

Final Projects: Research Paper

SAMPLE RESEARCH PAPER (A)

“An Overview of the
Hospitality and Restaurant Management Profession”

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Thesis Statement: A person who wants to become a professional in the Hospitality and Restaurant Management field should consider gaining both experience and an educational degree in order to enjoy a successful career.

Purpose: To help the author understand what it will take to become a professional in the HRM field.

Audience: Professor

Outline:

- I. Introduction: The HRM profession is multi-faceted
 - a. An Educational Degree is advantageous; Experience is also key
 - b. Responsible for operations of a functioning food establishment
 - c. The field is diverse and covers all demographics and populations
- II. Body: The HRM profession is multi-faceted because of the nature of the hospitality and restaurant industry.
 - a. Education - A degree from an accredited university or training from a certified program can be advantageous.
 - i. AS in Hospitality & Restaurant Management
 - ii. BS in Culinary Arts Management
 - iii. Business & Marketing
 - iv. Recreation Management
 - b. Experience – with dedication and hard work, a person may be able to work his or her way from bottom up.
 - i. Getting a foot in the door
 - ii. Learning from observation and practice
 - iii. It takes time

- c. Industry Overview
 - i. Largest Employer
 - ii. The numbers speak for themselves
 - iii. Management Opportunity
- d. Profession and my assessments
 - i. Appeals to my personality
 - ii. Fits my interests
 - iii. Works with my career goals
- e. Evaluation – has lots of potential, but not perfect
 - i. Majors may be achievable; given more time and available resources
 - ii. Like the hands-on creative parts of the job
 - iii. Not too sure about the very long hours/lack of time off
 - iv. Enjoy working with people; but not sure how I would do following instructions
- f. Conclusion – I will keep researching the field
 - i. Audit some more classes at Mt. SAC.
 - ii. Spend more time speaking with professors or counselors
 - iii. Find out if the majors offered are suitable for me.
 - iv. Figure out what would happen if enrolled in the program; where to go from here!

The HRM profession is multi-faceted because of the nature of the hospitality and restaurant industry. Because it is the single largest employer in the United States outside of the government (Restaurant.org), the industry crosses all demographics and populations and offers a great deal of opportunities. The profession entails anything from menu planning to working out the next marketing plan to make the establishment appealing. A person could enter the field through different ways, by acquiring an educational degree or by gaining experience as a restaurant or hotel worker and working his or her way up. Combining both elements of education and experience may be the best approach. A person who wants to become a professional in the HRM field should consider gaining both experience and an educational degree in order to enjoy a successful career.

As a starting point, I contacted Dr. Al-Malood (personal communication, December 1, 2006), Professor and Area Coordinator in the Hospitality Management program here at Mt SAC. I wanted to find out what in his opinion, is the difference in having and not having an education in this particular field. In explaining the HRM field, he had this to say:

HRM is business management, and management is part science and part art. The science aspect deals with the clear technical issues, producing P&L statements, other financial statements,

operating equipment, executing a task, etc. The art aspect deals with the intangible things in dealing with different personalities, making decisions, innovating, dealing with conceptualls. A person who commits himself to going to college will acquire many of these skills in a very short period of time under the guidance of a faculty member.

He also said that education “equips students with the necessary training, skills and tools to be successful and effective managers.” In response to the argument that people can also succeed in the business by working their way from the bottom up, he does not disagree. “Education through experience certainly has it merits,” he said, but that it is not perfect and has “deficiencies.” Ultimately he believes that a combination of both education and experience are crucial to having a successful career. As he eloquently stated, “Education and experience go hand in hand...one is always incomplete without the other.” I found the interview to be greatly insightful, and do hope to be able to attend one of his courses in the near future.

The courses offered for someone interested in the HRM field is diverse. At Mt SAC, one can pursue an Associates Degree in Hospitality and Restaurant Management, or on different campuses, courses in Culinary Arts Management, Recreation Management are widely available. An Associates Degree in Hospitality covers courses such as Food Safety and Sanitation, Restaurant Cost Control, Menu Planning or even hands on electives in gaining actual work experience.

