

CHSGA hotelier

CEYLON HOTEL SCHOOL GRADUATES ASSOCIATION **MAGAZINE**

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49TH AGM

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
OF THE CEYLON HOTEL SCHOOL GRADUATES ASSOCIATION

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT – CEYLON HOTEL SCHOOL GRADUATES ASSOCIATION



Welcome to this edition of the 'Hotelier' Magazine which is released to coincide with the Ceylon Hotel School Graduates Association Annual General Meeting of 2020. It is with immense pleasure that I address you once again as we gather together for the 49th AGM of our prestigious association. Truly, it is my humble privilege to be your President and an honour to lead a dedicated and committed team of hospitality Professionals.

The past year has been a challenging one for the association- as it was for the entire nation. Our industry was the first to be affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Both group and individually managed hotels came under tremendous pressure to sustain and remain in business. Additionally, the second tier providers of accommodations, both in the formal and informal sectors were hugely challenged with liabilities that threatened their existence. Infact, all stakeholders in the hospitality industry including 3rd party dependents such as vendors and service providers have been badly affected by the coronavirus outbreak.

During this critical COVID-19 period, the CHSGA spearheaded several programmes and activities including the providing of financial assistance to many CHSGA members who lost employment thereby affecting their income. 25 students of SLITHM were also granted funding after they were laid-off from the workplace.

Using this downtime to support and develop the industry, CHSGA embarked on a series of Hospitality Professional's seminars covering the Down South, Kandy, Negombo and Colombo regions. The programmes held in Kandy, Negombo and Colombo were totally funded by the CHSGA. The Annual "Propel" Soft Skills Development programme was launched and the assessment center was conducted on 6th March 2020 at the Cinnamon Bey hotel. It is planned to roll out the remaining "Propel" sessions during the course of this year.

Your Association successfully completed an advanced culinary exposure programme for SLITHM Kandy - under the theme, "Gastronomy Voyage", supported by Chef Rohan Fernandopulle & the Bocuse d'Or Sri Lanka, Team. CHSGA's 'Strategic Direction' Committee has made a considerable headway with the Continous Professional Development, the EMBA and is now striving to obtain the Degree Status for SLITHM.

As we enter our 50th year of existence, we have lined up series of unique activities to celebrate this great milestone. We will outline these in time to come and I invite you to be part of this historic occasion as a proud member of the CHSGA. At the same I urge all of you to think of ways you can give back to your association - from career and academic mentoring to volunteering time at and on CHSGA events to simply attending academic and social events.

A very big 'Thank you' to the 'AGM 2020 Organizing Committee' and to the 'Hotelier' Magazine team, with a very special appreciation to the Office Bearers, Past Presidents, Sub-Committee Heads and members of the Executive Committee of the CHSGA for their untiring efforts to hold your association in high esteem.

I wish you all the very best and 'Happy Reading'.

PRIYAL PERERA / FCHSGA

President - Ceylon Hotel School Graduates Association

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN – AGM ORGANIZING COMMITTEE / CHSGA

Dear Members, Colleagues and well-wishers of CHSGA,

I am honored to welcome you all to the 49th Annual General Meeting of the Ceylon Hotel School Graduates Association at the Taj Samudra, Colombo.

The year 2019/20 has been a very challenging one for us hoteliers, especially with the double blows that were dealt by the Easter Sunday attacks last year, and, now the COVID-19 Pandemic - literally bringing our industry to its knees. As history would have it, setbacks are nothing new to the hospitality and tourism industry in Sri Lanka. We have always stood strong and sprung back from everything that has been thrown at us. The stalwarts in the 49-year history of CHSGA will vouch for this and clearly, it is a testament of the character and inherent strength possessed by people in this great industry and in our members of the association.

We are now facing a new threat; a global pandemic that is affecting all industries and businesses across the world - for which, answers and a cure is yet to be found. This is a challenge that will push us to our limits, to think differently, to forge alternate paths in discovering our own footprint in the 'New Normal'.

In keeping with these momentous times, this year's Annual; General Meeting will be a relatively quiet and reflective event and is a breakaway from the traditional destination AGM that we have all grown accustomed to. The Executive Committee and the Organizing Committee have had to deliberate on many concerns and eventually made the decision to hold the 2020 AGM in Colombo. However, let me hasten to assure you all, that we have left no stone unturned, to ensure that the AGM, followed by the evening's cocktail and dinner will have all the grandeur - befitting the association's most important event of the year.

Allow me to convey my sincere appreciation to the President and the Executive Committee of CHSGA for placing their trust in me to lead the Organizing Committee. I must thank each and every one of the organizing committees for the great support and the commitment extended in making the event a great success.

In conclusion, I wish to express my sincere gratitude and appreciation to our 'Chief Guest' and to the 'Guest of Honour' for accepting our invitation and gracing us with their presence. I also take this opportunity to say a big 'thank you' to the team at the Taj Samudra hotel, CDC Events and the sponsors who came forward to help us despite the challenges.

I look forward to seeing you all in Colombo for the 49th Annual General Meeting.

Stay Safe!

ASELA WAVITA/FCHSGA

Chairman – AGM 2020 Organizing Committee

Vice President – Ceylon Hotel School Graduates Association



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN – SOCIAL MEDIA & PR COMMITTEE / CHSGA



My Dear Readers,

It is a matter of pride to pen down the message for the Hotelier magazine AGM issue. My heart fills with immense pleasure as I perceive the progress of the Hotelier magazine.

In the time I have been in on the editorial board of the magazine, I have seen how Hotelier Magazine has grown in terms of its look and the content.

Readers appreciated the content of the hotelier magazine and the work of CHSGA.

As we are step behind to celebrate 50 years, CHSGA executive committee decided to outsource publishing of the hotelier magazine to elevate the magazine to its next level.

I am very confident that our very own Mr. Shafeek Wahab and his team will fulfill the entrusted work to them.

"May the CHSGA Hotelier Magazine grow into a sturdy tree"

Let me wish you all happy reading whilst staying safe.

THAKSHILA GALAPPATHTHY / MCHSGA

Chairman - Social Media & PR Committee,
Ceylon Hotel School Graduates Association



**Ceylon Hotel School
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*Sri Lanka Institute of Tourism & Hotel Management
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MESSAGE FROM THE PUBLISHING EDITOR

The challenges which confront the CHSGA have not changed. Topping the list was the constant battle to ensure that the hospitality industry in Sri Lanka received an energetic, youthful and properly trained workforce. Despite dire warnings of a growing 'skills gap', the industry faced an acute skills shortage – apart from a widening supply deficit. As productivity dropped, the industry's employment practices and attractiveness deteriorated, comparing poorly with other business sectors.

The demand for staff exerted pressure on hotel schools such as the Sri Lanka Institute of Tourism and Hotel Management (SLITHM). Soon, quantity diluted quality and standards began to take a backseat. Progressively, professional management, development and training of both faculty staff and students became hapless victims of 'government by desk', where most of the important decisions are now taken by state officials rather than by qualified academics from the hospitality industry. Unsurprisingly, the current course catalogue is far from aligned with the ground realities.

COVID-19 decimated the world...well almost. In the process it flattened the battlefield, acting as a trigger for change. Overall, the pandemic has initiated a great opportunity to reinvent not only curricula, but how to deliver them. When digital components and technology will drive future guest engagement in shaping and influencing competitive aspects of hospitality, educators will need to discover new and creative ways of responding to these trends. From an educational perspective, the pandemic allows us to revise certain administrative and bureaucratic processes within SLITHM. Hopefully, the institute can use the meaning of 'crisis' as a turning point for better hospitality educational models in the future.

Nostalgia is a bittersweet yearning for the past. It's sweet because it allows us to momentarily relive good times; it's bitter sweet because we recognise that those times may never return. However, the silver-lining in hospitality is that we are in an industry that perpetually strives to embrace 'good times' for all, all the time – even in troubled times. Holding this year's Annual General Meeting at the Taj Samudra Hotel will bring back memories to several members - especially the senior lot, who might well be seduced to fondly retreating to a past that holds wonderful memories and daunting challenges that were overcome. Hence it is in that spirit of nostalgia, that we delve into the past, to recapture some of those moments - so lucidly described by Mr. Desmond Fernando in the article titled 'Editorial from the past...'

In this issue of 'Hotelier', Jan Van Twest provides some useful guidelines on how to survive and sustain one's business during these turbulent times, whilst Roshan Fernando takes more than a peep into food and beverage operations in the 'new normal', lamenting at the same time, on buffets having invaded the hotel dining room. Interestingly he did complain about it in an article he wrote way back in 1989. Now that's food for thought.

We also feature an interview article that brings into the spotlight Dilip de Silva who shares with us his journey in hospitality, including milestones reached. There are also several other interesting articles contributed by guest writers, which I trust you will find both persuasive and pleasurable to read.

Sincerely,

Shafeek Wahab

Hotelier is the official magazine of the Ceylon Hotel School Graduates Association and is published on their behalf by int2ition. It is a bi-annual production distributed during March/April and September/October.

EDITORIAL FROM THE PAST...



Published below is the editorial that appeared in the 'Graduation Ball' souvenir of 1976. It was written by one of the most distinguished graduates of the Ceylon Hotel School (as it was then called) – Mr. Desmond Fernando.

Having graduated with distinction in 1969, Mr. Fernando was awarded a scholarship to West Germany for further studies and upon his return joined the Hotel School as Lecturer, Restaurant & Bar services. He was one of the pioneer Sri Lankans who came back to replace the foreign advisors who were on the staff of CHS.

Mr. Fernando never shied away from facing a challenge and in 1976 took on the role of Chairman – Dance committee to organize the 'Graduation Ball' for that year's graduates. This was to be the last batch to follow the 3-Year Diploma course as it had been replaced from that year onwards. Had Mr. Fernando together with a determined band of older and younger members of the association not joined ranks – the 1976 batch of graduates would not have had the traditional dance celebration. We take this opportunity to go down memory lane in appreciation of a truly wonderful example of leadership and fellowship.

