

Utilizing Team Time/Talent Assessment Tool
to Reorganize Front Office Training

By

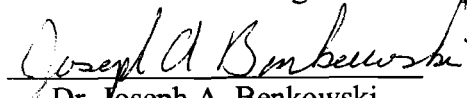
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A Research Paper

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the
Master of Science Degree
In Training and Development

Approved for Completion of 4 Semester Credits

Field Problem in Training and Development


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Summer 2006

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Title: *Utilizing the team time/talent assessment tool to reorganize Front Office training.*

Graduate Degree/Major: MS Training and Human Resources Development

Research Adviser: Joseph A. Benkowski, PhD

Month/Year: December, 2006

Number of Pages: 40

Style Manual Used: American Psychological Association, 5th edition

ABSTRACT

This study is a recommendation and analysis, presented to the Front Office Manager of L3O Hotels. The team is performing very well in some areas, but is limited to only certain individuals in the area of multitasking. The training program is designed to create a multitasking work team, however the staff's ability to do it well is in question. Research suggests that an assessment of allotted time, talent, goals, rules and regulations will lead to an answer.

The purpose of this study is to complete that assessment and to get the training program as well as the employees' back on track. The team will also be advised to move from being "manager-led" to being more of "self-reliant" multitasking team. (Definitions of these two types of teams may be found in Chapter I.) The assessment tool will aid in reorganizing the Front Office training, realigning the department to complete the goals of the training program.

The Front Office Manager for the study analyzed the Front Office's goals and completed a questionnaire to determine activities that have traditionally been performed by the Front Office. The Team Time/Talent Assessment Tool was conducted at the Guest Services Representative (GSR) level. Supervisors examined rules and regulations of the Front Office staff and provided feedback.

Utilizing the team time/talent assessment, L3O Hotels will be able to restructure and reorganize the Front Office. The assessment tool is designed to aid the team in maximizing the results achieved. The tool analyzes the goals of the team; the vision of the business; projects/activities and their effect on those goals. The tool also examines the rules and regulations to see if any of them are preventing the desired results. Competition in the area for guests and employees may cause L3O Hotels to need its employees, more than ever, to perform multiple tasks. (Within a year's time there will be a one thousand room hotel with convention space between L3O Hotels and a major airport, and across the street from major tourist destinations.)

The objectives of this study are multiple, most important are: Reorganizing the Front Office staff training to develop a multitasking team, increasing job satisfaction, and to share information on this monetarily beneficial style of training. This will also make the front desk trainer position more desirable and a beneficial investment.

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Chapter I

Introduction

In order to retain their best people, Hotels are cross-training their employees to perform different tasks to an extent that did not previously exist. Giving knowledge to employees is one way of retaining an employee, as it makes them feel useful and is a great motivator. This can be costly and time consuming, especially when employees need to constantly give up a working shift to attend training. Training employees to multitask is quicker, providing simple advantages as ending the need to hire someone just so breaks can be ran smoothly. Multitasking can be a very effective measure, crucial to the bottom line, during down times in the Hospitality Industry. The slow periods can be for an hour or bankrupt a corporation, depending on the cause and severity. These slow periods are numerous, some expected the most challenging are the unforeseen, such as terrorism, varies in the degree of impact. Terrorism's impact on Hospitality Companies, within large destination cities, is a challenge that will be felt repeatedly and as strongly as did racism, sexism, and labor relations. There are currently dozens of tips, training and laws to combat these types of challenges.

L3O Hotels Overview

L3O Hotels is a 500+ room business traveler hotel. It is sales team is working to add more of the tourist business to offset the effects of a slowing economy and the new safety concerns due to terrorism. It serves over 800,000 guests a year and has been in business since 1970. The hotel has convention space to serve 3,000 guests at a time. At full staff the hotel employs five hundred; currently it is only at two hundred and sixty. The property has a business office for faxes, emails, printing; it also has a swimming

pool, sauna, whirlpool, game room, two bars, a restaurant with buffet, coffee shop, gift shop, and bell staff service. A majority of the employees have been at the hotel for more than ten years.

The hotel is fortunate to take its training programs very seriously and is known as the leader for the "Of Course" service standard. This training program is conducted every year and as a refresher every year for the staff. Unusual for a hotel is the fact that if an employee has been there ten or more years they have at the least gone through the training five times. It is important to note that the program under-goes changes and is updated frequently. An interesting fact is that the trainers are the department heads that are certified to teach the program to the employees. The Human Resources department previously executed the "Of Course" program. The Human Resources department now concentrates on orientation of new-hires, required paperwork, alien registration, employment verification, job fairs, etc. After seeing the Human Resources department the employees go to their assigned department and are trained through the use of Supervisors in such departments as housekeeping, the Bell-captain in the Bell department, or a trainer as in the Front Desk. The Front Desk Trainer is responsible for instructing the new-hire on using the Front Office machines as well as the computer system.

