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# THE IMPORTANCE OF STAFF TRAINING IN THE HOTEL INDUSTRY

--Case study: Renaissance Shanghai Yuyuan Hotel

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## **ABSTRACT**

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In any kind of business, human resources are the most powerful sources. How to attract outstanding personnel, how to make full use of employees' abilities and potentials in order to help achieve the organizational objectives are the questions that every leader should take into consideration.

Staff training is a very essential part of Human Resource Management (HRM), it is a path for the management to know about their employees, it is a way to help employees to make best use of their own abilities, and it is a method to assist employees to become more professional at what they do. With the help of HRM, business success is partly guaranteed.

The purpose of this thesis is to help every employee in the hotel industry to find out the importance of staff training.

The theoretical part introduces HRM, Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) and staff training. Topics about staff training, the importance of it, and the benefits it bring are discussed in the theory part. The empirical part consists of a research of both quantitative and qualitative methods in Renaissance Shanghai Yuyuan Hotel, 53 respondents have been participated in this research.

The research results show that the employees have not fully realized the importance of staff training, the hotel could be in a dangerous situation if employees do not take trainings seriously.

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| Keywords | Human Resource Management, Staff training, Hotel industry |
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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Staff training is chosen to be the topic of this thesis, because understanding Human Resource Management extensively in business brings unimaginable benefits and due to the author's personal interests in this subject after finishing her practical training.

Moreover, this is also a great opportunity to get to know Human Resource Management in a deeper perspective, although Staff Training is just a small part of Human Resource Management, it is really interesting to take a close look at it.

In this chapter, the background of the thesis and the aim of this thesis study will be introduced, and then the motivation will be explained, what leads the author to this study.

### **1.1 Background information**

The world is changing rapidly in everyday life. In order to be able to catch up the paces, making the best use of the personnel's abilities became of tremendous significance in the businesses, therefore Human Resource Management needs to be carefully considered and implemented. It should be able to deal with the effects of the changing world of work, which means that people who work in the Human Resources Department have to be aware of the implications of globalization, technology changes, workforce diversity, labor shortages, changing skill requirements, the contingent workforce, decentralized work sites, and employee involvement etc. Because when either one aspect of above changes in the working process, it could change the whole business operation, therefore, it is important for the Human Resource Department to be prepared and to take control. (Christina Pomoni 2009.)

Staff training is an essential and indispensable part of Human Resource Management, "the importance and value of staff training has long been recognized. Consider the popular and often repeated quotation, 'Give a person a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach a person to fish and you feed him for a lifetime'." (McClelland 2002, 7) This understandable and far-sighted saying was

from a famous ancient Chinese thinker and philosopher Confucius. This saying has explained clearly how important it is to train an employee to conquer his/her work than just give him/her a job of income. By observing today's business climate and the exponential growth in technology with its effect on the economy and society, the need for training is more pronounced than ever.

## **1.2 Aim of the study**

This thesis is going to present to the readers a thought of what is HRM, Staff Training and the importance of staff training in the hotel industry, and at the same time, a research is conducted on staff training in the case hotel where the author did the practical training, in the research opinions about staff training in the hotel from employees in different positions will be obtained, front line staff, supervisor, manager etc. In the conclusion part the author will briefly go through the whole thesis study, discuss about the research study results and according to the results got from the research study, comments and suggestions about the employees' attitude towards the staff training and how could the Human Resource Department do to improve the trainings as well as to get better results from the training will be provided.

## **1.3 Motivation of the study**

I had my practical training in a five star hotel that belongs to Marriott Hotel Group--Renaissance Shanghai Yuyuan Hotel in Shanghai, China. My job as a waitress in the western restaurant called Yu Café taught me very much and I learnt quite a lot from the training there. The trainings that I have been attended are training for the beginners, language training and 15 minutes training.

The special training program of Marriott Hotel Group which will be talked more about in the later chapter motivated me to get to know staff training more thoroughly and inspired me about how important it is in the hotel industry. The theory and practice of staff training in hotels should also be applicable to other business units within this industry.

#### **1.4 Structure of the thesis**

The thesis will be divided into theoretical part, empirical part and the conclusion. The first chapter will be the thesis general introduction part, provide readers some thoughts about the thesis and the motivation of this thesis study. In the second chapter definition of Human Resource Management will be provided, and an introduction to Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) as it is closely connected with Human Resource Management. In the third chapter, there will be information about staff training in general as well as in the hotel industry, the meaning of staff training, what is the training process, types of training, analyze the importance and benefits of it are going to be explained. And there is a short description about staff training in the international perspective.

The fourth chapter is the introduction of the case company, its facilities and services, specialties and the training system in the hotel, especially the training program—Passport to Success.

Chapter five explains the research methodology, including qualitative research, quantitative research, the paths of data collection and the validity and reliability analysis of the research. The empirical part is exhibited in chapter six, which consists of the presentation of the results and analysis of them, the display of data is done in forms of tables and charts by using SPSS. Chapter seven is the analysis of the qualitative research, their introduction, experience of the training, opinions about the trainings etc. will be discussed.

Finally in the eighth chapter is a conclusion briefly about the importance of staff training, research results and some suggestions for the improvement for the trainings of the case company and for staff training in extreme situations.

## **2. HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT**

### **2.1 Definition**

A basic and simple meaning can be seen from the name itself; 'human resources' is about people, 'management' suggests it is within the business and organizations. Human Resource Management is a complex concept; it ranges from business to business, and it differs in academic literature and practical perspective.

As Gary Dessler described "HRM is the policies and practices involved in carry out the 'people' or human resource aspects of a management position, including recruiting, screening, training, rewarding and appraising." These practices and policies include conducting job analysis, selecting suitable and required candidates, orienting new employees, plans and implementation of training and developing, managing salaries, providing employees' benefits and awards etc. (Dessler 2006, 4)

On the other hand, Steering Committee for HRM Standards & Qualifications in South Africa provided another definition for HRM in different scope and intention in 1999, "all the decisions, strategies, factors, principles, operations, practices, functions, activities and methods related to the management of people as employees in any type of organization; all the dimensions related to people in their employment relationships, and all the dynamics that flow from it; all aimed at adding value to the delivery of goods and services, as well as to the quality of work life for employees, and hence helping to ensure continuous organizational success in transformative environments." (Price 2007, 30-31)

From the definitions it is not difficult to see that HRM is a mixture of many aspects, for instance, people, business success and plenty practices. And HRM should be proactive to manage people, pragmatic to achieve practical solutions to real work problems, and also eclectic that from many theoretical and managerial traditions.

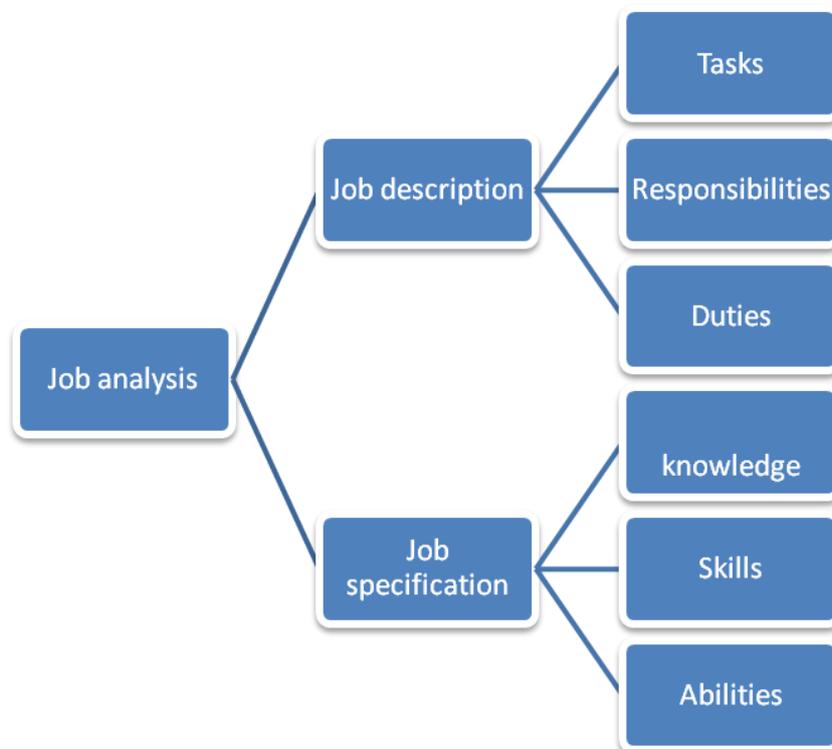
## 2.2 Roles of HRM

Managing human resources is very important in a firm, a good HRM team is organized and everyone in the team has his separate responsibilities, job analysis, recruiting, training and evaluating. (Dessler 2006, 2)