Read full Extract of the 'Editorial' in the 1976 Dance Souvenir:

“The idea of a Hotel School in Ceylon as a teaching institute was first conceived and put into operation by the Government Tourist Bureau in the year 1965 with 11 students on its role following a short course in Cookery and Restaurant Service. With the formation of the Ceylon Tourist Board in 1966, the Hotel School came under its purview, and with the assistance and guidance of the U.N. and Canadian advisors who were attached to the school from its inception, the Ceylon Tourist Board formulated a new scheme of studies which resulted in the inauguration of the 3-year Diploma course in General Catering (as the course was then called). Later on, this course was re-designated as the 3- year Diploma Course in Hotel and Catering Operations.

With a view to establish an identity of its own, the students of the Hotel School organized a New Year's Eve dance in the year 1967 at the Banquet Hall of the Hotel Samudra, which also housed the Hotel School. This dance was a resounding success, and I venture to think that the reputation of the School and what it stood for, came to be recognized by the country at large from about this time.

By the year 1970, the School had been established on a sound footing with the arrival of German Experts very kindly assigned to the school by the Federal Republic of Germany, which at about the same time, provided the equipment for a modern kitchen and training restaurant. In accordance with the Tourist Board's programme of progressively replacing the foreign advisors with local counterparts, it initiated a scheme of sending out to the Federal Republic of Germany, a specified number of Graduates of the School for advanced training: and by the end of 1974 the School's teaching staff was made up entirely of local personnel. This arrangement continues to date.

Hand in hand with the tourist promotion drive of the Tourist Board, a number of hotels came into existence and as a result there was a growing demand from the Hotel Industry (which was quick to recognise the quality of the School's products), for personnel trained at the Ceylon Hotel School. To meet the demand the School organized and conducted a number of short-term craft courses in Cookery, Restaurant and Bar service, Reception and Housekeeping.

In 1972, the first and second year students of the 3-year Diploma course in Hotel and Catering Operations organized a dance on the occasion of the graduation of the batch of final years. Hence the origin of the name, "Graduation Ball". Since then the event has become an annual feature and it would not be an exaggeration to say that this event has become one of the major social events in the city.

We are proud to record that at long last, the Hotel School is in total occupation of the Hotel Samudra premises. (The sharing of the premises as well as its amenities over a period of years led to much mutual dissatisfaction and in our view tended to place the school at a permanent disadvantage in the matter of coordinating its practical training programmes and also in projecting its image in the public mind as a separate and distinct institution). The School now operates the Restaurant as well as the Guesthouse, and from all the reports, these operations, though conducted exclusively by the students, have been a complete success.

We are hopeful – and indeed it would be more fitting, that future School dances could once again be held at the Banquet Hall of the School premises, in order that old friends could meet in familiar surroundings and discuss the good old days, both at the School as well as at 'Sefton', the School hostel. Unfortunately, the Banquet Hall was never intended to accommodate the ever-increasing numbers of patrons at these dances and so we must continue to hold this dance elsewhere.

It is not our intention to distract you any longer from the main purpose of your presence here, which is to enjoy yourself. So, here's wishing you all an enjoyable evening and hoping that you will grace this occasion next year too!"

DESMOND L.C. FERNANDO / FCHSGA

Desmond Fernando, who is a past President of the CHSGA, graduated from the Ceylon Hotel School in 1969 after following the inaugural 3-year Diploma course in General Catering. Thereafter, having won a scholarship, he proceeded to West Germany for further studies. Upon his return, he joined the Ceylon Hotel School as Lecturer - Restaurant & Bar services, becoming in the process, one from a trio of pioneering alumni of the hotel school, to join the teaching faculty - which upto that time consisted of foreigners. Desmond Fernando was not only a great teacher but a wonderful mentor who was unafraid to speak out when it mattered and was ever willing to encourage with words of hope and support.

Hospitality in a Post COVID-19 Sri Lanka Scenario



Photo: Courtesy of Fortress Hotel & Spa, Koggala

The Sri Lanka hospitality industry has internationally a reputation of being resilient and robust. Many of my foreign hospitality colleagues, have expressed their admiration for the Sri Lankan hospitality industry and have labeled us as the “Great Come Back Kids” of the business. The three decade civil war, with a couple of insurgencies and a tsunami thrown in, were all taken in our stride and the work of all the stakeholders in the industry were the envy of many a country.

However, the years' 2019 and 2020, delivered Sri Lanka, as the Aussies might say “the worst double whammies that a country and industry could experience”. The 2019 Easter Bomb attacks shook Sri Lanka and the tourist industry to the core and then like a recurring nightmare the COVID-19 pandemic took us by the scruff of the neck and threw us in the doldrums.

In the aftermath of these disasters, the industry is still struggling to keep its proverbial head above water. As an hotelier of some experience, I thought of putting pen to paper to share some of my thoughts that would hopefully assist my fellow hospitality colleagues in steering their organizations through the stormy waters ahead.

Survival & Sustenance: This is perhaps the first

knee-jerk reaction that all of us must focus on for the time being.

a) Take stock of your hotel's current status. Evaluate the business model and take strategic decisions of what parts need trimming, saving or simply eliminating. Keep a vigilant eye on your operating costs; establish your core fixed business costs. Paradoxically, this is rather easy to establish as most operations are now at a standstill and one can very easily monitor what are your fixed costs at zero occupancy level. Key costs to monitor would be Electricity, Water, Food, Staff Salaries and Wages. One needs to take careful stock when dealing with staff and allied human resource issues.

b) The Government Authorities have very proactively amended the existing Labour regulations, thereby ensuring that employers and employees rights have been protected so that there is some flexibility to most of the issues brought about by the negative impact caused by the loss of business. All the stakeholders have reached a consensus to try to protect industries and employees' jobs. Labour costs are the main factor of your business now with reduced operations in normal activities. Keep yourself updated on these amendments as these may be helpful to implement, once the true impact of the pandemic is felt.

c) Do your best to maintain all key profitable aspects of your operation, by amending or modifying processes, so that you ensure an efficient and healthy contribution from your revenue earning streams. Keep in close contact with your accounting and operational teams, so that you can quickly set up financial as well as operational goals to ensure the survival and sustenance of your property. This can be on a weekly review basis. Make yourself aware of the moratoriums on loans and working capital loans that perhaps are already in place, after the Easter Sunday attacks.

d) Take effective steps to clear your outstanding debtors. This will enable you to ease up the working capital to help you efficiently run the day to day business activities. You should, however be vigilant to the fact that moratoriums and grace periods are only temporary factors that in some cases may become exasperated by penalties imposed- should you default, by the lending institutions.

e) Implement the official COVID-19 safety protocols ASAP. This will ensure that you are ready to re-open as quickly as possible after obtaining the necessary authorization.

Planning for future Operations: This aspect of the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic is perhaps, the next most important phase in the comeback strategy of your hotel operation.

1. Work together with your HR & Training Department to go through the existing staff cadres and Standards of Operations (S.O.Ps). In view of the reduced occupancy and business operation levels, there will definitely be certain processes and staffing areas that would require frequent review and changes, to suit your revised operational situation.

2. Organize training programs and seminars so that all staff including Heads of Departments, Supervisory and Operational staffs are well versed and updated with their fresh or amended S.O.Ps and COVID- 19 protocols, so that they are on par with the latest requirements.

3. Keep your entire team updated on the current status of the industry and the hotel in terms of financial viability and operational readiness, so that any drastic changes are easily explained instead of being introduced unannounced, causing disruptions to the work place and staff morale.

4. Review the hotel marketing and sales strategies, taking into context the evident changes in the historic market conditions that the hotel will have to weather until the normal operations and market conditions return.

5. Consider the marketing options available in the local market, so as to enable your hotel to operate at an optimal status to reduce your operating losses or be able to achieve breakeven revenue, whatever the financial situation your hotel is currently in.

6. Investigate the potential of using new marketing and advertising platforms to target your different source markets by encouraging direct bookings, thereby improving the contribution and yields.

These points that I have compiled for you above are general guideline to adapt during this crisis and help you steer the course through this unsettled, turbulent times. Successful implementation and adaptation would help your organization and you to kick start your business and to be prepared for the eventual upturn in the industry which will but, surely and certainly come.

JAN VAN TWEST / FCHSGA

Jan Van Twest, is a past President of the CHSGA with over 40 years of experience in the hospitality industry in senior management positions in Sri Lanka, Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific Islands. A graduate of the Ceylon Hotel School, with a Diploma in Hotel & Catering Operations and a Diploma in Advanced Hotel and Catering Operations from the Carl Duisburg Centre in Munich, Germany, he is also a certified Hotel Trainer with the Chamber of Commerce for Munich and Upper Bavaria. He is currently the Director/ General Manager of the Fortress Resort & Spa in Koggala and serves as a Director of Hotel Services Ceylon PLC, Summer Seasons PLC, Fortress Resorts and the Queensbury PLC.

A vision for the future



At the beginning competitive advantage lay heavily on the three L's; "Location, location and location". Then, as we moved on to the age of Knowledge Management, it changed dramatically to the 3 K's; "Knowledge, knowledge and knowledge. Now, an upheaval of tectonic proportion has shifted it to the three S's; "Safety, safety and safety".

It's still a long way before hotels offer voice-controlled guest rooms. Nevertheless, after COVID-19, here is an outline of a potentially real scenario, where the internet of things will come into play very soon.

You've just checked-in to your hotel and you walk into your guestroom - without touching the door knob. As you step inside, you immediately trigger cleverly concealed sensors that automatically switch on the air-conditioner. By pressing a button on your smart phone, you move the window curtains enabling some sunlight to stream into the room. If it is both dark outside and inside, a quick jab of another button on your phone turns the room lights on.

All this simply made possible, by turning your smart phone into a remote, with the addition of a hotel app, featuring in-stay functionality that gives guests the power to also adjust the room temperature, stream personal content to their room's TV, contact the concierge, and order in-room dining, etc.

Going in to the bathroom, you place both hands under the washbasin tap and a sensor detecting your hand movement activates water to run. You don't need to use your hand to turn it off either- the intelligent tap stops the flow of water as soon as you take your hand away. Imagine a hotel bathroom that complements this auto hand-wash with an automatic soap dispense and a hand dryer – all in the same location.

