-based interviews with a purpose of increasing the effectiveness of the selection process (Kessler 2006, 24.)

However, Clough (2015) argues that competency based interviews are not totally free of subjectivity and the applicants could prepare the answers in advance; moreover, this process is time-consuming. Nevertheless, Rooney (2009) identifies that there are definitely more advantages than disadvantages because this tool eliminates any bias or discrimination due to the structured, standardized process and questions.

Case interviews

Another type of interview is a case interview where the applicants should demonstrate their analytical skills and competencies (Right Management 2014). A goal is not to provide a right decision but to demonstrate an ability to solve the complex business problems and to show the interviewer the way of thinking as a potential colleague. Generally, this method is applied in the management consulting, investment and tech companies (Ace the case 2017.)

Group interview

Additionally, an HR representative may initiate an idea of group interview that can be differentiated into two types; one is conducted with a group of other candidates at the same time and another is the interview by the group of several participants (Doyle 2016). A purpose is to evaluate each applicant's personal, professional, communicative and team-working skills. The interviewer may ask a question to a specific candidate or the whole group and observe who will respond. Basically, the global organizations implement this method in order to hire large number of workers (Matias 2007, 54.)

Panel interview

As one more type of applicant's assessment, a panel interview means that several participants – usually an HR employee, a department manager or supervisor and department head – will evaluate candidate's suitability to a job position (Right Management 2014).

From the studies of Arthur (2012, 189), it is recommended to notify the candidate about panel interview, to prepare the open-ended questions and agree on the general areas of coverage in advance. Otherwise, the candidate will feel uncomfortable and nervous during the interview. This method allows the participants to compare the impressions about the applicant and make a final decision. Besides, the panel interviews are time effective and widely used in practice.

Peer interview

In addition to the above discussed methods, a peer interview is related to the situation when the loyal employees of the organization with the different work experience and age have an opportunity to assess the skills of candidate, to evaluate how well the applicant suits the culture of the department in particular and the company in general, and to make a match between the relevance of experience and responsibilities at hand. Moreover, they have to be prepared for this process in advance to avoid from gut-reaction judgments and legal standpoint. Nowadays, this type of interview has become more popular, especially in the organizations where the teamwork is important (Arthur 2012, 191.)

As Mighty Recruiter (2016) states, another essential issue about peer interviews is that the current employees of the company feel more valued and appreciated when they participate in the recruitment and selection process.

Lunch and dinner employment interview

Some organizations tend to organize lunch or dinner employment interviews. They may be considered as the second interview to assess the candidate's social skills and behavior in more informal and relaxed atmosphere, especially when the job position requires customer interaction (Doyle 2016.)

Referral interview

Finally, in some cases a company may have a referral interview. This situation is occurred when an existing employee of the company can provide a referral to another individual seeking for a new job. It is better way to ask questions than «cold calls» when the unknown applicants introduces as the strangers hoping to get information (Bailey 2000, 21.)

As was mentioned earlier, the interview procedure in the hotel is quite long and time-consuming process that requires several stages, including:

- the first conversation by phone;
- the primary face-to-face interview with HR manager;
- the interview with a head of department; and
- in some cases, the final conversation with the General Manager of a hotel for the positions of sales, marketing and reception managers because they directly «represent» the hotel.

From the employer's perspective, the interview type, questions and participants should be decided upon the goals of the hotel and vacancy. At the same time, the applicant has to be prepared in advance according to the requirements of hospitality industry and nature of the applied position.

However, the HR department may use the behavioral interviews to evaluate the candidates for positions of managers to assess how these applicants will behave in possible work-related situations; whether they are able to resolve the conflict situations with the guests make an effective decision, build a strong team, etc.

To hire a lot of employees before the season, the HR usually organize group or panel interviews to evaluate the communication and team-working skills. A variety of interviews allows the HR managers to evaluate the candidates by specific questions and tasks, but it requires more efforts and time to prepare and conduct such procedures. That is why, the most common interview type is one-to-one conversation. However, in general, the hoteliers are basically looking for employee who is dedicated to the hotel industry and who is able to share the culture of hotel.

3.2.3 Problems in interview techniques

The recent figures prove that more than 6 000 HR managers do not believe in a success of job interview. There are several problems of interview techniques and practices that would rather solve them and improve a company's brand (Grasz 2013.) The task of hiring managers in a particular hotel is to simply minimize the possibility of potential mistakes.

Interview process mistakes

By experiencing the interview, it is common for both sides – the hiring manager and applicant – to move into the different topics unrelated to the particular job case. Even if the HR worker has prepared the questions in advance, there may be a risk of flowing into other direction of a topic (Tolan 2015.)

Furthermore, Sun (2013) indicated that an essential issue to consider for the HR professionals is time limits of the interview. In other words, there is too long or too short duration of conversation for the hiring manager to adequately evaluate the candidate.

As Sullivan (2012) states, the mistakes mentioned above are called *inconsistency of the interview*. To avoid this kind of issue, the managers need to use the score system to asses the applicants; to develop the schedule across the day and time limits for each particular job interview and to prepare the appropriate questions in advance.

Interviewer bias

According to Hughes (2016), the most important issue is that the interview techniques are not valid and fair to all applicants. The latest studies reflect that a majority of final hiring decisions are subjective and they were made within the first four to twenty seconds of the interview based on the appearance of applicant without any rational actions (Saterfiel & Associates 2017.)

Sullivan (2012) agrees with this point of view by noting that some HR managers make the stereotypes, the subjective factors and inaccurate prejudgments about the candidates, hence, eliminating the qualified professionals. That is why many companies use the different types of testing to add objectivity to the selection procedure and discover all strengths and weaknesses of the applicant.

The hiring managers of hotels have to be careful when interviewing the candidates. Some people seem to be very professional and polite during the conversation. In fact,

they can be rude with the colleagues or the guests that leads to the bad reputation of a hotel. On a contrary, some other people can be shy and nervous during the interview, but it does not mean that they are the worst employees. Therefore, the interviewers may have the skills of «psychologist» to reveal the most fair and suitable workers for the hotel.

Summarizing the possible mistakes mentioned above, the interview can be described as an effective but subjective method of selecting process in the hotel field. However, such tools as the score systems, the various types of testing, schedules, developed in advance, careful analysis and professionalism of interviewer will increase a chance to avoid any possible mistakes.

3.2.4 Testing and other alternative HR selection techniques

Along with the interview, *testing* is one of the common methods of evaluation of candidates' skills for vacant posts. *The main purpose of testing* is to obtain information about the individual characteristics of candidates that can affect the results of work process in the future. This method is often used in conjunction with other techniques. It enables to reveal the overall level of professional and personal characteristics of the applicant required to perform specific tasks and duties.

Psychometrics

As Roberts (2004, 10) states Chinese were implementing *psychological testing* in order to select the government officials in the past. Likewise, they can be considered as *psychometrics* that aid to the assessment of the mental characteristics of candidates.

According to Walsh (2011), there are two types of psychometrics:

- *ability or aptitude testing* that tends to assess the intellectual performance of candidates by simulating the work requirements;
- *personality testing* that is generally applied for identifying the level of motivation and the condition of emotional stability of candidates by asking the questions about attitudes, personality, work style, etc.

Steve (2013) supports that psychometric testing is standardize and gives the same opportunity for every candidate, hence, it is quite fair selection method. However, Blanch (2014) pointed out to the fact that the tests might include biases for disadvantaged people with various cultural or psychological problems related to testing. They could be

the qualified specialists but the hiring process may sort them out. That is why the HR professionals need to consider all the factors mentioned above and decide upon the selection tool carefully.

Nonetheless, personality and ability testing is useful tool for HR managers of hotels. It enables to directly determine the personality characteristics, attitudes, behavior and motivation to work in the hospitality industry. As was mentioned earlier, the most important for hotel business is aspiration for developing in this field. Therefore, psychometrics may be certainly used as the significant assessment tool.

Work simulation

Work simulation enables the hiring manager to supervise the candidate implementing a task that is required for the job (Dias 2017). For instance, the work sample testing might involve translating the text into other language, installing the computer program, or creating the marketing plan (Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology 2017).

As Akrani (2013) proposed, the work sampling tool gives unbiased results. Moreover, this is more favorable method by candidates than psychometrics while using the similar equipment of the actual job performance. Nevertheless, as reported by HR guide (2001), this technique is quite costly to conduct; observations are limited and can not record the speed of candidate's working. However, the work simulations provides high reliable and valid results, hence, they are useful tools among all existing methods.

As for the hotels, work simulation would be used for examining the candidates for employees of reception service, a food and beverage department and housekeeping services. For instance, the managers could give the following situation to a potential reception worker: a foreign guest would like to check out of the hotel and he has several complaints concerning the services. The candidate needs to describe what he or she is going to do. Such simulations help to reveal the best applicants that performed the required tasks in the most professional way.