### 2.2.1 Job analysis

“Job analysis is the procedure through which you determine the duties of these jobs and the characteristics of the people who should be hired for them.” (Dessler 2006, 61)

Job analysis is the basis of all the other departmental activities. In the job analysis, HRM considers what jobs are needed, and writes the job description; clarify each job’s tasks, responsibilities and duties. As well as job specification, the person takes care of writing job specification should be clear about what kind of knowledge, skills and abilities are required in the work. (Woods 2006, 55)



**Figure 1 Job analysis (Woods 2006, 56)**

### 2.2.2 Recruiting

According to the job analysis (Figure 2), human resource staff responsible for recruiting would know how many employees to hire and what kind of people are to be hired. Recruiting can be divided into internal recruiting and external recruiting, as the name suggested, HR DEPARTMENT can hire employees from workers inside the organization (Table 1), a transfer from a branch, or any kind of promotion etc. Hiring from outside sources is called external recruiting. (Woods 2006, 99-100)

**Table 1 Internal and external recruiting sources** (Decenzo & Robbins 2007, 152-158)

| Internal sources                    | External sources                   |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Job posting                         | Advertisements                     |
| Newsletter                          | Employment agencies                |
| Employee as referral sources        | Schools, colleges and universities |
| Recommendations by current employee | Professional organizations         |
| -                                   | Online recruiting                  |

### 2.2.3 Training

After successfully and carefully chosen new employees, these employees need to be trained to be on the job, orientation will be organized in the beginning of their work, and other kinds of trainings will catch up. Since Staff training is the main

topic of this thesis work, therefore, training will be discussed more later on in the next chapter.

#### **2.2.4 Evaluating**

It is necessary to have performance appraisals for employees in a period of time; the evaluation comes out from feedback of their department's representatives, co-workers and the training process etc. The evaluation encourages and motivates them to work harder and better in the future, and also helps them to improve their skills and abilities by rewarding, compensating and more practicing. (Dessler 2006, 183)

### **2.3 Aim of HRM**

People are different from each other in many ways, they offer dissimilar skills, abilities and knowledge which will or will not fit the needs of the organization, and some of them dedicate themselves to their work, whereas some just see the work as stable income, they are under-utilized, which lead to an unbalanced situation on their performances.

The main aim of Human Resource Management is to close the gap between actual performance and the ideal requirements of a business to achieve greater organizational effectiveness and success. (Price 2007, 28)

According to Armstrong (1992, 15-16), HRM is aiming to achieve organizational objectives through utilizing, training and developing its employees. It is targeted to motivate employees, make the best use of employees' abilities and potentials in order to increase productivity and economic returns. HRM is helping the organization to create conditions for employees to innovate, team work and develop abilities as well as to establish an environment for employees to express their creativity and energy. With the assistance of HRM, individuals will relate themselves with the success of the company by performing better; HRM has the objectives to integrate human resource policies with business plans and strategies.

## **2.4 Strategic HRM**

### **2.4.1 Definition**

“Strategic Human Resource Management means formulating and executing HR systems—HR policies and practice—that produce the employee competencies and behaviors the company needs to achieve its strategic aims.” (Dessler 2006, 11)

SHRM connected human resource management and organizational strategies, by developing staff and exploiting employees’ best potential and abilities, to increase the productivity and maximize the competitiveness, so that the company can be able to face the competition and achieve its business objectives. In SHRM, the purpose of HRM is to realize the business targets. (Beardwell & Holden & Claydon 2004, 32-33)

SHRM is different from HRM in its management concept, contents and method. SHRM is advanced, because it is when human resource enters the boardroom and when Human Resource Department has the same strategies as the organization. Human resources’ advantages have been fully utilized, which ensures the success of the business activities. (Beardwell & Holden & Claydon 2004, 41)

### **2.4.2 Aim of SHRM**

“The aim of strategic human resource management is to ensure that the culture, style and structure of the organization, and the quality, commitment and motivation of its employees, contribute fully to the achievement of business objectives.” (Armstrong 1992, 47) The goal of SHRM is to relate human resources with organizational strategies, by utilize human resources to achieve organizational objectives, and adjust human resource according to the standards, such as downsizing or relocating staff to suitable positions. It also aims to train and develop employees in order to keep up their abilities and qualities in business competitions. Evaluating objectively, rewarding and motivating according to their performances are also the targets of SHRM.

### **2.4.3 Key benefits of a SHRM system**

When connect Human Resource Management with business strategies, there are some obvious benefits, therefore, it is a tendency that more and more organizations relate HRM and strategies.

Strategic Human Resource Management helps the organization to manage the human resources in a better and efficient way; it ensures every employee has the same target, which is to try to satisfy their customers and helps to release employees' full potential so that they perform better at work. SHRM focuses more about the results and the effectiveness of the human resource development, which leads to an advanced and efficient management of the human resources. SHRM system also helps to build a basis for the organizational change, for instance, to hire more employees or cut off some staff according to the periodic strategies.

(Analour 2007, 113-114)

### **3. STAFF TRAINING**

“Training is the process that provides employees with the knowledge and the skills required to operate within the systems and standards set by management.” (Sommerville 2007, 208)

“Training, in the most simplistic definition, is an activity that changes people’s behavior.” (McClelland 2002, 7)

As discussed earlier Staff Training is an indispensable part of Human Resource Management activities, more and more companies have realized how important it is to maintain training in the changing and complex work environment.

#### **3.1 Staff training in hotel industry**

In modern hotel business, it is all about competence in people, and especially the employees’ qualities. The level of service quality depends on the qualities of employees. The qualities are about knowledge, skills and thoughts which lead to a hotel’s survival and development. Therefore, staff training is essential in many ways; it increases productivity while employees are armed with professional knowledge, experienced skills and valid thoughts; staff training also motivates and inspires workers by providing employees all needed information in work as well as help them to recognize how important their jobs are. (Yafang Wang 2008.)

Training and development can be seen as a key instrument in the implementation of HRM practices and policies. (Nickson 2007, 154-155) Successful hotels always include staff training as their important development strategy.

#### **3.2 The importance of staff training**

Staff training is a significant part as well as the key function of Human Resource Management and Development; it is the crucial path of motivating employees and increasing productivity in the business. (McClelland 2002, 7)

With the development of the technologies and the whole business environment, employees are requested to be more skilled and qualified, even if you are a good

employee today, you could be out of the line some other day if you do not keep studying. A company needs organized staff training if wants to be competitive among others. (Yafang Wang 2008.)

Staff training is the key task to help everyone in the company to be more united. An enterprise could hire experienced employees or train employees to be skilled. When the company trains their own staff, by providing and forming a harmonious atmosphere, accurate work specification and the passion of work, team spirit will be built between employees and management team within the process. (Train01 2009.)

Training of work tasks is one of the main aspects of staff training, including principles at work, professional knowledge and skills, by offering employees these essentials, staff training helps personal abilities match with business requirements. (Train01 2009.)

Training could be enormously demanding and should be in-depth; lack of training or poor training brings out high employee turnover and the delivery of substandard products and services. (Sommerville 2007, 208)

### **3.3 Benefits of staff training**

Staff training enhances the capabilities of employees and strengthens their competitive advantage. Effective training will improve the personal characters and professional abilities. Not only employees, management and organization would benefit from staff training, customers and guests benefit as well, because of the received quality products and services. (Sommerville 2007, 210)

#### **3.3.1 Benefits the employee**

- Increases job satisfaction and recognition

During the training, employees will be introduced what is the work is about, how to do, what kind of role does the job play in the whole business, it helps them to understand their work better and also love what they do by understanding the work.

- Encourages self-development and self-confidence

After systemized training, employees will understand what important role their jobs play, and with the information, knowledge and experiences obtained during the training, they will be more confident with their work, so that better services will be provided.

- Moves employee closer to personal goals

Employees gained not only professional knowledge and skills during training, training also broadens their choices on setting career targets. They can get the opportunity to get to know other positions, increases the possibilities of promotions in the meantime.

