

**A COMPREHENSIVE LOOK INTO HOTEL OPERATION (S) AND
MANAGEMENT**

A Final Internship Report submitted in partial satisfaction
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degree of

BACHELOR

in

TOURISM

by

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Organization

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Section 1

Palasia Hotel—Palau first opened its doors in July 1998 when it was still managed by the Outrigger Hotels & Resorts. Today, eight (8) years later, the hotel is left managed by the joint venture that owns it—Palasia Resorts Inc. The principals that own the hotel include(s) Asia Pacific Holdings Corp. (under the Business Management committee of Kuomintang) of Taiwan and Micronesia Investment & Development Corp. of Palau. Although the hotel is still young in the Palau hospitality industry and less recognized than the newest five-star hotel that recently opened its doors, it still holds 165 luxurious guests rooms—by far the largest in the small Islands of Palau.

Section 2

In the summer of 2006, with the help of a few congress leaders and the General Manager of the Palasia Hotel, I was able to acquire employment to work as an intern in the hotel and gain my experience in the hospitality industry. During the two and half (2 ½) month period at the hotel, I worked on three (3) major ventures: **First, I was placed at the front desk to learn about the major task(s) of hotel operation (s). Second, I was placed in the Sales and Marketing Department on a research project about travel agencies around the world including other tasks. Lastly, I further exposed myself in the hotel management arena as the acting administrative assistant to the General Manager of Palasia Hotel.**

After an initial orientation session and brief introductions with all hotel departments and staffs, I was thrust into my first major venture, which was handling phone lines within the hotel, including incoming/outgoing phone calls in the front desk.

Initially, I thought this task would be easy, after all it was just answering phone calls, but I quickly learned how much work had to be put into these phone calls. I realized that I had to better equip myself with the knowledge about the hotel, be prepared for answering questionings, and to memorize all the department extension (s) as we were not allowed to reference any directory when transferring calls (This was the most difficult part). Fortunately, after a few weeks, I was able to grasp all the necessary requirements and I progressed.

In addition, during my first venture as front desk personnel, I was exposed to other tasks, such as *preparing room packages for arriving guests, opening phone lines for room guests, encoding room keys, checking in/out process and assigning beach towels to outgoing guests*. The preparation of room packages involved a great deal of task as guests were divided into different categories and different travel agencies which meant different coupons, different services, and different check out dates depending on flight schedules (Chartered or not). I had a difficult time preparing packages when I first started, but with determination I excelled though with a few slips.

The next part of my task which was opening phone lines and encoding room keys was actually my favorite part of the front desk operation (s). This included punching in a couple of numbers which involved using a computer. This was also the easiest task because it didn't involve confusion among guests and issuing names.

Basically after the guests were assigned room numbers three days in advance, all I had to do was encode the room keys to the room number and attach the key to the room package. As for opening phone lines, this was basically part of my internship task for the whole summer although I had switched departments. Everyday at noon I would print out

a copy of all the arriving guests for the day and released their phone lines through a small phone box that resembled a DJ's equalizer box which included many buttons and switches.

Furthermore, the checking in/out process was another easier task because it didn't engage in any inclusive undertaking(s) besides opening the guests' remarks in the computer and checking them in. This was done without complications because all the necessary requirements were previously completed. The hotel uses the Macros/Fidelio system that is very simple to understand and easy to apply.

Besides checking the guests in via database, I had to request for their credit card to confirm their credit before handing them their room packages and further explaining the hotel amenities and services. Similarly, the checking out process was trouble-free and convenient as all I had to do was inquire about the mini-bar in their rooms before releasing the guests.

The last task that I had to comply with was the issuing of beach towels to guests that were taking day tours and dive excursions during the day. This required guests to sign their names and room numbers to a form with the number of towels desired before I could release the towels. This also involved towel counts and signature from the guest upon the return of towels. Other similar and less complicated tasks also consisted of signing in/out of umbrella's during the rainy days. Not to mention the guest's messages, letters, and packages that needed to be recorded and sent up to their room(s). These were the primary function (s) in the front desk area; however, there were many other tasks that I was not able to touch upon.

As the weeks progressed, I began to advance in my front desk training and the supervisor was delighted that I was able to handle a multitude of work without any complications or complaints. This was the stepping stone for my transition to the next level of my internship exposure. After learning about the advancement of my training and what I was capable of accomplishing, the manager of sales and marketing department requested that I assist him in a research project that they were conducting.