Assessment centers

Nowadays, the assessment centers as the HR selection tool is implemented by some organizations. This method is a kind of training game in which the candidate is placed in the conditions of possible working environment. The applicant should make a speech,

analyze a fact, make a decision or form a judgment within a limited period of time (Psychometric Success 2017.)

Based on the study established by Thomton & Rupp (2006, 6), the assessment center method serves a variety of purposes of candidate's evaluation or employee's promotion; but it is quite different from other tools. The main feature that distinguishes this method is that various individual evaluation practices such as ability test, personality test, work simulation and interviews may be combined with each other. Additionally, the decisions would be made by multiple professionals.

For the hoteliers, this method would be the most effective selection tool, because it allows combining several tools into one evaluation procedure. However, this procedure requires a lot of expenses. That is why the assessment center tool is considered as more objective, valid but expensive method of selection than others.

Situational judgment

The situational judgment is occurred when the applicant encounters the working situations based on the position's requirements and must answer the multiple questions. On the one hand, in terms of the reasons that the manager must develop the different scenarios and response options, the situational judgment HR selection tool is more complicated than others (Schieltz 2017.) On the other hand, this is less expensive than the assessment centers but closer to the actual job features than psychometrics (Brenner 2014).

In the hotel business, the situational judgment could be used as ordinary testing including the questions about the particular department and vacancy. This type of testing might be offered to a candidate of any hotel's position, which especially includes interaction with the customer.

To sum up, some companies in the hotel industry implement testing as an alternative selection technique. However, this tool requires the additional costs. That is why if the financial plans and goals allow conducting the methods described above, they can be applied to selection of candidates.

Receptionists, doormen, porters, bellboys – all of these employees are usually the first staff to greet the customers, to introduce the hotel facilities and its services. They are responsible for making the guests feel positive about the company. At the same time,

there is a high volume of the potential candidates for these positions. That is why the managers tend to use testing in conjunction with interviews to choose the best applicants. Mostly, the personality or aptitude testing is used to evaluate the communication skills, the attention to details, the skill of dealing with complaints and overall level of job readiness and experience.

As for the manager positions, the candidates are generally evaluated through long and detailed interview process. It enables to introduce the potential employees to the team, to know the specifics of applicant's behavior and determine the skills relevant to the particular department.

3.2.5 The selection decision

In terms of the different reasons and factors, the selection decision is one of the most difficult and important parts of HRM process. A successful choice can improve the organization's success, while a failed selection decision may lead to the stagnation of working process, to create the fluctuation movement of personnel and, thereby, to make a need of additional costs on the recruitment and selection process of new candidates. Thus, there are the differences between the most widely used approaches of making the accurate selection decision.

Multiple hurdles method

The first approach of *multiple hurdles* indicates that selection procedures are controlled and evaluated one after another. Since each step is completed, the applicants with the lowest scores are excluded. This strategy may be divided into two methods. Firstly, the way that removes the candidates that score the lowest points at the actual procedure is called *the independent method*. Another way is *the accumulative method* that combines all previous selection procedures with the current level and excludes the applicants with the lowest points (Psychology 2017.)

There is no doubt that multiple hurdles approach is time- and cost-effective method of applicant flow because all applicants do not complete each stage (Farr & Tippins 2010, 44). However, this approach overviews the information only from several selection steps and eliminates the candidates who are excellent in all fields except for one step (Phillips 2006).

Compensatory scoring method

One of the methods to achieve the predictive accuracy is *compensatory scoring strategy* related to the total set of selection practices, for example, one general type of appropriate worker. All decisions tend to select the candidate who can undertake the role of this model. Some organizations have deliberately discovered that the different employees have various strengths and weaknesses. For instance, some workers are successful in organizational and managerial matters; some of them are suitable for the creative and accurate issues and other employees are fit into culture of the company. That is why the firms seek to create several composite scores that provide the different models of successful workers (Psychology 2017.)

The most recent studies shows that the primary advantage of this approach is that this method allows the observer to fully evaluate every applicant and use all assessment tools before the candidate is eliminated (Redman 2017). Nonetheless, this is more expensive and time-consuming tool for the organizations (Phillips 2006).

Cut score method

The next approach can be defined as a boundary line that determines which applicants will be eliminated. This strategy is called *cut score* that generally adds a threshold value to other methods. There are no specific rules that indicate a level of cut score. The main point is that the organizations set the score based on the different factors such as the company's goals and costs, a labor market condition and expected job performance. A mix of judgment of experts and quantitative analyses are generally used when determining the cut scores (Psychology 2017.)

Farr & Tippins (2010, 47) reported that it is worthwhile for the organizations to use this strategy in order to simplify the selection decision process for easy understanding by decision-makers. Nevertheless, this method does not consider the important information both above and below the line of cut score (HR guide 1999.)

Judgment method

There are several *judgment methods* of selection decision that completely differ from mentioned above strategies because they are not relying to cut scores. These approaches are based on the quantitative data from the selection steps in order to allow a hiring manager to take into consideration a useful information. The most widespread types of judgment strategies are *expectancy* and *profile-matching methods*. As to the

first matter, the hiring manager converts the scores from the selection steps to desired outcome of the organization. The second method means that applicant's selection score should be similar to the points of «ideal» employees (Psychology 2017.)

Rogelberg (2007, 702) supports that the judgment methods enables the HR specialist to measure the complete selection information whilst providing a high predictive accuracy. As a result, the discussed ways of selection process tend to provide a quantitative data for the hiring manager to make a decision without any automatic actions.

Banding method

The last selection alternative is *banding method* that groups all scores together and reviews them as equivalent. The primary advantage of these practices is that they equalize all applicants within a band that enables the manager make a hiring decision based on other attributes required for the position (Torres-Coronas & Arias Oliva 2009, 485.) However, according to Farr (2010, 164), while considering the banding method of selection, it is necessary to keep the balance between increasing validity and reducing the adverse impact that reflects the use of banding strategy.

In total, all above mentioned selection techniques could not be applied as an independent tool because it does not provide the complete information about the candidate. They are recommended to be used as an auxiliary element. The evaluation of professional competencies and personality traits of applicant involves the use of a whole range of different methods. This is the only way to collect more accurate information about the candidate's skills. Therefore, many companies apply several selection methods at the same time.

The features of selection decision in the hotels

In the hotel industry the selection decision is especially important because this field of business is directly related to providing the excellent level of services to customers; hence, all employees must have the certain qualities in order to work in a team and make the customers feel welcome.

Based on the discussed methods of evaluation, the obtained results should be described and compared with the selection criteria of candidates. The process of choosing the candidates is completed by making a decision on a basis of a report that is

drawn up according to the results of the interviews and testing procedures (ProHotelia 2010.)

In other words, in order to make the most accurate and valid selection decision for the hotel team, the hiring manager must investigate all the useful and valuable information from the selection procedures such as reviewing of resumes, interviewing, testing and using any of the mentioned above methods to assess them.

The most common practice of evaluation in the hotel business is one-to-one interview. However, the chances of making a successful decision are increased when structured interviews are combined with the objective comments from referees and appropriately chosen assessment techniques. The assessment center is the most effective method of evaluation but it is quite expensive. That is why not every hotelier is able to provide such opportunity for HR managers to fully evaluate the candidate.

Last but not least, after development of the selection criteria, screening of all resumes of candidates, conducting the interviews and tests, the last step of the selection phase is making an offer to the most appropriate candidate via e-mail, letter or by phone (HR council 2017).

4 THE METHODS OF RETAINING THE MOST VALUED EMPLOYEES

Due to the fact that the skilled professionals are in high demand today, especially in the hotel business, the retention is considered as one of the most relevant problems of each organization. In terms of this reason, in this chapter the author will describe the major employee retention strategies that will aim the case company to keep the morale high among the workers, hence, contributing to its success.

4.1 Definitions of retention and turnover

First of all, a reader should have a clear understanding of the basic distinctions between retention and turnover. The term «*retention*» means the percentage of workers remaining in the company. Every organization tends to have a high level of retention. On the contrary, the *turnover* is the percentage of employees leaving the enterprise for the different reasons (Phillips & Connell 2003, 2.)

It is possible to state that managing retention is the constant problem of any company, particularly in the hotel, where the staff directly interacts with the customers. Therefore, the reasons of retention and some of the methods of keeping the right employees are described below.

4.2 The reasons of turnover

First of all, the reasons of turnover of valued employees should be established to develop the strategies, which could help to solve the issues.