Finally, you allow your body to drop on to your bed – but not before plugging your phone into the charger that's conveniently located on the side of bedside table. From the moment you entered your hotel room, and, up unto this time, your hands touched only your mobile phone.

Funnily, mobile apps that can do all of what is described here, entered the market several years ago. But a majority of hotels were reluctant to invest fearing they were not worth the cost unless they actually engage guests. Thus, limiting their use to increasing revenue with ancillary offers, real-time marketing through targeted promotions sent through the app and the capture of data to build guest loyalty through a tailored experience.

Understandably, the hospitality industry has a long way to go before it is up and running. However, while hotels by way of necessity will prioritize safety and sanitation, it would make sense for them to incorporate flexible ways in which guests can exercise and enhance their personal sense of well-being given an array of choices.

Technology and automation, vehemently disliked by many prior to COVID-19, because it reduces human interactions, will, like cutting-edge facial recognition systems be the norm. The technologically sophisticated hotel without staff is just around the corner. So, get used to it. However, remember, technology like everything ages – unlike human interaction.

SHAFEEK WAHAB / FCHSGA

Shafeek Wahab is a veteran hotelier with over 40 years experience in the industry. Having held senior management positions, at the Mount Lavinia Hotel, Ramada Renaissance Hotel, Trans Asia Hotel and John Keells Hotels in Sri Lanka, he has worked at / with the InterContinental, Holiday Inn, Kempinski, Le Meriden, Westin and Sofitel hotels overseas. Currently he is the Publisher and Editor of Hospitality Sri Lanka – a weekly B2B & B2C e-journal and a prolific hotel and travel writer. Having graduated in 1975, from the Ceylon Hotel School with the 3-year Diploma in Hotel & Catering Operations and the 2-year Diploma in Advanced Hotel and Catering Operations from the Carl Duisburg Centre in Munich, Germany, he is a certified Hotel Trainer with the Chamber of Commerce for Munich and Upper Bavaria.



Photos: Courtesy Sackville Hotel Nuwera Eliya

A Buffet - Eater's Lament

At a time COVID-19 is still in full bloom in certain countries, we, both as a country and an industry recognize that sometime in the future, we will be given the opportunity to totally get back to the new normal. However, what we will return to, will be a drastically different environment for our customers and employees.

Hence, those who are thinking about the situation today and who plan well, will be prepared to address the objections of a scared and emotionally unsettled consumer. Whoever is better positioned to anticipate consumer concerns, address their needs, and fulfill their demands, the quicker they will return to normalcy and profitability.

When the industry recovers, it will be a time to let go of outdated business practices and develop newer, more creative ways to feed people. In my opinion when things go back to normalcy, the dining scene will return to what it was, and more so, business will boom, (although it will take a while). Till then, restaurants need to be more creative in terms of revenue generation. You will have lots of restaurants adapting to delivery models.

Quarantine situations have made us realise the importance of food and how we need to be more responsible in our cooking. We will see a lot of zero-waste practices used in kitchens. Shorter menus and frequently changing menus will be the trend. Small quantities of food in buffets & 'a la minute' cooking options, and using more frying pans, griddles, casseroles, sizzlers, hot pots,

muffin pans and individual table BBQ units will be the future. The chafing dishes may go out of style.

There's the "all-you-can-seat" dilemma, as eateries are forced to cut capacity inside to allow for more social distancing. Reducing the amount of options at a buffet will drive customers away, without enough people paying to get in to offset the food costs, buffets will lose more money. Not to mention that food costs will go up eventually. If there's a vaccine and COVID-19 is beatable, then I think the buffets can reopen in their current form.

The prospects of getting a pizza, fried fish, teriyaki chicken and some chocolate-dipped strawberries on the same plate look questionable for the near future. But industry leaders are determined to try – whether it means bigger sneeze guards covering the food, switching out tongs after every use or filming your food etc.

But buffets also require vigilance, from people on both sides of the line. Cooks and restaurant staff must monitor the food to make sure 'hot dishes stay hot' and 'cold dishes stay cold'. They must switch out common utensils on the regular to keep them clean and sanitized, whilst tossing/replacing food that has sat for an hour or longer at room temperature.

The main transmission route remains person-to-person contact. It is therefore recommended that restaurant managers adopt the usual protocols: social distancing, mask wearing for staff, and educating customers on regular hand-washing - before and after visiting the buffet. In some instances the buffets are transformed into cafeteria-style operations, with staff

plating food instead of the customer. Restaurant operators have come up with other solutions, too, such as pre-portioned servings ready for pickup, or endless entrees delivered to your table. (How fun for servers looking to limit their interactions).

Honest Food Concepts

These challenging times will lead to there being more conscious diners, chefs and restaurateurs'. The aim will be to utilize resources in the best possible way in terms of ingredients, seasonality, having more respect for the produce one receives and the people growing it. It's been a tough period for everyone and we all just need to care a little more. I am sure value is going to play a big role going forward. Value in terms of experience as well as value in terms of the food and services offered. Smaller formats with lesser expenses, value-added dining, home delivery kitchens for comfort, shall be the new rules for eating out. As for night life, places with a uniqueness quotient will survive, because people will party less due to limited availability of money. Post these two phases and after a year or so, we would be looking at thrive mode again, where lost ground will be regained and newer opportunities created.



Supply Chain Visibility

For many years, some of the more progressive restaurants have preached the importance of supply chain visibility, and the ability to track product literally from farm-to-kitchen-to- plate. The technology to accomplish this exists, but the implementation and start-up time and costs to do so have scared away all but the most vigilant. The goal and the promise is to provide a common “language” and method for tracking and reporting on all products from their point of creation (or growth) to the production facility, to the warehouse, to the broadliner, and finally to the restaurant. By identifying each consignment with a

unique code, we would literally be able to track down to the farmer or even the field in the event that a food borne illness is identified in a product. The technology exists today; it simply requires significant effort on the part of the food service operators and the distributors to agree to conform to the standards.

Safety over Efficiency

For years the industry has looked for ways to be more efficient and to improve speed-of-service, labor efficiency and drive-thrust. We may very well see as a byproduct of post-COVID-19, a softening of this stance with the emphasis being placed on safety, cleanliness, and hygiene, even at the expense of speed and efficiency. A few examples of this could be:

- The cleaning of a credit card when handed to an employee and the cleaning of it upon return.
- The cleaning of a POS terminal between transactions or when a different employee uses it.
- The changing of gloves between customers or the regular use of hand sanitizer between customers.
- The sanitizing of a tray prior to delivering it to the customer.
- Placing items like napkins and condiments behind the counter and requiring customers to ask for them.



While none of these tasks are lengthy, they will all increase the delivery times and speed of service. While this is true, it should be expected that a few customers will complain; when in fact, the optics of this level of care and focus on cleanliness should be well received by most if not all customers. In the Post-COVID-19 world, it may be necessary to re-think many of our current business processes to support improved safety over labor and production efficiency.

Restaurant Design Changes

As stated previously, nowhere will the impact of COVID-19 have a longer lasting impact, than in the table service segment of the industry. Whereas some will come back as loyal customers and a show of support, it is expected that a greater number will not, at least initially. Table service restaurants need to look at ways to manage the objections that will likely be raised by customers and do their best to address them immediately.

Some thoughts and strategies to overcome objection would include:

- Increased spacing between tables and/or breaking up larger rooms into smaller sections.
- Greater access (and visibility) or hygienic products such as wipes and sanitizers on tables and in public areas.
- Cutlery, glassware, and plates cleaned at tableside (or brought to the table packaged) for customer assurance.
- Removal of salt and pepper shakers or provide either packeted or on demand.

- Servers behind the counters in restaurants that offer buffets and/or salad bars.
- Coverings over meal plates that are delivered tableside.
- Pay-at-table functionality to avoid passing a credit card to a server.
- Offering e-receipts in lieu of paper.
- Digital menu boards or tablets with anti-microbial screens in lieu of paper menus.



However, these points are irrelevant. For diners, the bottom line is enjoyment, and my own harsh views on buffets are related directly to my lack of self control. Although I follow buffets with all health protocols and guidelines, I often fall victim to curiosity and greed without self discipline.

Nevertheless, my biggest objection to buffets is the way they are gradually taking over hotel dining rooms.

ROSHAN FERNANDO / FCHSGA

Roshan Fernando is a Graduate of the Ceylon Hotel School and a past President of CHSGA. He has worked as the GM of five star luxury boutique properties such as Hotel TUGU Bali and TUGU Lombok, Indonesia, Amara Sanctuary Resort in Sentosa, Singapore, Sofitel Dalat Palace in Vietnam and The Amara Saigon. Prior to his overseas appointments, he was the Director Operations for Aitken Spence Hotels looking after nine properties inclusive of three five-star properties. At present he is working as the Group General Manager for The Golden Hospitality group looking after luxury hotels in Kandy & Nuwara Eliya.

Train Your Hotel Staff to Show Hospitality When Enforcing Mask Requirements



Enforcing Mask Requirements

With most hotels around the globe requiring guests to wear facemasks in all public areas these days, it has fallen upon the frontline hospitality staff to enforce this policy, which in many cases is also municipal ordinance or decree. Although most guests comply voluntarily, a small minority are voicing their displeasure but still complying. An even smaller, but very vocal minority of hotel guests are challenging our staff's authority to require compliance in a way that is confrontational and often demeaning.

From what I am hearing, it's the front desk staff that is most often the receptors of a verbal barrage, as they are most likely to first encounter unmasked guests as they enter the lobby. Yet of course it could be any staff member who passes through the public areas.

Therefore, it is important to provide them with training they need to de-escalate these encounters in the spirit of hospitality. Here are some tips to share with your guest contact staff.

Express empathy and then apologize to defuse the encounter.

As with all KTN training on service recovery, the first recommendation we have is to deflect the guest's anger with a sincere statement of empathy, personalized and contextualized to their situation. Here are some examples.

