
STRATEGIC HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT – COMPETENCY DOMAINS FOR HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY PROFESSIONALS

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Abstract: Travel and tourism is the largest service industry in India. It is expected that the tourism sector's contribution to the country's gross domestic product (GDP) will grow at the rate of 7.8 per cent yearly in the period of 2013–2023. The Indian tourism sector has been flourishing in recent years due to the best lodging facilities at the tourist destinations. Hotels in India have a supply of more than 110,000 rooms. With tremendous pull of opportunity, India is a destination for hotel chains looking for growth. Multinational industry giants are flocking India and forging joint ventures to earn their share of pie in the race. This trend is demanding manpower requirement at a greater level. The quantity and quality of human resource becomes crucial to meet the expansion of the industry. This makes Human Resource the most challenging for any hospitality industry and demands competencies of HR personnel to be strategic and functional.

HR professional must master the necessary competencies and that mastery of HR knowledge comes only from being familiar with the concepts, language, logic, and practices of HR that are the result of research and training. Nowadays, competencies are used in many facets of human resource management, ranging from individual functions such as recruitment and performance management to organizational strategic planning and design of organizational structure and culture. HR competencies are said to be a set of characteristics contributing to the effective HR performance that enables an organization to carry out its business strategies in a competitive market. This study will examine and identify the core competencies that a Hotel HR professional should embody in the current scenario and supersede basic competencies that are practised years together.

Keywords: Competency, Functional, Strategic.

Introduction: In today's world, Economic Growth of a country depends on Tourism & Hospitality industry along with Industrial and Agriculture sector. Hotel Industry is one of the fastest growing sectors in India with the growth rate of 8% between 2007 and 2016 and India has been the most attractive destination for global hospitality industry players. Tourism and Hotel sector is a widely expanding and booming segment in the market, and this industry offers huge job prospects to our nationals. The importance of tourism and hospitality employment in both developed and developing countries is attested by the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), who suggest that travel- and tourism-related activities account for

over 230 million jobs, or 8.7 per cent of jobs worldwide (WTTC, 2006).

Due to globalisation there has been immense growth in Hospitality segment in India, especially in the metro and cosmopolitan cities like Chennai. There is a boom in demand for hotel rooms in the country as a result of growth in sectors like information technology, telecom, banking and finance insurance, construction and real estate. This has resulted in demand for well qualified and experienced candidates from this field in India and Overseas

Chennai is a key business hub for south India and demand here has historically been driven by the IT/ ITeS, Banking, Financial Services and Insurance (BFSI), the automobile manufacturing

industry and leisure. Nearly 75% to 80% of the city's demand base is of corporate/ business origin, with the remaining being Meetings, Incentives, Conventions and Exhibitions (MICE), Leisure as well as Airline driven.

As the hotel inventory and keys increases and registers a remarkable growth, Jobs also grow in complexity. However, whilst the quantity of jobs is unquestionable, the quality of many of these jobs is of great concern to academics and policy-makers alike This makes Human Resource the most challenging for any hospitality industry and demands competencies of a HR personnel to be strategic and functional.

Need for Strategic Human Resource: Human Resources, as a discipline, has been going through a great deal of change in the past two decades but in spite of these changes the hospitality HR professional seem to struggle to get it right. . However, due to the turbulent nature of the business world today and the resulting demands on human capital, the Strategic Business Partner (SBP) role can be a highly valuable solution for hospitality industry. A well-designed SBP role coupled with excellent delivery of operational HR functions can help in transforming the HR function .The development of the SBP role comes from a combination of having skills and knowledge in the areas of Human Resources, Organization Development, business acumen, and being in partnership. However, once the competency profile is developed, it is important for the industry to focus on the transitions from their current HR state to the use of an SBP model.

Whether Human Resources have been able to add value and provide strategic services before, the demand is paramount today. The types and intensity of global changes affecting organizations increasingly have human capital implications in both strategy and operations. While some HR functions will continue to require similar, tactical execution, the need for higher level strategic HR perspectives is growing.

It is in this arena that the Strategic Business Partner role becomes essential and can add significant value.

HR Competence: Competencies are used in many facets of human resource management, ranging from individual functions to organizational strategic planning and design of organizational structure and culture. HR competencies are said to be a set of characteristics contributing to the effective HR performance that enables an organization to carry out its business strategies in a competitive market.

Researchers in the field of strategic human resource management have emphasized that human resource practices leads to higher organisation performance and be sources of sustained competitive advantages. There is a need for HR professionals to become more effective strategic business partners and must make the transition from being strategic business partners to becoming contributors in their organizations.