- High-performed employees are expecting the challenging working tasks as well as professional growth and development. Otherwise, they will feel bored and try to leave the organization (Marcum 2017.)
- The motivation of higher salary in other firm. Typically, if the employees receive more payable job offer, they will likely to quit (Management Study Guide 2017.)
- When the company does not provide a work and life balance for its employees, this could lead to retention of the valued workers.
- Poor management strategies also may influence the employee retention by creating uncomfortable work environment. By contrary, if people have a positive relationship and communication flow with the supervisor, they will probably manage with other challenges (Marcum 2017.)

The reasons of turnover in the hotel business

Despite a poor situation on the Russian labor market, the problem of staff turnover is still relevant. The staff turnover rate is up to 80 % in the hotel and restaurant business. The main reasons of this situation in hotel of any size could be:

1. if a promotion is not possible;
2. if the management does not place high emphasis on staff development;
3. if there is a lack of employees' interest to job performance;
4. if the hotel has an inconvenient location, working schedule, etc;
5. if the wages are low;
6. if there is a lack of the corporate culture;
7. the problems related to communication with the guests;
8. the undeveloped system of motivation and rewards.

(Neretina & Kichkailo 2015.)

Summarizing the reasons of turnover in general and hotel industry in particular, it is possible to conclude that if the staff turnover ratio is high, this phenomenon acquires the negative terms: the companies constantly spend their budgets on recruitment, selection, training and adaptation of new staff. The most important is that the quality of service and the guest's loyalty to the hotel decrease as inevitable consequence. Moreover, the high turnover can adversely affect the psychological climate within the team and have an influence on labor motivation of employees. Therefore, the HR professionals and executive management of the company, including the hotels, need to carefully consider each of the possible reasons of turnover to improve the personnel situation related to retention of top talent.

4.3 Job enrichment

When the staff turnover constantly increases, a method of job enrichment is implemented by the managers. It enables them to redesign the job characteristics to make it more meaningful and effective for employees. The notion of job enrichment is called *a task characteristic model* based on the components of intrinsic motivation (Oxford Reference 2017.)

The other source states that the relationships between the core job characteristics and psychology is influenced by an individual's development (Human Resource Management 2017).

As it was discussed in subchapter 4.2, in the hotel industry, if there is a lack of employees' interest to job performance, they will probably tend to leave the hotel. Thus, job enrichment method indicates the conditions needed for creating and increasing of internal motivation as well as states the essential principles that could be used for redesigning the job.

4.3.1 An overview of the task characteristic model

Griffeth and Hom (2001, 31-32) proposed that by redesigning of job's complexity, the basic task characteristic model fosters several psychological points: *core task characteristics*, *critical psychological states* and *work results*. As to the first matter, the main task characteristics of a job include such components as *skill variety* that means using the different competences to achieve a goal; *task identity* or the whole working process with the effective performance; *task significance* or meaningfulness of the work; *autonomy* or freedom in determining the conditions of work process; and *feedback* or direct notification about the effectiveness of employment output.

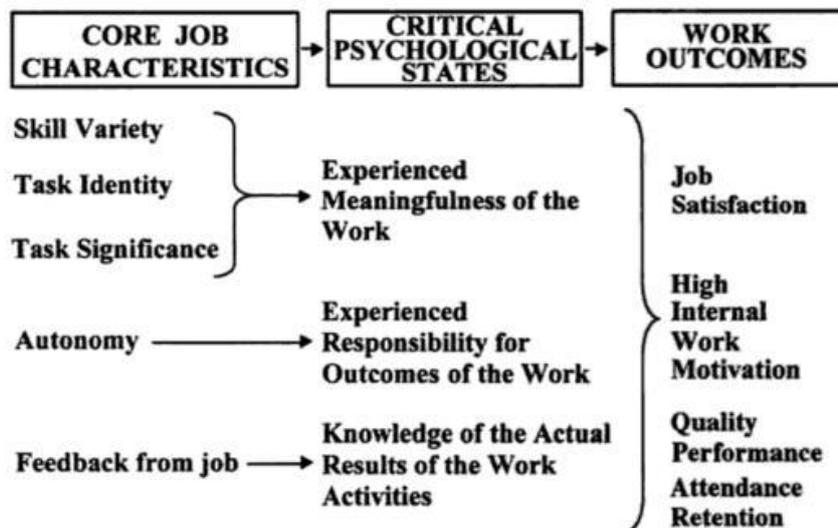


FIGURE 4. Task characteristics model (adapted from Griffeth & Hom 2001, 33)

The figure 4 perfectly illustrates that the job features influence on all issues: the first three components foster a meaningfulness of the job, the autonomy strengthens the responsibility for results and feedback solely increases the experience of work output effectiveness. Thereby, the results such as a job satisfaction, an intrinsic motivation, a quality performance and attendance retention are enhanced. By contrast, if the job

features and psychological states are low in a particular case, the staff is less motivated to participate in the work process.

4.3.2 The principles of redesigning the job

In order to accomplish the step of obtaining input for redesigning the work, the manager should assemble a group of employees that are willing to improve their jobs using several principles:

- *combining tasks* that means that the small separate tasks can be united to the one meaningful job duty;
- *forming natural work unites* or organizing jobs into the meaningful groups such as an assignment to a specific geographical location, a type of business or organizational department. By identifying with the particular group, the employees would experience the significance of their work;
- *establishing customer relationships* means the direct contacts between the staff and clients;
- *vertically loading the job* means an independence in determining of methods and conditions of work process; and
- *opening feedback channels* means a direct, immediate and regular notification about the workers' job performance without any natural or artificial barriers (Jex & Britt 2014, 355-357).

Job enrichment model in the hotel field

Considering described principles, it can be mentioned that all of them need to be implemented in the service-oriented companies, including hotels. The hotel business itself assumes establishing customers relationships; moreover, the ordinary hotel's structure consists of the natural work units. There are specific departments such as sales and marketing, human resource, food and beverage, housekeeping, engineering, purchasing, reception, accounting, gardening – all of them are engaged in certain duties and responsibilities. Therefore, the main focus should be on opening and keeping the feedback channels on a regular basis about the job performance of employees to acknowledge the actual results of job; combining small tasks into meaningful duties to make it more attractive for staff and providing more freedom in determining of working methods to make the personnel feel the responsibility of work outcomes.

The key advantages of job enrichment method for the hotel of any level include the increased level of commitment to service goals; improved problem-solving; customer

complaints dealt with quickly; decreased retention rate and higher morale of employees. However, this notion requires the training of skills needed to perform a job, a high level of labor stability and cost control (Kusluvan 2003, 659.)

Nevertheless, the job enrichment and task characteristic model are the effective tools for HR managers. This is a contributory factor for increasing of internal motivation, the job satisfaction, the attendance retention and the quality of performance. This strategy fosters to reduce a staff turnover and help to retain the valued employees (Griffeth & Hom 2001, 34) Therefore, the job enrichment model is a way of empowering people in the hotel industry.

4.4 Training and development

According to Saks, Haccoun & Belcourt (2010, 6), *training* is considered as a process of acquisition of knowledge, skills and attitudes to develop the performance required for a position.

The main point of a successful company providing the services is the properly selected staff which is continuously interacts with the customers. Indeed, the personnel have to acquire the competences needed to become proficient in the required job fields. Training is a necessary part of the correspondence between the professional knowledge and skills at the current level of production. Thus, this method provides a quality service, which in turn affects the development of hotel business.

4.4.1 The purpose and reasons of training

The purpose of training is to provide a sufficient number of employees whose professional competences are fully in accordance with the goals of enterprise. These practices should be planned and systematically delivered to employees. In result, the staff would be more competent and be able to contribute to the achievement of desired performance. Staff training is required in the cases of:

- an employment of a new worker;
- an appointment to a new job position;
- a lack of skills to perform a job; or
- the serious changes in the strategies of organization

(Hayes & Ninemeier 2009, 175.)

In the hotel business, the first-class service begins with polite, communicative and positive-minded staff. A lack of quality trainings may lead to the decreased reputation and bad responses about the hotel. At the same time, trainings increase the internal motivation of employees to achieve the best results, to promote, hence, to increase the retention and hotel's level of services.

4.4.2 Staff development and its principles

The professional staff development depends on the completeness, accuracy and relevance of existing or received information. *Development* refers to the continuous process of improving of professional knowledge and skills required to perform the future job responsibilities. The professional development system is based on the following principles:

1. the planned, systematic and continuous acquisition of skills and knowledge;
2. the frequent and compulsory training; and
3. the differentiation of curriculum and programs for various categories of employees.

Furthermore, there are the basic requirements to ensure the effectiveness of development and training programs such as the motivation and favorable conditions. If the skills acquired during the training are complex, the process should be divided into the successive stages (Saks, Haccoun & Belcourt 2010, 6-7.)

4.4.3 Types of training methods

Based of the notion that the hotel industry, in which the case company operates, is the independent field of business, there is a need for the personnel having special skills and all-round training. The managers should use the different types of development methods to improve the service knowledge of staff and retain the effective professionals.