- Empathize: "I can understand how you feel, and to be honest sir, I don't like wearing a mask either, especially for a full shift here at the hotel..." or "Indeed, Ms. Smith, I know how you feel and I wish we didn't have to wear one either while on duty, especially with it being so hot this time of year..."

- Apologize: "...and I apologize for the inconvenience this pandemic situation has caused." Or "...I apologize for this situation that is beyond my control here in town."

"It's the front desk staff that is most often the receptors of a verbal barrage, as they are most likely to first encounter unmasked guests as they enter the lobby."

Defer to a higher authority. Let the guest know that it is a higher authority who is mandating this requirement, such as a hotel brand and/or the local, state, or national decree.

- “Here in Anytown, the (Mayor, Council, Judge...) has is requiring our business to comply and we must do so to avoid fines (or risk being closed down). Unfortunately, we are not able to welcome any guests who do not comply.” Or -

“Because the safety of our guests and hotel staff is a top priority here at Hotel Brand X, our leaders are requiring all our guests to comply in order to protect those guests who are especially vulnerable to this pandemic.”

If they continue to object: First, just return to the first step and continue to express empathy and apologize. After you cycle through this a few times, most guests will relent and agree to comply.

If they still resist, speak more firmly such as: -

“As it is sir, I am just not able to allow you to proceed inside, so may I kindly ask once again that you please put on this mask?”

If they still do not comply, it may be helpful to have a manager, or even a co-worker speak with them and take them through the same conversation.

The above steps will most likely resolve the issue, yet some guests will flat out refuse. As a manager, be sure to let your staff know where the line is drawn. Will they allow the guest to cancel their reservation without penalty? When should they call for security or law enforcement? Hopefully though, when frontline staff is trained on the previous de-escalation techniques encounters will not come to this point.

Finally, this is a great time to remind the frontline staff that bringing out the best in others, brings out the best in ourselves. Remind the staff that although there will always be a small percentage of the traveling public who present as difficult guests, the vast majority of those who complain are simply nice people who are going through a rough spot. When we maintain our composure, guests are more likely to comply, rather than when we let our emotions get the best of us.

“Finally, this is a great time to remind the frontline staff that bringing out the best in others, brings out the best in ourselves.”

DOUG KENNEDY

Doug Kennedy is President of the Kennedy Training Network, Inc. a leading provider of hotel sales, guest service, reservations, and front desk training programs and telephone mystery shopping services for the lodging and hospitality industry. Doug continues to be a fixture on the industry's conference circuit for hotel companies, brands and associations, as he been for over two decades. Since 1996, Doug's monthly training articles have been published worldwide, making him one of the most widely read hospitality industry authorities. Visit KTN at www.kennedytrainingnetwork.com or email him directly doug@kennedytrainingnetwork.com



OTA's: Hotels didn't get it then... *Will they get it now?*



Photo: Courtesy Freepik

The Coronavirus pandemic has created havoc all over the world. Looking back, nothing like this has ever been experienced before. So, there is no way of learning from the past. Nor is there any certainty in predicting the future. For thousands of years, humans have struggled and overcome obstacles. If there is one thing that history has taught us, it's the fact that we will overcome this, if not sooner... at least later.

Despite the doom and gloom that COVID-19 thrust upon us, there are several opportunities to re-group, re-align or call it whatever you like - to set a few things right. For starters, and for those of us in the hotel industry, the solution to break free from the shackles of OTA's is up for grabs.

Long before COVID-19, I recall someone - himself a General Manager of a hotel, writing about his experience at the Dusit Hotels and Resorts in Pattaya, Bangkok. He had checked in with a group of friends to celebrate a birthday. They had all booked rooms on the executive floor at Thai Baht (THB) 5,000/- per night, where the initial booking was made on booking.com. His group had originally planned to stay for two nights, but on

the last night (which was a Saturday), one of his friends decided to extend his stay for an additional night.

He thereafter went to the front desk of the executive lounge. The receptionist on duty at the lounge quoted him 7,000 THB for the Sunday night. His friend was surprised as it was 2,000 THB more than what they all had paid before, and more importantly, booking.com was showing 4,600 THB for the same Sunday night. Keeping his cool, he asked the staff if she could offer him the same rate as booking.com. Astonishingly, the receptionist instructed him to book on booking.com.

Here's a similar example of what happened to me in 2018. Having stayed at this hotel in Singapore for two nights on my way to Melbourne, I wished to stay a night at the same hotel on my return journey which was also via Singapore. I found that the rate offered by Expedia and the hotel on its website, to be the same. So, before leaving the hotel to take my flight to Melbourne, I went over to the hotel's front desk and this is how the conversation went:-

Me: Should I book with you directly or again online thru Expedia?

Staff: Whichever you prefer is alright with us.

I was truly astounded at the absence of pro-activeness from the hotel staff as well as the lack of training / common sense. It is indeed ludicrous to see hotels spending a huge part of their marketing budget on developing their own website to persuade customers to book direct, whilst very little effort is made on training staff to handle the direct customer, when that connection is made. What a waste.

Even more wasteful is the fact that, hotels are willing to forgo the opportunity of avoiding having to pay any commission – which can range between 10 to 25 percent. For example, Booking.com charges between 10-15 percent, whereas Expedia charges between 18-25 percent.

To oversimplify the two situations, when you don't get to book directly with the hotel, where do you go? You go to the OTA channels and for the exact piece of business, these two hotels were willing to pay out 15 to 25 percent to OTA's.

Hotels have to immediately stop complaining about OTAs if they are unable to implement policies to sensibly address direct requests. In the two

examples described above, the response of staff involved, when trained properly, would have been something like, *"If you like Mr. XXX, I can handle this personally for you by taking and confirming your booking right now..."*

By doing so, several things are put into motion, such as:-

- Saving out on paying a booking fee, commissions, etc.
- Capitalising on the opportunity to secure extended / return reservation directly.
- Having the opportunity to book next time as well. (important for Corporate / Business hotels)
- Personalising the relationship and building rapport.
- Reducing dependence on your OTA's.
- Putting pressure on your OTA's.

It might come as a surprise to many, but seriously, hoteliers must start believing that their first and most important channel is their hotel's website. There is no point in spending on a good, responsive website and an efficient, user friendly booking engine if one cannot entice guests to book directly – be it online or personally.

Post COVID is the best time ever to favour your own website with special rates or offers to motivate bookers to book direct.

ILZAF KEEFAHS

Ilzaf Keefahs is a free lance writer who enjoys focusing on hospitality related matters that he is passionate about and likes to share his views with hoteliers and customers alike. He delves into the heart of hospitality to figure out both customer service and consumer trends that impact the industry. Ilzaf inherently understands that the customer is the single most valuable asset an organisation can have.





How to get the monkey off your back!

As the Manager, is it possible that you are helping your people in a way that is similar to feeding their monkeys? No? Guess again.

Can you recall how often this has happened? You, as the Manager, whilst walking in the hotel lobby are greeted by your Front Office Manager John, coming in the opposite direction. "Good Morning" he says. As you both meet, he walks alongside you and whispers, "By the way boss...we got a problem. You see..." He then goes on to tell you just enough to get you to say, 'good thing you brought this up. Let me think about it...and I'll let you know.'

Before you met John, on whose back was the monkey (problem)? His. After you both went your separate ways, on whose back is it now? Yours.

Next day morning, at the conclusion of the monthly heads of departments meeting, Jake the Human Resources Manager brings up a problem to which you say "Alright, send me a memo on that". That monkey on Jake's back is now getting ready to leap...and, no sooner he fires that memo to you, his monkey jumps across on to your back.

That same afternoon, you bump into Donald the Assistant Food & Beverages Manager, who asks "Can I have a word with you sir?" and, after a couple of minutes; you end the conversation by saying "I know what you are talking about. Let me check that with Harry (Donald's superior). I'll get back to you later". Immediately afterwards, Donald walks away with a spring in his walk. It's as if a huge burden has been lifted off his shoulders. Why? How? Because of your intervention, the monkey that was on his back until you met him, is now firmly on yours.

So, now you got three monkeys that do not belong to you sitting comfortably on your shoulder. Some Manager's might argue that taking your subordinates' monkeys' is a 'rescue' act. Is it? To John, Jake and Donald, you are a kind Manager, while others may well ask you, "what kind of a Manager are you?"

Monkeys are usually free to forage in the jungle, but when habituated, they need to be fed. If you decide not to set free your monkey, then you are committed to its care and well-being. When you adopt a subordinate's monkey, then who is working for whom?

This story is not all about monkeys. It gets worse. Remember your promise to Donald to talk to his boss Harry? Well, don't be surprised to find him waiting in your office the next morning, and, to greet you with a "How's it going?" (Words of a true supervisor), "Have you spoken to Harry yet?" Caught off guard and not having had the time to call Harry, you hurriedly reply "No I haven't, but I'll get right on to it".

Can you see where this is heading? Now you're subordinate - turned supervisor is putting pressure on you to do his job, and, like any good Manager will go on to supervise your progress. This is the typical 'Delegating up' procedure. One that occurs in every business – despite not found in any manual, guidebook, and standard of operations or the like.

If we assume you have eight department heads and each of whom restricts him/herself to delivering one monkey per day. By the end of the day, there may be eight of those primates clinging on to you and by Friday afternoon, you have over 40 of these monkeys in your office...all screaming to be fed.

It all starts very subtly with the asking of your opinion. You give your subordinates a task, he or she finds it difficult to accomplish and come back to ask you what they should do. This is 'delegating up' and if you accept this, not only does it eat into your time; it also distracts you from your proper role and does absolutely nothing to help your subordinates develop.

So, how do you stop accepting a monkey that a subordinate brings your way or put differently, prevent people from 'delegating up'. You use a supportive leadership style instead. Pat the monkey on the head and tell the subordinate that you understand the complexity of the problem and that you are willing to talk about how he or she – not you, can look for a solution. This results in the subordinate leaving not just with the monkey, but also with an idea as to what he or she should do about it.

Another approach, one that adopts a learning opportunity for your subordinate and keeps that monkey off your back, is to ask the person coming to you “what is your recommendation?” They quickly learn that they must come up with a solution before asking your opinion. You then have the option of supporting their solution or explaining why you would act differently.