This system, called LISA, is what the Guest Services Representative or GSR uses to Reserve, Check-In, Update, Bill, and Check-Out guests. The Reservations Department, Public Broadcasting System Department (PBX). As well as other departments with the hotel use the system. The use of the LISA system will enable the GSR to "jump" from screen to screen utilizing the system to its fullest to multitask assisting the guest more efficiently.

Statement of the Problem

The Front Office is not performing the multitasking objective in its training program, leaving the training program incomplete. It will not be prepared for the random flux of the economy, approaching new competition and a widespread change in the public's opinion of travel. The Front Office of L3O Hotels is not the collaborative entity that has proven effective with many of its competitors. Once this assessment is complete, training will be re-aligned and the tool will aid in the hiring process.

Research Objectives

To get a work function back on track it is necessary to determine what the barriers are. It is necessary to look at the entire operation and influences upon that operation.

Therefore, the research objectives of this study are:

1. To complete the current training program objectives
2. To restructure and reorganize Front Office training
3. To assess the available time and the talent of the Front Office staff

Purpose of the Study

Customer, or Guests as referred to in the industry, have huge expectations of the front office staff. Many guests feel that the front desk is responsible for the overall operation of the hotel. There is a lack of knowledge on the part of the public as to the overall operation of a hotel. The obvious tends to complicate things within a hotel more than it helps it. Every Front Office employee has a nightmare story about a guest that could not understand why they would not have an answer for something that deals with another department with the hotel. Keeping guests happy when you are feeding or boarding them is more difficult at times than it seems.

This study significantly impacts the Front Office, as all parties are involved in the process of making the department better. The Front Office Manager may look at this assessment tool as beneficial to its training and hiring programs.

The Front Office Training program has not been creating a multitasking staff for several reasons:

1. The staff feels they have too many other things to do
2. Turnover at the front desk is high
3. The position of trainer does not hold prestige, just a pay raise
4. The hotel has been forced to hire employees without experience
5. Training staff levels are low, causing trainers to feel rushed

Research Module

The review of literature is presented in Chapter Two. The literature review was in the areas of Front Office structure and operations, team development, vertical and horizontal organizations, multiskilling, team building, and tools for change. This literature was studied and analyzed by the researcher to insure its appropriateness for the study.

The team time/talent assessment tool was used to collect data on the present employees of the Front Office of L3O Hotels. Further data was collected through phone, visitations and fax with the Front Office Manager and emails with trainers and supervisors. Chapter Three will include charts and diagrams demonstrating the assessment tool. Chapter Four will share the results of the tool, interpretation of the tool and progress made with the Front Office staff. Chapter Five will present the conclusions and recommendations of the researcher.

Definition of Terms

Multitasking/Multiskilling. A mechanism by which companies can improve efficiency, reduce costs, improve quality, and increase production. Defined as a way of working, where the traditional division between work areas and disciplines are removed, and individuals are give responsibilities for a range of different types of tasks. (Health and Safety Executive Committee, 1998)

Performance. Analysis. Takes an organization's performance requirements, much like the assessment tool, and identifies the current or anticipated gaps in workforce performance or competence. (www.ispi.org/service/shatshpt.html)

Human Performance Technology. A set of methods and procedures, and a strategy for solving problems, for realizing opportunities related to the performance of people. (www.ispi.org/services/whatshpt.html).

Self-directing work team. Management only has responsibility for the team's organizational context. Self-directed teams offer the most potential for innovation, enhance goal commitment and motivation, and provide opportunity for organizational learning and change. (Moravec & Associates, 2006)

Limitations

The greatest limitation to the study was the employees questioning their anonymity. Three participants asked if the survey results could be linked back to them. They were assured of the process ability to keep them anonymous and also gave them the University of Wisconsin-Stout's website. On this website the participants were encouraged to view the live subjects information and training sections.

In any study the participants' sense of loyalty may make their subjectivity questionable. Due to the education level of the participants, there was not much concern for that.

Chapter II

Review of Literature

Brief History of Hotels

In the 1700s, after the Industrial Revolution in Great Britain, public lodgings' establishment as a significant commercial institution began. The best way to track its monetary gains would be to attach it to the establishment of money, in the sixth century BC. However, the demand for places to stay for free began before then. Readers of the bible should remember the birth of Christ. Like the early inns a manger is neither clean nor sanitary. Until 1834 there was not indoor plumbing, which was introduced by Astor, and there was not a telephone in any room until introduced by the Netherland Hotel in 1894 (Liguori & Gray, 1994). The inns were run by the owner of the house and did not have the luxuries of today's hotels. It definitely was not luxury without running water, toilet facilities, and no feather tick beds.