Orientation training

One of the most productive solutions is short and informative orientation training that provides the additional motivation from the first day of working. This is a combination of observation, explanation and particularly practice by presenting the company and its environment to a new employee (HR 2001.) Each hotel has its own standards; that is why new employees should definitely receive the training to be dedicated to these standards, mission and vision of the brand.

Coaching

Coaching or mentoring enables employees to have a direct interaction and receive information from an experienced specialist. Generally speaking, this method is usually offered after more formal training practice to expand the knowledge and skills of staff. A manager, a supervisor, a head of department or HR employee could serve as the coach for the trainees (Training Today 2016.)

Group discussions

Group tutorials provide the employees an opportunity to discuss the ideas related to the new program. This is an effective way to receive the information and feedback from other employees on the same issues. The interaction between the trainer and trainees make this method more effective and powerful (NaukriHub 2017.)

Role playing and management games

Role playing and management games could be used for experiencing the situations that would occur during the working process. The trainers may raise the various issues surrounding the negotiation, the creativity, the innovative ideas and dealing with the customers' complaints, etc (Samanta 1993, 67.)

In the hotel industry, the role playing training could be useful for simulation of problem situations that would occur during the working process. For example, the guest has a complaint about the facilities in his room by claiming that his deluxe is dirty. The trainer and employees replay this situation and try to find the best solution that would show the professionalism of hotel staff.

Refreshing training

Refreshing training is the process of training of existing employees to change their professional profiles in order to achieve a compliance with the requirements of the organization. Moreover, this method develops a high level of independence and activity, increases the aspiration for self-development with the use of modern forms of learning (HR 2001.) There are two common training models:

- *on-the-job training*; a theoretical course in a professional educational organization and practical training at the company;

- *outside training* in the specialized professional schools and training centers (Agarwal 2012).

Nowadays, the problem of retraining is relevant due to the permanent total obsolescence of competencies and depreciation of previous special skills, which is caused by scientific and technological advance. Respectively, the training procedures can be defined as the process of developing the theoretical and practical skills to increase the professional competences of workers and to improve the advanced equipment, the technology, the work organization, the production and management. At the same time, the professional development has a positive effect on employees. By acquiring new skills and knowledge, they become more competitive in the labor market and receive the additional professional development opportunities within and outside of the company.

To summarize, based on the fact that the competitive market of the hotel business places the high requirements on the level of employees' qualifications, knowledge and skills, the staff training is becoming particularly important for the most Russian hotels. The continuous professional development of personnel is an essential part of the company's corporate culture and one of the powerful tools of retention.

Due to the high turnover rates in the hotel industry, the staff investment in the forms of different trainings and subsequent evaluation of these trainings indicates the company's confidence in its employees and gives the opportunity for them to advance. In result, the hotel retains the most valued and professional workers and improve the overall HR situation.

4.4.4 Evaluation of training

To begin with, evaluation means *the assessment* of the results of development practices. The organization needs to understand the usefulness of training, to check its quality, to calculate the performance of training costs and determine its practical value, i.e. whether the participants are able to apply the knowledge (Management Study Guide 2017.)

Since companies spend large amount of money, the assessment results are essential for improving the specific training strategies as well as for further planning of employees' growth. The clear training procedures and assessment criteria should be created prior to the learning course to have the most effective results (Training Industry 2016.)

Kirkpatrick's evaluation model

By the current date, the original assessment system for evaluation of the performance of training practices is Donald Kirkpatrick's model, published by the author in the year of 1959 (Kirkpatrick partners 2017). The researcher proposed four steps of assessment that are described below:

1. **Reaction:** opinions and thoughts of participants about the training experience;

A motivation to learn is a crucial factor of success because people acquire the knowledge better when they have a positive attitude towards the coach, the purposes and the process of training. At this level, the subjective opinions, the judgments and thoughts of participants are generally formed. In order to receive an objective picture of strengths and weaknesses of the training, it is necessary to provide the useful information for the analysis and freedom of expression for the participants. Additionally, the feedback should not be too detailed (Mind Tools 2017.)

Due to the time- and cost effectiveness, the most common way to receive a feedback from the participants is questionnaire that analyses the training content, the facilities and methodology (Management Study Guide 2017).

2. **Learning:** the increase in knowledge and skills as a result of training course;

By creating a new training program, a coacher should set the pragmatic goal of improving the performance in the employees' workplace or developing the new technologies. Therefore, the learning level measures *the changes* in the attitudes, skills and knowledge of the participants (Training Industry 2016.)

The evaluation involves such methods as the observation, the exercises, the professional and behavioral tests, the surveys and interviews. The results of assessment at this stage are more important for a coach than for the participants because it can help to find out the effectiveness of chosen strategies (Forest 2016.)

3. **Behavior:** the extent of change after applying the results on the job;

By considering this level of evaluation, Kirkpatrick primarily defined the *transfer* of learning from the training experience to the workplace. Thus, it is important to

assess the practical results of the training; in other words, the implementation of acquired knowledge, skills and attitudes to the work situation (Mind Tools 2017.)

In order to compare the previous and current working behavior, the organizations use the observation, the combination of questionnaires and feedback tools (Management Study Guide 2017).

4. **Results:** the effects that the staff performance has as an outcome of the development (Kirkpatrick Partners 2017).

The companies invest in the training programs in order to increase productivity, to reduce the costs, to develop new products, to introduce the new equipment and technologies, etc. Thus, it is necessary to assess an impact of learning outcomes on the activities across the organization (Forest 2016.)

In practice, it is difficult to assess the impact of individual trainings on a large company's activities. It could rather be established a connection between learning and organizational development. Nevertheless, many enterprises implement the different evaluation forms, using various business indicators such as the increased sales, the reduced costs, the improved quality, the increased satisfaction of employees, the staff retention, the higher morale etc. Gathering this type of data requires the analytical work, the financial resources, a large amount of time and coordinated efforts of many departments of the company (Training Industry 2016.)

Return on Investment (ROI)

The fourth level of Kirkpatrick evaluation model does not answer the question whether the training is worthy of it. The fifth stage of assessment was added to the system which is called ROI. This level implies that a person assessing the training effectiveness should have the skills to evaluate the costs and profits as well as the outputs of the company (Management Study Guide 2017.)

The evaluation of training programs is a process of calculating the value of the learning courses for the particular employees and organization in general. This model becomes more difficult and expensive from the first to the last level. Nonetheless, the results are extremely important for the company to cut the costs and to increase globally.

The hotels, as any other organizations that aimed at success, need to take into consideration the Kirkpatrick evaluation model. It enables to calculate and examine the results and meaningfulness of the trainings programs. Considering the fact that learning courses and seminars are expensive and time-consuming, the evaluation would definitely help to analyze the effectiveness of conducted trainings. Moreover, it enables to develop more productive training plans in order to achieve better results.

4.5 Motivation and rewards

The main purpose of a manager at any level is to ensure the execution of work. Motivation plays a significant role in this process. What is motivation? Motivation is a process of inducement to the working activities in order to achieve personal and organizational goals (Heathfield 2016.)

Google Company presents the perfect example of employee's motivation practices. According to Martin (2014), along with the usual benefits such as free health and dental services, insurance, vacation and sick packages etc, the organization provides a compensation of up to 5 000 dollars for legal spending; the financial benefits for adopting a child; free of charge lunch and dinners; gym, massages, bike repair, etc. This is an example of successful motivation strategy, which leads to higher productivity and satisfaction of employees.

In the meanwhile, the modern motivation theories explain the human behavior based on two basic concepts: needs and rewards. As to the first matter, there are many classifications of the needs but the universal theory has not been created. The needs are divided into primary and secondary. Generally, the primary needs are usually congenital such as the physiological needs for food, water, air, safety, etc (Mulder 2014.)

The secondary needs are inherently psychological such as communication, esteem, power, success, self-actualization, etc. Hence, human needs determine its behavior (CliffsNotes 2016.)

4.5.1 The common types of reward

The common method that is used for work motivation is a reward. It is possible to state that rewards are considerable values for employees. Basically, there are external and internal rewards. The work itself provides internal reward, i.e. the positive feelings

including the self-esteem, the friendship and meaningfulness of job performance that employees may experience during the process. At the same time, external rewards are determined by the organization: the promotion, compensation, benefits, recognition and appreciation, etc. The manager should develop the system of needs and motivation in order to define what type of reward is applicable to a particular worker (Sommerville 2007, 320-321.)

4.5.2 Types of reward suitable to the hotel's motivation system

The hotel's motivation system is a set of effective techniques that allows the company to keep the service up to the highest level. According to Little & Marandi (2003, 130), the various rewards could be divided into monetary and non-monetary compensation that are listed below.