Yet another tactic is to ask your subordinate to meet

you in your office at a time convenient to you, and say to him/her “Tell me how it is going then”.

With that statement, both of you have maintained your roles – you as supervisor and you're subordinate as supervisee.

Sometimes, subordinates may have to be taught how to feed certain monkeys. In such instances, use the directing and coaching leadership style. Explain each move thoroughly. Make certain that he/she understands each step and be prepared to repeat yourself if necessary.

Be wary of those who appear baffled by the job you are asking them to do. Sometimes, smart subordinates pretend to be less confident in order to suck you into saying, “give it here, let me take care of it”. That's when you have unwittingly held out your hand to feed your subordinate's monkey.

There are of course some monkeys you may have to take like the ones given by your boss – no choice. But others you don't. If you have already adopted some of your subordinates' monkey, it's time to give them back to the rightful owners.




Remember however, that you as the Manager can develop subordinates provided they have the initiative. Unless you give it to them, you are wasting both their time and yours.

WILLIAM ONCKEN

The late William Oncken Jr. wrote the best - selling 'Managing Management Time' in 1988, from which this column, together with passages from Kenneth Blanchard's “One minute manager meets the monkey” was adapted for the hospitality industry. This article describes how the manager can delegate effectively to keep most monkeys on the subordinates back, offering suggestions on the care and feeding of these lurking invisible monkeys. Stephen R. Covey says the original article written by Oncken and Wass is a powerful wake-up call for managers at risk for carrying too many monkeys.



10 CHARACTERISTICS OF A GOOD INTERVIEWER

-  Understands hiring needs
-  Knows how to sell a position
-  Is fair!
-  Asks the right questions
-  Researches the candidates
-  Is kind!
-  Is a body language expert
-  Makes a conversation with candidates
-  Carefully takes accurate notes
-  Always provides closure

 TALENTLYFT

NOT ALL
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MAKE
FOR
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NOT ALL MANAGERS MAKE FOR GOOD INTERVIEWERS

A picture is worth a thousand words'. Who, it was, that married 'ten thousand words' with 'picture'... isn't known, but what is known, especially by those in the human resources business is that when hiring; 'words count more than looks'.

Looks do matter - for some jobs (like in modeling or in the film industry), but not all. Unfortunately for many in the recruiting field, particularly for those in the hospitality trade, looks seem to matter for all kinds of jobs.

It begins even before the applicant says his or her first word in an interview. By the time the interviewee walks in to the room, an opinion is already being formed by members of the interviewing panel. In that split second, judgments on appearance, posture, smile or even a nervous look, have been formed.

A study done by UCLA several years ago revealed that the impact of a performance was based on 07 percent of the words used, 38 percent on voice quality and 55 percent on nonverbal communication.

Many are the articles written on so many important details that job seekers should know prior to any interview. These can include heaps of advice on displaying verbal and non-verbal cues to impress interviewers. However, very little is written about how interviewers should conduct the interviewing process – to ascertain strengths and weakness of the candidate, look for potential red flags, ensure that there is a fit with salary, personality, verify abilities, be aware of the STAR technique – all of which are essential in the hiring process.

During my time in the hotel trade I've sat at several interviews where I recall how often the conversation would invariably drift towards "He carries himself well" or "she appears to be a good fit for the vacancy". Remarkably, these comments come within nano-seconds of seeing the candidate. The one who was considered 'carried himself well' – was mainly because he was tall and the 'fit for vacancy' comment arose because the girl was extremely pretty.

We humans scoop up bits of visual information conveyed by a person's height, carriage, looks which we analyse in seconds to make a lightning fast decision. That's when first impressions come into play and as we all know, first impressions prepare the groundwork for making an impact – some of which we can control, some we can't.

I discovered that some of my colleagues on the interviewing panel placed a lot of emphasis on 'first impressions'. To many of them it was like judging a book by its cover. If it is eye-catching – let's buy it... never mind the story. End of story.

I once recall persuading my colleagues, when interviewing for hotel receptionists to consider a particular female applicant over a prettier one who seemed to be the number one choice. Suspecting that there to be some unfair bias based on looks, I was determined that the less pretty candidate, who was by far the most skilled applicant, got the job.

Choosing someone based on their looks can backfire badly. Once your other employees begin to suspect of an unfair bias towards good looks, or a similar unrelated reason, trust and respect goes out of the window.

Sadly, I have come to conclude that most of those who sit on interviewing panels have no clue on what questions to ask, how to phrase them, how to listen, be kind, provide closure and most important of all, gauge the suitability of a candidate. I have on occasion been appalled by the 'herd instinct' demonstrated by some panelist – a symptom caused usually by 'boredom' as the interviews progress late into the day. Consequently, to push things to a conclusion, subjective preferences emerge and in the process the wrong candidate gets appointed.

Take telephone or call centre operators where looks do not matter—yet is just one of many necessary attributes for the job. Most interviewers only search for that ideal 'voice' forgetting the other skills set such as having patience, being conversational and approachable, keeping a positive attitude under any situation, attentive listening, to name but a few.

I guess a little bit of a Freudian practice, such as having a screen to hide the applicant, might work well for people who cannot interview and assess candidates objectively. Interestingly, some

orchestras have begun to do auditions behind screens so as to eliminate any gender bias.

Some international companies tested this approach where for the first three minutes of the interview, interviewers who cannot see the interviewee can form first impressions based on only what they hear.

To cut to the chase, a good interviewer not only knows how to select the best candidate but to also provide every candidate summoned, a great learning experience.

ZORMI AMIHTAF

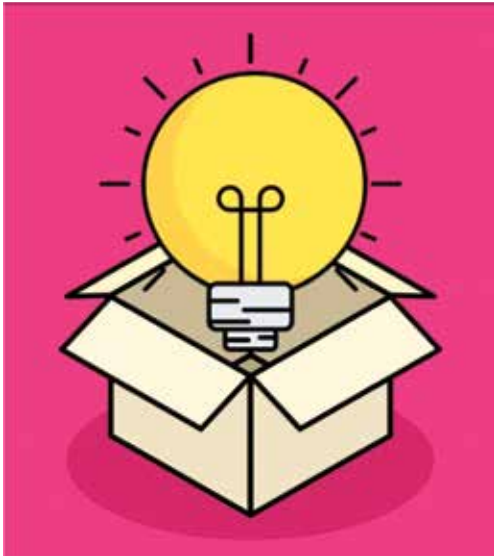
The publisher wishes to express his profound thanks to the writer of the above article. The article resources necessary for a magazine of international standing are immense and growing and we found this piece irresistible to publish. Not only does it reveal issues in the workplace when one considers the process of interviewing applicants but also tells a story, few will openly admit it exists as described.

SOME REALITIES THAT HAUNT THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY

- a. Our lowest paid, shortest tenured, entry level front-line employees generally have more interaction with the customer than the highest paid.
- b. Solely using traditional financial measures falls short in at least 3 ways:-
 - It may not capture all of the company's strategic objectives (Vision of 10 hotels by..., Social responsibilities, etc.).
 - Financial measures are *after the fact*. Since financial measures are results that are recorded well after the actions and decisions that leads to them, they are indicators that arrive too late to help prevent problems and ensure organisational health.
 - Financial measures are not very diagnostic. (Financial accounting, balance sheets, profit & loss statements, allocation of costs, etc. are an x-ray of the enterprise's skeleton. But much as the diseases we most commonly die from – heart disease, cancer, Parkinson's – do not show up in a skeletal x-ray, a loss of market standing or a failure to innovate do not register in the accountant's figures until the damage has been done – Peter Drucker).

Most of what we call management today consists of getting in the way of people doing the work - Peter Drucker

To lead people to extraordinary service, you must serve them well by hiring the right people, providing meaningful work, preparing them well for their jobs, giving them ongoing support, and finally, by getting out of the way.



Bob's Story

We begin to think that high levels of intelligence are more the result of nature, rather than nurture. But that's just not the case.

The truth is, we are all blank slates when we arrive here on earth. Sure, we inherit a few things from our predecessors, but ultimately our futures depend on our work ethic. There are plenty of brilliant people in the world who never amount to much, solely because they lacked the opportunity to exhibit their inherent talents and intelligence.

Bob worked long years ago at a leading bulb-manufacturing factory in the U.S. The company supplied light-bulbs to several dealers spread over a large territory and had a huge fleet of delivery trucks to distribute its stocks of light bulbs.

Bob's job was to pack light bulbs in boxes for delivery. Each box was to contain 24 bulbs and the factory employed 12 full-time workers including Bob as 'bulb-packers'. The wages paid to each 'packer' was not much, but Bob needed the money.

Unlike the other 'packers', Bob was not only intelligent, but possessed a mind that from a young age, continually looked at doing things differently.

Bob found his job both repetitive and boring. Soon, whilst not neglecting his duties, he began experimenting with his work in his spare moments to make his life at work more interesting. In the process, he discovered that with a little ingenuity, he could re-arrange 36 bulbs, rather than 24 into a single box.

In doing so, not only could the same sized box now hold 12 more bulbs, the manner in which the bulbs were packed also resulted in minimizing breakages. Furthermore, when Bob did the math's, his method meant that the factory needed to order less boxes (30 % more or less), but also required fewer delivery trucks (and drivers), leading to lower running, fuel and insurance costs.

When Bob attempted to share his discovery with his immediate supervisor, he was immediately yelled at "Don't try to be smart. Pack 24 light-bulbs into a box ...that's how it is always done and will always be done - nothing more, nothing less. Don't try to screw up things and put us all out of our jobs. Just stick to what you are told."

“The chief financial officer can tell you how big the company's payroll is, but cannot tell you the replacement cost of employees' skills, much less whether they are appreciating or depreciating”.

Not long afterwards, unable to respond to intense competition and to fend off rising production costs, this factory closed down. Everyone was surprised when that happened. Not Bob though. He knew why? Bob had by then moved on to another job where his employer recognized his talent.

