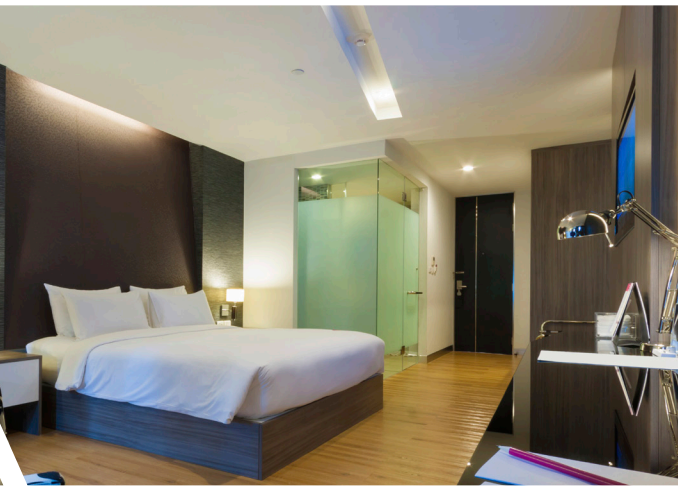




Hospitality Sector Employer Toolkit



In partnership with
NATIONAL NETWORK
CONNECTING LEARNING AND WORK



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Overview

The hospitality industry continues to post solid job gains and is quickly becoming a hot industry for job seekers. The Bureau of Labor Statistics projects 328 million hospitality jobs by 2022, which will account for 10 percent of the U.S. workforce. However, recruitment and selection remain a challenge for hospitality employers. Many restaurant and hotel owners struggle to find right-fit candidates for open positions, which can seriously impede the growth and profitability of their business.

The American Hotel & Lodging Association (AHLA) and the National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation (NRAEF), through support from the National Network of Business and Industry Associations (National Network), have partnered to define Common Employability Skills (CES) for the hospitality sector and to develop tools to assist employers in identifying these skills in potential recruits during the selection and hiring process.

While traditional assessments measure a candidate's technical skills as they relate to job tasks, measuring non-technical, or soft skills, presents more of a challenge. These skills, however, are crucial for anyone working in the hospitality industry. The toolkit presented here offers guidance on how to attract, identify, and hire applicants with a high HQ, or hospitality quotient. HQ is the combined personal attributes and professional competencies that contribute to an individual's success in a hospitality workplace.

The toolkit includes:

- **Common Employability Skills (CES):** Fourteen (14) essential competencies for the hospitality sector
- **Career Invitation:** Not your typical job posting, a career invitation is a broad look at hospitality and what it means to be a part of this dynamic industry
- **Competency-Based Hiring Best Practices:** A guide to selection and hiring for Hospitality Sector CES

Common Employability Skills

Personal Effectiveness Competencies

Interpersonal Skills—Displaying the skills to work effectively with others from diverse backgrounds

- **Demonstrating sensitivity/empathy:** Demonstrate sensitivity to the needs and feelings of others
- **Maintaining effective relationships:** Communicate effectively with others using verbal and nonverbal cues.
- **Respective and valuing diversity:** Interact respectfully and cooperatively with others who are of a different race, religion, national origin, disability, color, age, medical condition, marital, veteran, or citizenship status, sexual orientation, etc.

Professionalism—Maintaining a courteous, conscientious, and businesslike manner in the workplace

- **Displaying a professional appearance:** Maintain appropriate personal hygiene and grooming.
- **Maintaining a positive attitude:** Demonstrate a positive attitude toward work.
- **Exhibiting patience and resilience:** Respond in a positive and respectful manner in difficult situations.

Dependability and Reliability—Displaying responsible behaviors at work

- **Fulfilling obligations:** Display responsibility in fulfilling obligations.
- **Practicing attendance and punctuality:** Come to work on time and prepared to work as scheduled.
- **Following directions:** Comply with organizational rules, policies, and procedures.

Adaptability and Willingness to Learn—Demonstrating the importance of learning new information for both current and future problem solving and decision making

- **Using change as a learning opportunity:** Treat unexpected circumstances as opportunities to learn.
- **Incorporating on-the-job training and life experiences:** Desire and show a willingness to embrace new assignments, procedures, and technologies to improve work performance.

Workplace Competences

Customer Focus—Efficiently and effectively addressing the needs of clients/customers

- **Demonstrating a desire to serve:** Be pleasant, courteous, and professional when engaging with internal or external customers.

Teamwork—Working cooperatively with others to complete work assignments

- **Establishing productive relationships:** Respond appropriately to positive and negative feedback.
- **Meeting team objectives:** Work as part of a team contributing to the group's efforts to achieve goals.



