



Your Future...

in Hospitality & Catering



Management • Finance • Sales & Marketing
Administration • Food & Beverage
Rooms • Maintenance



Compiled by the Human Resources & Support Services
Directorate - Malta Tourism Authority.

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Disclaimer

Whilst the MTA's Directorate for Human Resources & Support Services has taken extreme care and attention to ensure that all the information contained in this booklet was accurate up to the date of printing, the MTA cannot be held responsible for any changes that may have occurred in the interim.

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Introduction

The Malta Tourism Authority (MTA) has a diverse role, but one which in essence is about creating and fostering relationships. The Authority was formally set up by the Malta Travel and Tourism Service Act (1999). This defines our work as the tourism industry's regulator and business partner and as promoter of the Islands as a tourism destination.

We work closely with the tourism sector on the Maltese Islands and help strengthen the industry to ensure the quality of our tourism product.

One area which is key to the tourism industry's success is the development of human resources. This booklet is part of our initiative to encourage more young people to take up careers in the hospitality industry. Here, we outline the various job roles, the career paths you can follow, the skills you'll need and the rewards on offer if you choose a career in hotels and catering. If you have any queries or require further career guidance, feel free to contact our Human Resources and Support Services Directorate. You'll find our number on the back of this booklet.

So what does the hospitality industry offer?

Above all, it offers a career in which you can make your mark as an individual, while being part of a team and part of an industry which contributes to the country's economic well-being. Few sectors give individuals so much scope.

The very word 'hospitality' says it all. The job roles outlined in this booklet have at their core the welcoming of guests to the Maltese Islands. A great deal of job satisfaction, whichever role you choose, comes from knowing that you really can make a difference to someone's experience of Malta.

It is a challenging industry. Each day offers new opportunities and unforeseen issues to deal with. If you show initiative and are willing to learn, you can progress rapidly. And you will have ample space to demonstrate your individual capabilities.

It is a highly professional industry and one that offers considerable career flexibility. But you have to be prepared for life-long learning and training. Whichever role you find yourself in, you will always be in the front line of customer service. Equally

important will be your understanding of the industry's rigorous service standards.

Hospitality is by its very nature international. Whether you work in Malta or overseas, you'll meet people from all over the world. You'll be able to learn about their cultures and, hopefully, be inspired to learn their languages. Good communication skills are vital to all the roles, and are essential to making people feel at home here.

It goes without saying that the hospitality business is a people business. But just as important as contact and communication with guests, is your ability to be a good team player with your colleagues. A hotel or restaurant can only be as successful as the people who work in it.

The best of teamwork though, is that there is plenty of support around you as you learn the ropes in your chosen career in hospitality.

Careers in Hotel Management

In large hotels and catering organisations, there are management opportunities in various departments such as food & beverage, finance, the rooms division, marketing & sales and human resources. Managers may specialise in one area, moving up from the operational level to become heads of department. Moving from one section to another provides you with a flexible skill set you can use to widen your horizons beyond your area of specialisation. This means that whichever route into management you take, you have a lot of scope to excel.

Hotel General Manager

What does the Hotel General Manager do?

You are the focal point of the day-to-day running of the hotel. A major part of the job is managing people, setting the goals and standards for your management team and overseeing the performance of all departments. You are also the driving force behind the business. You keep up to date with any local or international industry trends that impact your business. It's your job to implement strategies that create a competitive edge for your establishment.

The job is one of responsibility, but it is not without its upsides. The general manager has a great deal of personal contact with staff and guests and will undoubtedly have the opportunity to travel - attending trade fairs and conferences - especially if the hotel is part of an international chain.

What do I need to do the job?

Excellent communication skills, an outgoing personality and a natural flair for dealing with people are vital. Foreign languages are always useful. You need to be sensitive to others' views, and intuitive to their needs, as you'll be delegating work and overseeing your staff's performance.

Good organisational skills are paramount whether you are dealing with few staff in a small operation or managing a hotel that is part of an international chain.

Since you are the focus of all day-to-

day operations, you'll need to be flexible enough to juggle several issues at once and deal with unexpected situations. To inspire confidence in your judgement and decision-making, you'll need to think on your feet and have an open mind about situations. You need to be able to take risks. The way you go about your job will be a benchmark of best practice for the hotel. You'll need the strength of character to take stock of your own actions

GAIN EXPERIENCE IN AS MANY DEPARTMENTS AS POSSIBLE. IF YOU'VE DONE YOUR COLLEAGUES' TASKS, YOU'LL HAVE WHAT IT TAKES TO GUIDE AND INSPIRE THEM.

and see how and where you can improve your performance.

You will also need to think creatively and have the ability to plan for the long-term. You are key in deciding the business strategy and marketing objectives of the hotel.

A head for figures is an obvious advantage but there is no prerequisite that you have accountancy qualifications. Apart from being able to see the bigger picture, you'll need the energy and enthusiasm to keep your team motivated day in day out and to be able to sustain your interest in the job even when tackling routine tasks.

Good general managers come from any area of the hotel industry. Qualifications can hone your skills but it is important to have an inherent ability to lead people and inspire your colleagues so as to achieve the desired results.

What's in it for me?

The general manager's role puts all your skills to the test - financial, creative and interpersonal. But, if you master the role you can be assured that you have tested yourself in one of the most demanding positions in the industry.

If you're looking for a challenge, then this is the job to aspire to. Everyone in the hotel, from your fellow managers to the most junior staff member, looks to you for guidance. So you will need to lead by example and gain their respect. This may sound daunting. The success of the hotel's operations is down to you. But the sense of reward and satisfaction is hard to find in many other careers.

Formal training and educational qualification in hotel management together with hands-on experience in different hotel departments is essential.



Financial Controller

What does the Financial Controller do?

You are the financial driving force of the organisation and are responsible for promoting financial awareness within the management team. The routine part of the job is preparing the management accounts to comply with statutory requirements. But you would be wrong if you thought that was all you do. The financial controller has a key management role and provides insight into the entire operations. The work you do assesses not only the historical performance of the hotel but is the basis on which decisions about its future are taken.

