



Cooperative Education Report

Title: “Sheraton Dallas Hotel”

Written by

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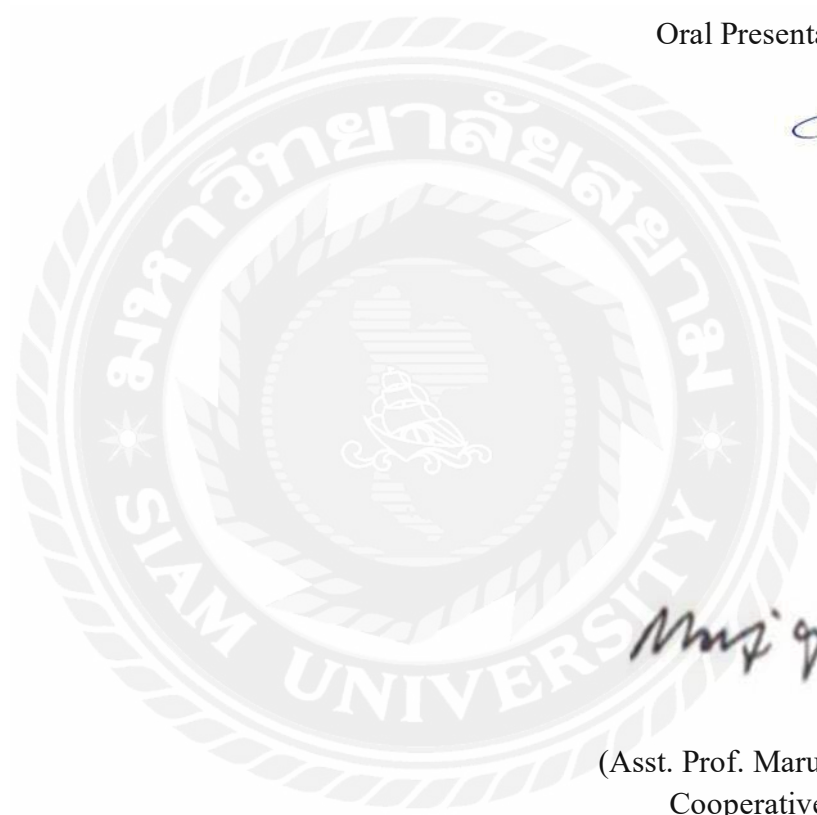
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**This Report Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for Cooperative Education, Faculty of Business Administration, Academic Semester
2/2022.**

Siam University

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We have approved this cooperative education report as partial fulfillment of the cooperative education program semester 2019-2023



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Semester / Academic year: 2/2022

Abstract

Sheraton Hotels has always been a timeless, upscale pioneer in hospitality. It is Marriott International's most global brand, positioned within the Premium tier. With its rich history and iconic presence in the hospitality industry, it was the first hotel to land in many cities around the world, garnering acceptance and trust, and establishing itself as the fabric of communities around the globe.

The report entitled "Sheraton Dallas Hotel" focuses on how Marriott Hotels has been evolving the hotel industry throughout the world for years now. This cooperative education report contains the working experience of different tasks carried out as a Finance intern.

The objectives of the study is to implement theoretical knowledge learned and to have a better understanding of American business administration practices.

Keywords: Risk Assessment/ Auditing/ Hotel Industry

Acknowledgment

First and foremost I would like to thank Siam University and Kathmandu College of Management for giving me the opportunity to work and experience corporate life. This course helped me a lot to relate my theoretical knowledge to the practical world.

I would also like to thank Sheraton Dallas Hotel for giving me this opportunity to work as an intern and learn a lot about the hospitality industry and corporate world.

This opportunity presents itself to me as an opportunity for my professional progress. I will make every effort to put my newly acquired knowledge and skills to the best use possible. Also, I will always be thankful to all the people who helped me throughout the journey.