Career Invitation

Become a Hospitality Hero

What does hospitality mean to you? Hospitality is much more than a meal or a place to sleep away from home—it's an invitation to share an unforgettable experience. The hospitality industry is in the business of people, serving our guests and offering lifelong careers to our employees. Hospitality businesses power the nation's economy and provide opportunities to small business owners.

Is Hospitality for You?

A hospitality employee has a heart for service. In your role, you have the responsibility and privilege to affect lives every day. You thrive in a fast-paced, high guest contact environment. You enjoy working with others and are passionate about guest service.

What Are the Opportunities?

A job in hospitality can be a stepping stone or a lifelong career—where it takes you is up to you! You will encounter opportunities for personal growth and career advancement at every turn. More than half of hospitality department managers and many general managers started their careers in hourly, entry-level positions and moved their way up the ranks.

Let's Get Started

Join the talented team of hospitality heroes who deliver unparalleled memorable experiences to guests around the world. Your story could begin here...



Competency-Based Hiring Best Practices

We recognize that every organization has hiring and selection policies and procedures in place. The best practices listed here are intended specifically to guide employers in hiring for the CES identified in this toolkit.

Recruitment

Extend a career invitation. Go beyond posting a traditional job description to engage job seekers by offering them a glimpse of the opportunities inherent in the field of hospitality. In addition to elevating the industry in the eyes of potential applicants, this approach begins to answer the question, "What's in it for me?"

Model the behaviors you wish to see. The HR recruiter is an ambassador for your organization and must embody the characteristics you want your ideal candidate to possess. To the applicant, the recruiter is the external face of and often the first contact they have with your organization.

Select right-fit candidates. The goal of the selection and hiring process is not simply to fill a role; it is to match the applicant's competencies to the position where they will be most effective.

Use your most valuable resource—your employees. If you have stand-out employees, chances are they know someone who could become your next star employee. Ask for recommendations from current staff, and offer a reward for successful referrals.

Interview

Show respect for the interviewee. Arrive on time to the interview, and set aside uninterrupted time to spend with the applicant.

Utilize the multiple interviewer approach. Whenever possible, use multiple interviewers to gain a variety of perspectives on job candidates. Whether you use a panel interview or a series of mini-interviews, try to divide and conquer by asking each interviewer to focus on a specific area or set of competencies. This will provide minimal overlap with maximum coverage.

Define the organization's commitment to the employee. Beyond the skills needed for a particular role, candidates are interested in the qualities necessary to succeed in an organization, opportunities for training and development, and career growth. How will your organization help the employee succeed for the time he or she is with your company?

Find out what the candidate hopes to gain from your organization. Are the candidate's needs consistent with your organization's mission, values, and prospects? This is an opportunity for both the employer and the applicant to self-select out of the process.

Observe the candidate outside of a traditional interview environment. Although this step takes some extra time, it offers invaluable insight into a candidate's behavior and potential fit with your organization. If time permits, take the applicant on a tour of the organization to see how he or she interacts with staff and guests. An applicant who is impolite or does not acknowledge a server or bell attendant, or one who seems ill at ease in the hustle and bustle of a busy back-of-the-house area, may not be a right fit for your organization or team.

Use behavioral and scenario-based interview questions to solicit thoughtful responses. Applicants may talk around an issue or deflect the question altogether. Be direct and persistent; you may have to ask a question several different ways to arrive at a clear answer. Ask for clarification and probe deeper if required.

Refer to the **Appendix** for a behavioral interview tool. This easy-to-reference table outlines each Hospitality Sector CES competency, its corresponding observable behaviors, and behavioral or scenario-based interview questions (with sample things to "listen for") designed to measure the competency in individual interviewees. The notes column provides a place for interviewers to job down their impressions of the candidates.

CES and Lifelong Learning

In addition to providing ample opportunities for internal growth, hospitality can be a launching point for careers in a variety of industries, and the CES competencies are not only essential building blocks for a career in hospitality but provide a payoff for the employee on a personal level. Proficiency in these areas, combined with hospitality industry experience, will provide many pathways to success. The following table shows each competency and its corresponding life skill, or personal reward. Use these as talking points in the selection and hiring process, as well as in ongoing career conversations throughout an employee's tenure in your organization.

