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# Career Progression in Hospitality and Tourism Settings

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## Learning objectives

After reading this chapter you will be able to:

- Understand the characteristics of tourism and hospitality employment
- Define careers and career development
- Explore the way individuals build careers in tourism and hospitality
- Explain the relationship between career development and talent management

## Introduction

This chapter considers the career journey that individuals make in hospitality and tourism settings, and the role of talent management in the career development process. Career development is facilitated both by organisations in terms of their current and future human resource needs, and by individuals who make choices concerning their career needs and aspirations. Career development plans and prospects take place in numerous industry sectors, each with their own labour market characteristics and norms for career development opportunities.

In this chapter, the nature of tourism and hospitality employment is outlined as a starting point to set the context of careers in the tourism and hospitality sectors. This is followed by an exploration of the aspects that are relevant to the topic: careers, career development and career progression. The career journey then becomes the focus of discussion, outlining what constitutes a career journey before examining them in the tourism and hospitality contexts. The remaining part of the chapter turns its attention to talent management in the career context. The relationship between talent management and careers is outlined. A summary is then offered.

## Tourism and hospitality employment

The ever-growing tourism sector provides opportunities for employment creation. Estimates by the World Travel and Tourism Council anticipate that over the next ten years there will be 347 million tourism jobs worldwide (World Travel & Tourism Council, 2014). Tourist activities create direct, indirect and induced employment opportunities. As discussed elsewhere by Ladkin and Szivas (2015), direct employment refers to employment in tourist sectors such as hotels, tour operators, transport, travel agencies etc. Indirect employment refers to jobs created by people working in activities that are partially dependent on tourism, for example, financial services, construction, car hire, etc. Induced employment is the additional employment resulting from the effects of the tourism multiplier as residents spend money on activities earned from tourism (Fletcher *et al.*, 2013). What this provides is a wealth of employment opportunities in numerous sectors, some more directly related to tourism and hospitality settings than others.

In terms of employment issues and labour markets, information is more readily available concerning the hospitality sector, partially due to jobs in this sector being more evident and less hidden than those in tourism. In the UK, for the tourism and hospitality sectors, figures from People 1st for 2013 indicate that:

- The sector accounts for just over 2 million jobs
- Restaurants employ the largest workforce in the sector
- 35% of businesses expect the workforce to increase
- By 2020, the sectors' workforce will have grown by 6%
- An additional 660,200 people will need to be recruited by 2020
- Nearly half of the workforce is part-time
- The sector has a young workforce, two in five workers are aged under 30
- 57% of the sector are female
- 32% of employers have female senior managers
- 22% of the workforce are migrant workers

(People 1st, 2013, p11)

Despite the diversity in the tourism and hospitality sectors, it is possible to identify certain characteristics of employment in the sectors. These broad characteristics have been identified and discussed elsewhere (Duncan *et al.*, 2013; Janta *et al.*, 2011), however a selection of these are presented here as they require consideration due to their relevance to how people develop their careers in the sectors. The characteristics that have an influence on career development include:

- Tourism and hospitality occupations vary widely in terms of skill requirements, ranging from unskilled to highly skilled and professional occupations. This presents a range of opportunities for different skill levels, and provides a means for up-skilling throughout a career journey.

- Many of the occupations have low barriers to entry (Liu and Wall, 2005; Vaugeois and Rollins, 2007). For example, if they are unskilled or semi skilled, they are open to a wide range of people and may be seen as a 'first job' to gain experience. This can be drawback, creating the perception of low skilled, low paid menial transient jobs (WTTC, 2014). However, it could also be viewed as a positive aspect as it means that many jobs are open to everyone. Unskilled or low skilled jobs provide the entry points for work into the sectors.
- The contractual arrangements are varied, for example they may be part-time or full-time, permanent, temporary or seasonal. This again can be viewed both as positive or negative. Positive in that the flexibility of contracts suits different individual needs, but negative as the security of full-time permanent work is not always available.
- Some of the occupations have clear career progression, others do not. The lack of clear career pathways is one of the main reasons leading to a poor image of the sectors and the negative impact of this on recruitment (WTTC, 2014).
- Turnover rates can be high (Yang, 2010). One feature of the sector that is felt in most countries and appears to be universal is higher turnover rates compared to occupations in other sectors.
- The sector is one that employs economic migrants due to the ease of obtaining employment in the sectors. (Matthews and Ruhs, 2007; Janta *et al.*, 2011). A low skill specificity, few educational requirements and short term contracts make many of the jobs available to a wide range of individuals. High turnover also ensures a constant supply of available employment opportunities for migrant workers seeking their first job in a new country.
- Associated poor labour conditions conform to stereotypes and are well documented, consisting of issues such as low pay, shift work, long hours, and poor career advancement opportunities (Baum, 2007; McIntosh and Harris, 2012).
- Cultural and social issues in some countries make travel and tourism less attractive than other sectors. For women, this may place a 'glass ceiling' on their participation rates (WTTC, 2014).

## Careers, career development and progression

### A career

A career is the *“evolving sequence of a person’s work experiences over time”* Arthur, Hall and Lawrence (1989: 8). The traditional understanding of a career is seen in terms of professional employment with progression and advancement in the organisational position (Gunz and Heslin, 2005). However, traditional concepts

of a career based on organizational structures and hierarchies are in decline (Eaton and Bailyn, 2000; Sullivan, 1999) and are being replaced by careers with less developed structures. The modern career is multi-dimensional, developing beyond the constraints of a single organization or occupational setting (Arthur, 1994; Collin and Young, 2000). It is associated with increased mobility and is increasingly 'boundaryless' (Arthur, Inkson and Pringle, 1999, p 11) reflecting contemporary work practices.

However defined, careers are the outcome of structural opportunities available to an individual, for example the size of the industry, organizational structure, and knowledge requirement, human ability and ambition. The structural opportunities in an industry provide the framework for any occupation, and individual ability and ambition determine how people make choices within the structural opportunities (Ladkin and Weber, 2009). From an individual's perspective, how people's experiences and occupations change across a life course is essentially what defines a career.

Within the broad field of career theory, career development and progression form an integral aspect.

## **Career development**

Career development is closely aligned with career planning. It is an essential component of human resources management (Nebel, Braunlich and Zhang, 1994). In the organisational context, career development is concerned with:

- How individuals manage their careers within/between organisational structures;
- How organisations structure the careers of their members.

From a personal perspective, career development is concerned not only with how individuals manage their careers, but also how individuals view and direct their own careers in terms of their goals, values, beliefs aspirations etc.

Essentially, labour market and structural opportunities are presented by the industry context but it is a range of personal choices, opportunities and constraints that make one person's career different from others.

As careers are part structure, part individual choice, we can argue that the responsibility for career development rests neither solely with the individual nor the organisation, but is shared by both (Pazy, 1988, Orpen, 1994). It is the outcome for the individual from both organizational and personal career planning (Simonsen, 1986). It is widely accepted that joint responsibility is the best way to achieve successful career development (Kong *et al.*, 2010; Lewis and Arnold 2012). Both organisational needs and personal career goals can be considered together and be mutually beneficial. This practice is in line with contemporary ways of working, as individuals are now less likely to spend all of their working lives with a single organisation.