This was the beginning of my second major venture at Palasia Hotel. The following week, I switched gears and moved to the main office where I would spend the next three (3) weeks in front of a computer, conducting research into different travel agencies around the world that offer packages to Palau. The process was not only time consuming, but complex and knotty as it involved a great amount of reading and recording. Thus, I decided to create a more detailed database since some travel agencies offer broad information, whereas other agencies will offer more detailed sequence in their company information. In any case, the research was a windy road with many bumps on the way.

Moreover, I was able to come across many agencies around the world that offered great deals and exclusive packages to Palau for the ideal vacation(s). Surprisingly, a great number of these agencies, I found, were located in the United States alone. This (finding) came as shock to me because about 70% of the tourists that arrive in Palau each year comprise of Asian Nationals specifically Taiwan, Japan, and Korea respectively. Other travel agencies covered such countries as Canada, South Africa, The United Kingdom and other parts in Europe, other countries in Asia, and the Pacific region.

Besides, during my three week training in the Sales and Marketing Department, I was also able to expose myself to the planning and coordinating of events and function(s) that were held at the hotel. I was able to see first-hand the major challenges that the department had to face in controlling the outcome(s) of these events. One of the biggest challenges that the Sales and Marketing Department had to face was the ticket sales. This was a difficult task because it had to involve a great deal of promotions, advertisements, and radio broadcasting(s) which was costly and dense. In the process, I was able to comprehend these intricate tasks and completed my assignments.

Though my training in the Sales and Marketing Department was short-lived, I was able to absorb all the preconditions about venturing into the marketing world of hotel management. After preparing the database to further complete the hotel(s) exposure to different travel agencies and exposing myself to other Sales and Marketing Department tasks, I was hungry for more training, particularly around the management of a hotel. I was loaded and prepared to face all the trials that were presented to me.

Towards the end of my training in the Sales and Marketing Department, the administrative assistant to the General Manager at the hotel had resigned. They needed to find somebody temporary to replace the old assistant. Unbeknownst to me, they were already discussing about my taking the new position as the acting administrative assistant to the General Manager until they found a permanent replacement. The announcement came just a few days later in my third week of training in the Sales and Marketing Department. I was thrilled and ecstatic about the opportunity to commence in the Administrative Office with the General Manager and all the Executive Heads.

Accordingly, this was the third and last of my major venture(s) interning at Palasia Hotel. The mother load of the three (3) major ventures and the most appealing and motivating fraction of my internship experience, this opportunity was conclusively the climax of my internship. The major tasks that I had to complete were as follows: Assisting the General Manager with any requests such as answering phone calls, Receiving and sorting mails, typing speeches, composing letters, preparing memorandums for inter-department(s), attending executive meetings/sales meetings & keeping minute(s), processing requisition forms for purchasing department, screening guests coming in/out of the Executive office, revising brochure(s) and flyers etc...(checking for grammatical errors) before they were finalized, and assisting the General Manager with any other special request(s).

Perhaps the most obscure part about working in this position was that I didn't have any supervisor to stand guard and follow me through the process. I essentially had to read through the manual by myself and cultured myself through this particular course of my internship. The only person I had to report to at this point was the General Manager himself, and since most of the time he was out, I had to go outside of the book at times and make some of the decision(s) myself with his consent of course.

Interesting enough, on my first day as his special assistant, he called me into his office and gave me a list of things that needed to be completed by the end of the day. This list included such things as letters to other major companies, a memo to the sales department, and a proposal for a wine distillery in Palau. In addition, there was no room for question and answer as he was already running late for a luncheon meeting. Dazed and confused, I went back to my small office space and contemplated on which

assignment to complete first. Fortunately, I was able to complete all assignment(s) by the end of that particular working day; however, I was brain dead when I returned home.

Correspondingly, writing letters/proposals wasn't the exigent part of my new position. The most demanding task arrived two days later with the first executive meeting I attended. Although I have attended different types of meetings in my education years and have previously recorded minutes, that particular meeting was the toughest meeting I have ever attended. As soon as I stepped into the conference room, I could feel the density in the atmosphere and the tension that each executive head possessed. It was the beginning of the list of obstacles that I had to overcome in order to master the minutes recording.

There were several obstacles that I had to endure before I could call myself the connoisseur of minute recording. The first obstacle was to train both my ears to listen at the same time. This obstacle I had mastered towards the end of my internship because everybody would always talk all at the same time. *The second obstacle* was to become an overzealous selective listener. This meant that I had to learn to divide the information into different categories (i.e., ignore, not important, for later, keep in record, always inquire, next to important, important, and very important).