Competency	Personal Payoff
Sensitivity/Empathy	Increased self-worth and patience; a greater understanding of others' needs and feelings
Effective Relationships	Greater influence and input in decision making; networking opportunities
Respect for Diversity	Leadership qualities; influence; ability to build strong teams; ability to coach others
Professional Appearance	Self-confidence; respect from others
Positive Attitude	Improved health and wellness; strengthened relationships
Patience and Resilience	Kindness; independence; resourcefulness and adaptability
Fulfilling Obligations	Trustworthiness; pride in accomplishments
Attendance and Punctuality	Reliability
Following Directions	Accountability; commitment
Willingness to Learn	Personal and professional growth; self-improvement
Desire to Serve	Initiative; reputation
Teamwork	Self-awareness; maturity; achievement; promotion

Appendix

Competency	Observable Behaviors	Behavioral Interview Questions	Notes
Sensitivity/ Empathy	<p>Makes direct eye contact; smiles when appropriate</p> <p>Appears accessible and open</p> <p>Looks interested; nods in agreement</p>	<p>Tell me about a time when you were proud of your ability to recognize how another person feels. Describe how you were able to “read” the other person.</p> <p>Listen for: <i>effective communication; ability to put yourself into the other person’s shoes; ability to spot verbal and nonverbal cues as to how the other person is feeling.</i></p> <p>Describe a time when you had to tell someone difficult news. How did you go about it?</p> <p>Listen for: <i>preparing for the discussion; keeping feedback constructive; explaining any follow-up measures; making sure the person understands; keeping emotions in check.</i></p> <p>Give me an example of when you had to make a decision in favor of yourself or someone else. What were your thoughts and feelings?</p> <p>Listen for: <i>self-awareness; genuine caring; compassion and initiative in assisting others</i></p>	

Competency	Observable Behaviors	Behavioral Interview Questions	Notes
Effective Relationships	<p>Speaks well of current/former coworkers and leaders; does not make negative comments about current/former work environment</p> <p>Communicates clearly and effectively; choosing words with care</p>	<p>Tell of a time when your active listening skills really paid off.</p> <p>Listen for: <i>understanding the importance of building rapport and relationships; trust.</i></p> <p>Give me an example of a time when you successfully communicated with another person even when that individual may not have personally liked you (or vice versa).</p> <p>Listen for: <i>ability to communicate with others regardless of differences; understanding that everyone must work together toward a common goal</i></p> <p>Tell me about a time when you had to explain something fairly complex to a coworker or guest. How did you handle this situation?</p> <p>Listen for: <i>effective communication strategies; patience</i></p>	
Respect for Diversity	<p>Treats all staff with respect, regardless of their status, position, age, gender, etc.</p> <p>Responds in a language that is respectful and appropriate</p> <p>Recognizes own biases and assumptions</p>	<p>Provide an example of when you worked with or helped somebody from a different culture or background to your own. What did you do and what did you say?</p> <p>Listen for: <i>learning about the culture; respecting differences; flexibility; patience; politeness</i></p> <p>Have you ever had to handle a situation when a colleague or guest did not accept a person from another culture or background? How did you do this?</p> <p>Listen for: <i>remaining calm and respectful; diffusing the situation; referring serious cases to HR, management, or security as needed</i></p> <p>Tell me about a time that you changed your style in order to work effectively with those who were different from you.</p> <p>Listen for: <i>awareness of own biases; flexibility and adaptability; patience; effective communication</i></p>	

Competency	Observable Behaviors	Behavioral Interview Questions	Notes
Professional Appearance	<p>Displays good personal hygiene and grooming</p> <p>Dresses appropriately to the situation</p> <p>Uses appropriate body language</p>	<p>Tell me about a time when you had to wear a uniform for school or work in the past. How did you feel about it?</p> <p>Listen for: <i>respect for rules and regulations; pride in one's appearance; pride in the organization</i></p> <p>Have you ever had a service experience where you were concerned about the cleanliness of the establishment or the staff? How did that feel, and what could be done to improve the situation?</p> <p>Listen for: <i>respect for hygienic practices; understanding of the need for hygiene in the hospitality industry</i></p>	
Positive Attitude	<p>Displays confidence and honesty</p> <p>Appears genuine; not "putting on a show"</p>	<p>Tell me about a time in a past assignment where you were doing something incorrectly and a manager let you know that? How did you react?</p> <p>Listen for: <i>humility; willingness to learn; accepting constructive feedback</i></p> <p>What is your motivation for wanting to leave your current position?</p> <p>Listen for: <i>honesty; desire for personal and professional growth</i></p> <p>How would you describe the perfect work environment for you?</p> <p>Listen for: <i>self-awareness; connection to company culture; working on a team; empowering and positive</i></p>	