Thank-You

Sincerely,

Seejal Pokharel

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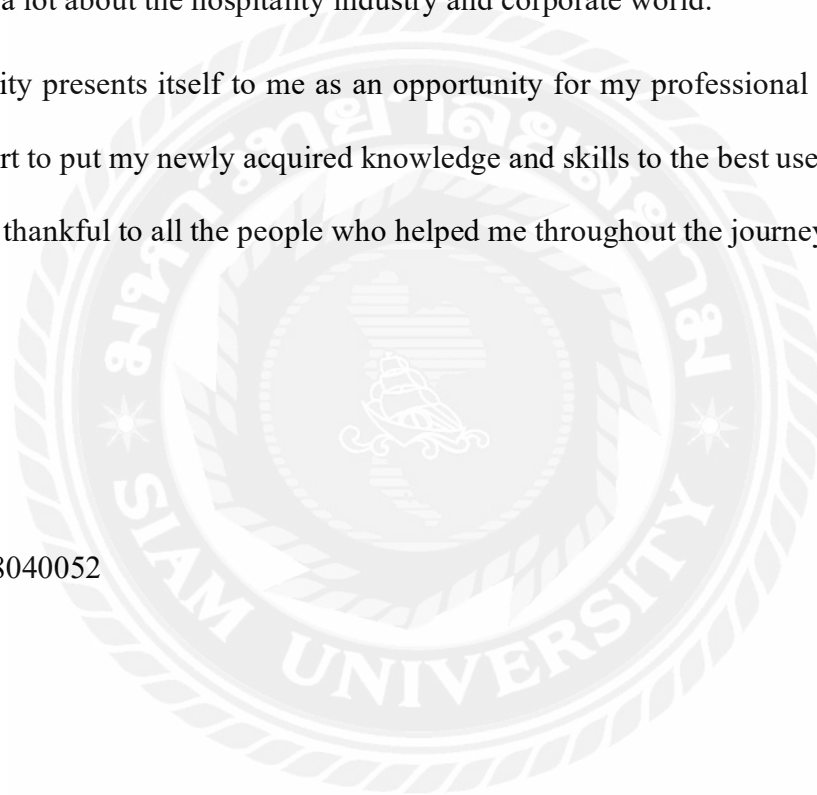


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Chapter 1. INTRODUCTION



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1. Company Profile

Sheraton Hotels has been at the heart of communities for over 80 years. Bringing people together is what the hotel has done since opening its first Sheraton in 1937. Now, they're deeply rooted in over 400 communities across the globe. The hotel is now part of Marriott International which is the largest hotel chain in the world.

The operations and guest experiences build upon the core values, brand passion points, design, operations and guest experience programming. All build upon one another for an integrated environment and work together to amplify our brand's vision to be the world's gathering place.

“Take care of associates and they will take care of the customers” is the founder's philosophy and it has made Marriott International a great place to work for more than 95 years. Innovation has always been part of the Marriott story - The Marriott family helped shape the modern

hospitality industry and they're driven to continuously challenge the status quo and anticipate our customer's changing needs with the new brands, new locations and new guest experiences.

They hold themselves to uncompromising ethical and legal standards. This extends to the day to day business conduct, their employee policies, supply chain policies, environmental programs and practices

1.1. Mission

Its mission is to enhance the lives of the customers by creating and enabling unsurpassed vacation and leisure experience.

1.2. Vision

Its Vision is to be the world's favorite travel company.



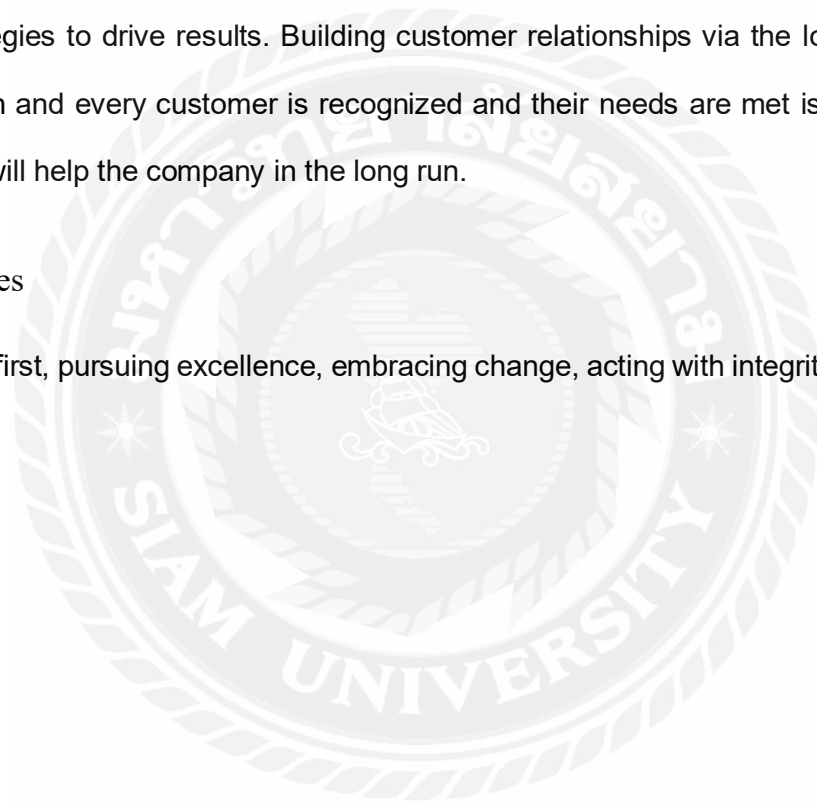
Figure : 2

1.3. Strategies

In early 2022, Marriott embarked on a bold new company strategy called Growing Forward. This Strategy is guiding it beyond the pandemic and into the next era of global travel. To position it for success in 2023 and beyond, they have an updated framework to execute the growing forward strategy. The company strategy map is the shared strategy across Marriott and is built upon strategic paths to win, supported by performance metrics to track progress and tailored execution strategies to drive results. Building customer relationships via the loyalty program to make sure each and every customer is recognized and their needs are met is one of the main strategies that will help the company in the long run.