- Helps the employee become an effective problem solver

Practical experience can be taught and guided in the training; employees will learn the methods of solving problem or complaints during training.

- Allows the employee to become productive more quickly

By training, employees get familiar with their work tasks, advanced knowledge and techniques which improve their capabilities, increases productivity.

### **3.3.2 Benefits the management**

- Aids in evaluating employee performance

People who are responsible for training will find out those employees during training, who are quick learners, who have better knowledge and skills, so that different methods of training can be chosen, therefore, better results will be acquired.

- Aids in sustaining systems and standards

Within the training, employees will be introduced to the principles and standards of the hotel, together with the policies and procedures; hence hotel can sustain its standards and system with the help of training.

- Helps identify employees for promotions or transfers

During the training, employees' abilities and personalities will be easily identified by experienced trainers, or some employees are more suitable for other positions, hotels can adjust and make best use of employees' knowledge and abilities.

### **3.3.3 Benefits the organization**

- Leads to improved profitability

Owing to the growth of productivity and better services after training, it is more promised for the hotel to have more profits in return.

- Reduces accidents and safety violations

Without organized training and guidance, especially employees who work with dangerous facilities, accidents are easily occurred, training can help organizations to prevent accidents.

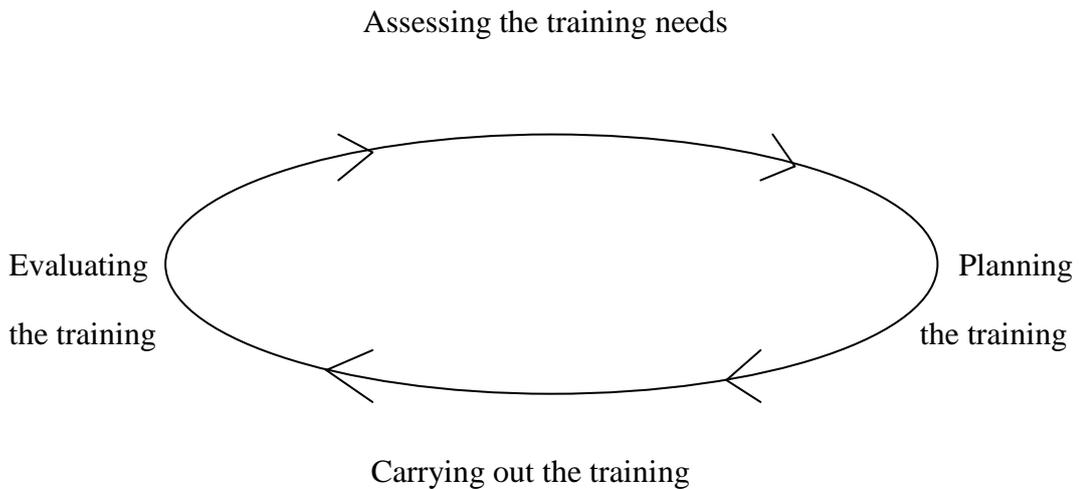
- Aids in organizational development

Hotels need to develop their technologies and way of working in order to be competitive, and staff training assures the competitiveness, because training will bring good quality, effectiveness and loyal customers to the hotels.

- Reduces wastage and costly employee turnover

Wastage and damages in different departments are commonly found out in hotel operation, with the help of staff training; unnecessary wastage and damages can be avoided. Regular trainings can decrease work pressures and employee turnover, as a result, less labor cost will be spent and better service can be achieved. (Sommerville 2007, 210)

### 3.4 The Training process



**Figure 2 Training Cycle (Stredwick 2002: 117)**

The training cycle (Figure 2) is circular; it begins with the needs assessment. A need of training always results from the difference between an ideal expect for employees' performances and the actual performances. Trainings can also be provided for new employees to help them get familiar with the work environment and tasks etc. HR department should consider the related aspects for example job analysis, performance objectives etc.

The second step in the training cycle is the planning of the training. Planning is separated into specifying training objectives, designing training program, selecting training methods. Training goals, training method, duration, program structure, location and selection of trainees etc. practical problems are to be answered in the planning stage.

After successfully planning the training, then the training program should be effectively carried out following the plan. The trainer should be well prepared and skillful, and the trainees should be actively participating in the training.

Evaluation of the training is an unavoidable stage in the training process, to get the feedback helps adjusting and organizing future trainings. Plans for future training can be done in this stage. Evaluation is the ending stage of a training

cycle but at the same time it is the basis for the new training cycle. (Woods 2006, 188-189 & Nickson 2007, 158-164)

### **3.5 Types of staff training**

#### **3.5.1 Sort by training objects**

Training is differed by disparate groups, one is the top management group, the second group is supervisory management, and the third group is front line employees who participate in operations and providing services.

As for the top management group, including general manager, directors, managers and assistant managers of every department, they take care of making decisions. The training should be about building proper economic views, marketing, forming sales strategy, budgeting and cost controlling etc. Supervisory management group is the supportive team in the organization, such as supervisors, team leaders etc. they should be trained about management concept and ability, professional knowledge, customer services and how to deal with guests requests and complaints etc. practical information. Front line staff helps hotel's actual operation; training for them should be focused on professional knowledge, technical competencies and working attitudes to improve their abilities.

#### **3.5.2 Sort by training location**

According to the location that trainings take place, trainings are separated into in-house training, on-the-job training and outside training.

In-house training is organized by the Human Resource department, using hotel facilities such as the training room, staff canteen. On-the-job training is usually held by each department; supervisors, team leaders and trainers are responsible for this kind of training, experienced worker or trainer trains the employee. (Dessler 2006, 157) Outside training refers to training which is held outside the hotel. Trainees attend seminars and conferences, participate in training program organized outside the hotel, or go abroad to other sister hotels for training.

### 3.5.3 Sort by training contents

Trainings are held for different purposes, some are organized to help new employees to get to know the hotel, some are for improving employees' professional skills, therefore, the trainings can be divided by their contents:

- Apprenticeship training

To introduce hotel general information and basic skills needed at work to new workers. This training helps building up good relationships between employees themselves and as well as between employees and management team. Moreover, it helps employees to set up the right attitude towards work.

- Certification training

After this kind of training, employees get professional certificate on practical or theoretical tests. It aims to improve employees' skills and motivates them when they pass the tests.

- Simulation training

Practical training is held with the help of Human Resource Department, aiming to improve methods of working and increase work effectiveness by simulating the real workplace. This training is in existence in everyday work, therefore it is long-term. In order to have good results from this training, department heads play very important roles by using proper training skills.

- On-the-job training

Employees' professional quality is the key of hotel services, the rules and principles of work are taught in this kind of training, besides, courtesy, manners and techniques of handling interpersonal relations are taught as well. This kind of training aims to train employees to learn the best way to do the work in the most quickly and effective way.

- Language training

Hotel employees are required to be able to speak one or two foreign languages, for different departments, different work categories or different positions, language requirements also differ. English as an international used language, every staff needs to be familiar with. Another language is required or to be trained depending on the location of the hotel.

- Hotel services and administration training

This training is more focused on a specific subject according to the request of improving administration and services, including telephone techniques, guest relations, sales skills, public relations general information and application, safety and first-aid etc.

- Cross training

To ensure the communication among departments and increase the ability of adjusting to distinguished environments, cross training is used to assist employees to receive knowledge and skills from other departments.

(Walker 2007, 597-598)

### **3.6 Staff Training in an international perspective**

As hotel business is often on an international level, so that Staff training should also be internationalized. Cross-culture training needed to be taken into consideration when planning and designing trainings. Language training became especially important in international staff training. (Nickson 2007, 27-33)

Staff Training in International HRM (IHRM) is through various methods, attending courses and lectures in different schools or training centers, by using materials like readings, recordings, movies etc. to assist trainings. Since culture is a key factor in IHRM, therefore, culture topic is treated more seriously and carefully, employees should be trained well to deal with possible cultural misunderstandings or even conflicts. Practical information should be provided during the training, role play, simulations, and meetings with foreign employees will help the trainees to understand better. (Decenzo & Robbins 2007, 221)

## **4. INTRODUCTION OF THE CASE COMPANY**

Marriott International, Inc. was founded in 1927 in Washington D.C by J. Willard Marriott. The small catering family business was called Hot-shoppe, Mr. Marriott and his wife started by selling root beers. In 1957, the first hotel of Marriott International, Inc. Twin Bridges motor hotel was opened in Arlington, Virginia. Marriott hotels now have 18 different brands, JW Marriott, Marriott, Renaissance, Ritz-Carlton, Courtyard etc. in over 68 countries, in total about 3,150 lodging properties. The first international hotel of Marriott International, Inc. was 1969 in Acapulco, Mexico, and its first international hotel in Europe was 1975 in Amsterdam, Holland. (Marriott 2009.)

