

Don't Swallow Your Pride - By Joseph M. Gravish

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Summer's coming quickly - the busy season for many hotels. And the 'woe is me' crowd is once again awakening from their annual winter hibernation. This time of the year one finds more articles describing difficulties some hotels predict they'll have finding quality seasonal employees.

And just like the returning seasons, just as many managers will revert to the same hiring mentality adopted in the past - just find me a body, any body. They've expediently forgotten what it really cost last year - and perhaps for years past - when they were satisfied hiring mere 'breathers' - those who add little or no value to the hotel staff, those whose longevity was measured in days or weeks, not months. They've conveniently forgotten what a hassle it was spending 90% of their time managing the difficult, revolving-door 10%.

Isn't it time to change? How can you, Mr. or Ms. hotel executive, make it better?

Now is not the time to swallow your pride and lapse back into your usual 'any body is better than no body' attitude. And what type of employees should you be looking for, and hiring? That's easy - only those who, themselves, have **PRIDE**.

P - Personality. The hospitality business survives on people who are alive, vibrant, out-going and attentive to details. These people are excited - everyday - about the opportunity to meet new people, greet them with a generous smile, impress them with a pleasant 'hello', and treat them as they would a valued friend.

R - Responsive. Our business is service. There's no 'me' in service. It's all about impressing the guests. It's about meeting and exceeding their expectations. It's about fulfilling our promise - to provide them a top-quality product and unexcelled service. It's about being responsive to their every need - better yet anticipating their needs - looking for opportunities to do more. It's about going the extra mile.

I - Initiative. Ours is a fast-paced, every-day-is-different business. It's exciting and exhilarating. There are innumerable opportunities for success - and failure - in every guest encounter. When a quality hire sees something that needs to be done to make a guest happy, he or she takes the initiative to get it accomplished - even if it's not a part of their normal job. They're always ready when needed.

D - Dedicated. When treated properly employees will be extremely loyal to the company and their job. They'll be punctual, dependable and ready to work even in the most unappreciated, repetitive types of jobs. You can depend on them when you're not there to cover for you. They'll be dedicated to the success of the team.

E - Enjoy. You can easily tell if you've hired the right person. They eagerly anticipate daily challenges, adopting a sort of theatrical cast member role to make the audience experience more enjoyable. These people take personal satisfaction in earning the equivalent of verbal applause - a 'thank you'.

To be fair, some resorts do rely heavily on seasonal, visa-eligible staff. Nevertheless, these properties should not sacrifice quality for quantity

There are many job candidates, particularly young adults, who are energetic and customer savvy - full of pride - just waiting to be hired - if you're willing to treat them right, give them the necessary training, appreciate and reward them properly, and embed them quickly into the team. You must also be willing to distinguish your organization from other less 'employees-first' hotel and food service companies.

Now is the time to make a difference. Now is not the time to swallow your pride.

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