The third obstacle was to learn to know my position in those meetings as I am a very opinionated person and I always have something to say; though I learned to keep quiet and just tab down the minutes. *The fourth obstacle* was forcing myself to drink more than five cups of coffee per meeting to keep myself up and attentive because those meetings last up to three (3) hours and sometimes four (4) hours on the busy days. *The last obstacle* was learning to assimilate to the language structures of these 'non-auditory'

meetings. Since these meetings resembled the United Nations with everybody all from different parts of the world, there existed a huge language barrier that a first-time attendee would not be able to understand.

Against all odds, I was still able to breakthrough these obstacles and maintain a professional level of performance. I surpassed all the requirements amidst the critical criticism from most of the employees. The first couple of weeks felt like a decade on my shoulders; however, through a lot of reading and research through the company files, I proficiently met every single obstacle thrown my way with my head held high.

To boot, all my other tasks as the acting administrative assistant, were remarkably educational as I was exposed to the different business transactions of running and maintaining a hotel operation(s). The paramount measurement for this training position was learning to think independently and completing each task with self-determination and adapt skill.

Section 3

Through research, practical training, and thorough observation (s), I was able to gain a mountain of experience and a momentum of determination towards disseminating myself in the hospitality industry. This experience and determination advocated me to recognize all the different functions at a hotel that further relinquished my endeavor to consummate an in-depth analysis of hotel management.

My findings are as follows: ***The primary source(s) or the foundation(s) that determines a hotel's success is through the Sales and Marketing Department, The***

F&B department, The Management, The Front Desk Personnel, and all other departments respectively.

Through elaborate observation, I have come to find that the Sales and Marketing department is the backbone that keeps a hotel running successfully. Allegedly, the management is very important in any hotel operation(s), but after completing my internship, I have changed my perspective about managing a hotel. In my opinion, the Sales and Marketing Department is the primary source of revenue for any hotel. They are responsible for marketing into different business opportunities including promoting the hotel whether in the domestic or international market.

The second and possibly another lucrative part of any hotel operation (s) is the Food & Beverage department (F&B). The F&B department is the second to most important in my list because they are the condiments that complement the Sales and Marketing Department. After successfully breaking through the market and making sales, it is up to the F&B department to satisfy the patrons whether room guests or conference dwellers and keep them coming back for more. This in turn entices more patrons to return on a frequent basis, allures more patrons, sets a name for the hotel and increasingly brings forth more revenue and source of income for the hotel.

The third important part of any hotel operation(s) that completes the seasoning of any business success is the management team. They compose of a few men/women that communicate through a network and keeps tab of all hotel operation (s). Through an in-depth analysis, I found that though these men/women get paid higher salaries and make the final decision (s); they actually are not well versed in the day-to-day operation(s). In

addition, they don't get to see first-hand all the detailed elements that are needed to be acquired to accomplish a goal.

Basically, these management officers only see the general idea and listen to broad briefings before completing their final decisions. Hence, I put this department as third because they are an important element in a successful hotel, but are not well endowed with all the simple day-to-day requirements. As opposing as it may seem, these individuals are still very much needed because they not only complete the formula in running an acknowledged hotel, but they are the mediators that keeps the hotel well balanced and in order.

The fourth constituent in hotel operation (s) is the front desk department. They are the second to least important in my list because they run an all-inclusive operation that keeps the hotel up and running. The front desk personnel are important for the flow of communication(s) within the hotel and outside of the hotel.

They are the face of the hotel that should always maintain a professional level of courtesy and hence makes them another important part of the formula to the hotel's success. In addition, their role is similar to a hotel connoisseur when one can not be obtained or afforded. Regardless of their role (s) they are the entrance and exit of any hotel and should always be highly regarded.

Ultimately, the last remaining departments that maintain all other hotel operation(s) are also very important. These departments range from accounting, purchasing, maintenance/engineering, security, public areas, laundry, and housekeeping etc. Though they are the least important, they could also be distinguished as the threshold(s) that cultivate all other aspects of the hotel management.

Despite the fact that in my observation, I reorganized the order of the hotel management, in reality, a hotel really can not function without all these distinct departments. During my in-depth analysis, I have efficiently compartmentalized each department duty more concussively. Nevertheless, I have high regards for each department(s) equally because I was disclosed to almost all the departments and their duties during the last major venture of my internship.

Section 4

Concurrently, during my analysis, I found problems that the hotel is currently facing and some of the other improvements that they will need to take in regards to their future undertakings. As I have mentioned, the primary source of revenue for the hotel is in the Sales and Marketing Department. ***In my observation, the hotel has a weak Sales and Marketing staff. Secondly, the communication flows within the hotel is exhausted and enervated. Thirdly, there is much confusion in the management responsibilities. Lastly, hotel amenities and services have lessened because of the increasing billion dollar loss by the investing companies.***

The Sales and Marketing Department in Palasia Hotel is incompetent and insufficient. I say this with the utmost diligent respect, sincerity, and honesty. In truth, the hotel can bring in so much more business transaction(s) and revenue if they had a stronger, dedicated, and innovative staff at hand. I attended sales meetings during my last major venture, and I was able to witness first-hand the rate at which the department was headed. For example, a certain proposal or brochure finalization was repeatedly brought up in meetings consecutively for a month.