The city of New York has been known to start trends that have influenced the rest of the United States and the world. This trend for fabulous things can be recorded with the opening of the City Hotel in 1794. This hotel is the first building in America to be opened specifically as a hotel. Once this hotel was opened, Baltimore opened its City Hotel, Boston with the Exchange Coffee House, and Philadelphia with the Mansion House.

Boston took the lead from New York and opened the luxurious Tremont House, in 1829. This started the splurge of luxury hotels. The United States is now home to some of the most luxurious hotels in the world: Chicago's Grand Pacific; San Francisco's Palace; Denver's Brown Palace, and of course New York's Waldorf Astoria.

As with any product the rich have, the middle class wants it next and on down to the poor. For example, there are people on welfare who have televisions. Though wide distribution of hotels came the commercial hotel in 1908, the first being the Buffalo Statler built by Ellsworth M. Statler. The growth of hotels, during the 1900s also created the need for professional schools of hotel management and a need for skilled hotel workers (Paige & Paige, 1989).

The Front Office

Competition to be special may lead some hotels today to do otherwise; however, all hotels basically have one thing in common-a front desk. The front desk can be compared to a nucleus. It is the heart of the hotel, controlling and recording the guest's stay. It is also the most important first and last contact for guests. The works of the staff at all front desks are basically the same: receiving and welcoming guests, selling accommodations, maintaining accounting and other records. It is also the point of contact for other departments within the hotel and incorporates various requests to make the guests more comfortable.

The advantage to being skilled with this industry is that the functions and tasks of going about the day-to-day activities are universal, making it easier to find work. The phenomenal growth and expansion of the industry, since the 1960s, have created a constant demand for trained and skilled staff (Paige & Paige, 1989).

The following functions and tasks are the standards for operating within the industry. Each hotel adds its own spin on these basics, however these are industry wide:

The function of the Front Office is to:

1. Sell accommodation
2. Receive and welcome guests
3. Check-in and register guests
4. Check-out guests and deal with the settlement of accounts
5. Chart all reservations
6. Deal with advance reservations
7. Keep up—to-the minute records of room status
8. Handle incoming and outgoing mail
9. Deal with telephone communications
10. Maintain good communications with all other departments

Tasks of the Front Office:

1. Reservations
2. Room assignment
3. Guest check-in and registration
4. Guest accounting
5. Credit verification
6. The acceptance of personal and traveler's checks
7. Guest check-out and settlement of accounts
8. Maintaining records
9. Preparing reports and statistics for management
10. Maintaining control procedures

It is a fiercely competitive business; every operator aims for maximum occupancy and profitability. This goal is achieved by improving efficiency within the establishment and by offering the highest standard of accommodation, facilities and service at competitive prices (Paige & Paige, 1989).

The assessment in this study will focus on the abilities of the Front Office Personnel to add the duties of other offices to their day-to-day shift. To be a Guest Services Representative (GSR) there are special qualities and social skills one must possess, separate from the ability to perform. It would be counterproductive to continuously train someone who does not have the following qualities and skills:

- Poise and conduct
- Personal appearance and hygiene
- Voice projection and correct speech
- Telephone manner
- Dealing with awkward guests and situations
- Handling inquiries at the Front Desk
- Good communication with the guests

These skills are vital to the hotel as well as the GSR. To the customer's way of thinking, the agent is the company. They do not understand these skills nor the numerous tasks and functions that are required for the job. They do not know the areas of responsibility, job description, or what can and cannot be done for them. To customers, those things are the hotel's business and not theirs (Anderson & Zemke, 1998). This being true the hotel must select agents who are able to acquire or who possess these

skills. As history shows, the industry will continue to acquire new properties and guests will continue to have huge expectations.

Hotels have to deliver service to the guest that is exceptional, to keep those guests. In the 1980s, professional business watchers began to notice that:

- Companies that emphasized service were starting to make more money and keep customers longer than companies that did not.
- Organizations that focused on superior customer service turned out to be all-around better, more successful companies than those that treated customers like the enemy and customer service as either a grudging afterthought or a necessary evil (Anderson & Zemke, 1998).

Hotels depend on repeat business; in order to do that the guest must feel as though they are receiving the best possible care. Multitasking is that added emphasis on service, the GSR is able to give superior customer service. A GSR should be ready to go the extra mile and to “Deliver Knock Your Socks Off” Service as written by Anderson & Zemke, to achieve that repeat business. To deliver that service the agent need to retain the things that they have learned. According to Anderson & Zemke, Texas A&M researcher DR. Leonard Berry and his colleagues at Texas A&M University invented a framework during the year of 1988. They found that customers evaluate service quality on five factors:

1. Reliability. The ability to provide what was promised, dependably and accurately.
2. Assurance. The knowledge and courtesy you show to customers, and your ability to convey trust, competence, and confidence.