How many businesses often fail to recognise what their employees know, allowing people like Bob, who are valuable assets, plateau in frustration or move out the door? Some companies eventually do, too late...because Bob had left.

Dan Meyer captures this nicely when he says "In time, Organisations come to miss what they didn't know they had." He cites a student of intellectual capital stating, "The chief financial officer can tell you how big the company's payroll is, but cannot tell you the replacement cost of employees' skills, much less whether they are appreciating or depreciating".

Organisations must learn to recognise the tacit knowledge that people like Bob possess, then create an environment where it is made explicit and find avenues to share it – only then will employees and companies celebrate intelligence in the workplace.

ANONYMOUS

In this attention-grabbing age, the decision to publish this article written by someone who wished anonymity, (jokingly saying 'refer to me as another Bob'), was irresistible. The moral of the story could well apply to any business – even in hospitality, where managers who think they know it all, frequently 'kill' ideas from their workers. Consequently, many opportunities to improve get thrown out due to the reluctance of supervisors and managers to engage, openly discuss, analyse a problem or discover a solution with their employees.



How to Save A Million Dollars

The CEO of a national hotel chain was attending an out-of-town conference, and stayed at a hotel owned by the competition. When he stepped up to the reception desk, the young receptionist greeted him by saying, "Welcome back." He was impressed that she knew he had been there before, and when he returned to his office a few days later, he challenged his own company to come up with a system to identify and acknowledge returning guests. Several months and hundreds of man-hours later, the proposal was on his desk. As you can imagine it was awesome in scope and staggering in price...nearly \$1 million dollars. Ridiculous he thought. He would never be able to convince his board of directors to approve an expenditure of that size simply so reception staff could say "Welcome back!"

But I don't suppose you get to be CEO of a multi-billion dollar company without some smarts. So he conducted a little investigating of his own at his competitor's local hotel and was able to come up with the answer. Here's how they did it.

When a cab pulls up to the hotel, the bellman typically assists the driver with a guest's luggage. Whenever possible, the bellman asks the guest, "Is this your first visit with us?" The bellman then escorts the guest into the hotel lobby and makes eye contact with the front desk receptionist. The information is conveyed via a subtle signal...a simple tug on the ear indicates a returning guest.

When our CEO stepped up to register, a genuine smile and a "Welcome back" was all it took to make a significant and very positive impression.

It's not a foolproof system, but it didn't cost \$1 million bucks either!

Courtesy: in2ition

Q & A

session with Dilip de Silva – former Chairman SLITHM and immediate Past Patron of CHSGA

Q. You were the SLITHM Chairman until late last year, what was your experience specially returning to the country in almost after 40 years?

A. In a nutshell, I would say it was extremely challenging - especially after the Easter Sunday bombings which brought the entire tourism industry to a halt and training institutes totally shut down for several months rendering helpless students stranded in no man's land for a long time. The worst was the death of two SLITHM students at Shangri-La disaster with several other students injured and requiring hospitalization. However, within three months we were able to reopen our Colombo and regional institutes and were able to conduct the annual graduation ceremony enabling hundreds of deserving students to graduate.

As the Tourism Ministers office was located in the SLITHM building there was the additional burden of servicing never ending ministerial meetings throughout the recovery phase. I must say the SLITHM faculty and administration staff rose to the occasion and met all the demands propelled at them. As it says through adversity comes opportunities as well, for the first time in the history of SLITHM, we were able to place around 25 students in overseas internships in Dubai, India, Malaysia (Langkawai Island) and Maldives Islands with the support from Indian Taj hotel group and Marriot hotels in Dubai.

Another shining 'moment of truth' during my tenure with SLITHM was to see SLITHM students winning 23 medals at the Chefs Guild competition in 2019 including one super gold medal in cookery and Food and Beverage Service. In the past SLITHM have been winning 5 to 6 medals every year. In 2019 we set a target of winning at least 25 medals and finally won 23 medals.

Q. During your tenure with SLITHM you were the Patron of CHSGA. What were your impressions?

A. Having been a student in 1973 and a lecturer from 1978 to 1981 at the Hotel School and to eventually

become the Chairman of SLITHM, it was indeed a pleasure and privilege to serve as the Patron of CHSGA. It is no secret that CHSGA is the backbone of SLITHM from the time CHSGA was formed and has always been there to lend a helping hand.

The PROPEL soft skills development program of SLITHM students organized by CHSGA has benefitted the SLITHM students immensely to build their character, confidence and leadership traits. A classic example was how the students rose to the occasion to rebuild the confidence of the industry by organizing the "Unity Run" from the Kingsbury hotel to town Hall. The unprecedented support and attendance by the Colombo hotels management and staff were an indication of SLITHM students' capabilities outside the classroom environment. I would say it was one of my proudest moments with SLITHM.

Q. Any future plans you hope to embark upon that would benefit the tourism sector?

A. Apart from doing short term assignments, I am planning to organize a nationwide tourism debate among the Tourism institute students to give them the opportunity to showcase their communication skills and to build up their public speaking competence. A common thing we hear from guests is that majority of our younger employees are very shy and timid and unable to cope up with guests both local as well as overseas visitors. I believe a competition of this nature will provide a platform for youth from grassroots level institutes to more accomplished students from elite institutes to showcase their talents in public.

Sri Lanka's success recently with world debating championships is a good indication that we have abundant talent in the country and given the opportunity I have no doubts the youth of tourism institutes will rise to the occasion. I am pleased that few leading hotels have pledged their support as well as print and electronic media as well. I would be delighted if CHSGA could take this on board.

Q. If you were to return to SLITHM, what would be your immediate priority?

A. There is one thing I regret that could not address sufficiently before my departure. That is to provide the students to receive a decent meal in the school. Unfortunately students are not allowed to buy any meals from the canteen let alone even a cup of tea! I successfully negotiated with the Tourism police OIC for them to vacate the large room they occupy on the ground floor to allow students to have a cafeteria there. Unfortunately up to date, I understand nothing has happened since I left. I sincerely hope whoever comes as the chairman will attend to this without delay.

Q. Understand 2020 is a special year for you. Can you describe why?

A. Yes indeed the year 2020 is a very significant year for me as it my 50th anniversary since joining the

tourism industry in 1970. Straight from school I joined Lihiniya Surf hotel Bentota under Hotels Corporation as trainee.

After three months training in the reception, I was moved to kitchen as a kitchen clerk, ending up as kitchen supervisor after 4 years, before leaving to UK on a scholarship offered by the Hotels and Restaurants Association UK to undergo a course of management training.

Since then I was privileged to travel and work in 4 continents covering 12 countries over the past 50 years and return back to Sri Lanka to settle down. I consider the most important 'moment of truth' in my career was meeting my wife, Nelufa at Lihiniya Surf Hotel Bentota in 1970 and returning to Sri Lanka after 40 years to live beside the sea at Uswetakeyiyawa (UK) Hendala beach front resort.



SLITHM Medal winners with the interviewee standing next to the former Minister of Tourism and faculty members

DILIP DE SILVA since leaving the Sri Lanka Institute of Hospitality and Hotel Management (SLITHM) involved himself with the Skills for Inclusive Growth (S4IG) program as a consultant trainer/coach for guesthouse and home development projects. Additionally, he was the Tourism Consultant for PWC's study on female participation in the tourism sector as well as working on a short term assignment with the Tourism Industry Skills Council (TISC). During the Covid-19 lockdown, he participated in a series of online cookery demonstrations for ILO global staff and conducted a 3-day 'Train the Trainer' program for 20 F & B instructors of the Vocational Training Authority (VTA).

After COVID-19 every customer counts...



In the 19th century, Italian engineer and economist Wilfried Fritz Pareto observed that 20% of Italians held 80% of the country's wealth. Expanding on his 'law of the vital few,' Pareto held that a multitude of different events and social structures follow this same principle. This theory, which came to be known as the 'Pareto principle' or one that is more popularly referred to as the '80/20' rule, has proven to be absolutely accurate when applied across nearly every facet of human activity.

Today, (i.e. up until COVID-19 came), none will dispute the well-known business adage that 20% of your customers produce 80% of your sales, and conversely the majority of your customers (80%) contribute only 20% of your revenue. So, looking after that 20% became an obsession and Pareto's nugget of wisdom influenced sales and marketing teams to focus on that 20%, rather than dilute their time and energy by trying to make everyone a customer.

Consequently many businesses concentrated on their top customers, paying little heed or ignoring the bottom where the small spenders were.

Picture your customer volume in the form of a pyramid, where the high spenders make up the pinnacle, while the small spenders occupy the base. And if you lose the bottom of the pyramid - your volume base is gone; meaning your sales drop by 20% and 80% of your customers are gone. Which type of business says "I can survive with my top 20% only?"

We consumers live in a world where businesses can discriminate between their high-value and low-value clientele at will – preferring to pamper the biggest spenders and marginalizing the rest. While most companies cannot get away with deciding the order of treating its customers in this way, some do it openly: airlines.

Every now and then, airlines keep adding an expensive new amenity – such as picking up passengers from home and chauffeuring them to the airport in a limousine, offering cabins with beds, private showers and personal service to name a few. But these airline perks are not for ordinary people like you and me. They are only available to the elite flyers or the mega-rich. The rest of us must endure narrowing seats with minimal service.

On some flights I have found myself being treated like a stowaway, and yes...on that Boeing 777, I was at the bottom of the pyramid, seated in the economy class section – jocularly referred to as 'cattle-class'. Airlines have somehow invented a flying caste system that is embarrassingly acceptable to everyone. Does this not seem odd?

How often have you read about hotels claiming "our goal is to make every guest feel like at home... blah blah blah". This has me confused. Because we all know that the homes of guests are not the same. So, how does the hotel do that? It simply cannot and doesn't. In my experience most hotels treat some guests as more equal than other guests.

It's all to do with whether you are a 'high' spender or 'low' one.

COVID-19 has since wiped the slate clean by shutting down every restaurant and hotel. As the recovery takes place, re-opening operations after closure is like opening a new business – starting from zero.