This means you gain a unique insight, 'a bird's eye view', of the whole organisation.

What do I need to do the job?

Obviously you need to have an aptitude for figures. Ideally you'll also be a good communicator. You will be interpreting financial results to provide the resources for management colleagues to make their decisions - about marketing or business development for instance.

To become a financial controller you'll need to put in the study over several years to gain relevant quali-

cations in accountancy and probably management too since the financial controller needs to have a good grasp of the entire business. The career path requires you to start out learning, but you will need to develop the skills and confidence to manage and lead.

You'll also need a good dose of patience as you work your way up. Nothing beats the experience of working alongside colleagues responsible for various departments of the hotel.

Later on, you'll be taking decisions that can affect their budgets, so it pays to know what you are talking about and show you are aware of their work and concerns.

You should have the curiosity to go beyond the figures and a keenness to understand what makes the hotel business tick. After all, it will be your job to propose strategies relating to cost control and the allocation of resources.

What's in it for me?

This is a very important role within hotel management and you'll have a great deal of say in shaping the hotel's future. The qualifications needed to do the job are valuable for any industry, not solely hotels and catering establishments.

By specialising in hotel financial management though, you can find yourself with exciting opportunities to develop your career. These range from the chance to be part of the team setting up a new hotel, to being group financial controller of a hotel chain.

The satisfaction and the thrill of this career lies in knowing that your input can lay the foundations of success for the hotel.

"FINANCIAL EXPERTISE WILL BE YOUR PASSPORT TO ACHIEVING PERSONAL GOALS AND SUCCESS FOR YOUR HOTEL"



Getting Qualified? See Page 25



Sales & Marketing Manager

What does the Sales & Marketing Manager do?

Your job is to maximise revenue from the hotel infrastructure making sure that the business is developed in line with the hotel's policies and financial targets.

You will be responsible for every aspect of incoming business and be expected to come up with new revenue streams. These may include devising special room rates and services, developing new markets overseas, building the conference and incentive travel facilities, and marketing special events.

You will liaise and negotiate with international tour operators and local destination management companies, make presentations to both colleagues and external, and travel overseas to meetings and trade fairs.

What do I need to do the job?

This role requires a strong, determined yet charismatic person. Someone who has multiple skills: the creativity to think outside the box, the personality to motivate and lead a team, and the financial ability to set

and meet targets in a highly-competitive industry.

This is one of the most exciting, yet challenging, roles in the business. People look to you to drive the bottom line by increasing occupancy rates, developing ways to stimulate demand in shoulder months and creating new and exciting service offerings.

You will need to learn how to make realistic demands on your staff and be there to support them. It is important to gain the respect of your team. You need leadership and managerial skills,

"REMEMBER HOW YOU FELT WHEN YOUR PARENTS BOUGHT YOU THAT LONGED - FOR PRESENT? THIS IS WHAT YOU FEEL WHEN YOU ACHIEVE YOUR OBJECTIVES IN SALES & MARKETING".

excellent communication and presentational skills and a keen financial awareness. Above all, you must be prepared to listen and learn. You have to be aware of the wider market and

keep up to date on your competition - other hotels and country destinations.

What's in it for me?

To go in for sales and succeed in the career, you really need to have an inherent love for the job and a thirst to reach, and improve on, targets. You can start with the most humble of sales jobs to see how you fare.

If it's for you, and you want to progress, then the rewards are immense. Not just in financial terms - good sales and marketing managers are in high demand within the industry - but also in term of personal growth.

Product and industry knowledge will give you the satisfaction of being in touch with people from around the world, and enable you to build a wealth of contacts.



Human Resources & Training Manager

What does the Human Resources & Training Manager do?

This role goes far beyond selecting the right people for the organisation and helping make sure they are managed effectively. The position can vary widely according to which hotel you work for. But a large part of your work is in recruitment and selection, training and development, industrial and employee relations and human resource planning. It's your business to have a view of the operation's human resource needs. You are a key member of the management team; hotels and catering are, after all, people businesses.

What do I need to do the job?

Firstly, you will be an excellent communicator, and at ease dealing with people from every department in the hotel and at every staff level. This is a job for someone with the desire to see people make the most of their potential. You are there to guide them and suggest career paths and training which can widen their horizons.

At the same time, you represent the company's business goals. The role is

often that of a mediator between company and individual needs. You must be open-minded when facing

**"HUMAN RESOURCE
MANAGEMENT IS ABOUT
GETTING THE BEST OUT OF
YOUR COLLEAGUES"**

difficult situations, be fair, inspire confidence and lead by example. If you view employment issues as a 'them-and-us' affair, this is not the job for you.

You will need to study and be prepared for career-long learning to keep abreast of both local and international HR-related laws and trends. This part of the job should not be underestimated. The HR department has to reconcile the needs of the company with the needs of the employees. As a member of the management team, the hotel's overall financial success is your responsibility too.

What's in it for me?

This is a varied, interesting and challenging role. The constant changes in the industry and the knowledge you will gain means you will never stop adding to your own personal skills set. Then, there are the rewards of helping others make the most of their careers, and the satisfaction of knowing your contribution is vital to the success of the entire business.

Sometimes human resources is seen as a 'soft issue'. This couldn't be further from the truth. Whenever people need to be motivated as a team - especially in demanding service industries such as hotels, catering and tourism in general - you will have your skills tested to the limit. Human resources in hotel management is one of the most challenging career options you can choose.



Food & Beverage Manager

What does the Food & Beverage manager do?

You are responsible for the administration, human resources and budgetary control of the hotel's catering and beverage operations. You'll have full overview of the day-to-day running of the organisations' food and beverage outlets. These range from à la carte restaurants to coffee shops and from poolside bars to night clubs.

You will also liaise with the Head Chef and other kitchen staff to compile budgets and menus required for the various food service areas and for special events' catering. An important part of the job is ensuring the hotel restaurants comply with health and safety, and food hygiene regulations.

