Summary of Case

Redwood Resort is a unique establishment located on the edge of Lake Wawasee, Indiana’s largest natural lake. It was founded in 1893 as a meeting ground for the purpose of spiritual education and physical recreation. Today, Redwood resort is locally owned and still aims to offer its guests the escape and relaxation that they deserve. The Pier & Back Porch is Redwood’s restaurant where they offer indoor and seasonal outdoor dining. They define the restaurant as casual elegance, offering a wide variety of options. In 2014, Redwood Resort had staffing opportunities in their kitchen, the owner then decided to participate in the H-2B program. Making this decision brought the resort, skilled kitchen workers, from Jamaica. These temporary workers are usually well-skilled and have extensive experience in a resort type of hotel in Jamaica. Most of them also hold higher-level positions in their respective kitchens. However, once they arrive at Redwood, they are all assigned line chef duties. When the first initiative to hire Jamaican kitchen staff started in 2014, the owner of Redwood resort was in one of his favorite resorts in Florida and he was very impressed with one of the chefs there, Damien. The owner of Redwood resort approached Damien, who was from Jamaica on an H2B vis, and offered him a job in his resort. The following year Damien joined the Redwood team, and everyone was pleased with his performance and work ethic.

The hotel management was not prepared to work in a multicultural environment. Often, there was an issue with a work ethic based on their culture and experience from their home country. Further issues arose from the salary they were receiving. The temporary workers were receiving minimum wage which prompted them to request to work in other departments. This led to exhaustion during their main job in the kitchen. During peak hours, the kitchen manager would get very agitated and use inappropriate behavior and language towards the other kitchen staff. Often the atmosphere in the kitchen was heated and many arguments happened which led to the temporary staff walking out. At this time, the Kitchen Manager was from the United States and often the Jamaican chefs disagreed with his approach and attitude. The Jamaican staff used to stick to their group and the locals did the same. There was no unity in the kitchen and work suffered at times.

During the slow season, the American kitchen manager and head chef were laid off. Meanwhile, Damien received his green card and was appointed kitchen manager. This year while teaming with the General Manager, they planned to bring six new Jamaican line chefs. However, due to the H2B visa restrictions and the COVID-19 pandemic, only two were able to come, causing a new challenge in the resort. The kitchen still worked at full capacity due to their peak season and an even higher influx of customers. Without any alternatives, the hotel had to hire locally. All the local staff that they could find were underqualified and lacked the necessary skills. Extensive training was needed which slowed down the whole operation of the kitchen. The two Jamaican chefs became frustrated because now they also had to train the new local staff while working in the kitchen. As a result of this frustration, Kirk, one of the Jamaican chefs decided to accept a job offer in Florida at a golf resort. Kirk has been coming to Redwood Resort since 2015 and has also worked with the current kitchen manager in Jamaica. Kirk’s growing concern was that he has been very loyal to the company, but he has not been offered any incentives to return. However, this new position not only pays much better but offers additional benefits as well. Without Kirk in the kitchen, Damien would not be able to manage. He will be left only with one Jamaican chef that must cook and prep but train the new local employees too.

Damien decides to take this issue to the hotel manager. However, the hotel manager does not want to give Damien the authority to decide in this situation, wanting to handle it by himself. Damien explains to the general manager that he is more familiar with the culture and he knows how to approach Kirk. However, Damien wants the flexibility to increase Kirk’s salary if possible. The general manager argues that Damien is only looking out for his friend and Damien only wants to give Kirk more money.

Target Audience

The case study itself is understandable at the undergraduate level and still relevant to the graduate-level student. The analysis of the case study is more suited for graduate-level work as it covers more advanced concepts depicted in the literature review section. While the intention of this teaching note is geared more towards the graduate level of study, instructors of undergraduate students could easily adapt this case study for use in their classrooms by replacing the additional readings with their textbook chapter readings. The themes presented here, while advanced, are still common in introductory-level Hospitality Management courses as well as Human Resources Courses within the Hospitality umbrella.

Learning Outcomes

Presented in this case study is a real-world example of the differences of cultural perspectives in chefs and management as well as their outcome on hospitality employees and managers. Three key concepts addressed were outsourcing kitchen staff with an emphasis on growing or buying talent as well as cultural diversity in the workplace. By the end of this lesson, the student should be able to:
1. Analyze the advantages and disadvantages of the outsourcing kitchen staff from both employee and employer perspectives.
2. Compare and contrast the implications of growing talent or buying talent.
3. Understand and evaluate the implications and significance of cultural diversity in the workplace from both employee and employer perspectives.

Lesson Plan

Prior to the lesson, students will be asked to read this case study along with additional readings including topics such as outsourcing staff, examples of growing talent versus buying talent in the hospitality industry, and the importance and implications of workplace cultural diversity. The importance and implications of workplace cultural diversity will emphasize the concept of bringing foreign workers that have not been to the U.S. before into the workplace. Students will also be asked to familiarize themselves with the above-mentioned topics by researching examples.

Discussion Topics and Questions

1. Cultural Diversity
2. Outsourcing or Growing Talent
3. Do you feel the overall international recruitment process is appropriate, please explain your answer?
4. How does Covid-19 affect both international and local hiring of kitchen staff?
5. How could Redwood Resort improve its training procedures during an understaffed period of time?

Cultural Diversity in the Workplace

1. Referring to Hofstede’s Insights Tool, what are the major differences in the two cultures presented?
2. Considering the different cultures in the workplace, how would you ensure effective communication between your employees?
3. How does cultural diversity influence the workplace? What are some advantages and disadvantages/challenges?
4. In your opinion, should the general manager or kitchen manager deal with kitchen staff, please explain your answer?
5. In your opinion, has the hotel used a successful onboarding process to make the new staff feel welcome, please explain your answer? What would be an appropriate approach?