Also, I was able to witness three major function (s) that the hotel had hosted, and the turn out was ridiculous as promotion(s) were dragged and sales were low. Respectively, the hotel needs to consider hiring new management for the Sales and Marketing Department and recruiting new eligible staff members to increase the revenue.

Secondly, the hotel's communication flows is ambiguous and secretively traveling at non-existent airwaves. The flow of communication needs improvement and more expert authorities in the channel airwaves because everything always seems to be flawed, rumored, or broken. In addition, each department has its own mind and hence when information is passed through these communication flows, the end result is always exaggerated information, cracked information, or just leaked from one corner to the other. This is a problem because it either hinders judgments or confuses the rest of the hotel staffs from successfully completing their duties.

Comparatively, the management is disoriented and misguided because their job descriptions have been put into the filing cabinet for 'future' reviewing. I am not implying that the management team is neither wrong nor incompetent. This statement basically means that they have lost track of their original responsibilities. I experienced at first-hand their views on running each department. Since each department manager is a manager in general, the end result is a confused employee who doesn't know which manager to listen to because they (employees) are sometimes requested to acquire two opposite posts on accomplishing a goal.

Lastly, one of the greatest loss to the hotel and perhaps one of the most apparent problem is the continuous billion dollar loss from the investing corporation under the Kuomintang. I view this as a probable cause for closure because of the current political

status of Taiwan. Though the shift from one political party to the other in the next following years may not cause much difference in the international arena, it may or may not lessen investments. This would still have some affect to the future of the hotel and its employees.

Moreover, the hotel is continually losing more money and has been set back on its assets because of the current power conditions in Palau. Palau has been experiencing a power crisis since the summer started and will continually experience this problem until late October. During one of the meetings I attended in the summer, I was able to note that for the first three weeks of the power outage and businesses were asked to run on their own generators, Palasia spent \$ 60,000 U.S. / \$1,920,000 NT Dollars on oil to run the generators in just the three weeks alone. This could also be concluded as another major loss for the hotel and its future efforts.

The solution (s) that could be presented to help increase the revenue and improve the hotel operation (s) is as follows:

PROBLEM	SOLUTION
1. Weak Sales and Marketing Staff	1. Hiring new Management & Recruiting eligible workers.
2. Communication flows are enervated and exhausted.	2. Should consider conducting a comprehensive cross-training program and implement new regulations via memos.
3. Confusion about the management responsibilities.	3. Should reiterate the job descriptions and include them in important memos that should be strictly implemented.
4. Decrease in hotel amenities and services.	5. Hotel staffs (particularly Sales & Marketing) should be more innovative and dedicated to expose hotel and obtain world-renowned status to bring more revenue.

Below is my S.W.O.T Analysis for Palasia Hotel:

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Established Gym equipments that bring in 35% of the revenue. - Includes a high quality beverage service in the restaurant and bar. - Nice ambiance closely related to both island life and the vast development of the bigger cities. - Promotes drinks with coupons when ordering a meal - Unlimited services in the domestic arena. - Efforts on presentation and settings - Location is convenient as it is in the heart of Koror, downtown. - Room packages the lowest on the island. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Limited access to the beach - Poor Management - Weak Sales and Marketing - 80% of the employees are non-palauans. Knowledge about the islands is restricted and local connection is thin. - Lack of soliciting travel packages with different travel agencies. (Limited guests).
Opportunities	Threats
<p>Enough space and equities to expand in the future.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lose business and customer loyalty over contingent lack of innovation. - Lose of business transaction due to lack of investments. - New Hotels that are increasingly gaining recognition. - Decreasing interest in the hotel, domestic or internation.

Section 5

In conclusion, Palasia Hotel is still recognized as the largest room holder in the Islands of Palau. Reasonably the hotel is still maintaining its memorable status even during its current downhill condition. Albeit I equally witnessed the negative side of the hotel, I am content that it will survive through its current hardships. I am able to attest to this fact because of my two and half (2 ½) month period that I was interning at the hotel. In actuality, the multitude of training and the accumulation of experience I received were unearthing and riveting. Also, since I was able to expose myself to three major ventures in the hotel operation(s) other than just training in one department, I am confident that the experience I gained over the summer will be beneficial to me in the future.

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Please review!