What do I need to do the job?

There is an art to understanding the food and beverage requirements of an establishment. You'll need a good head for figures to work out the routine budgetary aspects, but above all you have to understand the food and beverage business.

One route to gaining an insight into

the sector is to have worked in areas such as the kitchen or the restaurant. This way, you will have had first-hand experience in food and beverage purchasing, stock control, pricing, and menu planning and be aware of the stringent health, safety and hygiene

"YOU HAVE TO START FROM THE BOTTOM IN THIS DIVISION, BUT INITIATIVE AND PERSEVERANCE ARE THE SECRET TO SUCCESS."

standards required in the areas under your control.

Ideally, you will have excellent communication skills since you will be dealing with numerous customers and staff and will need to liaise daily with colleagues in other departments. Attention to detail and organisational skills are essential as you are responsible for the profit margins of the food and beverage outlets. Since you are in

charge of a fairly large department, you need delegation skills to be able to manage a variety of staff from different areas of the hotel.

What's in it for me?

It is no easy feat to run efficient, profitable restaurants and bars, which are not only recommended by customers but which also provide an enjoyable and healthy working atmosphere for your staff.

But that is the reward of the job. There is immense satisfaction to be had from the appreciation of clients, colleagues and staff.

You are also running a highly visible aspect of the hotel, one that is often a key measurement of the establishment's overall success. Succeed here and you can find yourself furthering your career with a move into general management.



"BANQUETING IS ABOUT COMBINING YOUR CREATIVITY WITH YOUR WILLINGNESS TO MAKE A CLIENT'S WISH COME TRUE".



Banqueting & Events Manager

What does the Banqueting & Events Manager do?

The success of any banquet, large function or event depends on your management skills. You will be involved from the early planning stage through to the day of the function itself. The job combines administration, sales, management and co-ordination with all the other service departments.

You also have a public relations and marketing role as you are a key interface with guests, external suppliers and other hotel departments. Your job doesn't end once the event or function is over. You will be following up your customers, gauging feedback and seeing if arrangements were satisfactory. Repeat business is your business.

What do I need to do the job?

No two clients will ever have the same wish list and it's your job to interpret their needs into a well-run, efficient and successful event or function. You will need excellent communication and people skills since you act

as a kind of account manager for each function. You'll have an outgoing character, a pleasant, patient manner, and be well organised. Ideally, you will have a knowledge of catering.

You should approach each function as a chance to demonstrate your professionalism. Every function is different, even if the category - wedding, conference, sales presentation - seems the same. A wedding can be a buffet or a sit-down formal meal while conferences can require everything from small syndicate rooms for working seminars to large theatre-style accommodation for the main business of the day.

You will need to be innovative in your suggestions as to how best to host a function, and be confident that you can deliver. For this, your team is paramount. So you should demonstrate that you can manage effectively, motivate, work to deadlines and cope when clients' requests change.

Hours can be unsociable so you will need stamina and a healthy approach to hard work. You need the ability to juggle several events at once, both in

terms of forward planning and on the day itself. Sometimes large establishments host two or three functions simultaneously.

What's in it for me?

Your rewards come from seeing satisfied customers. These can range from repeat business from large international firms whose corporate events you have successfully hosted, to a quick phone call of thanks from families whose special day - anniversary or wedding - you have run smoothly.

If you excel in this role, and want to move on, there is no reason you can't adapt to any managerial role.

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Restaurant Manager

What does the Restaurant Operations Manager do?

You are in charge of the management and efficient day-to-day running of the restaurant. This includes planning staff rosters, weekly menus and budgets and ensuring compliance with service and food quality standards.

It is a role which blends managerial and administrative skills with an interest in food preparation and service. You are responsible for ensuring that the restaurant's clientele has the best possible experience dining out at your establishment.

What do I need to do the job?

Restaurant service is almost a 24-hour job since the hotel may be open until very late, or open early to serve both hotel guests and other clientele.

You will need to be a confident leader, and have the personality to motivate staff who are expected to work unsociable hours. There will be times when you will need to be quick thinking and firm. You will need to be highly organised to deal with the planning and paperwork that goes into running the restaurant operations. The job is also more outward looking than you may realise. You need

"THE GREATEST REWARD FOR YOU AND YOUR TEAM IS SEEING THE SATISFIED LOOKS ON YOUR CLIENTS' FACES".

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an understanding of trends in food and beverages – what's in and what's not in terms of atmosphere, cuisine and drinks. This means keeping abreast of the market – local and international – and listening to and acting on customer and staff comments.

You need to excel at routine paperwork, and have a clear idea of budgetary matters. There is no reason why you can't be creative in the role as well, by suggesting and organising events that boost restaurant and beverage revenues.

What's in it for me?

Your personality will be the key to how you approach the job. You will, of course, need to take pride in running the operations efficiently, but ideally you will also want to help your staff make more of their jobs, and take the opportunity to stamp your mark on the restaurants' policies.

Hotel management will have overall direction on food and beverages, but you are the one who really understands the day-to-day operations. This gives you the scope to suggest changes for the better. This is a role which can act as a stepping stone to careers in other areas of the hotel business.

Executive Chef

What does the Executive Chef do?

This is a role that has everything to do with management and a lot to do with the profession of a chef. You are responsible not only for the day-to-day running of the kitchens, but also for the organisation and financial

management of the catering department. In large hotels or restaurants you can find yourself in charge of a big team. It's your job to see that quality food is produced within a stipulated budget. To do this, you will be dealing with stock control, purchasing and payroll. You will coordinate the kitchen and service in order to maintain the highest standards of meals and service. You will have the pressure of keeping labour costs and other operational costs under control.

"THE EXECUTIVE CHEF IS A VALUABLE MEMBER OF ANY HOTEL OR CATERING BUSINESS; AND THE CHEF'S PROFESSION IS HIGHLY REGARDED."

What do I need to do the job?