1.4. Core Values

Putting people first, pursuing excellence, embracing change, acting with integrity and serving the world.



2. Organizational structure

2.1. Diagram of organizational structure:

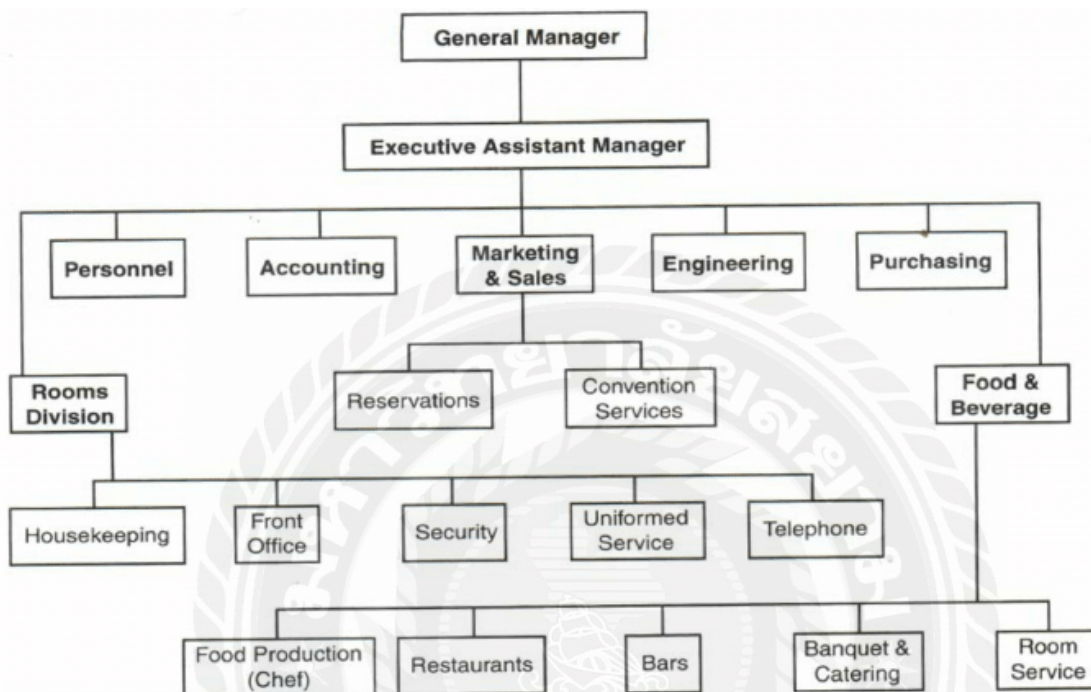


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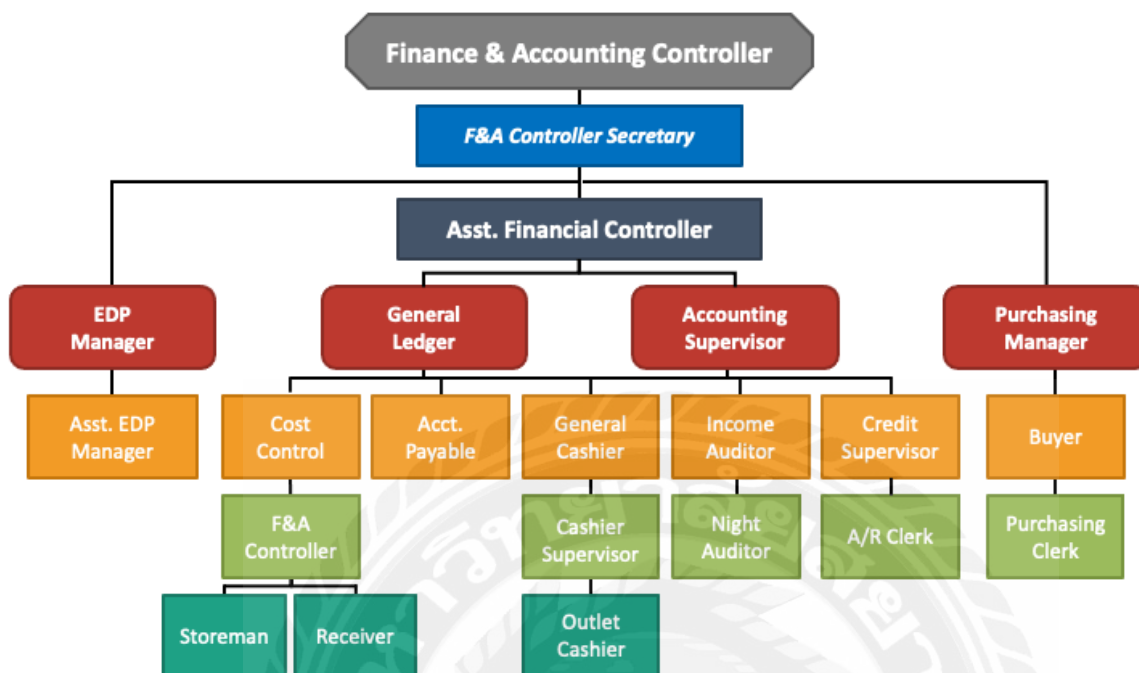