Following the interview with Dr. Al-Malood, I spoke with Don Mignogna (personal communication, December 3, 2006), manager of Casey's Bar & Grill in Downtown Los Angeles. He and I discussed the advantages and disadvantages of working as a restaurant manager. To him, one of the positives is being able to work in a highly social environment in working with the public, but as a result, the hours are long and a typical work week could be upwards of 80 hours. He was an example of someone who worked his way in from the bottom up without an educational background. He believes anyone can start by working in the lower-paying service jobs and make his or her way up over time. With regards to education, Mr. Mignogna said it "can help, but I personally prefer taking workshops and seminars." He did have one strong advice for me when it came to education versus experience, "Work hard! Whether in the field or in school, if you work hard you can achieve what you want."

Concentrating on the restaurant industry alone, in an industry with countless opportunities, it's no wonder Mr. Magnogna's hard work has paid off for him. The National Restaurant Association on its 2006 Industry Overview reported \$511 billion in sales in serving over 70 billion meal and snack occasions with a workforce of 12.5 million employees. Of the 12.5 million employees, not all are working in big restaurants or establishments, more than seven out of 10 eating-and-drinking places are single-unit (independent) operations (Industry Fact Sheet). In a number that may work against educators like Dr. Al-Malood, the

Association also states that “nine out of 10 salaried employees at table service restaurants started as hourly employees and that “more than one out of four table service operations will increase the proportion of their budget allocated to training.” It does not guarantee success of course, and like the professor said, a person who does not go to college, or majors in HRM may acquires some but not all of the skills “over a longer period of time, and perhaps under favorable or unfavorable conditions.” It is regardless a booming industry.

I always changed my mind about what I wanted to do. As a kid, I wanted to be a veterinarian. The veterinarian somehow morphed into a doctor. The doctor became a pharmacist and the list grew longer. But somewhere along the way, I discovered a passion for cooking. I found my way to the kitchen. The “making of something out of nothing”, the seeing a smile on someone’s face after they have tasted something I made, it brought me joy. I cooked for friends and family whenever possible, at every chance I had simply because I loved to cook. I also discovered that cooking went hand in hand with another interest of mine, bartending. It gave me an idea that perhaps I would one day open my own restaurant bar. But where does one begin? What does it mean? This project gave me the start that I needed to find out a little bit something more about a subject that has always interested me and may be something I want to pursue as a career.

As an INFP, career satisfaction means doing work that is in harmony with my own personal values and beliefs and allows me to express my vision through

my work (Tieger, 163). My work in the kitchen is a constant creation, and a career in creating would be very appealing. Yet as an INFP, it is also noted that I prefer doing work where I could work towards fulfilling my ideals and not be limited by political, financial or other obstacles (Tieger 166), whereas a career as an HRM professional may sometimes mean I would be restricted by budget allowances or other people's constraints.

In evaluating my findings, I believe that there are many aspects of HRM that I find attractive, but it is not all perfect. The Associates of Sciences offers a good assortment of classes that look interesting, but does depend on how it fits with my work schedule and other routines. I enjoy the parts of the field where a person is allowed to be creative, such as designing menus and the food offered to customers, but what I am unsure about are some of the other details. Finances, operational logistics, handling customers are all parts of the responsibilities of a HRM professional, and if I wished to become a manager and much less an owner, I would have to work on some of these skills.

In conclusion, I will continue to research the field in several ways. If I am unable to attend classes full time, I would like to audit a few courses offered by Mt SAC under the HR program. I will also definitely continue communicating with Dr. Al-Malood and other faculty members to discuss my options and potential in the field. As a person who does change his mind often, I would very much like to be decided on a career option that I can continue to pursue. With

more understanding in researching for this paper, I believe I have started down the right path and will continue to seek out my options here at Mt SAC and beyond.

Works Cited

Tieger, P.D. & Barron-Tieger, B. (2001). Do what you are: discover the perfect career for you through the secrets of personality type. Boston: Little, Brown & Co.

Industry Fact Sheet (12/6/2006). Available: www.Restaurant.org

The National Restaurant Association on its 2006 Industry Overview