Given that numerous studies have shown a positive relationship between strategic HRM practices and organisation performance, this study sought to identify the competencies needed for HR professionals to become effective business partners and contributor in organizations.

Objectives of Study:

- To identify the core competencies that a Hotel HR professional should embody in the current scenario and supersede basic competencies that is practised years together.
- To explore competency domain for the HR professional and identify individual competency factors from each existing and explored domains.
- To define HR competencies that adds greater value to the organisation and figure out how it can be developed in the most effective way.

Purpose of Study: The purpose of this study is to attempt to understand better the Human

Resource (HR) professional's competencies and to identify the core competencies gap in hospitality industry. Furthermore, these finding will be tested in order to determine if they are linked to a hotels business performance. HR professionals need to endure and overcome many barriers to reach the ultimate goal of becoming a strategic partner in the organization. The purpose of this study is also to determine the relationship between HR competencies and possible success factors of HR profession.

Research methodology: This is a descriptive study based on secondary data. The other sources used in this paper are articles, journals and reports.

Limitations of the study:

- Difficulty in appointments of HR professionals for discussions
- Only cases of limited hotels were considered

Analysis and interpretation of Findings: For HR professional to deliver the standards and to become more effective business partners and players the following competency domains becomes very crucial.

Strategic Contributor: Successful and good performing hotels in the market have witnessed HR professionals involved in the business at a strategic level. These HR professionals manage the culture, facilitate rapid change, and are involved in the strategic decision making and create market-driven connectivity of the operation. In this competency area, culture management, rapid change efforts, and a business partner role along with customer focus emerged as important factors for HR professionals, making impact on their organizations' financial performance significant.

Thought process – Realistic and Futuristic: Integrity is the core for an HR professional and they need to advocate realistic and futuristic thoughts. This ensures trust among the employees and makes them move forward based on the commitment he could witness among the

HR team. This chemistry among the HR and employees results in a very positive and futuristic environment that influences the business result. The thought of a HR person who is more realistic plays an important role in the opinion poll of the management to resolve issues and for organisational development.

Delivery - Business based HR activity : HR professionals are expected to deliver both traditional and operational HR activities to their business in all major categories. They should design developmental programs and create challenging work experiences. HR activity should focus on attracting, promoting, retaining, and out-placing appropriate people. Finally HR professional should be able to deliver performance management system in terms of designing performance-based measurements and reward systems and provide competitive benefit packages.

Capacity & Capability builder: Every organisation has its own capacity and capability. Guiding to discover and define the organisational capabilities becomes a core competency for an effective HR professional. The organisational capabilities are a guiding force for the employees of an employee of an organisation. By devising this capability an HR can influence the performance of an employee and system as whole. Capabilities of a hotel shall include standard operating procedures, impeccable service, going extra mile, heavenly stay and a delicious meal. Organisational capabilities can survive more the individual behaviour and create deeper values among the employees.

Business Knowledge: To become key players in the organisation, HR professionals must understand the business and positioning of the hotel they serve for. Key areas of knowledge include applied understanding of the integrated value chain (how the hotel horizontally integrates) and the hotel's value proposition. The labour factor and legislation is a key factor

that constitutes the domain of business knowledge. Human resources professionals must understand how their business or agency operates. This includes the organization's strategy, how the organization makes money or achieves its primary purpose, its technological processes and organizational capabilities.

HR Technology: HR professionals need to be able to leverage technology for HR practices and use e-HR/web-based channels to deliver value to their customers and further the pace of technological innovation will continue to accelerate. HR can take advantage of these changes by automating HR processes and become more effective in communicating with its internal /external customers. More importantly, by absorbing the latest technology, HR can project a forward looking image that will help it earn the respect of sceptical colleagues.

Integrating Transformation: Transformation or change is inevitable in a hotel business. HR

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professionals should play a key role in preparing the employees in the transformation process. Resistance to change is obvious but HR should ensure to integrate the change process by involving the stakeholders and employees in key decisions. Making available the necessary resources that include men, material, machine and money, every HR professional should sustain change and achieve the competitive advantage.

Conclusion: More than a staff function, HR professionals in Hotels are expected to perform both line and coordinating function. This report has suggested some professional standards and competencies and how these might be translated into sets of skills and knowledge for the development of HR professionals. More than gaining only credibility, building and practicing the said competencies will have more impact on business performance and add explicit value to the Hotel business.

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