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2.2. My Job Position:

My job position during the Co-op program was as an Accounting Intern. My major roles were to look after the daily, monthly and quarterly income auditing, and provide administration support to the company and standard auditing procedure. Along with that, I was also responsible to review, identify, and correct errors and discrepancies on account statements and other records. I was also working as a backup to the General Cashier where I had to be responsible for the cashiering, surprise bank auditing of the employees whenever needed. I was also responsible for submitting the reports as per the SRA requirements in daily and quarterly basis.

2.3. Description of organizational structure:

The description of the organizational structure is quite vague. We have the area General Manager who works at our property and oversees a couple hotels in this market. Followed by the

Hotel Manager. We have Director of Finance and Accounting, Director of Food and Beverages, Director of Human Resources, Director of Engineering, Director of Sales, Director of Events, and Director of Rooms. In Finance and Accounting Department, we have two assistant directors of finance and accounting followed by general accountants, a voyager who is manager under training and I, J-1 who is an intern.

3. Intention & Motivation to Choose Sheraton Dallas as Co-op study workplace

Hotel industry of Nepal has been increasing every year. Chain hotels like Radisson, Marriotts and Hiltons are being set up. I was always interested in the hospitality industry. Since the projects we had in Business Finance class, I got to understand more in the theoretical side but wanted to actually learn by working in the industry's financial section itself.

I was looking for the biggest international companies in the world to learn more than I can in Nepal, so that I can help the industry get better in any way possible. I got the opportunity to work here at Sheraton Dallas, Marriott International which is the largest hotel chain in the world. The place is very welcoming and they always motivate their employees to grow and learn more. They select JIs every year to work with them for inter cultural knowledge and experience and always encourage us to train more, learn more and help us get more exposure. With also many employee benefits the place has always been a top pick since the very beginning of my college.

4. Strategic analysis of the company

SWOT analysis

Strength -

- Global presence : Offering the most powerful portfolio in the industry, their 30 brands and 8000+ properties across 139 countries and territories give people more ways to connect, experience and expand their world.
- Market Leadership : Sheraton is the largest and second tallest hotel in Dallas and Texas with 1840 guest rooms. Being the largest ensures it enjoys the full benefits of economies of scale.
- Excellent Reputation : Marriott is ranked #44 for diversity, #100 just companies, #243 world's employers, #84 top regarded companies and #38 best employers for women. Also, it has been one of the regulars on the Fortune 500 list for 21 years and was ranked #151 in 2019
- Strategic Partnerships - partners with the biggest players in different sectors, which enabled the company to undercut the competition. It partnered with Alibaba to enable millions of customers to book directly without deposits.
- Loyal customers - A section of Marriott's customers will not even consider switching to any other hotel. The company has nurtured one of the most loyal customers using a combination of strategies, including one of the largest loyalty programs.
- Strict code of conduct - The hotel service business is highly sensitive to a wide range of issues. From cleanliness to etiquette and punctuality in service delivery, Marriott's strict code of conduct ensures delivery of all these ingredients of success.
- Highly Innovative- Delivers value by exploiting innovation and technology effectively. From Villas and Homes venture to wallet-free experience, innovative operations are at the core of Marriott's success. It ranked #21 Most innovative company.

Weakness -

- Ineffective data protection - consumers distrust and avoid companies that fail to protect their data. In 2018, the guest reservation database of Marriott's starwood was hacked and personal information of up to 500 million people was exposed.
- Poor positioning - it is marketed and structured as a family - focused business from market position to management. The future of the hospitality industry lies in young single millennials which makes Marriott's family - focused positioning a major weakness.
- Negative publicity - The service is sensitive to public perception. Marriott's reputation has been tainted in 2017 by the decision to rescue only its hotel guests from St. Thomas after Hurricane Irma and kept non-guests off the cruise ship even though it was half - empty
- Civil Lawsuits - Issues with the law always portray companies in a negative light. It was issued for blocking customer's personal wifi citing security concerns and was fined \$600,000.

Opportunities

- Shifting Demographics : As more and more millennials and gen-z enter into the customer market; the company has the opportunity to grow its customer base by positioning as a cool youthful brand. Millennials are already delivering change in the hospitality industry.
- Focus on emerging economies : demand for high end hospitality services in developing countries is increasing rapidly and presents lucrative opportunities for hotel chains like Marriott.
- Diversify Offerings : Satisfying customers of the digital age goes beyond offering basic services. They demand personalized services. Marriott can differentiate itself from competitors by offering customized services that cater to the specific needs of customers.