The monetary compensation such as:

- *a system of remuneration* based on the work outcome;
 - *the bonuses* to the most effective professionals;
 - *an additional charge* for the night duties and tasks;
 - *medical care and insurance premiums* paid on a behalf of employees;
 - *pension plans*; and
 - *vacation, sick and holiday pay*
- (Bogardus 2009, 275-276).

Non-monetary compensation include:

- *the intensive staff development*: training, conferences, seminars that will improve the professional knowledge and skills of personnel;
 - *rewards in kind*: the gifts certificates for any birthdays or events;
 - *celebrations*: the staff parties, dinners, excursions that will increase a friendly working atmosphere and corporate spirit;
 - *praise*: a written or verbal recognition and appreciation of employees;
 - *advancement*: the clear growth parameters and goals; and
 - *a flexible schedule*;
- (Little & Marandi 2003,130).

For the first compensation category, the hotel should enter the guest survey cards that offer the customers to assess the services, including the quality of each individual department. It is possible to determine the most effective employees, to assess their level of activity and to pay the appropriate bonuses on the basis of collected information.

Additionally, this method will increase the motivation level of other workers (Ashe-Edmunds 2017.)

Moreover, one of the most motivational non-monetary rewards in the hotels is free lunch. This perk saves employees' money and time for cooking at home. Thus, the hotel business has an advantage of additional bonuses over other industries.

Furthermore, most of the companies, operating in the hospitality field, conduct «the Best employee of the month», «the Best employee of the year», «the Best manager», «the Best intern» events. Such practices definitely increase the motivation level of staff in order to win the competition and receive a reward.

4.5.3 Factors influencing the development of compensation programs

When developing the compensation programs, the organizations must consider a variety of following external factors:

- **Economic factors** such as inflation, unemployment, interest rates, economic growth that have an influence on the cost of labor; in other words - the cost of attracting and retaining of qualified employees;
- **Labor market** consists of any sources from which the enterprise recruits its staff. The conjunction of supply and demand impact the wages and benefits paid to employees for the required skill set;
- **Product market competition** creates pressure on the financial health of the organization, including wages and compensation pay. In a strong economy, the increased market competition could lead to growth of the company because of increasing demand that results in raised monetary rewards;
- **Tax and accounting requirements** as well as **government regulations and legislations** affect the strategic reward system through its enforcement of Social Security and Medical Care taxes, the pension regulations and other requirements concerning the pay and compensation mechanisms
(Bogardus 2009, 281-283.)

The successful motivation system is definitely has an impact on the loyalty of existing employees. There is no doubt that if the worker receives the additional bonuses, free medical care, insurance; participates in different staff parties and dinners; or receives birthday gifts, he or she will feel valued and appreciated. Even if some other conditions of work do not fully satisfy the employees, they will replace these gaps by favorable system of motivation and rewards.

Thereby, it is necessary to develop a separate system of motivation and rewards, taking into account the characteristics of each particular hotel, the individual employee, the benefits legislation, a variety of taxes, the implications of changes in the competitive environment and the changing economic and labor market factors. In terms of these reasons, the HR and executive management must accurately develop and implement the compensation and benefit strategy that attracts, motivates and keep the valued employees whilst achieving the company's hiring and retention goals.

4.6 Work-life balance

The work-life balance means striving to provide employment practices that allow people to have a balance between their work and personal commitments (Armstrong 149, 2006). This term has become incredibly discussed in the last few decades. There are many scientific researches dedicated to this subject. Noticeably, only 56 percents of employees in Russia believe that their companies seek to establish a balance between work and personal life (Royal 2017.)

The basic concept of work-life balance

The basic concept of allocation of space and time indicates the consideration to:

- themselves or own needs and demands;
- the close others or family, friends, relatives, etc;
- a paid job as a financial mean to fulfill the different needs;
- the distant others such as the voluntary activities.

The cornerstone of this concept is that each individual person has a different perception and framework concerning particular category and the work-life balance as a whole (Clutterbuck 9, 2003.)

The Fuji Xerox website confirms that a work-life balance is an important part of overall HRM practice. They launched this method of retention in 1988 to provide an opportunity for its workers to connect the job and personal life by providing a childcare leave system and family nursing care system. As a result, the average working period at the company in 2011 was 19.6 years for males and 15.3 for females (Fuji Xerox 2011.) This example supports the idea that the work-life balance supports various values among workers.

4.6.1 Work-life balance as an important benefit to hotel's employees

Work-life balance principle is essential not only for employees but also for the employer in the hotel industry. The hotel's facilities basically operate around the clock. That is why many employees have to work on the weekends, on different holidays and through the nights. It contributes to the personal conflicts and problems of employees.

The hospitality industry is also connected with «presenteeism». It means a need to work more hours than necessary and always to be at work for emotional support. «Presenteeism» directly results in the non-existent sense of work-life balance (Frost 2016.)

In order to provide the work-life balance for the hotel staff, the employers need to give more flexibility of the schedule and establish these schedules in advance. It will allow the workers to combine the work with other plans.

Moreover, as it was mentioned before, the childcare benefits to employees have a positive impact on recruitment, retention, productivity and employees' well-being. In spite of the fact that providing the work-life balance in the hotel industry is more difficult than in other fields of businesses, it is not impossible.

To conclude, the work-life balance principle should ensure that employees realize and make use of the opportunities for working differently. The managers must support and implement the work-life practices that involve motivation, commitment and performance of staff (Clutterbuck 123, 2003.) By creating the flexible schedules and providing childcare benefits, the hoteliers will be able to increase the motivation level, to support the concept of work-life balance and retain the most effective professionals.

4.7 Effective supervision

Since service is important in the world of hotel business, in which the case company is operating, a main role of the frontline manager is to ensure the cooperation of workers to achieve the company's objectives. In order to establish the significance of effective supervision in the recruitment, selection and retention of employees, the functions and competencies of managers should be defined.

As it was mentioned in previous chapter, Google has the successful motivation strategy. At the same time this organization has developed the effective supervisor's system. According to Martin (2014), the employees are asked about their supervisors and managers on the regular basis. The outcome of survey is established to recognize and

appreciate the best managers and make them as the role models. The worst supervisors are provided with coaches, with the help of which 75 % improve the quality of performance within a short period of time.

4.7.1 Supervisor's main functions

The effective supervision includes five stages such as planning, organizing, staffing, directing and controlling which are illustrated on the Figure 5.

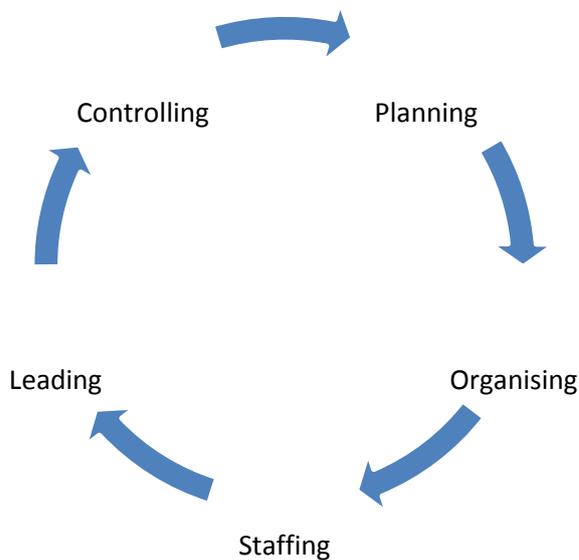


FIGURE 5. Functions of the frontline manager (adapted from Wagen & Davies 1998, 16)

Planning

The supervisors need to plan the pathway, the needs, the demands and working process itself to achieve the company's goals. For instance, the short-term planning means preparing for service and ensuring that all the requirements are carefully set out. Besides, the managers have to plan long-term by considering the staff requests for personal leaves, overtime, sick time, promotions etc in accordance with the organization's personnel policies (Management Study Guide 2017.)

Staffing

A manager needs to control that there are enough professional staff on duty in accordance with the required level of service while ensuring that these employees are

properly trained and motivated to accomplish the tasks and achieve the goals. At the same time, supervisors should participate in the recruitment and selection process by reviewing advertisements for job candidates, their resumes and conducting the interviews in order to hire the most suitable employees (Wagen & Davies 1998, 17.)

Organising

Organising as a function of the supervisor includes allocating physical resources and tasks to individual workers. The main point is to ensure that every duty is performed effectively and efficiently by a particular employee. More than that, the supervisors organize the orientation of new employees to the hotel, its policies, rules and facilities. They develop training practices as well as career counseling and coaching plans to motivate and improve the employees' knowledge (Money Matters 2017.)

Leading and controlling

The managers must be able to illustrate and explain the way of interaction with the customers as well as to monitor and control that regular orders of psychical resources are updated and the employees are performing in accordance with the required standards. They provide feedback on the employment performance on the regular basis and establish the ideas of staff improvement plan (Management Study Guide 2017.)