Renaissance Shanghai Yuyuan Hotel was opened on 27<sup>th</sup>, September, 2007. This hotel is mainly for business customers, but the designs and business idea still concern about the people with young thoughts. Renaissance Shanghai Yuyuan Hotel has its central location in Shanghai. It is about 15 minutes walking from the main business avenue Huai hai Road and Nan jing Road. It is 6Km from the railway station and 16Km from the nearest airport -- Hongqiao Airport. Renaissance Shanghai Yuyuan Hotel is located closely to a lot of famous sightseeings of Shanghai, Yu Garden, Chenghuang Temple, People's Square, Huai hai Road, Nan jing Road etc. (Marriott 2009.)

### **4.1 Hotel services and facilities**

There are 22 floors in the hotel, in total 323 rooms and in which 13 are suites. Various kinds of services and facilities are available in the hotel, on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor; there are Yu gourmet in which sells exquisite cakes, chocolates, hotel special champagnes, different wines and daily used products--shampoo, lotion, under wears etc. and Easy reception and Concierge are also located there to provide guests simple guidance and suggestions.

China Bistro, business center, banquet rooms and conference rooms (Appendix 4) can be found on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor. In China Bistro, you can taste all kinds of Chinese food. Chinese food has different styles due to different food regions, and at here

you can have them all. Business Center provides on-line services such as checking and booking flights or train, bus tickets. Also you can have private phone call and faxing, copying here.

There are several banquet rooms on this floor; the main one can hold more than 350 people, some guests have their wedding and birthday party here, companies would set their celebrate parties and cocktail parties here as well, and East and West Garden are small-scale banquet rooms, they can be conference rooms as well. The hotel also has some other private conference rooms on the rooms' floors.

The 4<sup>th</sup> floor is a main floor in Renaissance Shanghai Yuyuan Hotel. There are the main reception, lobby (Appendix 4), lobby bar, and Yu Garden Caf —the western restaurant. Lobby is in the middle of Reception and Yu Bar, you can have a rest in the bar whenever from 10 a.m to 1 a.m, and various drinks can be chosen from the beverage list.

Yu Garden Caf  sells many kinds of western food both by buffet and a la carte menu. Here every guest can have their breakfast from 6.30 a.m to 11 a.m, breakfast is on buffet, a la carte menu is also available for special desires. Lunch is from 11.30 a.m to 5 p.m, normally just sell a la carte food, buffet and group dinners can also be arranged according to reservations.

From 5-20<sup>th</sup> floors are where the rooms (Appendix 4) located, 17-20<sup>th</sup> floor are club floors. The top two floors are for the well designed spa, gym and the special window swimming pool (Appendix 4), in conditions of good views as well as relaxations.

(Marriott 2009.)

## **4.2 Hotel specialties**

The hotel offers pretty welcome sweets on the front desk, when every guest comes to the reception; the front office staff let him/her take the sweets, which brings customers great first impressions and good moods when leaving the hotel.

DTS—Delighted to service, which is the reservation center of Renaissance Shanghai Yuyuan Hotel, the specialty of DTS is that when staff deliver things to room, they use a special basket.

The morning call in this hotel is also different from normal ones, normal morning calls ask a guest to wake up, the morning call here is demonstrated by telling about the local weather, local news, but not one word about get up. When you get bored with the news and weather, you will be awake.

In the bar, guests can use special gambling tool him/herself to decide which cocktail he/she will get. It is a small cube with six sides, each side represent one kind of cocktail, his/her drink will be chosen when he/she throw the little cube.

Large banquets or conferences holders are given a small golden pineapple medal to put on their shirts by the hotel, so that every staff knows their identity, they will be taken good care.

### **4.3 The Training System**

In Renaissance Shanghai Yuyuan Hotel there are various kinds of trainings, 15 minutes training in each department, which is about discussing different topics each day, like cleaning table procedure, beverage knowledge, and greeting customers etc. English training is organized once a week, speaking, reading and listening are trained and practiced there, and mostly the topics are about hotel work, at the same time, role play is part of English training. And there are some department trainings and organizational trainings for leaders, supervisors and managers.

Marriott Hotel Group has its own training program, called passport to success, in total 8 levels, from the first level—Level 1 which is about getting to know the fundamentals of Hospitality and Services, understanding Marriott history, culture and service spirit. From Level 2 on, employees will be tested about their knowledge of hotel services and safety issues. With the length of work grows, the tests will be more detailed and knowledge about other departments will be covered. For example, level 2 tests about hotel general knowledge and safety

concerns; it is a review of the first level training and it helps to know the training results from level 1. Level 5 is about the basics and standards for food and beverage services in rooms. The longer you stayed in the hotel, the higher level you have to complete. And the passport of accomplished trainings is recognized in all Marriott hotels.

The training program helps to improve employees' abilities and quality in a continuous way, bring them professional knowledge and prepare them for future challenges.

(SKNVibes business 2006.)

## **5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

In this chapter, research methods will be introduced, the research methods of this thesis will be discussed, how the data is collected, the contents of the research will also be talked about in this chapter. In the final part there will be a validity and reliability analysis.

### **5.1 Research Methods**

There are two kinds of research methods, qualitative research and quantitative research, in the empirical part of this thesis; both of the research methods are used. Quantitative research was done by sending questionnaires to the employees to the Food & Beverage department employees; and qualitative research—personal interviews with the Assistant Human Resource Manager, Training Manager and supervisor of the western restaurant.

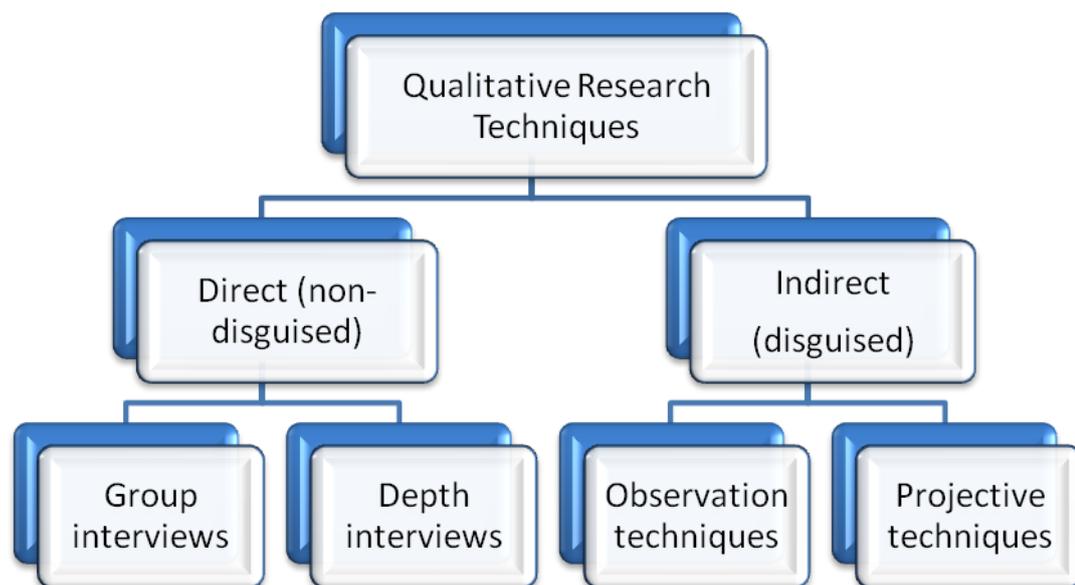
#### **5.1.1 Quantitative Research**

“Quantitative research allows the researcher to familiarize him/herself with the problem or concept to be studied, and perhaps generate hypotheses to be tested.” (Golafshani 2003, 597) Quantitative research seeks to quantify the collected data for analyzing, and find a final course of the action. It is based on statistics, the objects are large number of respondents and it is structured. In this thesis quantitative method is used to gather the information from the employees of F&B department about their attitudes towards the hotel’s staff training. With the help of quantitative research method, it is easy to have a clear and scientific view on the opinions by having them on questionnaires and analyze with SPSS, and to interview one or some of the employees about their thoughts does not present all employees’ opinions; moreover, it is not possible to interview every employee individually.