- Expand into Related Sectors : The hotel chain business is linked to a wide range of sectors from tourism to catering real estate, and many more. They've already expanded to houses for hire.

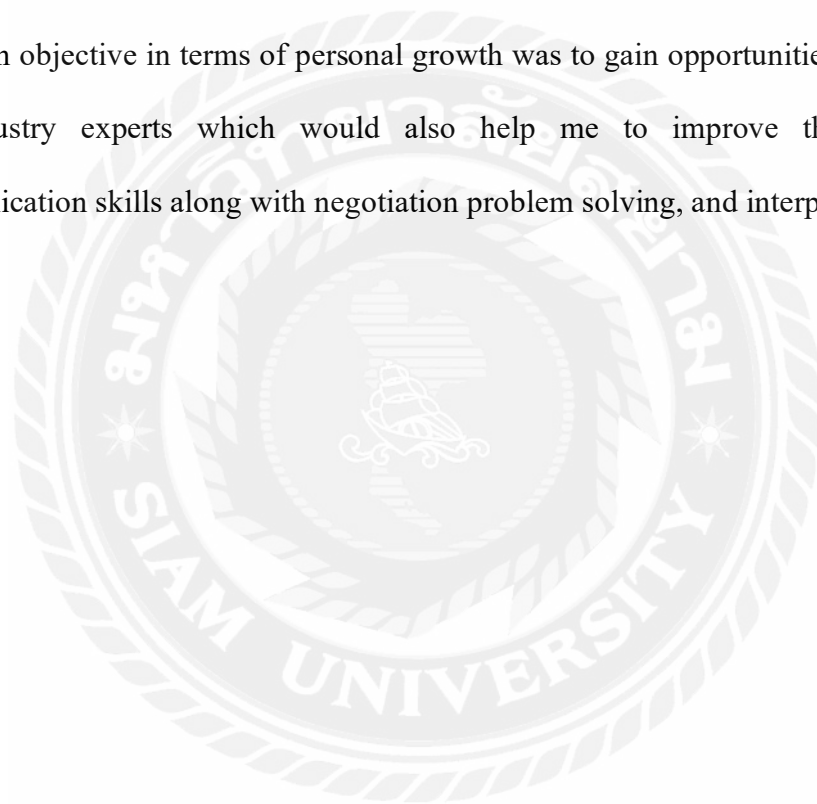
Threats

- Global Pandemic - Marriott has already lost 92% of its profits as the number of customers declines due to the pandemic. If the virus or similar situation continues, Marriott's profitability will continue to suffer.
- Stiff Competition : the hospitality industry is highly competitive. From Hilton to Novotel and many more, renowned hotel chains can reduce Marriott's market share.
- Looming Recession - With the countries sliding deeper into recession with millions of jobs wiped off in a short period of time. The adverse effects of the global recession has proven in the past to be particularly destructive to companies in the hospitality industry.
- Trade Tension - With the widespread adoption of isolationism, global companies like Marriott are perfect targets for tariffs by disgruntled populist governments. If Marriott is used as leverage or pawn in the trade war, it can make a substantial portion of its revenues.

5. Objectives of this cooperative study

The objective of the cooperative education was to be familiarized with the corporate world to have a first hand experience of how various industries operate along with being familiar with the company's policies and standard operating procedures. The main objects were:

- To know the company's standard operating procedures, information technology/ software used in daily business.
- Having knowledge of American business administration practices and Standard auditing procedures.
- Knowing how to create an engaged workforce, align associates with the company's core values, to manage the resources, time and people.
- The main objective in terms of personal growth was to gain opportunities to interact with the industry experts which would also help me to improve the cross-cultural communication skills along with negotiation problem solving, and interpersonal skills.



CHAPTER 2: CO-OP STUDY ACTIVITIES

2.1. Job Description and Responsibilities

My internship program has been divided into 3 phases with various responsibilities and learning opportunities.

1st phase: Orientation to the company's policies and standard operating procedures, this experience provided me with an opportunity to interact with industry experts and obtain skills by shadowing the supervisor and staff. Knowledge of the company's standard operating procedures, information technology/software used in daily operations along with the knowledge of American business administration practices and standard auditing procedures was gained.

2nd Phase : I learnt how to provide administration support to the company and standard auditing procedure. At the end of the phase I was able to review, identify, and correct errors and discrepancies on account statements and other records. Knowledge of American business administration practices which includes how to create an engaged workforce, align associates with the company's core values, and how to manage the organization's resources, time, and people was also learnt. Developing communication, negotiation problem-solving, and interpersonal skills; Proficiency in MS Office, database and online applications, and standard auditing procedures were part of the 2nd learning phase of this program.

Specific tasks and activities were :

- to create, organize, maintain, and update records utilizing database and spreadsheet software, other online applications, and manual systems of the company.
- Review and cross-check billing statements to identify and report errors and discrepancies to the staff.

- Study the company's history of relationships with clients and agents.
- Maintain timely communication with customers and clients by responding to their inquiries.
- Assist in implementation and maintenance of computerized accounting systems.
- Perform various operational support when needed.