Additionally, the supervisors are the key point of interaction between the frontline staff and senior management. In terms of this reason, the communication flow is important in both directions (Wagen & Davies 1998, 16).

4.7.2 Skills of effective supervisor

«Encouragement is a necessary part of supervision.» (Thomas J. Watson, 2013).

Alongside with the supervisor's functions, there are several skills that would have the professional manager in any field of business, including the hotel industry. Firstly, it is important when the supervisor has *technical skills* and knowledge required to accomplish the tasks involving the methods, the processes, the procedures or techniques. In the cases of problems that would occur during the working process, they would assist the team of department to resolve the situation. By contrast, if the managers do not have the necessary competencies, they will not retain the creditability with the personnel (Sutevski 2009.)

Secondly, the effective specialist needs to be sensitive to the different needs of staff as well as have a skill of listening, communicating, discussing, questioning, providing support, recognizing and appreciating people. This is called *people skills* (Wagen & Davies 1998, 16.) Thirdly, decision-making and problem-solving are *conceptual skills* that are necessary for supervisor's responsibilities in short- and long-term planning (Akrani 2011).

The supervisor is responsible to represent the employees' requests and contribute to the resolution of their particular problems in the work-related situations. The effective management practices need to be monitored to ensure the efficiency and competitiveness of the hotel whilst focusing on the balance of manager's functions, motivating and leading employees with the purpose of retaining the most valued workers.

The effective supervisor in the hotel business

First of all, hospitality supervisors need to ensure the smooth teamwork of the hotel. They should know how to get the right team by participating in the hiring process and developing the training plans along the way. Besides, the professional supervisor has to appropriately communicate with the customers, the colleagues, other supervisors and senior managers by listening, respecting other people's opinions and searching for solutions to communicate clearly (International Hotel School 2016.)

The supervisors should have a set of special skills that can manage and support a conflict resolution. In this way, hotel staff will feel understood and protected. Supervisors, who are able to build the effective team, make a clear communication, resolve the conflicts at the workplace, manage and organize the time, will create the positive working environment of the hotel; thereby, the most of the employees will tend to retain with the company.

Summary

By summarizing the recruitment, selection and retention practices in the Russian hotel business, it can be concluded that the hiring process in this industry is not difficult. However, the recent start of Russian hotel industry has an impact on the overall labor market situation. The hotels experience a deficit of qualified professionals, especially in the regions. In that way, the hotel operators need to use as many recruitment sources as possible. Actually, the companies try to promote its existing employees, but if there is

no appropriate worker, the hoteliers use a set of various advertisements such as television, newspapers, recruiting agencies, job fairs, radio, the Internet, etc. The most popular recruitment source is advertisement on special websites and social media.

The selection process in the hotels is much longer in comparison with other organizations. The management has to be sure that the candidates meet the requirements of the hotel. Nowadays, the HR faces to the problem of recruitment the employees, which have all the stated claims. That is why the hotels need to train and develop the staff to the necessary level of service.

However, trainings are also serving as one of the most effective strategies of retention. Based on the theoretical studies, there are a lot of reasons why the employees try to leave the companies in the hotel industry such as the low wages, a low level of motivation, a lack of opportunities for growth, an inconvenient location, a non-flexible working schedule, etc. Anyway, such method as job enlargement might make the job performance more meaningful and interesting for the employees by providing more independence in order to determine the working methods of staff and by giving a regular feedback of employment performance. It will contribute to increased productivity, motivation and retention level.

Trainings and development practices could give the opportunity to climb career ladder. There are different types of trainings. Coaching, role playing, and orientation seminars – these practices will improve the skills of staff and increase the level of services. At the same time, management learning courses, cross-trainings, leadership seminars will reveal the potential leaders whilst retraining is needed to maintain the best quality of service. All in all, the trainings do not only improve the competencies of personnel, it increases the aspiration for self-development of staff. Thus, the hotels have to invest in its employees to retain the top talents.

Motivation and rewards system would help to keep the employees with the use of different bonuses, even if they are not satisfied with other conditions. Some hotels provide free lunches and accommodation, which may be the necessary condition of certain candidates.

Work-life balance principle could improve the working schedule of personnel, because the hotels always work roundly, hence, some employees should work on the weekends, on holidays, at nights, etc. The workers need to have a sense of existing work-life

balance to effectively perform their duties, to provide the best quality of service and feel that they have the personal life for other plans.

Lastly, the effective supervisors are needed to properly organize the work, to resolve the conflicts within the team and with the guests, to support, to listen and communicate with employees. When the workers feel that they are motivated, appreciated, recognized, valued, encouraged and supported, they will retain with the company as long as possible.

5 RESEARCH

This chapter will explain the research methods that have been implemented in this thesis. In particular, the type of data, the different primary and secondary sources and the processes of interviews will be described. Moreover, the limitations of the study will be defined as well.

5.1 Research methodology

Primary sources

According to the objectives, a qualitative research has been chosen as a preferred method of this study:

«The qualitative approach to gathering information focuses on describing a phenomenon in a deep comprehensive manner.» (Rhodes 2011).

Qualitative research is used to reveal the valuable insights, opinions and attitudes of the topic (Wyse 2011). On the one hand, the advantage of qualitative approach is that it allows the researcher to conduct studies about relevant topic using everyday words (Yin 2016, 6.) On the other hand, this method can not summarize the general population and provides the difficulties in evaluating the relations between needed characteristics (Rhodes 2011). However, this method was chosen because it provides deeper understanding of the topic by receiving insights of the problem.

One of the most effective tools of qualitative research is in-depth interview (IDI). In-depth interview is considered as an individual interview with a single respondent that enables the researcher to collect the detailed information (Dawson 2002, 28.) The semi-structured type of IDI has been selected in this research because this method allows developing ideas to get specific information in comparison with the data gathered from other interviews.

The main point was to ask the questions about the HR situation of the case company, the steps of recruitment and selection, the main HR problems and ideas of possible improvements. IDI helped to reveal all the needed HR issues through open-ended questions to receive more descriptive answers. Consequently, this paper reflects on the

three major interviews with the employees of the case company. They provide an overall HR situation of the target organization with a particular focus on the challenges and effective ways of recruiting, selecting and retention of hotel's staff.

However, the author was going to conduct the quantitative study to gather the opinions of a larger number of case company's employees concerning the hiring and retention practices. Quantitative research is the numerical study, which is analyzed by the statistical tools to indicate the general characteristics of the topic (Rhodes 2014). Nevertheless, the target organization did not give the permission for conducting a survey. That is why the writer had an opportunity to gather the data only from the qualitative research and theoretical studies.

Secondary sources

The main goal of this thesis was to collect and analyze the relevant information about the recruitment, selection and retention practices in the Russian hotel industry. That is why the most of the data presented in this paper has been collected from secondary sources. According to Sapsford & Jupp (2006, 142), the secondary research copies, interprets, summarizes, discusses or judges the research topic that has been already investigated by someone else in the past. This type of data is easily accessible but it may contain inaccurate or incomplete information (Hamilton 2005, 8).

There are a lot of useful studies and researches, which helped to expand the topic. Therefore, the theoretical part of this thesis consists of the secondary data collected from the various HR books, articles published by the World Tourism Organization, websites and Savonia library sources.

5.2 Data collection

To begin with, the interview questions were not provided to the respondents prior to the date of interview, which involved twelve open-ended questions with the purpose of collecting the most accurate and detailed information.

The first face-to-face interview was accomplished with the HR director of the case company during internship. The second interview was conducted in person with the HR manager of the hotel and the last interview was carried out via e-mail with the HR specialist of Swissotel. The personal interviews were recorded in order to transcribe the

results word by word. The entire process of research took over the period of six months to ensure the most consistent results.

5.3 Data analysis

To properly analyze the collected information, the author classified data by reading through the entire transcript and making brief notes to highlight the essential features; grouping all responses into different categories; examining each group in details; comparing the results and making conclusions based on the analyzed findings. Hence, the empirical research helped to introduce the case company and its services to the reader, to evaluate the overall HR situation and develop the suggestions for improvements.

5.4 Limitations

Importantly, the empirical research was time limited; because of that the findings were affected by the social trends and the condition of economy during that period. Moreover, in terms of the constant development of tourism and hospitality industry, the information provided in this paper would not be relevant in time. However, due to the fact that the data presented in chapter 3 and 4 is on the theoretical basis, the obtained information could be considered as pertinent.

6 FINDINGS

6.1 The current HR situation in the case company

6.1.1 The main goal of Human Resource

The results of the interviews concerning on the current HR situation in the target company have indicated that *«Human Resources are not just working with the documents but at the same time maintaining an overall mood within the team of Swissotel. We are working in the field of hospitality, that is why the HR department should "set the pace" of behavior of other employees.»*

Olga Kuzovihina, the HR manager of Swissotel, states that the main goal of Human Resources is *«attracting a qualified specialist, in which the company needs at the moment, taking into account the candidate's opinion, the experience and wishes when choosing a job.»*

«The main goal is to ensure the operations of the hotel at the highest level by selecting the most qualified staff and develop a motivation system of the existing employees.»