This job is not only about being the best chef, it's also about being able to manage a team. For the catering department to run like clockwork, you'll need to be a highly-organised, dedicated person with a keen eye for detail.

You have to enjoy being a team player, and, as the person in charge, you will need excellent communication skills. Catering establishments can be pressured places to work since they serve large numbers of people at the same time. You will need to keep a level head and deal with situations as they arise.

You should also be methodical and

meticulous in your planning. The executive chef is in charge of budgets and standards and will need to develop the managerial skills to ensure that these are adhered to.

The ability to keep staff motivated as you run a day-to-day operation is important, but you also need to be able to sit down to the administrative work, before or after the demands of the day. To cope with both aspects of the job, you will be putting in long hours.

What's in it for me?

This is not a job for everyone. Many chefs will prefer to keep a more hands-on role in food preparation and leave the administrative side to someone else. But if you are keen to progress in catering, then this is a senior position.

You will have achieved the status of Head Chef after working your way through the ranks of a highly-regarded profession. Now you will want to hone your management skills in this job.

The experience you gain in this position gives you the opportunity to step sideways into more general hotel management. The bonus will be that you will have tested your mettle in one of the most important and pressured areas of the business.



Rooms Division Manager

**THE SATISFACTION COMES
FROM KNOWING YOUR TEAM
HAS MADE A GUEST'S STAY THE
BEST THEY HAVE HAD IN
ANY HOTEL.**

What does the Rooms Division Manager do?

You are in charge of everything to do with guests' comfort and well-being during their stay in the hotel. You are responsible for what is known as 'front-of-house' services and the housekeeping; these include all the facilities guests see - rooms, reception, reservations, concierge and portering - plus those they don't - such as the administration and staff management required to keep things running smoothly.

What do I need to do the job?

This is a wide-ranging management role within the hotel's organisation, and one which requires the ability to handle numerous demands on your time. The fact that you oversee so many departments gives you a unique job role, one ideally suited to helping you further a career in general management.

The role is one of the most customer-focused in the hotel, so you will need to understand guest relations. Communication skills are paramount given the daily liaison you have with

various staff members and the direct contact you have with guests. A flair for languages also comes in handy.

You need to be calm, communicative and outgoing. You are responsible for the first impression guests receive of the hotel, be it over the phone to reservations or on entering the lobby, and probably also for the last impression they receive on departure.

What's in it for me?

As the person in charge of the well-being of guests, you have a demanding role. Guest relations is a vague concept, but it is your responsibility to interpret it. In a sense, it is your personality they come face to face with during their stay since the impression they gain of the hotel is really down to you and your team.

Successful Rooms Division Managers can aspire to the role of General Manager as they have a deep understanding of what makes the business tick.

Front Office Manager

What does the front office manager do?

You are in charge of the reservations' area of the reception and in some cases the housekeeping division as well. As the person with key client contact you are a valuable member of the internal management team and will attend heads of department meetings. You are also called on to act as duty manager on a roster for weekends and evenings.

The main focus of your day-to-day work is dealing with guests. This also involves greeting and ensuring the comfort of VIPs, conference parties, and any other special event customers. The role also entails considerable management, both of people and time, as you will be responsible for all the front-of-house areas of the hotel - in effect, you are in charge of the hotel's public face.

What do I need to do the job?

As with any management role, you will need exceptional communication skills to deal effectively with customers and your own staff. And as a key member of the management team you will also be called on to present your and your teams' views clearly at regular meetings and in administrative reports.

You will need to be able to think on your feet and solve problems. The front desk is the first port of call for many enquiries, and sometimes complaints, so you will need tact and diplomacy to clear matters efficiently. The role entails considerable knowledge of the hotel's entire operations, and of the islands themselves. Front-desk staff are expected to be on hand to answer queries ranging from reservation enquiries to giving information about the locality, transport and so on.

You will lead a team which is an important part of the public relations of the hotel, so you will need to inspire and motivate and set clear goals. The ability to listen attentively and understand others' points of view is impor-

tant. Clear decision-making is important, as is the ability to inspire confidence and influence your team to carry out your wishes. All in all you have to be an exceptional individual who gets the best of out of your colleagues.

It is your job to make sure the atmosphere that greets guests is in line with management's policies. You will need to prioritise and set and oversee targets for your team. These often include marketing plans and goals to increase occupancy rates.

What's in it for me?

This is a highly visible and rewarding role as it is pivotal in the day-to-day running of the hotel. And it also gives you plenty of opportunity to put forward your views at management level. This means you will see immediate response to your work and that of

**THIS JOB GIVES YOU A GOOD
GROUNDING TO FURTHER
YOUR CAREER IN HOTEL
MANAGEMENT.**

your team, and be able to give your input into the hotel's managerial direction.

The experience gained in this front-line role will stand you in good stead to progress into hotel general management. You will, after all, have a deep understanding of your customers, and some experience in marketing the hotel since you are running the reservations office. It is a role in which you can make your mark as an individual, but to truly succeed you have to value your team. The role hones the skills needed to be a good hotel manager.



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Night Auditor

What does the Night Auditor do?

The role is often compared to that of the daytime receptionist, but the jobs differ considerably. With other hotel staff having finished their working day, you can find yourself dealing with any situation, enquiry or task. Your daytime counterparts will have the back up of more colleagues.

The night auditor is in charge of closing the business of the day so you will be dealing with administrative issues handed over from the day. Your work can range from night reception duties such as checking in late arrivals, settling room bills or providing foreign exchange facilities to giving local information, ordering transport and helping to resolve maintenance problems.

What do I need to do the job?

You need to be prepared to work unsociable hours, though your remuneration should obviously reflect this. This role more than most in the industry requires a flexible approach, since you are the focal point for any enquiry during the night.

Even though you will be working

nights, you are still responsible for guest relations and need an easy-going manner and an outgoing personality. You must be prepared to be the main interface on any aspect of the business. If you don't have the full answer or can't deal with an issue alone, you will need to know how to advise guests politely and ensure that their requests are followed through by

describe what it takes to do the job. On the practical side, foreign languages are a definite asset.