3. Tangibles, The physical facilities and equipment, and your own (and others') appearance.
4. Empathy. The degree of caring and individual attention you show customers.
5. Responsiveness. The willingness to help customers promptly.

(Anderson & Zemke, 1998)

These five factors or RATER, for short, will bring together all the training and experiences learned by the agent. This will prove to be an important tool to help the agent remember what has been previously learned and keep the guest pleased. These factors are very important and help to deliver great service to the guests (Anderson & Zemke, 1998)

Multitasking/Multiskilling

Multiskilling, has proven beneficial in companies in several different niche areas. Companies that presently use multiskilling are: Power Generation Plants, Postal Service, Chemical Manufacturing, Health & Safety and Aircraft maintenance. These all are heavily dependent on the talent of their staff. Hospitality and Tourism is another business that is people dependent. It is the skills of those people that help make the business better. A poll in these area asserts, "it is not about making employees competent in two disciplines, but equipping staff with additional skills relevant to the efficient running of the business" (author, 2001)

Multiskilling, is idea to cover shortages in a large or small area of need, it is also beneficial to cut costs. A company can have one key employee to cover more than one duty or cut staff completely in half. In the United Kingdom, multiskilling has been utilized to cover a larger portion of production activities with the intention to reduce labor costs (Cockrill & Scott, 1998).

Labor costs directly affect the bottom line; excessive use of labor will deplete profits when business is slow. In 1999 Workforce suggested Multiskilling to achieve corporate success. Multiskilling has been proven to have both a large and small, positive effect within a business. The Front Office needs to spearhead corporate success; it is key to the financial success of a hotel. It has a key role in credit, payroll, staff planning and income control throughout the hotel (Liguori and Gray, 1994).

Chapter III

Methodology and Approach

Introduction

The team time/talent assessment is a useful tool for reorganizing teams so that it can achieve maximum results.

The steps of the assessment:

1. Team leader should do a self assessment and assess the group (not included)
2. Analyze Team's goals
3. Examine all projects and activities
4. Examine all rules and regulations
5. May want participants to review colleagues (not included)
6. Ask all team members to review their temperament
 - Any Special skills
 - Pros and Cons
 - Likes and Dislikes
 - Contributions
 - Temperament to job

Research Design

The anonymity of L3O Hotels was maintained by the use of Industry recognized terms and commonly applicable facilities. The Front Office department participants and management received a letter inviting them to participate. It was also an opportunity to establish trust that the researcher does not work for L3O Hotels.

L3O Hotels and its staff are familiar with consultants and studies being done of its facilities. Corporate has tried many new training solutions and has yet to be totally satisfied with the results. This assessment is new to L3O hotels it is not doing the usual of offering training as a solution. This assessment may reorganize and reenergize what's already working and add that little something for what's already in the works.

The undercutting of rates by competitors in the area and public fear of travel will threaten L3O Hotel's prosperity and income. The best solution is to use what is already available without using excessive funds or unnecessary retraining.

Figure 1 is the assessment given to the Guest Services Representative (GSR). Figure 2 is the questionnaire given to the manager. The employees are given the opportunity to self assess as well as to critique their position and their workplace. The manager is given the opportunity to assess the goals and general preparation to change the focus of future training and to develop current personnel through multitasking.

Data Collection

The Guest Service Representatives and manager received a self addressed stamped envelope with their assessment or questionnaire. The assessment's purpose is to find if the employees are receptive of the type of rethinking, of the position's barriers, attitudes, activities, cons as well as pros, and personal contributions that may or may not limit their reception of rethinking this position.

It is important to note that this is a rethinking of the job, a retooling of the mind. Multitasking is in tune with Training Professionals' drive to not automatically blame or use training for missed opportunities to perform better.

To boost participation, several visits were made during the assessment period. The researcher was on hand to answer any question as well as to demonstrate urgency and the need for their participation. (Ideally, to put a face with a name.) The management's participant spent about fifteen minutes discussing the industry, trends, and past participation with outside researchers and consultants.

Data Analysis

The assessment was a definite success. The review of the assessment illustrated an impressive interest as well as a need to participate. The language used in responses was very direct and was even familiar with the researchers' experiences as the front desk. A majority of the participants have the temperament, skills and knowledge for the position. This data provided insight into the feelings of the staff and also that multitasking would be received greatly and be successful at L3O Hotels.

Management has demonstrated "buy in" through the enthusiastic conversation and immediate completion of the questionnaire. The management felt that training was currently intended to teach employees to multitask, however the process needs work. They needed that catch word-multitasking that was not provided previously.

Future training will make use of this line of thought. The connection between departments through a wider knowledge base is needed. This knowledge base creates experts to better service guests when they interact with the Front Office.

The participants in multitasking will be self-paced learners. To encourage non-participants and open access to training materials, manuals will be re-located near everyone's mailbox. The participants have equal access and opportunity to become multitasking Guest Services Representatives.