«The HR department is working together with other departments of the hotel to achieve the company's goals by attracting of suitable employees.»

Based on the data gathered from all interviews, the main point is that the HR has to recruit and select the most appropriate employees. That is why the next subchapter is especially important.

6.1.2 The recruitment and selection of employees

Julia Kopylova, the HR director, has described the recruitment and selection process at Swissotel. The hiring process begins with the placement of a vacant position at the different sources: internal – through the informational boards and intranet; and external – through the social media, outsourcing agencies, universities and colleges, television and special websites such as HeadHunter and Superjob.

The selection process consists of several steps: the first stage is a primary examination of the candidate's resume followed by a phone interview and interview with a representative of the HR department; the next step is an interview with a head of

department; finally, the concluding part is the corporate competence test for all potential candidates.

The results of other interviews have characterized the same recruitment and selection process stages. Nevertheless, the second respondent added that the new employees should have an internship in one or two days, during which the HR specialists and managers directly have the opportunity to evaluate their working process. This procedure helps the HR to select the best candidates.

6.1.3 The selection criteria of the case company's employees

Anna Alhimenkova, the HR specialist of the case company, mentioned that the *«main requirements for the applicants include high professionalism, friendliness, responsibility and aspiration for self-development.»*

Julia Kopylova added to this discussion by noting that the *«main features are reflected in the company's core values: respect, decency, teamwork, responsibility. High professionalism, the work experience, the knowledge of English language are also important criteria for the selection of candidates.»*

Nonetheless, the last interview with the HR manager of Swissotel defined that the personal qualities such as sociability, politeness, pleasant appearance and aspiration for studying are the most important qualities; then looking at the qualifications according to the stated requirements.

6.2 Core HR strengths and weaknesses of the case company

The empirical research has indicated several HR weaknesses of the case company that complicate the working process and require the additional costs. The main challenges, according to the interviews are:

1. Recruitment of a qualified staff

Sochi is characterized by the inflow of a large number of unskilled workers in the summer season. The situation with the labor market in the hotel industry is very difficult and it is getting worse with the years, because young people are not willing to study for the working specialties such as cooks, maids or waiters. At the same time, the professional specialists do not keep up with the new technology, the new trends and it is

more difficult for them to adapt to the working process. This situation is called a «staff shortage».

2. «Seasonal problem» of recruitment

Based on the interviews, the important HR weakness of the hotel is the hiring process before the «season», which means that Swissotel needs a large amount of various employees during the period from April to October. The hotel experiences the increased demand in the operations of all departments. In terms of this reason, the HR needs to find the workers that will provide the best quality of service to the hotel's guests in the shortest period of time.

3. Specific vacancies

Due to the interviews' responses, the case company needs some highly specialized professionals, for instance, a fitter for ventilation and air conditioning on a technical industrial scale. As was mentioned before, Sochi has the poor condition of workforce and the young generation does not express a desire to study such complicated subjects. *«Even if the qualified specialists in such specific fields are searching for a job, the competitors try to attract them faster.»* Hence, considering the «seasonal problem» in conjunction with the poor labor market situation, the challenge of recruitment of specific specialists is the burning issue for the HR.

4. The selection process

Based on the interviews' responses, the selection process is a complex and difficult HR procedure. This is the energy-consuming process that requires a lot of time, special skills and training. The unsuccessful choice makes the HR specialist to repeat all the procedures again: starting from the placement of vacancy, searching for the candidates, reviewing the resumes, conducting the interviews, etc. Moreover, the selection process in the case company is long and difficult process that requires a lot of time and different stages to evaluate the candidate. The case company needs to improve its selection practices to avoid any mistakes or failed choices.

5. Retention

The retention of top talents is the essential aspect to consider because the staff costs make up a huge share of current spending of the case company. *«When the valued*

employee is leaving the hotel, it takes a lot of time and money to find and train a new worker.» That is why the problem of retention should be considered in more details.

However, the interviews confirmed that the level of motivation and supervision is high enough at the case company. The management is implementing the different types of motivation: monetary rewards such as bonuses, high wages and various payments; non-monetary compensation – the presence of corporate culture, the insurance and free lunches. At the same time, the supervisors and managers tend to give the positive and negative feedback about the employees' performance on a regular basis; *«if the employee is going to leave the hotel, we always try to find out the reason for quitting by communicating with this employee and his or her colleagues. This helps us to assess the situation from all the sides and, if possible, to keep a good employee.»*

In addition, the case company provides several development programs for employees and their leadership skills at Swissotel. For example, the SUMMIT program is aimed at developing the potential leaders in various areas of the hotel. There are three types of programs: aspiring leader, high potential leader and future EXCOM. Each participant of the program takes a course of training, participates in the seminars, the conference calls and receives a certificate of learning course along with the opportunity to climb the career ladder.

Summarizing all interviews' responses, the empirical study has revealed that the HR strategy of the case company has its strengths and weaknesses, which require several improvements to retain the most professional, loyal and valued employees.

6.3 Suggestions for improvements at Swissotel

The empirical part of the research has discovered several HR weaknesses of the recruitment, selection and retention strategies of the case company. The conducted interviews with the employees of the target organization highlighted the possible solutions, which could help to improve the current HR methods and increase HR effectiveness.

1) Recruitment of a qualified staff

The recruitment of a qualified staff is the important problem because the case company specializes in providing the guests with the excellent level of service. Based on the empirical research, Swissotel has joined the international brand «Accor», which gives

the opportunity to attract the qualified employees around the world using such interview techniques as phone or video calling to reach the candidates that are not local.

According to the conducted interviews, another way is to train the employees to the degree required by the established standards. *«If the managers hired the worker that was not professional as expected and time did not allow recruiting a new person, we would train the employee to the needed level.»*

2) «Seasonal problem» of recruitment

Considering the interviewee's responses, the problem of «seasonality» is especially relevant as the HR department has to hire a large amount of qualified staff in the shortest period of time from year to year. According to the research, *«we need to attract more interns in the summer season as an additional help. This method helps us to reveal the potential employees that are responsible, ambitious and talented to work in the five-star hotel. Moreover, this is a cost-effective technique of staff recruitment because trainees basically work for free.»*

The respondents noted that the target company may use the services of outsourcing firms, which specialize particularly in the recruitment of people obtaining the working professions such as waiters, maids, cooks, security guards, or loaders. These organizations will make the recruitment process before the season much easier.

Furthermore, it has to be mentioned that the recruitment process should be started 1-2 months before «the season» in order to have time to train the employees. *«To maintain and improve our service standards, it is necessary to conduct the regular trainings and attestation of staff.»*

3) Specific vacancies

The recruitment of specific professionals is one of the most challenging tasks for the HR manager of the case company. The empirical study proposed that if the recruitment on the local labor market did not yield the results, the hiring managers would use the regional search tool. This method includes *«monitoring of the regional labor markets by viewing the analytical reports, the professional forums, the websites of universities, job sites such as HeadHunter and SuperJob and social networks to find the appropriate specific candidate.»*

4) The selection process

The respondents noted that it is necessary to consider «the all sides» of a candidate. *«It is important to reveal how the applicant behaves and what he or she says.»* In addition, a good method of selection is gathering information from other sources such as the recommendations of previous employers and checking the pages in the social networks of future candidates as Facebook, Instagram or Twitter.»

5) Retention

The retention is the most serious challenge at the case company. This problem is directly connected with the recruitment and selection practices because if the valued employee leaves the hotel, it is hard to attract a new person with the same high-level qualifications. The HR manager of Swissotel needs to consider trainings as one of the major methods of retention. *«Trainings may affect the loyalty of employees in a positive way.»*

There are many different types of trainings that will help Swissotel to improve the professional skills of its employees. *«It depends on the type of tasks, which are set by the organizers of trainings - if the goal is to upgrade the skills, to give the employees a new knowledge, to wake up the leadership skills in the workers that allow them to climb the career ladder, then training can be considered as a way of retaining employees.»*

According to the interviews results, the job enrichment method can be regarded as a successful tool of staff retention in the situations of non-motivational employment. *«Sometimes workers feel that their performance is not meaningful and effective as they expected. In that way, the level of motivation decreases, which could lead to the employees' retention.»*

Alongside with the job enrichment and training methods, the respondents noted that by providing the practices, that will allow employees to have a balance between their work and personal life, they can retain the valued employees. Such methods may include *«the family nurse system, the childcare leave system, offering maternity/paternity leave for new parents or asking our employees what benefit would be useful for them.»* Thus, if the Swissotel's managers support and implement this idea, the workers will be more loyal and tend to retain in the company.