There are several positives one can take from the 80/20 rule when re-opening during COVID-19:

- 20% of your menu items will generate 80% of your sales, so keep the most popular and remove the least accepted. This will also cut down on inventory, 'Mise-en-place', wastage, etc.
- If 20% of your wine and beverages give you 80% of your sales, cut down on the many

different labels as it also involves carrying expensive stock.

- 20% of your employees will cause 80% of your staff problems – time to weed out the trouble makers.

Re-opening a restaurant for instance is different in the new normal. Say, you have a 1,800 sq. ft. outlet that prior to COVID-19, accommodated 52 seats with tables and main fixtures. Given the new spacing measurement requirements, you would just about fit 20 covers. All the health and safety aspects aside, can your restaurant make money with 20 seats? Maybe...maybe not.

One thing though is for sure, to get to those 20 customers...every customer counts.

NOORHEM ARAHOZ

Told entirely in the language of the energetic, Noorhem Arahoz loves to write on 'this and that' – especially matters that spill forth from the world of hospitality. She has travelled extensively, by road, train, boat and up in the air to several countries. Noorhem loves to explore, is a nature lover, has dabbled in the food business and possess an unquenchable thirst to learn whatever that catches her attention.

THE KEY IS NOT IN THE SIZE OF THE PRIZE...BUT IN THE COMPETITIVE SPIRIT IT EVOKES



Joe is the owner of a popular and highly reputed restaurant. Despite excellent food sales, the revenue from beverages was far below expectations and, in spite of his exhortations at the daily pre-opening 'briefings', – it remained sluggish. After careful thought, he came up with an idea to do something that would galvanize his staff to sell more beverages. This is what he did. The person with the day's first beverage sale would be given a \$ 50 note and would be allowed to keep it –until someone topped that sale. When another person did better, he or she would receive that \$ 50 note. Eventually, at the end of the shift, the person who sold the highest in terms of beverage sales was the winner and received the \$ 50 note as the reward for that day. Suddenly, instead of standing around moaning about how tough it was to get customers to order beverages when dining, usually lethargic servers turned into passionate salespeople and customers were attentively served. All for \$ 50!

Takeaway from the story: Spirited competition can make small achievements worthwhile and seemingly impossible actions the standard.

Courtesy: in2ition

*You're not as clever as
you think you are... so here's*

HOW TO THINK SMARTER



Photo: Courtesy Freepik

Most of us think that by teaming up, we work harder and become more accomplished.

The truth though, is we tend to put in less effort in a group because we know our efforts will be pooled. If you know you aren't being judged as individuals, your instinct is to fade into the background.

To prove this, psychologist Alan Ingham had people put in a blindfold and grab hold of a rope. The rope was attached to a contraption that simulated the resistance of an opposing team.

The subjects were told other people were also holding the rope on their side, and he measured their effort.

Then, he told them they would be pulling alone, and again he measured their efforts. They were alone both times, but when they thought they were in a group, they pulled on average 18% less strenuously. This phenomenon has been observed in every possible situation involving group effort. Communal farms always produce less than family-owned farms.

Factories where people do repetitive tasks with no supervision are less productive than ones where each person has an individual quota to reach.

Sports coaches are aware of this and that is why most major teams isolate each member of the team when they're to evaluate or encourage them.

This effect can even be charted on a graph. The more people you add to the team, the less effort any one person makes. The graph arches away like a perfect ski-slope. So, if you want something done properly, then do it yourself.

DAVID MCRANEY

This Extract from 'You are not so smart' by David McRaney, appeared in the daily Mail some years ago. David McRaney is a journalist, author and podcaster. His blog exploring how we delude ourselves, youarenotsosmart.com, laid the groundwork for his first book, *You Are Not So Smart*, which became an international bestseller and was translated into fourteen languages.



Beverage cost or Contribution margin?



We all heard about it every month. The beverage cost! And it usually was not very pretty. Seemingly always too high, and it typically created lots of finger-pointing and much pontificating. Beverage cost was always a slightly complex beast and often misunderstood. That was largely because this poor cousin to food cost was shrouded in a bit of mystery and mystique, like a secret lost cocktail recipe.

Let's have a closer look at the black sheep of the family.

Many people are simply confused by beverage cost and, while it is an important standard to maintain, the real game to understand is contribution margin. What makes the biggest dollar profit is what is truly important to understand and focus on.

In hospitality, there is a business version of schizophrenia. It is a different way of managing, measuring and reporting everything. Just when you think you have one area of the business figured out, you quickly and silently switch gears and, Voila! You have a more complex version of what you just thought you wrapped your head around. Rooms, food operations, spa, golf, retail,

communication, banquets, minibars and, alas, beverage sales. They all are seemingly the same but under the hood, they act and produce very differently. The black sheep of the family is the booze and it has four middle names:

1. **Liquor**
2. **Beer**
3. **Wine**
4. **Minerals**

Like most people's children, they all look and behave very differently. When it comes to their cost you are well-advised to look in the two-way mirror and see their contribution as the bigger part of their story and not their cost.

Let's look at the first three

Contribution is measured two ways. The first is the **inverse of the cost divided by the selling price minus one**.

In the first example, I am going to use a vodka tonic—it is in the liquor family.

We pour 1.5-ounce drinks in my establishment. A 26-ounce bottle of Smirnoff costs our hotel \$8.

We get 17.3 pours out of one bottle when we sell highballs ($26 / 1.5 = 17.3$).

We sell each highball for \$8. My portion cost is \$8 divided by the 17.3 number of pours =

($\$8 / 17.3 = 46.2$ cents). My contribution margin in this example is **94.2%**.

Another way to establish the contribution markup is to express this as ($\$8.00 - .462 = \7.53). In my liquor highball example, we produce a gross contribution of \$7.53 and a gross contribution margin of 94.2%, or, inversely, a cost of 5.8%. I need to also add my tonic cost. To control my portion, I always want to use a shot glass properly or - better still, an electronic portion device. (This is a key to success with **No. 4 - Minerals**. Control your portions, control your profit.)

Now for the second example:
contribution margin of beer.

If a bottle of beer costs me \$2.05 and I sell it for \$6.00, the math is. ($2.05 / 6.00 - 1 = 65.8\%$). My contribution margin on this example is 65.8%, my beer cost is 35.2%.

Another way to establish the contribution markup is to express this as ($6.00 - 2.05 = \$3.95$).

In the beer example, we produce a gross contribution margin of \$3.95 and a gross contribution margin of **65.8%**.

The third and final part of the family we will look at is the **contribution from wine**. In this example, we will use house wine.

My house white wine costs \$12 per one-liter bottle and I sell a glass for \$11. I pour a 5-ounce portion. There are 35 ounces in a one-liter bottle, so I get 7 glasses per bottle.

My cost is ($\$12 / 7 = \1.71). My contribution margin on this example is 84.5%, my beverage cost is 15.5%.

Another way to establish the contribution markup is to express this as ($11.00 - 1.71 = \$9.29$). In the house wine example, we produce a gross profit of \$9.29 and a gross contribution margin of **84.5%**.

When I serve wine, I always want to use a 5-ounce carafe or a portioning device to ensure my quantities are always correct.

To summarize things we have liquor, beer, and wine all behaving very differently:

Liquor cost of \$.42 per portion, beverage cost of 5.8% and a gross **contribution margin of \$7.53**

Beer cost of \$2.05 per portion, beverage cost of 34.2% and a gross **contribution margin of \$3.95**

Wine cost of \$1.71 per portion, beverage cost of 15.5% and a gross **contribution margin of \$9.29**

The question that I first want to ask you is this: Who in your establishment has produced and propagated the beverage contribution margin strategy? Who knows which products produce the highest margins and which ones to sell first? Think about your local car dealer. They know which model has the biggest markup and the highest contribution margin. Your beverage operation is no different. This Intel should be front and center, not hidden in a well.

In your banquet and catering operation, what products are your sellers actively promoting? When a client presents themselves with a budget and needs your help to put together their event, you have an excellent opportunity to steer them in the highest profitable direction. In your restaurants and bars, do your servers know what products to offer first? Do they understand the difference between the contribution margin and the beverage cost? I bet most of them do not.

You now have an excellent tool to use to help get your service staff to sell the most profitable items first. Clients often know exactly what they want but they also in many instances are looking for suggestions, help, and service.

Learn to serve what profits the most first.

DAVID LUND – the hotel Financial Coach

At Hotel Financial Coach I help hotel leaders with financial leadership coaching and workshops. Learning and applying the necessary financial leadership skills is the fast track to greater career success and increased personal prosperity. I significantly improve individual and team results with a proven return on investment.

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HOTEL SERVICE ICONS

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THE CRM CHALLENGE



Dan, the President of ABC Hotels firmly believed that having the best Customer Relations Management (CRM) system was the solution to achieving the hotel's ROI goals, motivating his sales team and delighting hotel guests. He then hired a CRM vendor at a huge cost to engineer, install and implement the most technologically sophisticated system as quickly as possible. Thereafter, hotel staff CRM - users underwent an intensive training program to understand how the newly installed CRM system was going to increase business.

Dan's 'Game Plan' was now ready and set to go. Alas, his plan came crashing down as his sales team kept bickering about how well the old system was, while guest satisfaction levels kept sliding down. Soon, it was 'Game over' for Dan as the company replaced him with someone else. How did it all go wrong for Dan?

Customer Relations Management is a daunting journey with tough challenges. Done properly with a master plan at the beginning and ending with a technologically sound 'fit-for-purpose' solution, it would not only meet one's requirements, but also help overcome the numerous hidden obstacles and dangerous corners on the road to success.

Dan's fatal mistake was when he failed to run his plan through his top executives and all "C & B" levels of the hotel to obtain everyone's 'buy-in'. Furthermore, he neglected to study the company as a whole, not balancing his people's needs with the technological realities to ensure that the hotel's sales processes were enhanced not restricted. Failure to strike that delicate balance between technology, people and processes, where even overlooking just one element can be a disaster, led to the disharmony and his eventual dismissal. In this instance, not getting his people involved was his mistake.