Summary

The assessment tool continuously provided benefits to the researcher and to the participants, as it was designed to do. Management's full cooperation provided information to ensure the success of the addition of multitasking job skills. The participants have been given the unusual opportunity to boost their basic knowledge and perform at the same level and even perform beyond those before them.

This assessment is only phase I of the complete process involved in using the Team Time/Talent assessment tool. The advantages and usefulness of the tool covers the following areas:

1. Any misplaced personnel become apparent.
2. The tool indicates whether additional staff is needed and what kind of people management should hire.
3. The nature of any retraining needs become obvious, when meeting the demands of change.
4. Team members are considered as individuals not just as a team component.

During this process participants enjoy an even greater spirit of teamwork. The tool gave creditability to the statement, "Retraining isn't always the solution." This assessment is one of many avenues a corporation, small office or team can take to improve performance. According to this assessment, multitasking at L3O Hotels will be very successful.

Chapter IV

Findings and Analysis of Results

The long-term success or failures of this project are not known presently. This project in its design will benefit the future of L3O Hotels.

The Guest Service Representatives (GSR) will work self-paced in their pursuit of the new skills. Training materials have been relocated to a more accessible location near the GSR's mailboxes. The success of the overall project is of great interest to the training department. The training department feels this type of training would be beneficial in many departments throughout the property. Due to the present economic state, multitasking may also be key to saving jobs of senior employees.

Presently, in many organizations and industries, seniors have found themselves needing to work longer. Many seniors are now computer savvy, becoming competition for younger applicants.

Table 1. FRONT OFFICE EMPLOYEE SELF-ASSESSMENT RESULTS

1. *LIST ANY SPECIAL SKILLS YOU HAVE: (i.e. Accounting)*

Skill	Respondents with skill	Job importance
Accounting	///	Medium
Computer Programs	////	High
Customer Service	////	High
Office Machines	///	High
Typing Speed	////	Low
Higher Education	////	Medium
Phone Skills	/	High
Concierge Services	//	Low
Photography	/	Low
Security	/	Medium
Training Skills	//	Low
Forecasting	/	High

As listed in the previous section the respondents have skills in a multitude of areas. This variety of skills shows the potential and variety of interests the respondents have.

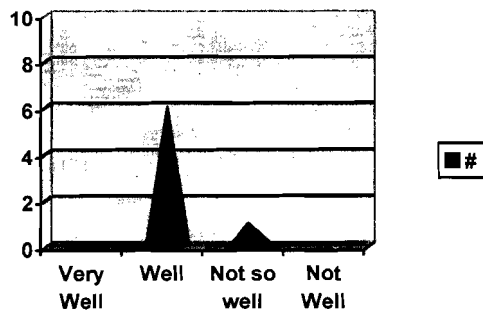
Below is an analysis of the most beneficial skills to this assessment:

Computer Programs-Respondents have the ability to master moving from one program to the next using multiple windows, screens, and systems when necessary.

Customer Service-Quality of service provided to customers is beyond those of someone that would rather work alone. As well the quality of service needed for each individual customer is different and not everyone possess this ability.

Typing Speed-Many hotel organizations are requiring a specific amount of time to be spent checking a guest in or out. If there are errors in the guest's information it may require them to enter this information. The GSR also will need to enter information into the computer for reservations and any number of situations. This speed at doing so will assist in pleasing or displeasing many guests. (A displeased guest is rarely a return guest.)

Higher Education-There is a stronger desire for learning among these respondents. The world is filled with many people who thirst for knowledge but never get quenched. There also are many more of those people who don't understand this thirst and abhor it. The later would not make a good candidate for multitasking.

Table 2. *HOW DOES YOUR TEMPERAMENT MATCH YOUR POSITION?*

This particular question provided an insight into the honesty and desire the respondents had to participate. Not one respondent marked VERY WELL. It is a popular fact among many analysts that nothing is always positive or negative, that most things are in-between. The researcher agrees with this line of thinking and felt the respondents took the assessment seriously. A benefit of participating in this study is that the respondents were getting a chance to be heard. Not surprisingly one respondent marked that their temperament didn't match their position well. As many employee find in their assumed positions that they may not like their job or able to handle the conditions of the job, but they are able to "fake it" very well. This response shows the researcher a possible reason for a lack of job satisfaction.

The Pros and Cons section shows the positives about working at L3O Hotels and the negatives. In making change it is very important to recognize and eliminate boundaries to success. The following is a presentation of the findings and an analysis of the top three respondent Pros and Cons.