3rd phase: receive hands-on training experience in accounting standards and practices which includes understanding the organization's assets, liabilities, revenue, expenses, and equity. Accounting practices included reporting of the day-to-day financial operations, the flow of accounts receivable/payable, and auditing to catch clerical errors. I learnt how to provide accounting support including assisting with filing systems for the accounting division. In this phase the I also learnt how to provide support in all aspects of general accounting. In particular, I was able to apply accounting principles and procedures to analyze financial information, prepare accurate and timely financial reports and statements and ensure appropriate accounting control procedures.

Specific tasks and responsibilities were:

- To perform accounting tasks such as preparing invoices, and checks, creating budgets, calculating billing statements, checking, and compiling financial records; for groups in-house, and also get hands-on experience working with all the other departments and operational needs. Operational needs include cash management for associate banks, managing department budgets and collecting group payments for event management.

2.2. Activities in coordination with co-workers

During this program, I was supervised directly by Scott Garrett, Director of Finance who is a 39-year veteran with Marriott and is among an elite group of Directors of Finance and Ms. Gail

Simpsons who has been working in the property for over 20 years and is currently the assistant Director of Finance. I was responsible for the daily income auditing of the property where I had to work closely with Night Auditors and all the other departments of the hotel. Surprise Bank Checking had to be conducted where I got the opportunity to work with the surprise auditors and be part of the process. My job also required me to submit reports for the Summary Risk Assessment monthly as well as quarterly and the reports had to be collected from various departments. The reports were collected via their managers and they were very supportive whenever I needed their help.

This is how I was successfully able to collaborate with all the team members of the organization. My evaluation of the performance was an important component of this program where on a monthly basis, I was directly and continuously supervised by Scott Garrett. He discussed with HR the progress and development throughout the program and together they conducted periodic performance evaluations and based on that information the final program evaluation was conducted.

2.3. Contribution as an Co-Op student in the Company

Daily Income Auditing of the hotel and preparing reports for the Summary risk Assessment requirement were two of my major responsibilities. The company had failed to upload the Summary risk Assessment Reports on a daily, monthly and quarterly basis post covid. I was assigned to look after it where I had to regularly review and work closely with the other departments. The compliance of the report was 12% which increased to 67.67% in the first month and 82% in the 2nd month itself.

The surprise par auditing had also not been conducted in the past few years and that was successfully conducted under the supervision of Assistant Direct of finance, Gail Simpson.



CHAPTER 3 LEARNING PROCESS

1. Loyalty and Credit Card Programs

Marriott Bonvoy is the customer loyalty program through which members have access to the diverse brand portfolio, rich benefits and travel experiences. Everyone in the hotel refers to Marriott Bonvoy as “Loyalty Program”.

The Loyalty Program rewards members with points toward free hotel stays, access to travel experiences through our Marriott Bonvoy Tours & Activities program, miles with participating airline programs, and other benefits. It is believed that the Loyalty Program generates substantial repeat business that might otherwise go to competing hotels. In each of 2021 and 2020, approximately 50 percent of our global room nights were booked by Loyalty Program members. They strategically market to this large and growing guest base to generate revenue. They have multi-year agreements with JPMorgan Chase and American Express for the U.S.-issued, co-brand credit cards associated with the Loyalty Program. They also license credit card programs internationally, including in Japan, Canada, the United Kingdom, United Arab Emirates, South Korea, and Mexico. They generally earn fixed amounts that are payable at contract inception and variable amounts that are paid monthly over the term of the agreements primarily based on card usage, and it is believed that the co-brand credit cards contribute to the success of their Loyalty Program and reflect the quality and value of the portfolio of brands.

1. Human Capital Management

Marriott's long history of service, innovation and growth is built on a commitment to putting people first. They are committed to investing in their associates, with a focus on leadership development, recognition, compensation, career opportunity, and skills training. The impact of COVID-19 on the hospitality industry, and actions that they and others in the hospitality industry took in response to COVID-19 (including implementing furloughs, reduced work week schedules, and voluntary transition programs, and eliminating a significant number of above-property and on-property positions) have adversely affected their ability to attract and retain associates. As lodging demand recovers from the lows seen in the early months of the pandemic, they have seen and continue to see industry-wide labor shortages causing challenges in hiring or re-hiring for certain positions, primarily in certain high-demand U.S. markets. In response, they have enhanced our recruitment and retention efforts and increased compensation where needed to maintain competitiveness.

2. Sustainability and Social Impact

Guided by the 2025 sustainability and social impact goals, as well as the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, Marriott is focused on creating a positive and sustainable impact wherever they do business. Their sustainability and social impact platform, Serve 360: Doing Good in Every Direction, is built around four focus areas: Nurture Our World; Sustain Responsible Operations; Empower Through Opportunity; and Welcome All and Advance Human Rights – each with targets to drive their efforts through 2025. These targets reflect their goals to (1) support the resiliency and sustainable development of the communities and environments where they do

business, (2) work to reduce the environmental impacts, design and operate sustainable hotels, and source responsibly, while mitigating climate-related risk, (3) facilitate workplace readiness and access to opportunity in the business, and (4) create a safe, welcoming world, including by working with organizations to educate and advocate on issues related to human rights throughout and beyond the business.