#### **5.1.2 Qualitative Research**

“Qualitative research forms a major role in supporting marketing decision-making, primarily as an exploratory design but also as a descriptive design.” (Malhotra &

Birks 2003, 131) Meaning that by using qualitative research, “why” instead of “how” will be found out. Qualitative Research focuses on developing an initial understanding out of the research, and it is not based on statistics. Qualitative can be used alone or to support quantitative research. For this thesis, in order to get a better understanding of the training system, the trainings’ general information and their effects etc. the author used the depth interview (Figure 3) to support the quantitative research.



**Figure 3 Qualitative Research Techniques (Malhotra & Birks 2003, 158)**

## 5.2 Data Collection

The data of this study is the primary data coming from the survey (appendix 2) and the interviews (appendix 3).

All the employees in Food & Beverage department are the sample group of this study, the questionnaire designed is about the staff training system in the chosen hotel. The questions on the questionnaire can be divided into two parts, the first part is about the respondent’s basic information, their gender, age, previous hospitality education, previous hotel working experience etc. and the second part is about the training they had in the hotel, how they felt about the training, and

what opinions they have about the training system, how do they realize the importance of the organized training. The total collecting time was two weeks from 10.08.2009 till 25.08.2009, because questionnaires were handed and returned to the author through e-mail, it took more time than expected to get all answers. There are 76 questionnaires sent out to the Food and Beverage department including Chinese restaurant, western restaurant, kitchens, banquet, bar and pastry, 53 were answered. The response rate is 69.7%.

The interview questions were designed before the interviews took place, the questions can be grouped into three sections, the first section is about interviewees' background information, positions, work experience and work tasks etc.; the second section is about purposes and goals of the training programs in the case hotel; the third section focuses on the improvements of the training programs. The interviews were done through telephone, individually with the Assistant Manager from Human Resource department, Training Manager and the original supervisor of the western restaurant. They are specialists of staff training, and their opinions represent different views from different positions. The interviews were done on different dates, which are 16 Aug, 2009 with Assistant Human Resource Manager and Training Manager, 29 Aug, 2009 with the supervisor. Interviews were originally done in Chinese.

### **5.3 Validity and Reliability analysis**

Reliability is the consistency of the measurement; the results will not change every time when testing in the same way with the same subject. "A measure is considered reliable if a person's score on the same test given twice is similar." (Web Center for Social Research Methods 1997.) Reliability can not be measured only can be estimated.

Validity suggests that if the measure measures what it supposed to analyze. In short, validity is about the accuracy of the measurement. It is vital for a test to be valid in order for the results to be accurately applied and interpreted. Validity isn't determined by a single statistic, but by a body of research that demonstrates the

relationship between the test and the behavior it is intended to measure. (Golafshani 2003, 599 & 602)

In this thesis, the questions are designed generalized and suitable for the employees from F&B department, with the support of the personal interviews, all the interviewees are experienced and skillful, makes the results reliable. The sample group is narrowed down to the F&B department before the research which helps the author to analyze, because if the respondent group as designed originally all the staff of the hotel, the author will not get the same response rate as now. And SPSS program is used to analyze the results, frequency and percentages tables are used to show direct and understandable analysis which increases the reliability of the results. The results of the thesis will be sent to the HR department of the hotel, they will keep it as a reference in their future Human Resource Development activities.

## 6. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS OF THE SURVEY

### 6.1 Employees' background Information

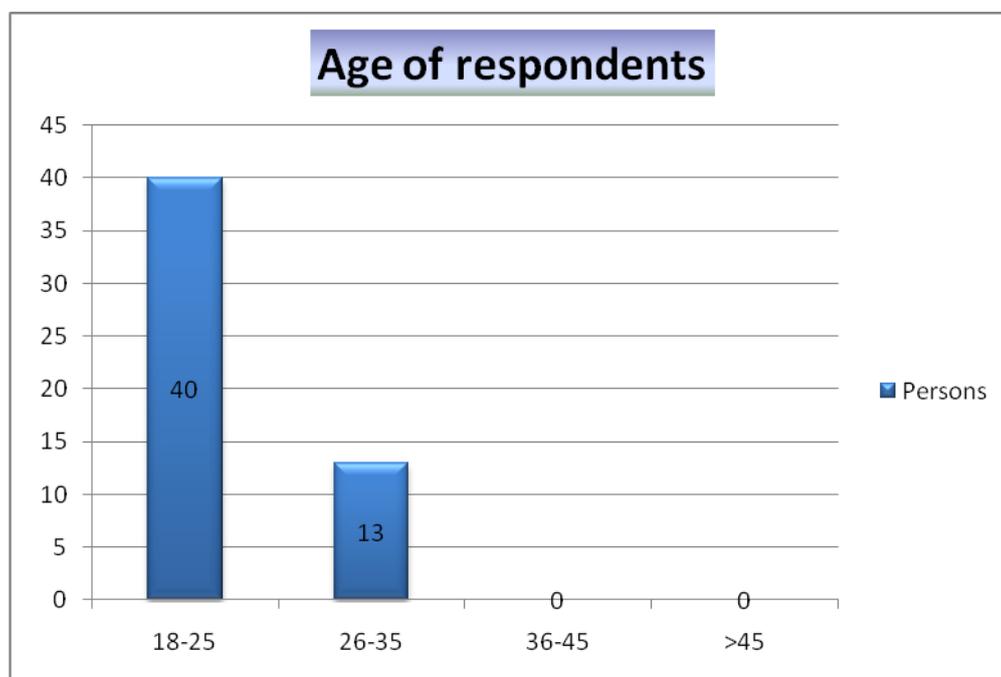
Displayed below are the results and analysis from the quantitative research, from the statistics we would see the basic information of the employees and their attitudes towards the trainings organized in Renaissance Shanghai Yuyuan Hotel.

#### Gender

76 questionnaires were sent out, and 53 of them have been returned by the respondents, there are 32 male respondents and 21 female respondents accordingly. The ratio of male to female is approximately 3:2. In the Food and Beverage department, Chinese kitchen and Western kitchen have mainly male at work, which is the reason of the difference in gender.

#### Age

The second question is to get to know about employees' age so that some relationship between age group and trainings can be found.



**Figure 4 Age of the respondents**

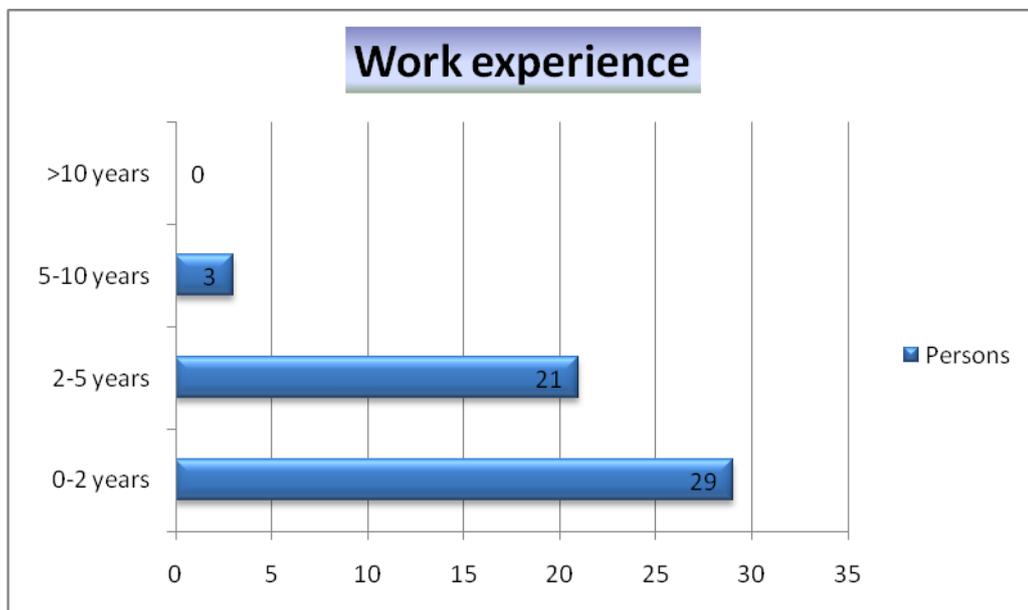
Figure 4 shows that the main age group in Food and Beverage department is between 18 and 25; the rest 13 respondents are in the age of 26 to 35.