Way back in the early 1980's, whilst working as the Lobby Manager at a 500-room 5-star International hotel in Colombo, I recall the entire front office operation was manual. In those days, technology, especially in the hospitality industry, was in its infancy. Almost every large hotel used the 'Whitney' rack system - developed in 1940 and which, up until the electronic reservation systems became common, was considered highly efficient in managing reservations and front office operations.

The telex machine was the most reliable and fastest means by which businessmen connected globally. The hotel had a team of telex operators 24/7, punching furiously on the tapes to meet demand.

Getting an overseas call via the hotel operator required a pre-booking thru the government-run department of telecommunications and could take several hours – which meant one had to stay close to the telephone in one's room or anywhere in the hotel for hours. There was no direct-dial facility in Sri Lanka those days - despite the 1st long distance telephone call without operator assistance having taken place in 1947 in the US.

Check-outs were handled by the front desk cashier using NCR 42 machines. There was no connectivity with the hotel outlets / profit centres and periodically, stewards had to run over to the front desk at the lobby level, to hand over signed guest checks for posting to the relevant guest's room bill. The hotel's night club was on the top most hotel floor and to speed up things, there was a pneumatic tube system that was connected from the night club to the front desk cashier's counter nine floors below. Signed guest checks were placed inside a metal carrier which then was inserted inside the tube. The suction created inside the tube kind of jet-propelled the carrier along the tube to the cashier's desk.

Even at that time, the hotel, which ran an average 85% occupancy for several successive years had a large number of repeat guests. Every frontline employee including the telex operators knew their guests. The success of the 'know your guest' culture was mainly due to the 'tracking' and meticulous 'capture' of guest behaviours, preferences, observations (complaints as well), by all levels of frontline / service staff.

These priceless 'nuggets' of information were gathered and maintained at the front office, and made available to reservation staff. During the booking process, whatever available information relevant to any guest was retrieved and 'flagged' to all other key departments on the day of arrival. The high loyalty factor the hotel enjoyed was testimony

to how well the system worked... all the time, every time and by everyone.

The point I wish to make here is that there is no escaping the required 'hard work' one has to put in, regardless of whether one has installed the most advanced CRM system. It is exactly this that many fail to understand – believing that technology will actively capture and feed the guest behaviours and data without human intervention. It simply doesn't work like that.

Take for example John Doe who arrives one morning at your hotel with a golf bag amongst his luggage. This is the easiest scenario to read. The golf bag signals John's passion for golf, and, an observant bell person who grabs his luggage, will not only inform of this to the receptionist, but immediately tell the concierge about it as well.

Picture how this works now. No sooner has John settled in his room, he is contacted by the concierge to enquire whether he would like to book for a round of golf at the nearest golf course in town. Likewise, Jane Doe who checked in with a Tennis racket, will be contacted to book a game at the hotel's tennis courts. Meanwhile, John's interests in Golf and Jane's in tennis, is duly recorded under their names in 'Guest History' by the receptionist/s who did their check-in.

Notice that in the scenarios described above, technology comes into play much later – only from the stage where the receptionist feeds in John's and Jane's sporting interests. Most hoteliers believe that CRM systems will do the work done by the bellman and concierge (as in the two examples) and that's a huge mistake.

Unless guest behaviour is observed, kept track of, fed into the system as well as retrieved at the appropriate moment by people, the flow of information will not materialize.

SHAFEEK WAHAB / FCHSGA

Shafeek, apart from having extensive experience in different tenants of hospitality including Hotel Branding, is the Founder of 'in2ition' - a hospitality focused Consultancy Company that undertakes Brand compliance auditing, Customer Journey mapping, Corporate Education and Training, improvement of Minimum Quality Standards, Developing Standards of Operations and Website management. He is SGS Yarsley/SL certified preliminary level ISO 'Lead Auditor'.



Photos: Courtesy Keith Jayasekera

There is a trickle of diners returning to their ol' jaunts but mostly regulars which gives hope but not that much to feel the Covid menace was just a one off - a temporary fright right out of the blues which was contained well within our shores within a few short months.

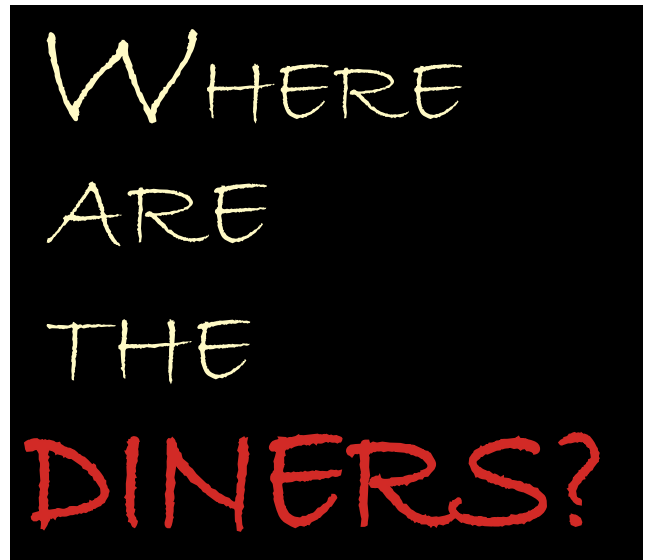
That analogy is nearly right although not exactly so.

We are not in a position to close our shores to outsiders indefinitely and here lies the opportunity and the flaw in equal measure. There are no quarantine measures in existence today that are 100% fool proof, and as such the odd virus can slip in unawares and within a matter of days a whole lot of folks can get infected and before we know it we have a roving epidemic sending us into panic mode.

The exclusive single owner eateries are drying out and dying by the dozen and there are estimations that as much as 40 – 50 per cent such well-established, longstanding diners will be out of business within the metropolis area before the end of this year.

This situation of course can change overnight once we can produce a safe vaccine for Coronavirus, but as vaccines go, they take time to develop, get tested and provide sufficient proof of their worthiness for human consumption before being released to the world.

Once an establishment remains closed or becomes redundant business acumen takes over not to return to the same foray but to find alternative ventures



that are less affected by a similar deadly disturbance to our social life and our behaviour patterns.

Fine dining is exclusive and requires F&B expertise and that means a higher proportion of investment on personnel with such accreditation beside the infrastructure and creating the right ambience and charm. Such establishments require a regular clientele bringing in more such sophisticated, discerning palates to try out their gourmet fare and hospitality.

However connoisseurs are the first to shy away when their life is in imminent danger unless they are extra careful and the mere resurgence of Covid-19 will make them stay away from public places of all sorts of gatherings, including dining out for certain - the very reason why most individually owned, well-run, bon vivant properties will carry a big question mark in the future.

The 5-star properties which have their own specialty restaurants can afford to temporarily closedown these units until such time the 'new normalcy' returns in terms of a significant increase of occupation numbers. Besides a 24-hour Coffee Shop and room service, can provide a convenient stop-gap – with the advantage of having the infrastructure already in place, and commonly found in most of these chain hotels.

The entire gamut of the local hospitality trade needs a thorough revamp with rewrites on all the facets taking into account Covid-19 has changed the game plan enjoyed by the hospitality trade from a 'sellers'

to that of a nearly non-existent 'buyer's' market.

The realization that this paradigm shift has taken place and that the change in the modus operandi must occur accordingly with immediate adjustments for long-term survival will be the new smart game in town, my friend.



KAY JAY

Kay Jay pens, rhymes and paints whenever the mood kicks in and keeps him in his study. He also sends writings of others whose deliberations fascinate him and tickles his curiosity. However this does NOT necessarily mean these viewpoints are fully endorsed. KayJay can be reached via [<arekesaya@gmail.com>](mailto:arekesaya@gmail.com) at your peril and there's no guarantee of a response or feedback either.

Does your kitchen operation send the right message?



One of the best ways to predict the quality of meals and service at a restaurant is to examine the restroom. Restrooms, including toilets, tiles and washbasins - are among the easiest rooms to clean. If a restaurant cannot keep its restroom clean, then you can be sure that the kitchen will be worse. It does not matter if it is a swanky, upscale restaurant or simple diner.

Messy kitchens tend to breed food borne pathogens, poor quality food and an indifference to customers. Conversely, clean kitchens reflect healthiness, a passion for quality and desire to delight customers.

Do you care about the state of your kitchens, and take pride in your restaurant? Do you have a way to ensure that your high standards are met? A kitchen audit is a simple and standardized way to make it happen.

- Is the walk-in sanitary?
How about prep stations?
Is equipment cleaned and maintained?
Would you mind if a guest walked in unannounced and saw the condition of the kitchen?
- Are aprons clean?
Are gloves and masks worn?
The checks and whites in good condition?
Is your kitchen staff presentable enough to walk through the dining room and not turn heads? (Don't let them out there unless they're a positive reflection of your kitchen).
- Are your bathrooms immaculate?
What conclusion do your customers draw about your kitchen based on what they see in your bathrooms?

Do you have an open kitchen? Bravo. It takes guts and discipline to show the world what you're up to behind the line - even more reason to be obsessive about the cleanliness (and professionalism) of your kitchen.

Courtesy: in2ition

"THE 4 MOST IMPORTANT WORDS IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARE:

'WHAT DO YOU THINK?'

LISTEN TO YOUR PEOPLE AND LEARN"

J.W."Bill" Marriott, Jr.

"What do you think?" is a non-scaring, thought-provoking question, that when posed properly will help employees share their ideas and thoughts.

This simple question can transform your relationship with all your employees and make you a better manager.

This question is far better than asking 'Why? How?

It also makes your employees feel that you value their input and respect them. In return they will think of you highly, because you have created an environment for discussion.

'What do you think?' has no right or wrong answers – which give your staff the confidence to respond. By asking the question, you have elevated mere listeners to active participants in the discussion.

Do not use the "what do you think?" question to trap or ridicule an employee in front of others.

You will destroy whatever rapport you have by doing so.

Sometimes after asking the question, there may be silence. Wait.

Don't be impatient. Don't start prompting or talking. Initial silence is good. Embrace it, Once someone breaks the silence, gradually everyone will begin to speak.

Remember these are employees who have to listen a lot because most managers do not let them talk.

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