Competency	Observable Behaviors	Behavioral Interview Questions	Notes
Patience and Resilience	<p>Does not become annoyed or flustered during the interview</p> <p>Answers probing or difficult questions with grace and patience</p>	<p>What are your "hot button" issues? What annoys you?</p> <p>Listen for: <i>solution-oriented thinking; ability to work through difficult situations</i></p> <p>How would you respond if you were training a new employee and had to show them something four times?</p> <p>Listen for: <i>patience; adapting the approach; effective communication</i></p> <p>Occasionally our work is judged or criticized unfairly or our intent is misunderstood. Can you tell me about a recent situation that fits this description? How did you react?</p> <p>Listen for: <i>ability to separate personal feelings from professional achievements; keeping calm under pressure; desire to learn from mistakes</i></p>	
Fulfilling Obligations	Takes responsibility for own actions/work	<p>Tell me about a time your workday ended before you were able to finish your task.</p> <p>Listen for: <i>ability to prioritize; commitment to task; effective communication with the team</i></p> <p>Tell me about a time when personal issues pulled you away from work and how you handled it.</p> <p>Listen for: <i>effective communication with coworkers and management to ensure work is completed</i></p> <p>How have you reacted to a colleague who regularly lets the team down?</p> <p>Listen for: <i>making sure performance expectations are clear; offering positive feedback when possible; staying connected as a team to ensure overall goals are met</i></p>	

Competency	Observable Behaviors	Behavioral Interview Questions	Notes
Attendance and Punctuality	<p>Arrives on time to the interview</p> <p>Is composed and prepared to answer questions</p>	<p>Is there anything that will prohibit you from consistently coming to work on time, every day of the week you are scheduled and putting in a full day's work for a full day's pay?</p> <p>Listen for: <i>responsibility for own actions; commitment</i></p> <p>Everybody misses work sometimes. What are some legitimate reasons to miss work?</p> <p>Listen for: <i>professionalism; maturity; discernment</i></p>	
Following Directions	<p>Follows all directions in the application and interview process</p>	<p>Sometimes it is necessary to strictly follow rules and policies. Give me an example of a time when you were expected to act according to policy even when it was not convenient. What did you do?</p> <p>Listen for: <i>respect for rules or practices; ability to put personal feelings aside; commitment to task</i></p> <p>Tell me about a time you were right but still had to follow instructions.</p> <p>Listen for: <i>completion of task; looking for appropriate time to raise concerns; keeping coworkers motivated</i></p>	

Competency	Observable Behaviors	Behavioral Interview Questions	Notes
Willingness to Learn	<p>Asks about professional development opportunities</p> <p>Expresses excitement about learning new skills/tasks</p>	<p>What are your standards of success/goals for a job?</p> <p>Listen for: <i>self-motivation; meeting and exceeding company objectives</i></p> <p>What will it take to attain your goals, and what steps have you taken toward attaining them?</p> <p>Listen for: <i>concrete strategies or plans; awareness of skill gaps and strengths</i></p> <p>What would you like to learn/gain by taking this job?</p> <p>Listen for: <i>engagement; motivation; expectations in line with company</i></p> <p>Give me an example of when you did not know enough about something to be effective. What did you do about it?</p> <p>Listen for: <i>self-motivation; willingness to learn new tasks; flexibility; ability to admit one's faults</i></p>	

Competency	Observable Behaviors	Behavioral Interview Questions	Notes
Desire to Serve (Customer Focus)	<p>Listens actively</p> <p>Is able to view situations from another's perspective</p> <p>Offers solution-oriented responses</p>	<p>Describe a situation where you had to handle an angry customer. What did you say/How did you act?</p> <p>Listen for: <i>taking responsibility for situation regardless of who was to blame; offering ways to resolve the problem</i></p> <p>It is time for your break, but a guest comes up to you with a question. What do you do?</p> <p>Listen for: <i>commitment to helping resolve the guest's inquiry; creative problem solving; teamwork</i></p> <p>Provide an example of a time when you have gone above and beyond for a customer. What was the outcome?</p> <p>Listen for: <i>desire to delight the guest; heart for service; creative problem solving; teamwork</i></p> <p>Describe a situation when you were given outstanding customer service.</p> <p>Listen for: <i>understanding what makes an exceptional guest experience</i></p>	

Competency	Observable Behaviors	Behavioral Interview Questions	Notes
Teamwork	Expresses enthusiasm about contributing to your team or organization	<p>Describe your most recent group effort.</p> <p><i>Listen for: collaboration; contribution to the group; effectiveness; outcomes; successes and lessons learned</i></p> <p>Describe a situation where others you were working with on a project disagreed with your ideas. What did you do?</p> <p><i>Listen for: collaboration and communication; willingness to try different approaches; willingness to admit that you may be wrong; creative problem solving; flexibility; putting the needs of the team and project above one's own</i></p> <p>Give me an example of one of the most significant contributions you made as a member of a team.</p> <p><i>Listen for: pride in accomplishment; meeting team goals and objectives</i></p>	