Since hotel and restaurant business stands in a competitive and fast changing environment, ‘young employees from 18 to 35 are mostly chosen to work in this industry as they can adjust to new environments quickly and easily.

The HR department should consider the age groups when conducting a training, young workers do not like theory too much but more interesting information is accepted by them, on the other hand, employees who are between 26 and 35 years old can accept both. By considering this aspect, the effectiveness of trainings could be improved.

### **Work experience**

This question is to find out employees’ previous related working experience in the industry, the purpose of this question is to investigate the need of training according to their related working experience. The results can be seen in figure 5 below.



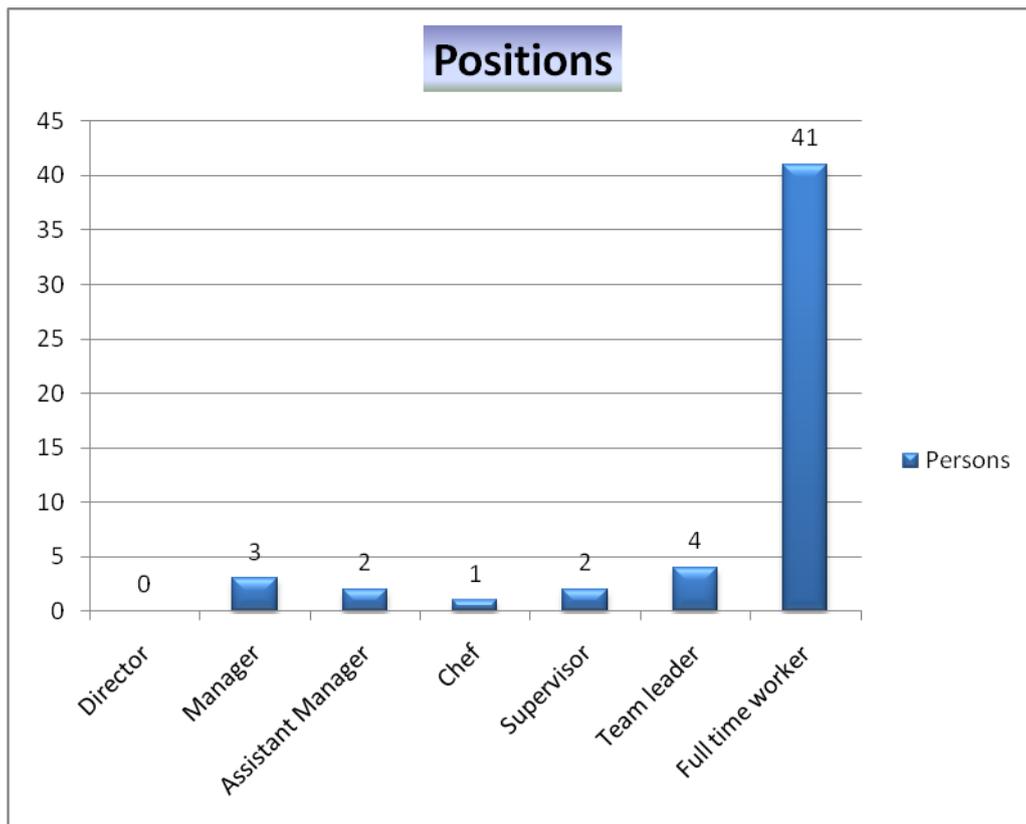
**Figure 5 Employees’ previous related working experience**

Three out of four categories were chosen by the respondents, more than half of the respondents have 0 to 2 years of related working experience, which indicates that they need more training to be more skillful and professional than other respondents do, because they are less experienced and other respondents have received more training throughout their past working life.

### Positions

This question is to check the respondents' positions in the hotel in order to understand the level of their received trainings during their years of working.

The positions like manager, assistant manager, supervisor etc. are listed in the answers and positions like waitress, bartender, sous chef etc. are adjusted into the choice of "full time worker" when analyzing.



**Figure 6 Employees' positions**

As we can see from Figure 6 the main position group in F&B department is "full time workers", the other 9 respondents belong to higher level of positions.

Employees are at higher level of positions received more training than full time worker did, more attention should be paid to full time workers because they need to have more trainings to improve their abilities and skills at work in order to reach a higher level of position.

**Table 2 Positions and work experience**

**Q3 \* Q5 Crosstabulation**

| Count |            | Q5      |                   |            |             |                  | Total |
|-------|------------|---------|-------------------|------------|-------------|------------------|-------|
|       |            | Manager | Assistant Manager | Supervisor | Team leader | Full time worker |       |
| Q3    | 0-2 years  |         |                   |            | 1           | 28               | 29    |
|       | 2-5 years  | 3       | 2                 |            | 3           | 13               | 21    |
|       | 5-10 years |         |                   | 2          |             | 1                | 3     |
| Total |            | 3       | 2                 | 2          | 4           | 42               | 53    |

When analyzing the question of previous hotel working experience with employees' positions, we can find out that normal full-time workers have less experience, some of them have just graduated from college, and some of them do not have a related education. Employees like supervisors, managers have more previous experience.

As we discussed above, full time workers should have more training to improve themselves in order to reach a higher level, and they should be earnestly considered when trainings are conducted.

### Length of the employment

This is a question asking about employees' time of stay in this hotel. Since the hotel was opened in September, 2007, the longest time an employee can work in this hotel would be no more than two years (the research was conducted in 2009). As we discussed in chapter four, employees started to attend trainings organized by the hotel soon after they have started working, the longer they work in the hotel, the more trainings they have to participate. This question helps us to know about the connection between employees' length of employment and their received trainings.



**Figure 7 Length of the employment**

42 respondents have worked in the hotel for 0-12 months; they received less training compared with the rest 11 respondents who have been working in Renaissance Shanghai Yuyuan Hotel for more than one year.

## 6.2 Training

Question number seven and eight aim to find out whether employees have training before they started with their work tasks, if they did have trainings, what is the training about. 43 respondents did not have training when they started, 10 other respondents did have, and the trainings were about hotel general introduction, customer service, computer system usage, departmental guide etc.

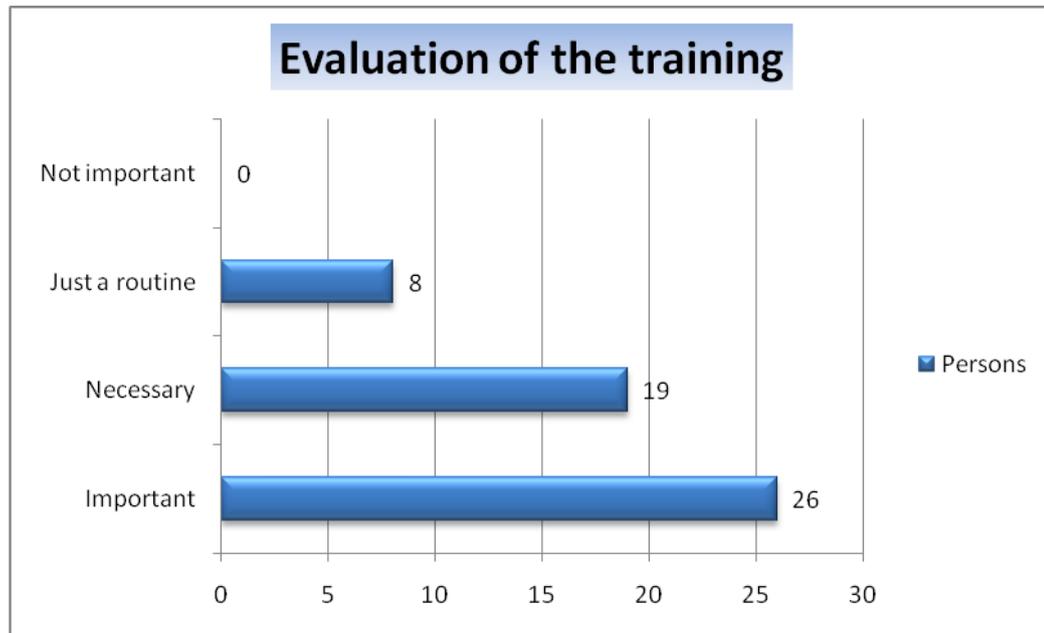
According to the Assistant Manager of Human Resource department (Assistant HR manager 2009.), it is not possible to organize training for every new employee, because they are hired at separate times, it will be reasonable and cost efficient to organize training for a group of new employees.