Table 3. LIST FIVE PROS AND FIVE CONS OF YOUR POSITION:

Pros	Responses	Cons	Responses
Variety	////(5)	Pace	/(2)
Co-workers	////(4)	Stamina needed	/(3)
Flexible hrs	/(3)	Hours	/(2)
Rewards	/(2)	Breaks	/(2)
Good Mangers	/	Rude Guests	////(4)
Cross Training	/	No holidays off	/
Facilities	/	Co-workers skills	/(2)
Customer Service	/	Pay	/
Training	/(2)	Availability requirements	/(2)
Comfort	/(2)	Over-selling	/
		Supply shortages	/
		Advancement	/
		Job Satisfaction	/
		Uniform	/

Pros

Variety-A great majority of the respondents are looking forward to having things change.

These respondents will be very welcoming to adding more tasks to their shift.

Co-workers-Respondents enjoy the work environment. These respondents will be competitive with each other and help each other to learn new skills.

Training-These two respondents will be useful as leaders for the new skills. They thirst for knowledge and will enjoy the process of multitasking.

Cons

Stamina needed-The Front Desk requires a lot of standing in one place and then rapid movement to retrieve items from the back. Front desk agents are encouraged to have comfortable shoes due to the length of time one is standing. It is difficult for some to spend an eight-hour shift standing. However it does come with the territory.

Rude guests-One of the skills that sets apart customer service people than any other job is that rude guests are everywhere. Throughout the course of a shift the possibility that a

GSR won't have at least one rude guest is slim. Through multitasking these difficult guest can be rapidly serviced and the GSR can help the next guest.

Pace-It was very concerning that any of the GSRs would state the pace of the job as a con. The Front Desk also has long periods of down time. There are many lists and job activities that must be completed by the end of the shift. There also are times when it's a line from the desk to the door for the entire shift. It does vary, however Multitasking can help that line to be dealt with in half the time.

Table 4. LIST WHAT JOB ACTIVITIES YOU LIKE OR DISLIKE:

<u>DISLIKES (Do not enjoy)</u>	<u>LIKES (Enjoy about job)</u>
Time Constraints	Concierge Duties
Monotony	Things are orderly
Overbooking	Guests
Taking Reservations	Checking IN/OUT
Bucket Check	Check Lists

These responses raised some concern. Two major duties of the position and a major skill needed are listed as Dislike: Taking reservations and Bucket Check.

The use of multitasking should place these dislikes in a more neutral place for these respondents. The participants will have a better understand of reservations and how to perform this task properly. During training on the computer this is a portion that is just highlighted. The trainee just gets an overview and has a limited knowledge of the workings of the particular reservations screen. The larger problem may not be in the reservations themselves, but the timing of phone calls for reservations.

Today's traveler rarely wants to make reservations using call centers or automated tellers. They want a name of someone who they can hold responsible at the hotel when they get there. To state once again today's traveler is smarter than yesterdays. When these

calls come into the hotel the GSR could have any number of things happening. The caller has no idea that there is only one person working at that time and there is a line with a guy shouting in the back, "Hurry up, I've got a meeting."

Through multitasking the GSR will be able to use one computer to make a new reservation. Complete checking in guest of front of them. They can answer another call. Take any opportunity to place the caller on hold to give attention to the person in front of them or get a number to phone the caller back. There will be times when they can even complete the reservation and keep the line moving-using the new skills acquired. (There's nothing they can do for the guy in the back of the line except keep smiling at him.)

The Bucket Check is a vital piece to the financials of the property. It ensures that each guest has been or will be charged for the correct amounts that they have spent. It also ensures that they are being charged the correct rate. This check must be completed accurately each time and cannot be taking lightly. It is something that a wise hotelier would never stop doing. This duty makes the last impression on the guest as opposed to explaining why they were charged for an adult movie when there never was a credit card to allow them to watch movies in the first place.

Table 5. *WHAT DO YOU CONTRIBUTE MOST TO THE FRONT OFFICE?*

<u>CONTRIBUTIONS</u>	<u>Responses</u>
Do job well	////(4)
Smile	/(2)
Team player	/
Positive Attitude	////(4)
Helping Co-Workers	/
Concierge duties	/(2)
Customer Service	/
Computer Skills	/

As the GSR acquires more skills their contributions will grow as well as change. The ability to start a reservation on another computer while checking a guest in, find a phone number for a restaurant, connect an incoming call to guest can all be completed with a five to ten minute time frame. Many of the respondents only gave one-word responses to this question. Many actually have no idea what they contribute. This could be from a lack of feed back from management. It could also mean that they are just unsure of their abilities since training.

It is the researcher's position that an employee should have a prideful sense of what they contribute no matter the job. Through multitasking, these respondents will acquire this pride, as they will be able to outperform most in their industry.