What's in it for me?

Night auditors will tell you that the reward comes from ensuring guest comfort. This is no easy task. You may find yourself dealing with what are seemingly endless issues, night after night. Satisfaction of doing the job well lies in knowing that you have turned a negative situation into a positive one. In this way you will have also helped your organisation's business grow.

"PEOPLE SAY A HOTEL NEVER SLEEPS. NIGHT AUDITING MAKES THIS A REALITY"

your colleagues as soon as possible. You will need to be highly organised and able to deal with administration so as to ensure a smooth handover to your daytime colleagues.

Flexibility, organisation, personality and efficiency are the keywords to



Maintenance Manager

What does the Maintenance Manager do?

This is a highly responsible job as the physical infrastructure and the 24-hour operations of the hotel depend on you. You are responsible for managing and controlling the maintenance department comprising specialists from various trades.

You are concerned not only with the

"WHEN THINGS GO WRONG THERE'S GREAT SATISFACTION IN KNOWING THAT YOU ARE THE ONE WHO GETS THE SHOW BACK ON THE ROAD."

daily maintenance but must also be aware of preventative measures. Hotels and restaurants adhere to strict regulations covering health and safety, and environmental standards. It's your job to ensure the hotel complies with relevant operational stan-

dards for plant and installations. You have to run a duty roster to ensure there is always a person on call 24 hours to deal with emergencies.

What do I need to do the job?

Ideally you will have gained experience in an industrial environment and across a range of functions. You should have electrical, mechanical, maintenance and engineering skills and some knowledge of building and draftsmanship.

A head for calculations and wide-ranging technical ability is needed as you will be doing everything from ordering fuel supplies to dealing with plant and machinery specifications.

These days you will need to demonstrate your capabilities by studying for the appropriate qualifications but experience on the job is invaluable and you are advised to grasp every opportunity to extend your skills.

The other aspect of your role is managerial. You will need to be adept at organising teams and be able to prepare contracts and sometimes tender documents.

Frequently, you will be requested to deal with a crisis, after being called in by other staff. You will require a steady head and a calm, methodical approach to tackling urgent maintenance tasks. It's your responsibility to keep the hotel running, day and night. If an emergency occurs, you have to deal with it straightaway. If the air conditioning doesn't work for a day, several hundred guests may be inconvenienced.

What's in it for me?

This is a job for practical, technical, level-headed people who can prioritise, manage, delegate and remain calm whatever the situation. There are the immediate rewards, as maintenance managers themselves say, of getting the show back on the road as quickly as possible.

But you are also there to show foresight in preventing the worst. And this requires a different skill set altogether.

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Careers in Food & Beverage

Chefs are responsible for preparing and cooking attractive food that is enjoyable and safe to eat. There are a number of different specialised Chefs and career progression is through a defined hierarchy.

Large kitchens are divided up into sections, usually known as 'brigades', each run by a Chef de Partie, who is responsible for the section's area of food preparation and cooking activities, dealing with, for instance, sauces or pastry.

Head Chef / Chef de Partie / Commis Chef / Kitchen Assistant

The early years, as you learn the basics of your trade, are hard work. Very few chefs make it to the status of a media celebrity. However, you will have opportunities to participate in competitions both locally and abroad. If you persevere, are creative and love the trade, you are assured of recognition and respect within your profession and within the hotel and catering industry.

What do these jobs involve?

Head chefs are really understudies to Executive Chefs, and their roles are similar. Sometimes the head chef doubles up as the executive chef in establishments that do not have separate positions. The head chef is concerned



not only with efficient and hygienic food preparation and service but also with overall management: staffing, rosters, budgets, purchasing, menu planning and the many other admin-

istrative jobs involved in running a professional kitchen.

Your daily concern is to produce quality, presentable meals to budget and on schedule. To do this you will need to organise the work of the various 'brigades' or sections within the kitchen efficiently.

Sous Chef or Chef de Partie

This position is one step up from trainee chef. In this role you will be skilled and experienced enough to run any section competently, and to take charge of the whole kitchen in the absence of the head chef.

The Chef de Partie is a specialist role. You are head of a section of specialisation such as pastry, sauces or vegetables. You will also have your own brigade.

Commis Chef

As the trainee or commis chef, you will have just joined the kitchen brigade and be getting to grips with the demands of the chef's profession. You do however have considerable responsibilities and are a key member of the team. Trainee chefs work a period in each section to gain general experience in every area of the kitchen.

You carry out Chef's instructions and ensure that certain basic procedures such as food preparation and

some basic cooking is completed efficiently. From time to time you will be entrusted with looking after and serving some dishes. You will also be assigned essential cleaning tasks



throughout the shift. The importance of hygiene will be instilled at this stage in your career.

Kitchen Assistant

You will find that a large part of your work is ensuring that the kitchen is kept to high standards of cleanliness. The hygiene of every surface from fridges to floors and walls, as well as that of the kitchen equipment, is your responsibility. Cleaning contractors often do the heavier work. You will also be asked to use a range of automatic kitchen utensils to perform simple cooking tasks.



What skills do I need for a career as a chef?

At whatever level you start in the profession, there are some general skills and attributes which are essential.

Life in the kitchen is particularly hectic, especially at service times. In large establishments, there will be numerous orders, so it is important to be able to deal with pressure and be able to cope with several tasks at once. Equally important is the ability to get on with others in a cohesive team since you rely on each other.

You'll need stamina as you are working on your feet in a hot environment. You have to be flexible and prepared to tackle a range of tasks. At some

aspects of food preparation. Those with a creative flair and imagination will find it a rewarding experience. You should read, study and learn all you can about food, food science and tra-

"If FOOD IN ITS INFINITE VARIETY IS SOMETHING YOU REALLY LIKE, THEN IT IS CERTAINLY A CAREER TO CONSIDER".

ditional and modern preparation techniques. If you specialise in pastry for instance, you will need to learn all you can about sweets and develop a sixth sense about what makes a good dessert.