However, adequate trainings before the work help employees get used to the environment and work tasks very quickly and avoid the obstacles and possible accidents during work. Adequate trainings before work lead to the better attitudes towards their work, as a result, better services will be offered to customers. In this case, the hotel organized a beginner's training only when there is a group of new employees in order to save costs for the department, but trainings before work is more beneficial if possible to be organized.

The human resource department should also understand the importance of staff training, either the trainings are organized before the work starts or afterwards, and to realize the benefits brought by staff training so that they will pay more attention to all the trainings that will be organized. HR department should be informed about the importance of the trainings and make all efforts in assisting organizing the trainings in order to help employees to improve, to ensure the growth of the business and to achieve better results from staff trainings.

### Evaluation of training

This question is about employees' evaluation of the first training they have taken part in, the results help the author to know the employees' attitude towards the first training held in the hotel.



**Figure 8 Evaluation of training**

Most of the respondents think trainings which they firstly attended was important, similar number goes to the choice of “necessary”, and 8 respondents thought the first training was just a routine. No respondents thought the first training they attended was not important.

Most of the employees realized the importance of the first training; this means that the goals of the first training were successfully achieved, which are introducing employees about the general information and helping employees to get familiar with the work environment and the work itself.

In the open question in the questionnaire (Appendix 2), the author noticed that some of the respondents thought the trainings took too much time every day, and some of them thought less training would be better, which indicates they have not really realized the meaning of or are not satisfied with the whole training system.

### **Frequency of training**

In the next question, the frequency of training was asked, 48 respondents suggested that the training is on daily basis and the rest 5 respondents chose they had trainings twice a year.

The quality and quantity of training should be kept on the same level, as discussed above, employees complain that the training takes too much time every day, the contents of trainings are repeating etc. On the other hand, trainers and HR DEPARTMENT hold different opinions about repeating training (Training Manager 2009.); they think repeating training helps to improve employees' mastery of knowledge, skills so that they can provide better customer services. Management team has very high expectations on training; however, the outcomes are not very satisfied so far, therefore, management and employees should communicate better so the employees will be willing to experience training and learn more from trainings.

### **Facts about training**

The following three questions are trying to find out if the trainings are mandatory or not, whether employees need to apply for the trainings or not and where are the trainings held. With the help of these three questions we can see what the hotel's attitude towards trainings is.

The trainings are mandatory on attendance; Renaissance Shanghai Yuyuan Hotel requires every employee to improve himself/herself through different kinds of trainings. The management team can evaluate the employees better by knowing their personalities, what they are good at and what they are lack of so that it is easier to make better plans for trainings. Employees do not have to apply for the trainings, as they are required to attend the trainings. All the trainings are held inside the hotel. Most of trainings are using the hotel facilities as a helping tool, training room, restaurants, kitchens, bars etc.

The results explain that the hotel's expectation on training is high; daily trainings are organized to improve employees' qualities and to assist employees to deliver

better customer services continuously. If possible, when training budget allows, outside trainings are also worth organizing, outside trainings diversify and increase the interestingness of training, and if the training methods used properly, the results could be better than expected.

### **The trainers**

This question aims to look for persons who are responsible for the trainings held in Renaissance Shanghai Yuyuan Hotel, either trainers hired from the hotel, or teachers sourced from outside agencies.

According to the training system in Renaissance Shanghai Yuyuan Hotel, trainings are mostly held by trainer and supervisors employed by this hotel, trainers are completely responsible for the Passport to Success program, language training is also held by one of the trainers, supervisor is responsible for 15 minutes training and guidance during work time, trainers sometimes are there to assist.

As the author explained above, 34 of all respondents receive trainings which held by trainers and supervisors, other 19 respondents are trained by the trainers.

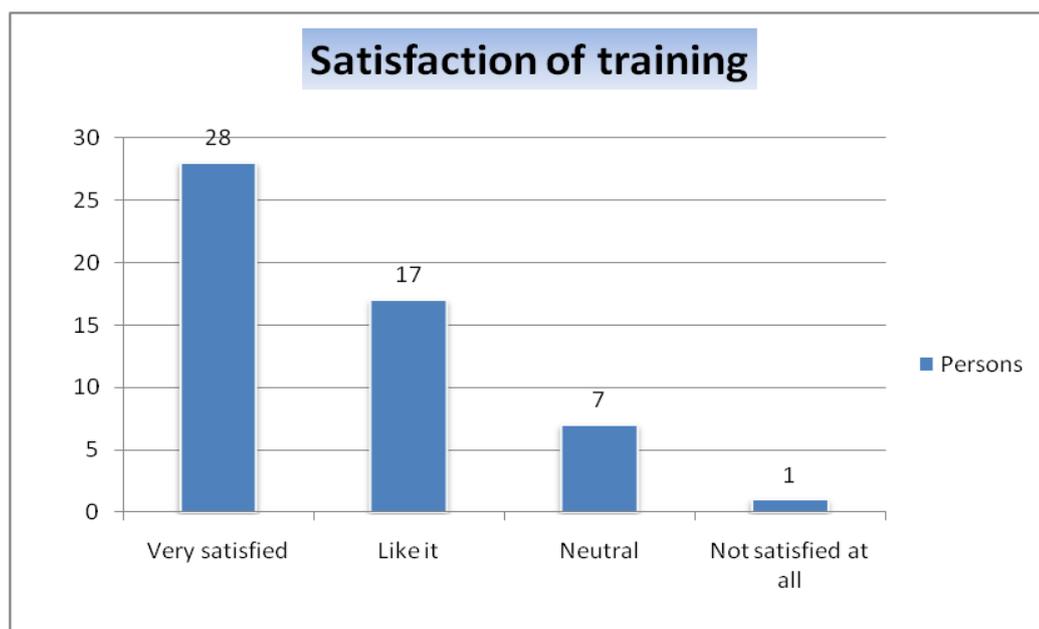


As shown in above tables, 23 respondents chose “Motivates employees and helps them to perform better” as the most important factor of staff training. Then for the second importance 15 respondents chose “Management team can evaluate employees’ performance” and “Motivates employees and helps them to perform better”. 11 respondents thought trainings “Helps organizational development” is the third most important reason of trainings. Except one respondent considered training not important, 16 participants chose “Encourages self development & self-confidence” as the least important reason.

The results let us know that employees do not consider trainings as a tool for self development or for building up self-confidence, but the trainings are important that they motivate employees’ to perform better in competition and provide a channel for communication between management and employees as well as management can evaluate the training better in order to set appropriate goals for future trainings and make the best use what employees are good at.

### **Satisfaction of training**

By knowing the satisfaction of employees’ towards staff trainings helps Human Resource department to adjust the trainings which will lead to preferable results.



**Figure 9 Satisfaction of training**

The results explain us that over half of the respondents were feeling very satisfied with the organized trainings, other 25 participants do not feel the trainings are at their best favorites.

According to employees' opinions obtained in the open question, which indicates that they were satisfied with the trainings because the trainings are well planned and organized, employees were pleasant to participate, and they have learnt from the trainings. On the contrary, trainings still need to be improved and adjusted to be more appealing and effective.

### **Opinions and suggestions on improvement**

Many respondents spoke highly of the trainings in this question; they thought the trainings are helpful, well planned in long-term view and well implemented, they also considered the trainings express Marriott service spirit, and the trainings encourages them to perform better in their work fields.

Dissatisfactions from employees' point of view:

Some participants suggested that the trainings are part of their everyday work tasks which cost too much time, sometimes they have to work overtime for the training, and the training contents are repeating. Three respondents claimed that trainings for beginners contain too much theory, which is distracting when sitting a long day in the training room. Moreover, some respondents indicate that more specific trainings should be organized, such as obtaining knowledge about wine and other language training besides English.

## 7. TELEPHONE INTERVIEW RESULTS

The interviews were carried out through telephone due to the distance, but it did not influence the quality of the interviews. After the analysis of the results from the quantitative research, the questions and findings are grouped into three sections as follows:

**Section 1 is about interviewees' background information, their positions, work experience and work tasks.**

The Assistant Human Resource Manager has 9 years of human resource work experience, and she is responsible for assisting the HR manager to organize the whole department and to maintain and develop the HR policies, interviewing new employees, help controlling everyday activities in HR and co-operate with other departments etc.