Outsourcing or Growing Talent

1. What is the role of the General Manager in ensuring the outsourcing process is efficient?
2. How does outsourcing affect cultural diversity in the workplace?
3. In the example of Redwood Resort, are there outsourcing practices efficient?
4. How does outsourcing affect the growth of talent?
5. What would be better for the kitchen in Redwood Resort—current model or focusing more on locals and why?
6. Should the resort have chosen a different strategy in light of Covid-19?

Instructions

This case study can be taught in a variety of ways. Two separate class periods could be utilized to address the topics. The first topics, outsourcing employees and growing and buying talent, could be discussed during one class period. The second-class period could be used to discuss workplace cultural diversity. Each area of discussion should be allocated at least 60 minutes to explore, discuss, and check for understanding on the topics. Depending on the level of the students, this class plan can be conducted in one 60-minute class period; however, the instructor can expand to two class periods of 60 minutes each depending on the depth the professor and students are willing to go into, time availability, and class size.

Outline

Please see below for more details on each section. Regardless of the teaching option chosen the outcome must be in line with the learning outcomes

- Class discussion based on the discussion topics and questions provided or
- Small-group discussion based on the discussion topics and questions provided
- Check for understanding
- Assessment for individual or group work

Class Discussion

A class discussion will be started asking students to share their experience with cultural diversity in the workplace. Students will be asked to state their opinions on the broad issues presented in the case study. A second discussion will be started on outsourcing versus growing talent, asking students about their opinions on both and how they relate to the case scenario.

Small Group Discussion

Small groups of no more than two per group will be formed. Each group will be tasked to highlight the main issues that are presented in the case in more depth. Furthermore, each group will be asked to use Hofstede Insights Tool and summarize the results between Jamaica and U.S.A. Each group will be asked to answer the question from one of the presented topics above.
Check for Understanding

In the remaining class time, a general discussion on the answers will be conducted. Alternatively, depending on the class time, each group can be tasked to briefly present their answers. Lastly, the students will be assigned to submit a write-up of their solutions and understanding as a group in a detailed manner. The written report should be at least 1500 words for both graduate and undergraduate students.

Assessment

Students will be given the assignment to read the case study in-depth and provide solutions on what route the hotel should take in terms of staffing their kitchen. Students must go beyond the case study and provide external references to strengthen their arguments. At least 3 external references should be given. Both graduate and undergraduate students must follow these instructions, however, graduate students are expected to provide a deeper understanding.

Analysis of Teaching Objectives

Cultural Diversity in the Workplace

Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions Theory is used to understand the differences in culture across countries and differentiate the way business is done across different cultures. Below shows the similarities and differences between Jamaica and the United States.

To begin, Jamaica and the United States score very closely in regard to power distance. Both scores are low, meaning their characteristics include being independent, equal rights, superiors accessible, and management facilities and empowers. Often in Jamaica, they find the control is disliked and attitudes towards managers are informal. The major differences between the two countries are individualism and indulgence. The US tends to look after themselves and direct family more so than Jamaica, while Jamaica is considered a collectivist society.

Cultural diversity influences the workplace by bringing benefits and challenges daily. One of the greatest benefits and influences in the hospitality industry from cultural diversity is being able to serve to the highest level of standard to different cultures because you have people on your team from that background. Ensuring effective cross-cultural communication among the team in a workplace is extremely important when you have different backgrounds working together. To create open communication within the workplace, managers could organize staff meetings, maintain a high employee engagement satisfaction, and develop an awareness of each individual's culture to truly understand their team. During the staff meetings, a leader could start effective cross-cultural communication exercises by having each team member take a survey to find out each person's preferred method of communication such as emails, personal meetings, etc. with one another. Advantages of strong communication include the prevention of conflict, helping to build professional networks and the creation of a satisfactory work environment for everyone involved. The way cultural diversity influences a rapidly changing professional world is by helping organizations understand patterns of employees, customers, and investors. In this case study of the Redwood Resort, the kitchen manager should deal with kitchen staff because they have the same background and strong work bonds. However, the General Manager should be encouraged to work on their professional relationship with the kitchen
and staff to grow trust and utilize tools to develop cross-cultural communication. During the new hire onboarding process, from the beginning of the employee's time at Redwood Resort, the employee should be greeted with a warm welcome, showing the same level of hospitality that the resort would like the employees to show the guests. The onboarding process is important in creating the culture and crushing any cultural barriers going into the first stages of employment.

**Outsourcing or Growing Talent**

Outsourcing of staff affects cultural diversity because it has the potential to bring employees to the team from other cultures. In the Redwood Resort example, the outsourcing practices they were using at the beginning were acceptable for the small amount of kitchen staff being brought on during that time period. However, without the proper steps of background checks, resume reviews, and proper interviews, the candidates became not fit for the positions of successful kitchen leaders and did not exhibit effective cross-cultural communication between the Jamaican versus local hires. The main disadvantage of outsourcing is the level of service quality not being consistent throughout the property. As time went on, it was clear that the process in place could not continue, especially with the pandemic of Covid-19. The general manager should work hand-in-hand with their HR department to possibly create an H2B program recruiter and seek out the local talent in the meantime. The general manager also should work on a training plan and process for the back of house staff members to be properly trained, which hopefully would reduce the turnover rate. The discussion raised in this section occurred during the Covid-19 pandemic and the hotel was forced to focus on local job candidates. Again, the training piece will be extremely beneficial in terms of financial peace and turnover rate. If the new kitchen staff could be trained properly and without pulling head chefs from their main job in the kitchen, the hotel would benefit greatly. Having an HR manager team with a company recruiter would limit the outsourcing and benefit the Redwood Resort level of service standard.

**Additional Readings**