The creative part of the work should not overshadow the fact that you need organisational and management skills if you are to succeed. Even the most mundane of tasks requires meticulous organisational skills. A practical approach and an ability to plan methodically are useful, as is the ability to stay calm in a crisis and be able to resolve problems.

Chefs need excellent communication and leadership skills to be able to manage and train kitchen staff under their supervision. At head and execu-

tive chef level, when you are responsible for budgets and negotiating with suppliers, you will need a head for figures.

What's in it for me?

You may be daunted by the prospect of a career as a chef. But don't be deterred. The career is demanding, but you will no doubt find out early on whether food preparation is something that appeals to you. Apart from the creative side to the work, there is the reward and pleasure of seeing satisfied clientele. The chef's profession is as varied and enjoyable as you make it. Though it is not for the fainthearted.



trainee levels, you will be assigned jobs not directly involved in food preparation.

To make a career in the profession, you have to have a keen interest in all

Getting Qualified? See Page 25

Restaurant Manager / Head Waiter / Chef de Rang / Waiter



What do these jobs involve?

Restaurants, both within hotels and as separate catering establishments, offer a variety of career paths in service and management. You can progress quickly from waiter or food service assistant to supervisory and managerial roles.

Restaurant Manager

As Restaurant Manager, you will be in charge of a team and responsible for the efficient organisation and control of the restaurant, its staff and liaison with other departments - such as sales and marketing or banqueting and events.



Head Waiter

The head waiter reports to the Manager and can be his/her understudy. In this role you assist in the restaurant management and are also on hand throughout service times to guide and organise staff.

Usually, the head waiter receives customers and escorts them to their tables. In most establishments, the head waiter advises on the menu and

Waiter

Waiters must ensure the restaurant is in order. You will need to learn about correct place settings and ensure the tables are laid with the required cutlery, crockery, glassware and linen. You will also be expected to learn the etiquette required for serving wine and for silver service.

Food Service Assistants

In short-order catering establishments formalities are often pared to minimum but waiters or food service assistants here are still expected to provide a welcoming atmosphere. If you work in a fast food outlet, you may be required to prepare light meals such as pizzas, hamburgers, salads or sandwiches, and dispense hot and cold beverages.

In larger fast food chains, roles are blurred and you will probably find yourself on a roster, serving one day and working as a kitchen assistant another. Fast food chains have their own way of working and often provide manuals for staff procedures.

What do you need to do the job?

Whatever level you work at, certain aspects of these jobs are the same. You will need to have a friendly, outgoing and pleasant manner and need to get on well with both the people you serve and the team you work with.

The job is physically demanding and requires you to work unsociable hours. To cope with these demands and still feel on top of the job, you will need energy and enthusiasm. You may be under pressure, but you should give each table under your care time, and make them feel that they are being looked after.

You are the main contact customers have with the establishment and your attitude and appearance will form

**"WHEN CLIENTS RETURN TIME
AND AGAIN, YOU KNOW THAT
YOU'RE DOING YOUR JOB WELL".**

the selection of wine. In some, more formal restaurants, especially à la carte restaurants, the head waiter also takes the order. The head waiter is often referred to as the 'maitre d'hôte'. Generally the taking of orders is part of the waiter's duty.



their lasting image of their dining experience. A clean, tidy appearance, and an efficient, pleasant manner are essential. You will need fluent English; other languages are an asset too.

The more senior positions such as senior manager or head waiter require managerial skills and the ability to cope with difficult situations and take decisions. You will be the person customers request when complaints and difficulties arise, such as discrepancies in the bill, or comments about the food quality. In these circumstances, you will need to handle criticism even if you feel it is unfounded. Your job is to reassure customers and provide them with solutions.

The more junior roles such as chef de rang or waiter require dexterity. You

may find yourself working at speed in sometimes limited space. You will need to learn about the timing of dishes and liaise closely with the kitchen so your customers are served within reasonable timeframes. If the restaurant is large enough you may have a chef de rang who will only be responsible for a number of tables.

What's in it for me?

These are key roles in any hotel or restaurant and you shouldn't underestimate the responsibility you have and the contribution you make to the success of the business. If you are willing to learn, you can work your way up to head waiter and into restaurant management within a relatively short time, so long as you have a natural dis-

position to do the job well.

If you start as a waiter, try to add those skills that can help you get into management by furthering your education and training. Grab any opportunity to gain overseas experience so you can learn the business from a different cultural perspective. Having started out on the restaurant floor, you will be well equipped to understand the business if you progress into a management role.





Bar Manager / Bar Person

What do bar staff do?

Bar staff work in licensed premises and are responsible for selling drinks of all kinds, as well as tobacco products and light food. Depending on where you work, the food can range from crisps and peanuts to light snacks or a full meal.

An important part of the job is talking to customers and providing a friendly, welcoming atmosphere.

The duties involved before the bar opens entail organising the area, and putting out bar snacks, fresh ashtrays and so on. You may also be involved in organising the cellar, and in cleaning equipment such as the beer system.

During opening hours, you mix and serve a whole range of drinks - alcoholic and non alcoholic. You will need

apart from serving customers, you collect empty glasses and wash them in the special glass-washing machine, ensure that tables are clean and keep an eye on the stocks. From time to time you will need to attach fresh beer barrels to the pumps and change the optics on the spirits.

If you are the bar manager, you will be keeping a organisational eye on operations, doing the behind-the-scenes paperwork needed to keep the bar stocked and serviced. You will need to oversee the bar staff and make sure the place is run to standard.

What do I need to do the job?

It is important that you get on well with people from all walks of life. You need an outgoing, cheerful, tactful and polite disposition. Communication skills and an empathy with people are important as you will need to gauge customers' attitudes and expectations. These skills are also needed when coping with difficult situations such as when you have to refuse to serve a customer who has had too much to drink or have to ask a troublesome customer to leave.