3. Quantitative and Qualitative Disclosures About Market Risk.

Industries are exposed to market risk from changes in interest rates, stock prices, currency exchange rates, and debt prices. Marriott manages their exposure to these risks by monitoring available financing alternatives, through the development and application of credit granting policies, and by entering into derivative arrangements. They do not foresee any significant changes in either their exposure to fluctuations in interest rates or currency rates or how they manage such exposure in the future. They are exposed to interest rate risk on their floating-rate notes receivable and floating-rate debt. Changes in interest rates also impact the fair value of their fixed-rate notes receivable and the fair value of their fixed-rate long-term debt. They use derivative instruments, including cash flow hedges, fair value hedges, net investment in non-U.S. operations hedges, and other derivative instruments, as part of the overall strategy to manage the exposure to market risks associated with fluctuations in interest rates and currency exchange rates. As a matter of policy, they only enter into transactions that they believe will be highly effective at offsetting the underlying risk, and do not use derivatives for trading or speculative purposes.

3.1. Problems/ Issues with the company

The growth strategy depends upon attracting third-party owners and franchisees to their platform, and future arrangements with these third parties may be less favorable, depending on the terms offered by the competitors. Their growth strategy for adding lodging facilities entails entering into and maintaining various arrangements with property owners. The terms of their management agreements and franchise agreements for each of the lodging facilities are influenced by contract terms offered by their competitors, among other things. They cannot assure you that any of their current arrangements will continue or that they will be able to renew agreements or enter into new agreements in the future on terms that are as favorable to them as those that exist today.

Their failure to comply with applicable laws and regulations may increase their costs, reduce profits, or limit the growth. The hotels that they franchise or manage are subject to a variety of laws and regulations around the globe, including, among others, laws related to employment practices; marketing and advertising efforts; trade and economic sanctions; anti-bribery and anti-corruption; cybersecurity, data privacy, data localization and the handling of personally identifiable information; competition; the environment; health and safety; liquor sales; and the offer and sale of franchises. The compliance programs, internal controls, and policies they maintain and enforce to promote compliance with laws and regulations may not prevent their associates, contractors, or agents from materially violating these laws and regulations. The failure to meet the requirements of applicable laws or regulations, or publicity resulting from actual or alleged failures, could have a significant adverse effect on our results of operations or reputation.

If their brands, goodwill, or other intangible assets become impaired, they may be required to record significant non-cash charges to earnings. As of December 31, 2021, they had \$18.0 billion of goodwill and other intangible assets. They review goodwill and indefinite-lived intangible assets for impairment annually or whenever events or circumstances indicate impairment may have occurred. Estimated fair values of our brands or reporting units could change if, for example, there are changes in the business climate, unanticipated changes in the competitive environment, adverse legal or regulatory actions or developments, changes in guests' perception and the reputation of their brands, or changes in interest rates, operating cash flows, or market capitalization. Because of the significance of our goodwill and other intangible assets, any future impairment of these assets could require material non-cash charges to our results of operations, which could have a material adverse effect on our reported financial condition and results of operations.

3.2. Solving the problems

Franchising and licensing many of the brand names and trademarks to third parties for lodging, timeshare, and residential properties, and with respect to the credit card programs interact directly with guests and others under their brand and trade names. So, during the process they need to be more selective because if these parties fail to maintain or act in accordance with applicable brand standards; experience operational problems, including any data or privacy incident, or a circumstance involving guest or associate health or safety; or project a brand image inconsistent with theirs, then their image and reputation could suffer.

They are always exposed to risks and costs associated with protecting the integrity and security of Company, associate, and guest data. In the operation of our business they use, and transmit large

volumes of data regarding associates, guests, customers, owners, licensees, franchisees, and the business operations, including credit card numbers, reservation and loyalty data, and other personal information, in various information systems that they maintain and in systems maintained by third parties, including our owners, franchisees, licensees, and service providers.

In order to protect from these risks, these technologies and systems must be refined, updated, and/or replaced with more advanced systems on a regular basis.

3.3. Recommendations to the company

The company had cut more than 70% of their employees and till this date, even though the business has recovered to a great extent, the hotel is short staffed. Every department of the hotel has to be staffed well for the productive result and better outcome.