6.4 Summary of findings

Considering the results of interviews, it can be stated that the main goal of HR department in the hotel of any size is to achieve the company's goals by attracting the qualified specialists, developing the motivation system of existing employees, providing the training and development practices and maintaining the overall positive mood within the team.

The recruitment and selection processes in the hotel business have almost the same steps and procedures as other industries. However, the main difference is that the selection process is longer and more complicated because of many stages of interviewing, especially for the candidates that interact with the customers. The most widespread type of interviews is one-to-one conversation with hiring manager or panel interview, which includes the presence of HR employee, a head of department and manager of this department.

The major characteristics, which are required for working in the hotel industry are: a high level of responsibility, professionalism, politeness, sociability, friendliness, stress resistance, aspiration for self-development and studying and a great desire to work in the hospitality industry. The past working experience in the hotels and knowledge of foreign languages, especially English, are also the important criteria for the employees.

Based on the research, the main challenge that the hotel business brings into the recruitment process is attracting the qualified employees before the season. A majority of hotels experience this period during the summer. A lack of qualified professionals on the Russian hospitality labor market complicates the situation. The interviews proposed several solutions that could help to resolve this problem. The HR managers need to attract the interns as an additional free workforce, use the services of recruiting agencies or outsourcing companies to hire the line personnel while providing trainings and seminars in advance.

The hotel industry assumes the problem of specific specialists. Such professions as a confectioner, a garden brigadier, a locksmith, a supervisor of housekeeping are very rare and require thorough search. The conducted research proposed using the regional search tool by checking out the universities, the professional websites or scientific reports.

Last but not least, the phenomenon of high turnover rate is closely related to the hotel business due to the constant interaction of employees with the customers. Staff turnover is one of the most common problems in the hotels, resulting from a hospitality business

feature such as seasonality. According to the results of the interviews, trainings can be considered as the main method of retention. The seminars, the lectures, the learning courses create the opportunities for development, for improvement of the skills in order to increase the loyalty of employees to the hotel.

Different monetary rewards such as bonuses, higher wages, medical care, insurance and non-monetary rewards – free meals, staff parties, various events, birthday gifts, verbal recognition and appreciation, opportunity to use the services of the hotel for free, depending on the working years and loyalty to the company; the effective management strategies and flexible working schedule serve as another methods of retention in the hotel business.

All in all, the recruitment and selection processes in the Russian hotel business is the challenging process, which requires the trained HR specialists with an experience in the hotel industry, a clear understanding what employees should be in order to provide the quality of service while trying to reveal the top talents among the candidates. There are a wide variety of sources, which would help to attract and choose the most suitable employees. After the management hired the right staff, it is definitely important to motivate, train, appreciate and encourage the team to effectively work and retain at the company as long as possible.

7 CONCLUSIONS & DISCUSSIONS

The thesis established the process of recruitment and selection step by step while indicating the methods of retaining of the most valued employees. Introducing the case company, its products and services, the core HR challenges and suggestions for the possible improvements enabled the author to answer the main research question.

The aim of this research was to gather and analyze the most relevant information about the effective tools of recruitment, selection and retention of staff. The core objective of this thesis was to develop and present the several methods of possible improvements of the current Human Resource Management practices for the case company.

The outcome of the study acknowledged that there is a common model of the recruitment and selection process, which includes the publication of a vacancy at the different sources, screening, interviewing and testing of the candidates, making the final selection decision and providing the orientation.

In the recruitment practices, it is necessary to take into account the wishes and competencies of candidates with regard to an open position. By selecting the best applicants, the managers need to consider the professional knowledge, the personal characteristics, and a similarity of interests with the immediate supervisor and a team of other employees. In addition, an important element of selection is an ability to properly evaluate the opportunities of new workers as well as to choose the candidates aimed at future success. It is essential to improve the selection procedures in order to make an objective decision when choosing the most suitable candidate and count the rights of both parties. However, each particular situation and vacancy should be analyzed in details in order to choose the most appropriate recruitment source, the assessment method and approach of the final choice. In this way, the outcome of hiring practices would be the most productive and successful.

As was mentioned in previous researches and theoretical studies, this thesis confirmed that the selection process in the hotel industry is more complicated and difficult than in other industries. The candidates, especially those who should communicate with the guests, need to have three or more stages of detailed interviewing. Moreover, the study results revealed that the turnover rate in the Russian hotel business is much higher than in other fields. The main reasons are low wages and stressful working conditions related to interaction with different guests. That is why it is important to learn how to motivate and retain the hotel staff.

It has to be concluded that the recruitment and selection processes are time- and cost-consuming, that is why the retention practices should be carefully considered and developed based on the staff needs, firm's goals and reasons of turnover. Each organization has to take care of its workers. Those companies that invest in the development of their employees are usually more successful in business.

Based on the conducted research and author's own suggestions, the main improvements for the client organization include the following:

- 1) It is recommended to attract the qualified employees from different cities or even countries using video and phone interview types or train the existing employees to the required standards in order to have the most professional specialists.
- 2) In order to be prepared for the «season», it is necessary to start the recruitment process in advance using the services of outsourcing agencies whilst attracting the interns as an additional help and potential trained specialists in the future.

However, the managers must carefully select the students by interviewing them to determine if the intern meets the hotel's standards and requirements or not. The company could provide the bonuses and an offer to continue working at the hotel on a regular basis to the best interns. This practice could serve as a motivation for the student and Swissotel will receive a trained specialist.

- 3) In order to hire the specific professionals, the case company can use the regional search tool by viewing the analytical reports, the professional forums, the websites of universities, job sites and social networks.
- 4) To make the most successful selection decision, the HR managers are recommended to consider the behavior, the competencies, the skills, the knowledge, the personal qualities, a past working experience, the recommendations from previous employers and pages in the social networks to examine the candidate from various angles.

The case company needs to implement a complex of various tools because separately they do not provide the exhaustive information about the candidate. The results obtained with the help of one method need to be supplemented with the data received from other techniques; only then the HR specialists may expect that the selected employees will fully meet the established selection criteria and organization's standards.

It is has to be noted that the HR representatives should be properly trained in order to apply the different selection techniques and make a successful choice, which will match the employee's and the company's needs.

- 5) If the staff turnover is increasing, it is important to carefully analyze the reasons of the employee's leaving, then use the different methods of retention such as the job enrichment model, the training and development practices and subsequent evaluation tool, the work-life balance procedures while maintaining the high level of motivation and management strategies.

The findings of this study will be presented to the case company for further consideration or implementation. More than that, the conducted research could be useful for the HR specialists, working in the fields of hotel, tourism and hospitality business.

Reliability and validity

Meanwhile, reliability refers to the repeatability of the results. If the study was conducted several times, the findings should be consistent and similar (Shuttleworth 2017.) The research is reliable due to the fact that the author started interviewing the respondents with the same questions on the same topic over long period of time and the obtained results were compared with other data.

Validity refers to the credibility of the study. In other words, the research can be considered valid if the results meet the requirements (Phelan & Wren 2006.) To ensure validity of the results, the respondents were clear on the nature of the investigation and the interviews' findings were confirmed by the case company.

Further research

There are a wide variety of researches and studies about the recruitment, selection and retention approaches. However, due to the fact that almost every company has the HR department operations, this is very relevant topic. In terms of the constant changes of the social trends and economy, the data gathered in this thesis paper should be updated with time and the research needs to be conducted again to discover the possible changes.

Personal & professional development

Considering the challenges occurred during the working process on this thesis, the main issue was to present the gathered information in the constant and logical way. In the beginning of the writing process, it was supposed to describe the training practices as the separate segment of the report. However, the topic was narrowed down to focus more on the hiring process of the case company. Otherwise, the study would be too broad.

Another problem was to organize the time of working. It is completely challenging to combine the thesis writing and working at the same time. Due to this reason, the author started the research process after the internship period.

In terms of the professional growth, the thesis process improved the author's academic writing, the interview conducting and data analysis skills. There is no doubt that the writer has obtained a huge experience in the HR field during the internship and research processes. The case company and the thesis supervisor actively helped to make the improvements and answered the needed questions.

Nevertheless, despite all the challenges and problems, the author is fully satisfied with the working process and results hoping that the overall thesis process and knowledge gained during the implementation will contribute to the writer's professional growth in the future career.

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APPENDIX 1

Abbreviation Glossary

<i>HR</i>	<i>Human Resource</i>
<i>HRM</i>	<i>Human Resource Management</i>
<i>IDI</i>	<i>In-Depth Interview</i>
<i>KSC</i>	<i>The Selection Criteria</i>
<i>ROI</i>	<i>Return-on-Investment</i>
<i>UNWTO</i>	<i>World Tourism Organization</i>