The training manager has 12 years of hotel working experience. She is responsible for Plans, organizes, monitors and conducts training activities effectively in order to upgrade the performance of their employees to meet the hotel standard. And also assist the Human Resource department in accomplishing hotel and department goals and objectives.

The restaurant supervisor is the Assistant Manager of western restaurant; he used to be the supervisor of that restaurant and had been promoted few months ago. He is now responsible for monitoring the restaurant's everyday operation, organizing briefings to restaurant employees, assigning work tasks and making work Rota etc.

All of the interviewees have participated in the training program, and they have finished all 8 levels in the program. Two of the interviewees thought all of the trainings are important because they are not considered as single trainings but a whole system, all of them have the same goal which is to improve employees and to make sure customers get better services. The other interviewee pointed out that Passport to Success program is more important as it is a systematic training program which helps employees to know the hotel and its services very well no

matter which department you are working for, so that it is easier to make a difference in providing better customer service.

**Section 2 is to analyze the purposes and goals of the training programs in this hotel.**

Marriott hotels commit themselves to provide guests with professional and exquisite customer service, to make sure that every customer feels 100% satisfied with the products and services. The trainings organized in Renaissance Shanghai Yuyuan Hotel approach to improve employees' knowledge and skills in order to provide better customer service.

The trainings play an important role in assisting HR department's efforts to develop their employees in every way and trainings help employees to keep the high quality services according to international standards.

**Section 3 focuses on the improvements of the training programs.**

One problem that HR department has found out during the trainings is that employees do not realize fully how important the trainings are, based on their reactions in the training and their performances. Their attitudes towards trainings are not as serious as expected, which affect the outcome of the trainings as well as their self development and improvements. Therefore, Human Resource department will enhance the power of trainings; they planned to add more diversity in trainings to make the trainings more interesting and enjoyable, but it also requires the co-operation from employees.

In Marriott hotels, trainings materials and methods etc. can be shared between sister hotels, so that the human resource department plans to invite employees or trainers from sister hotels to introduce their own experience, for instance how trainings affect their career improvements to illustrate the importance of staff training to employees and what benefits they would get. This plan helps to adjust employees' attitudes towards trainings.

## 8. CONCLUSION

Human Resource Management has been enormously important in the hotel business, when dealing with people, the basic requirement for the enterprise is to have good internal relationships between management and employees. Favorable Human Resource Management ensures business growth, and staff training is the most effective way to develop employees in order to have a good HRM. Therefore, staff training is concerned a lot in nowadays' businesses.

Staff training is an essential management tool, it has many benefits, such as shortens the study time, increases work effectiveness, helps employees and the company itself to compete in the fast changing environment, reduces damages and wastage. Staff training is a way of motivating employees, upgrading their skills, expanding their knowledge, preparing employees for self-development.

From both quantitative research and qualitative research we know that the trainings are very important and should be carefully considered, but in Renaissance Shanghai Yuyuan Hotel there are some existing problems with trainings.

1. The outcomes of training are not as expected; because some employees are not aware of the importance of training and what they will benefit from staff training so that trainings are regarded as normal courses to participate.
2. There is a lack of good communication between management and employees, when employees have complaints about trainings for instance the trainings are time consuming, but management team does not know, so that the trainings would never be improved until they communicate.
3. About one thirds of the employees felt they did not get self-development and build self-confidence after the training, which did not match the purpose of the trainings.

Possible suggestions:

1. Help employees to know staff training and understand the importance of it. Human resource department could explain to the employees about the

objectives of the trainings, and what employees will benefit from the training, meanwhile, the employees should be told that how can they use what they learnt from the trainings in the future. As human resource department planned to invite employees and trainers from sister hotels to introduce their experiences is a good way to remind employees of the importance of staff training.

2. Increase the communication between management and employees by getting feedback from employees in order to know what they like and what can be improved in the trainings to get better outcomes. And trainers can observe while conducting trainings, some employees would not express themselves even though they do not feel satisfied with the trainings. Moreover, employees from human resource department could attend the trainings themselves to find the problems and how does it feel when they are trainees. To understand each other better will bring better results for the trainings.
3. Guide employees to realize that improving themselves is the main aim of training. The main purpose of staff training in the case hotel is to improve employees' qualities in order to provide better customer service, but employees did not consider self development as the most important reason for trainings, therefore, they should be led to the right direction, which is to improve themselves and customer service but not for competition or promotion etc. other reasons.

Finally, from this study, the importance of staff training is discovered, in order to help human resource department of the case hotel to solve current problems in staff training as above discussed, possible suggestions are provided. To improve the recent situation needs time and it requires the co-operation of both management team and employees. I do hope this study have some value in helping the hotel's Human Resource Development.

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## **APPENDICES**

|            |                         |
|------------|-------------------------|
| Appendix 1 | Abbreviation            |
| Appendix 2 | Questionnaire           |
| Appendix 3 | Questions for interview |
| Appendix 4 | Picture                 |

## **ABBREVIATIONS**

|      |   |
|------|---|
| IHRM | International Human Resource Management |
| HRD  | Human Resource Development              |
| HRM  | Human Resource Management               |
| SHRM | Strategic Human Resource Management     |

## QUESTIONNAIRE

This is a questionnaire for the case study of my thesis about the staff training in the hotel Renaissance Shanghai Yuyuan Hotel, considering many aspects of the employees and the staff training. The questionnaire will not ask your name, therefore, please fill in the questionnaire as truly as possible. It is ok that you don't want to fill in the questionnaire but thank you all the same.

1. Gender:

Male  Female

2. Age:

18-25  26-35  36-45  >45

3. What's your previous hospitality education: (e.g. school, education, time.)

Please specify, \_\_\_\_\_

4. Previous hotel working experience:

0-2 year  2-5 years  5-10 years  >10 years

5. How long have you been working in this hotel? (The hotel was open in September 2007)

Less than 3 months  3-12 months  More than 1 year

6. Position: \_\_\_\_\_ (e.g. Waitress, chef, supervisor)

7. Did you have training when you started?

Yes  No

**If yes, for how long?** \_\_\_\_\_

**If no, you can skip question 8.**

8. What is the training about?

Hotel general introduction

Customer service

Computer system usage

Departmental guide

- All
- Other, \_\_\_\_\_

9. How was the first training you attended?

- Important
- Necessary
- Just a routine
- Not important      Why? \_\_\_\_\_

10. How often is training held in the hotel?

- Just once in the beginning when work started
- Once a year
- Twice a year
- Once a month
- Daily basis
- Other, \_\_\_\_\_

11. The trainings in the hotel are:

- Mandatory       Optional

12. Do you have to apply for the trainings?

- Yes       No

13. Where are the trainings held?

- Inside hotel
- Outside hotel, where? \_\_\_\_\_

14. Who held the trainings (Can be multiple choices)?

- Trainers
- Lecturer hired from outside
- Manager
- Supervisor

Trainers and supervisor

Other, \_\_\_\_\_

15. Why are trainings important in the hotel?

(Please number them in the order of most important to the least important.  
E.g. 1=most important, 2=second important, 3= third important etc.)

Motivates employees and helps them perform better

Encourages self development & self-confidence

Management team can evaluate employees' performance

Sustains a positive attitude towards customer service

Improves communication between management and employees

Reduces accidents and safety violations

Helps organizational development

Introducing new technologies in time

Not important

16. How do you satisfied with the trainings in the hotel?

Very satisfied

Like it

Neutral

Not satisfied at all                       other, \_\_\_\_\_

17. How can the training be improved?

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18. What is your opinion about the training system in the Marriott Hotel Group?

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**Thank you very much for your co-operation!**

## **QUESTIONS FOR INTERVIEW**

1. Can you tell me shortly about your position and your work tasks?
2. To your knowledge, how many kinds of training are there in the hotel, can you please name them?
3. Can you tell me something about Passport to Success Training Program?
4. Have you been participated in the training? How many levels?
5. What do you think are the purposes of staff training in a hotel?
6. Do you think the purposes are achieved after individual training?
7. In all trainings, which one is more important, or do you think they are all important, and why?
8. What are the advantages of the training system? What can be improved?  
(If you think there are any disadvantages or lack.)

**PICTURES**



**Picture 1 Lobby**



**Picture 2 Swimming Pool**



**Picture 3 Conference room**



**Picture 4 Hotel room**