Review of Manager Questionnaire Response

1. The goal of the Front Office in order of importance is:

- *GUEST SATISFACTION*- emphasis is the guest experience. This goal ties in all of the goals listed. Though guests can be satisfied when they leave the difficult part is to have them be satisfied throughout the stay.
- *DEVELOPING PERSONNEL*-Creating experts in this line of work to distinguish L3O Hotels Guest Service Representatives from any other
- *CAPTURING SALES*-Keeping the supply of income coming in. The steps taken to get guests are highly important. To keep the doors open there have to be new guests waiting behind those leaving.
- *UP-SELLING*-Increasing the supply of income by increasing the experience.
- *RESERVATIONS*-Creating the supply of income by filling rooms

2. Tasks influence on the purpose of the Front Office in order of influence:

- *HANDLING COMPLAINTS*-Keeping guests happy by correcting problems
- *GUEST CHECK-IN*-Timely execution from reservation to In-House guest
- *ANSWERING PHONES*-Satisfying the unseen guest
- *PERFORMING MULTIPLE TASKS*-Ability to move through all tasks
(Surprisingly very low on the list)
- *TAKING RESERVATIONS*-Currently thought of as a separate department

3. 50%-70% of the projects and activities currently in the works will help the Front Office reach the company's goals.

- The company is not overloading this particular department with disruptive activities or projects. According to the participant, the corporate departments are very receptive to requests to reposition projects or adjust activities which take away from the Front Office's major goal-GUEST SATISFACTION
- Some companies may require the Front Office to police the grounds, clear rooms, make maintenance repairs or other duties that take the GSR away from the desk.
- Many of the current projects and activities are helping the Front Office to reach the company's goals. One goal the company has is to increase financials from previous years and to have made advances in this area from two years prior.

4. 10%-30% of the projects and activities currently in the works will not help the Front Office reach the company's goals.

- There are few projects and activities currently in the works that will not help the Front Office reach the company's goals.
- The participant declines to share the biggest barriers.

5. According to the Manager participant, all of the following tasks lead to the current goals at L3O Hotels. This particular response provided the researcher with a particular feeling of familiarity as all of the tasks were from the researchers experiences as a Guest Services Representative. It also hinted to the researchers subject matter expertise. This was the point the research became even more important to the researcher.

- Audit Reports (Checking for correct paperwork)
- Bucket Check (Checking for correct charges-specifically)
- Call around sheet (competitors prices)
- Fax log (Ensuring business guests get vital information)
- Security of hotel and staff (Knowing employee only areas)
- Travel Arrangements for guests (Assisting those without transportation)
- Switch board Operation (In-coming and Out-going calls)
- Rack rate over Sell rate (The preferred prices of rooms)
- Balancing Accounts (Accounting for money taken in to money spent)
- Posting Charges (Manuel charging of guests for expenditures)

6. 70%-90% of all rules and regulations facilitate productive results.

- Corporate has a duty to itself to set binding standards to its employees. When followed these standards make for the success or failure of the business. As previously stated many rules and regulations are built on paranoia and not actual need. It is a very difficult job to anticipate the wrong doings or involvement of staff, therefore it is important to be general in order to speak to all involved.

7. 10%-30% of all rules and regulations hinder productive results.

- This staff has been given tools needed for success. The rules and regulations are set-up to assist the staff in performing their jobs. The barriers at many other hotels are not present at L3O Hotels. Corporate has spent many hours rethinking and adjusting rules and regulations to work with changing staff and what the populous has to offer for employees.

Chapter V

Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Summary

The Front Office Staff and the Training Department will find using the Team Time/Talent Assessment tool to be extremely easy and helpful to use in future reorganizations. This tool proved to be helpful in answering the question of whether the staff would be receptive to adding multitasking to the list of skills they possess. A staff not performing to its full potential and management not knowing if the potential is there is a huge problem. This assessment has given answers to the researcher and management staff about that potential.

The most direct and complete way to probe multitasking was a solution for this project was with the Team time/Talent Assessment tool. The tool also provided insight into any barriers that would prevent the staff from excelling. It probed the staff's personal and professional feelings about the position and L3O Hotels.

The information presented in this study shows the usefulness of the tool. The researcher did not complete the tool in its entirety as the level of difficulty in adding this skill is minimal. The portion not included is an evaluation of the staff members on each other. As previously stated this would cause undue stress and could negatively affect the staff. This type of research, like any, should not cause harm. Many professions have an unwritten, "DO NO HARM," clause when conducting research or consulting functions. The researcher believes in this clause and practiced it throughout the study.

Conclusions

After completion of the assessment, employees were able to see what their skills were and also whether they actually have an interest in the job they are performing. The tool has provided insight into the work being done and that, which is in the works. Multitasking will also give less advanced new hires the information they did not grasp during training. Another positive result of multitasking is, lowering of turnover by not losing employees due to poor performance. Turnover has a huge negative outcome on the bottom line if it is not checked.

The additional benefits of using multitasking in this work setting are both personal and professional. The staff will have more freedom of movement within the Front Office. The staff will have a full understanding of the systems they are using to perform their job. Multitasking is very different than many tools training professionals have as solutions to problems. Many of those tools do not work because they are or become simply “buzz” words thrown around to fit situations. Multitasking is not like many of the “buzz” words found presently in the work environment-its about action!