You will need to be well acquainted with the bar's range of drink products and be fully aware of the licensing laws.

Bar work is hectic, so the ability to work under pressure is essential. A good memory is useful for keeping track of orders and bills. Ease with

mental arithmetic is important. It goes without saying that you are in a position of trust since you also handle cash.

You will be expected to present a clean and tidy appearance though dress codes vary with the style of establishment.

What's in it for me?

If you like meeting people from around the world and would like to work in what is often a relaxed, informal atmosphere, then bar work is a good choice. That said, you will find the hours long and irregular.

The advantages are that the job will help you develop skills that are invaluable in other areas of the hospitality industry. You will learn about staff management, stock control, budgeting, and about dealing with customers and suppliers. If you wish to stay in the food and beverage sector, then this is a good place to start learning the trade.

"BESIDES CREATING COLOURFUL COCKTAILS, YOUR JOB IS ALSO TO ENTERTAIN THE CUSTOMER YOU SERVE"

to learn about products, such as mixers and cocktails, and about the serving of wines.

You also total bills and use cash registers and must be able to deal with credit / debit card and cheques and foreign currency.

Getting Qualified? See Page 25

Careers in the Rooms Division

The Rooms Division is a very important part of the day-to-day running of the hotel. As the department servicing guest comfort and well-being, it is a highly visible face of the establishment.

Guest relations executives, receptionists, housekeepers, concierges and porters together with Food & Beverage are often referred to as 'front-of-house'. All the roles involve considerable contact with guests and it is this that adds variety and interest to the jobs. Very often personnel from these divisions are the first to make contact with the guest and the ones who deliver the lasting impression of the establishment.



Receptionist / Reservations / Concierge

What do these jobs involve?

The receptionist provides the first impression of the hotel. But the role begins even before guests arrive. You are part of the team taking reservations by phone, fax, email or through direct personal contact.

The job is not just about greeting and helping guests, though a large part of your work does involve the administration of checking guests in and out of the hotel. You are also dealing with a variety of guest relation duties including allocating rooms, passing on messages, and organising any special requirements guests may have. You may also have to deal with complaints and follow them up.

In most hotels, reservations are computerised, so you will be using the

system to check availability and update information. You may also be required to write letters to confirm reservations and to operate telephone switchboards.

The reservations supervisor extends the duties of the receptionist by being more proactive in the sale of the hotel's services. In this role you will be liaising with local tour operators and destination management companies and trying to market rooms rather than just accept bookings.

Another aspect of the receptionist's job is to be a source of information on not just hotel services, such as restaurants and safety deposit boxes, but on anything to do with the locality. You will need to keep updated on what's on in terms of entertainment, as well

as be prepared to give advice on places of interest, museums and so on.

Your job entails constant liaison with other hotel staff, such as porters and the concierge. Reception work does vary according to whether you are in a large or small hotel. In the latter, duties may entail handling a wide range of tasks including carrying luggage.

In larger hotels, the concierge assists with luggage, ordering taxis, arranging car hire and offering advice on restaurants and other local amenities. The concierge and receptionist work in tandem to provide these 'front-desk' services.



What do I need to do the job?

This is a job where personality is paramount. Front-desk work suits friendly, confident and cheerful personalities. It is essential that you enjoy interacting with people - guests and colleagues alike.

You need excellent verbal and written communication skills, and will need to be able to understand body language - the signals you give out and those you receive. Ideally you should have foreign language skills.

Receptionists must really enjoy helping people to enjoy their stay. Sometimes receptionists find themselves constantly interrupted. They deal with guests checking in at the same time as answering queries from

other residents. You need to think on your feet, be patient and calm and be able to deal with people from all walks

"OUR ROLE INVOLVES GIVING THE FIRST AND LAST IMPRESSION. THE SATISFACTION YOU GET FROM GUEST CONTACT IS FAR BETTER THAN ANY FINANCIAL REWARD".

of life. You need to keep abreast of what is happening at the resort or destination so you can assist guests in planning their stay.

What's in it for me?

If you are outgoing, like guest relations, have language skills and are a calm person, then reception work is highly rewarding. You are able to gauge immediately the results of your work from feedback given by guests. Although you are part of a team, you have the opportunity to really make your mark on their well-being and the quality of their stay. This is a role which draws on your natural flair for dealing with people.

Executive Housekeeper / Housekeeper / Room Attendant



"IT IS MOTIVATING TO KNOW THAT YOUR JOB CONTRIBUTES TOWARDS THE HOTEL'S MAJOR REVENUE STREAMS, THAT IS, FROM ITS ROOM STOCK"

What do these jobs involve?

The executive housekeeper is responsible for ensuring that the amenities, public areas and bedrooms used by guests are maintained to the highest standards. The job involves being in charge of the whole hotel, not solely guest bedrooms. The executive housekeeper has to manage a team of staff and liaise with contractors and suppliers. There are budgets to take care of, staff to deploy and oversee, and high standards of hygiene and cleanliness to uphold.

Housekeeper

The housekeeper deputises for the Executive Housekeeper and liaises with other departments such as reception to check availability of rooms and to ensure individual guest requests are met. The supervisor makes sure that the rooms are up to standard by carrying out spot checks to see that all the requisites - fresh

towels, toiletries, and guest information about the hotel and locality - are provided.

As well as cleaning bedrooms and bathrooms, which in a large hotel is approached in an efficient, professional manner, the housekeeper and room attendants come into contact with guests.

Room Attendants

Room attendants are expected to work flexible roster and duties may vary from day to day. The responsibilities and times of shift will differ according to the hotel and its range of services. While there are procedures to follow, most room attendants develop a system of cleaning that works best for them.

Housekeeping staff are supported in turn by house porters, receptionists and the concierge, all of whom make a contribution to the comfort of guests.

What do I need to do the job?