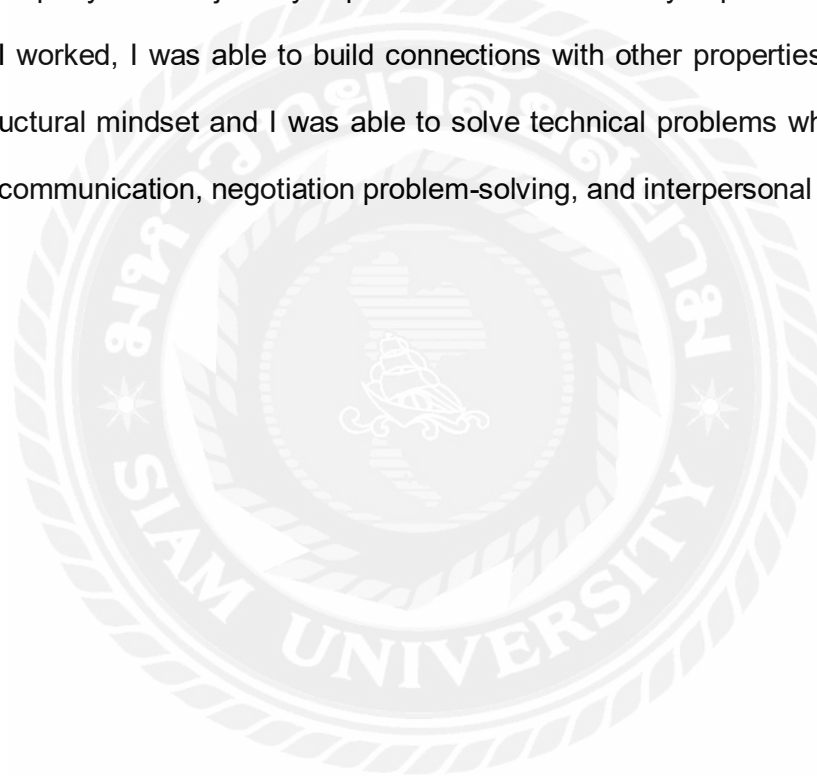
After the data leak from Starwood properties, all the systems have been changed and security has been very strong, but the hotel has failed to make the customers aware about it and publicize it accordingly. Guests who had to be part of the unfortunate incident will never want to risk more and stay here unless the hotel assures everyone that they have corrected all their mistakes.

The company has been on an aggressive expansion drive and today their empire is so huge that it is extremely difficult to maintain standards of service throughout which the brand is diluted.

3.4. Knowledge from coursework to the real working situation

I was able to learn how to provide support in all aspects of general accounting. In particular, to apply accounting principles and procedures to analyze financial information, prepare accurate

and timely financial reports and statements and ensure appropriate accounting control procedures. It was a great intercultural experience but most importantly, I got to be exposed to various tools and softwares, work policies and structures which will help me in any company I join and even when I start my venture. Workplace was also very flexible with the training plan and gave this opportunity where we could sign up for online trainings for free. The training could be from whichever department and whatever field we would best want to learn about. I also made a lot of networks in the property with not just my department but almost every department. Not just limited to the property I worked, I was able to build connections with other properties too. I have also developed a structural mindset and I was able to solve technical problems while I was there. I also developed communication, negotiation problem-solving, and interpersonal skills.



CHAPTER 4. CONCLUSION

4.1. Summary

Working in the rapidly growing and evolving industry, it has given me a wider and better understanding of what the hospitality industry will look like.

Being able to take part in many assessments under the guidance of a supervisor was always very helpful. Everyday felt like a new experience because of the work culture and things to learn. Knowledge of American business administration practices which includes how to create an engaged workforce, align associates with the company's core values, and how to manage the organization's resources, time, and people was for me the most important skill I got to learn. Not just that, but ways to develop communication, negotiation, problem-solving, and interpersonal skills; I believe, will help me in the long term, no matter where I work in the future.

4.2. My Evaluation of the work experiences

I was more than grateful to be a part of such an organized method of training. Being a part of this program helped me understand so much about the industry without being limited to one particular department but also about the work culture, ethics and so much more. Working in a different country in one of the biggest properties with over 700 employees was overwhelming at the beginning but eventually I started enjoying the experience and learnt many things that I would not be able to learn in my country. The hotel provided the trainees with DLZ - a Digital Learning Zone where we could sign up and take training the training lessons of whichever department or

fields we were interested in. With limited time to learn and explore, the workplace was very supportive to help me get exposed to cross-cultural events, programs and outings too.

4.3. Limitations of the Co-op Studies

The entire cooperative was a great experience and help for me, however there were a few limitations:

- Time Limitation

Since the work required to be completed in a limited amount of time, all the assigned duty had to be completed fast. I did miss out on a long term assessment which would help me understand the matter in a bigger picture.

- Cultural Diversity

I wasn't aware about the diverse culture in the workplace and being unaware about it created a gap in the beginning. However, everyday was a new learning experience.

4.4. Recommendations for Company on Co-Op

I had a very smooth journey and a great learning experience that I will carry forward throughout my professional career. The company provided us with many digital learning tools where we were exposed to learning about many softwares, practices and tests to evaluate our learnings too.

However, I would like the company to expose us to more tasks and activities where one can also learn about multitasking.

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