One example of a failed “buzz” word is “empowerment.” Previously, it was thought that the staff could be “empowered” to do certain things to better serve the guest. The problem became the need to have boundaries on this “empowerment.” Employees were disciplined for solving problems by purchasing a room or giving a movie or some “thing” to please the guest. “Empowerment” is seen as being black and white and it very much is a tool that should be gray. The objective should always be to positively affect the business and the staff. The Team Time/Talent Assessment has more than provided the

insight needed to say multitasking is the best way to improve the performance of the Front Office staff.

Recommendations

The Team Time/Talent Assessment has provided insight into the skills, interests and feelings of the Front Office staff. It is the recommendation of the researcher that multitasking be added as an improvement skill for the staff. It is also recommended that the tool be used to determine acceptability and barriers to future retooling of this and other staff at L3O Hotels.

It is key to the success of this retooling that the staff have equal access to training materials and be encouraged to learn all disciplines. Performance reviews should reflect the ability to better service guests using these new skills. The tool can be used in the hiring process as well. Management can determine the desire of the applicant to work hard and to improve in weak areas. This tool can become what shapes the overall business.

Many hospitality companies currently use assessments to determine hire ability these days. Olive Garden has its p16 and even a smaller company named O'Charleys has its online survey and now L3O Hotels will have the Team Time/Talent Assessment tool to determine if applicants are the right fit.

The tool is simple to use and provides enough information to drastically effect any business goal. The tool's purpose in this study was to show that multitasking was not only the correct addition; it showed that the staff would be receptive to it. The most important of the two being that the staff would indeed take on the new challenges, as it fit to their personal and professional goals, and the effect would be positive.

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Appendix A

Survey

FRONT OFFICE EMPLOYEE SELF-ASSESSMENT

1. LIST ANY SPECIAL SKILLS YOU HAVE: (ie. Accounting)

-	-
-	-
-	-
-	-
-	-

2. HOW DOES YOUR TEMPERAMENT MATCH YOUR POSITION?

○	○	○	○
VERY WELL	WELL	NOT SO WELL	NOT WELL
(NEVER IRRITATED)	(RARELY IRRITATED)	(SOMETIMES IRRITATED)	
(ALWAYS IRRITATED)			

3. LIST FIVE PROS AND FIVE CONS OF YOUR POSITION

1	1
2	2
3	3
4	4
5	5

4. LIST WHAT JOB ACTIVITIES YOU LIKE OR DISLIKE

5. WHAT DO YOU CONTRIBUTE MOST TO THE FRONT OFFICE?

THANK YOU SO MUCH LUCIAN

Manager Questionnaire

1. Using a scale of 1-5, 5 being the most important, what are the goals of the Front Office?

Capture Sales _____
 Up-selling _____
 Guest Satisfaction _____
 Develop Personnel _____
 Reservations _____

2. Using a scale of 1-5: 5 being the most influential, Rank each tasks influence on the purpose of the Front Office's.

_____ Check-in Guests
 _____ Take Reservations
 _____ Answer Phones
 _____ Handle Complaints
 _____ Perform Multiple Tasks

3. Of the projects and activities currently in the works, Check Mark the percentage that will help you to reach the company's goals.

- ☐ 10%-30% Few
- ☐ 30%-50% Some
- ☐ 50%-70% Many
- ☐ 70%-90% Most
- ☐ 90%-100% Almost All

4. Of the projects and activities currently in the works, Check mark the percentage that will not help you to reach the companies goals?

- ☐ 10%-30% Few
- ☐ 30%-50% Some
- ☐ 50%-70% Many
- ☐ 70%-90% Most
- ☐ 90%-100% Almost All

Please share the biggest barriers

5. Check mark tasks performed by your team that DIRECTLY lead to the current goals.

- ☐ All
- ☐ Audit Reports
- ☐ Bucket Check
- ☐ Call around Sheet (competitors prices)
- ☐ Fax log
- ☐ Security of hotel and staff
- ☐ Travel Arrangements for guests
- ☐ Switch Board Operation
- ☐ Rack rate over Sell rate
- ☐ Balancing Accounts
- ☐ Posting Charges
- ☐ None of the above

6. Examine all rules and regulations: Check Mark the percentages of those rules that facilitate productive results.

- ☐ 10%-30% Few
- ☐ 30%-50% Some
- ☐ 50%-70% Many
- ☐ 70%-90% Most
- ☐ 90%-100% Almost All

7. Examine all rules and regulations: Check Mark the percentages of those rules that hinder productive results.

- ☐ 10%-30% Few
- ☐ 30%-50% Some
- ☐ 50%-70% Many
- ☐ 70%-90% Most
- ☐ 90%-100% Almost All