Good communication skills are essential for all jobs in the rooms division. All grades, from room attendant to executive housekeeper, play an important part in the hotel's operations and have constant contact with guests. Communication skills are also vital for efficient liaison with colleagues in other areas of the hotel.

Room attendants need a practical approach to work and an eye for detail, both of which are important not just for routine tasks but also in identifying ways to improve the division to the benefit of guest comfort. You need to work efficiently and be discreet - you are entrusted with the guests' belongings and privacy.

If you are in a supervisory or management role, you will need to have the strength of personality to moti-

vate staff and instill discipline so that routine tasks are completed to the highest standards, cheerfully and within set targets. You will also need a flair for figures when it comes to purchasing and defining contracts with external service providers.

What's in it for me?

The rewards of the job lie in seeing that your guests are comfortable, and in welcoming returning visitors. That is proof that your role has been executed well. You have made a real difference to the hotel's business and you will gain the personal satisfaction of knowing you and your team contributed.





Guest Relations Executive

What does the Guest Relations Executive do?

This job is normally found in four and five-star hotels. In three-star hotels, it is done by the General Manager. Your role is to make sure that guests have all they require during their stay. You not only check whether there are, for instance, VIPs or honeymooners in residence, but you are also required to be on hand to deal with general guest queries.

You pre-empt guest needs by making ad hoc visits to restaurants and other facilities to gather information from colleagues and by talking directly to guests. You are the key interface with many departments and will need to work efficiently alongside house-keeping and reception.

An average day could find you liaising with reception or the banqueting department to ensure that conference delegates are accommodated properly. You could be preparing for the arrival of newly weds to ensure that they receive the extras to make their stay special; or you could be assisting families, providing helpful suggestions about excursions suitable for young children.

You will need to keep well informed about what's on locally and scour the newspapers quickly each day to brief yourself on concerts, attractions and other events. As a main point of contact with guests, you have to be pre-

pared to answer any questions related to the hotel or the Maltese Islands.

What do I need to do the job?

You'll need a certain kind of personality to do the job well. If you like direct guest contact and assisting people and have an outgoing, cheerful disposition, this is a rewarding role as you will have immediate feedback.

Not all the feedback may be positive. It is your job to try to resolve any problems guests may have with the quality of their stay or of the hotel services. This means occasionally deal-

ing with difficult guests or sensitive issues. You will need to be a calm, resourceful person, and have a tactful and polite manner. This applies also to your dealings internally with colleagues. You have to keep an open mind and never apportion blame. You need to ensure that issues are followed through and dealt with efficiently to guests' satisfaction.

Since you are on hand to answer all sorts of questions, it helps to have a good, all-round education, general knowledge and an appreciation of the arts, cuisine and culture. You will also need to absorb information quickly and be willing to brief yourself daily on latest news, events and so on.

Ideally you will speak several languages. Fluent English is a must. You will need to feel at ease conversing with people from all walks of life; and of different nationalities.

What's in it for me?

This is not a desk job though you do have to be adept and meticulous in dealing with administration to ensure you are well informed about the guest list and guests' needs. Generally this is a job which puts you in direct daily contact with the hotel's clients - the people who really matter. Meeting people and meeting their needs is a rewarding experience, especially when you receive praise. But knowing that you have made someone's stay more comfortable is reward in itself.

"THIS JOB EMBODIES THE MEANING OF THE WORD HOSPITALITY - YOU ARE AN AMBASSADOR OF BOTH THE HOTEL AND THE ISLANDS".

Getting Qualified

There are various entry routes into the tourism industry and a lot of options for study and training. The Institute of Tourism Studies (ITS), the Employment & Training Corporation (ETC), and the University of Malta all offer courses at various levels. Here are some to consider:



What Courses does the ITS offer?

Management Courses

Higher Diploma in Hospitality Management

Course duration: 4 years including 3 years at the institute and a one-year international internship.

Courses leading to careers at Supervisory or Head of Department level in the hotel and catering industry

Certificate/ Diploma Hotel Operations

Course duration: 2 years at certificate level plus one summer, local industry placement.

For the Diploma level, a further year of international internship plus a full year at the institute is required.

Courses leading to Careers in Housekeeping and Front Office

Certificate/Diploma Accommodation Operations

Course Duration: 2 years at Certificate level plus one summer, local industry placement.

For the Diploma level, a further year of international internship plus a full year at the institute is required.

Courses leading to careers in food preparation in hotels, restaurants and industrial catering

Certificate/Diploma Food Preparation and Production

Course Duration: 2 years at Certificate level plus one summer, local industry placement.

For the Diploma level, a further year of international internship plus a full year at the institute is required.

Certificate/Diploma Food and Beverage Service

Course Duration: 2 years at Certificate level plus one summer local industry placement.

For the Diploma level, a further year of international internship plus a full year at the institute is required.

Tourism Studies

The Sports, Leisure and Recreation course will lead to careers in sports coaching, animation and guest service activity programmes.

Course Duration: 2 years at Certificate level plus one summer, local industry placement.

For the Diploma level, a further year of international internship plus a full year at the Institute is required.

Courses leading to careers in the travel trade such as agency clerk, courier and reservations services

Course duration 2 years at Certificate level.

The Tourist Guiding Course leads interested candidates to careers in Guiding

Course duration 2 years at Certificate level.

Craft & Technical Programmes of Study

Foundation certificate level one in hotel services or food preparation and food service.

For further information check out the Institute of Tourism Studies website at www.its.magnet.mt



What Courses does the ETC offer?

Extended Skills Training Scheme in Hospitality Trades

Students in possession of a school leaving certificate can opt for the course mentioned below:

A two year apprenticeship programme offered as a collaboration venture by the Education Department and the ETC through the Institute.

For further information check out the Employment & Training Corporation website at www.etc.org.mt



What Courses does the University offer?

Various courses at the University of Malta can lead to related careers in Tourism. Courses offered include:

Tourism Studies

Management and Accountancy

Social sciences such as Psychology and Communications

Engineering

Information Technology

For further information check out the University of Malta website at www.um.edu.mt

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