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Advanced

Diversity in the Hospitality and Tourism Industry

CPQ: How does Diversity in the workforce help Hospitality and Tourism?

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The hospitality and tourism industries are international players in the global marketplace. People from diverse cultures visit hotels, travel on airlines and cruise ships and enjoy restaurant dining. An industry that blankets the world naturally blends differing belief systems and traditions in its workplaces, creating a new dynamic in business environments -- one that continues to develop.

Hospitality, Tourism and Diversity

The hospitality and tourism industries are service-based; their job is to satisfy their guests. It’s not as simple as that, however. To grow the business, the industry must attract more people, and with that increase comes a greater exposure to differing cultures. For example, high turnover and low production have been attributed, in part, to a lack of managing cultural diversity in the workplace. Many businesses must recognize the advantages of developing a deeper understanding and appreciation for differing cultures at work to create a successful employee.

Benefits of Workplace Diversity

Cultural diversity at work adds an interesting and beneficial component to hospitality and tourism. For one thing, when employees and management share a greater acceptance of varying ethnicities, a different work ethic develops that affords equal opportunities for everyone, regardless of cultural differences. Consequently, comfort levels increase among workers, enabling the creation of stronger teams, while lawsuits involving discrimination are reduced in number.

Conflicts Associated with Diversity

A basis for personal conflicts can exist in many hospitality and tourism jobs. These conflicts can be attributed to people with differing cultural beliefs having contradictory values about certain elements of the job. For instance, one employee may believe that up-selling guest rooms to increase revenue is most important when interacting with customers, while another employee may feel it’s insulting. Similarly, in some cultures tipping is not socially expected as it is in America. A lack of understanding these types of differing thought-processes and behaviors can contribute to confusion in the workplace.

Ongoing Development

As many employers continue to wrestle with concerns involving cultural intolerance in the workplace, they may face discrimination lawsuits, while their employees experience disparity involving fair treatment. Misunderstandings with guests occur with disappointing regularity. All of these situations point to the need for a deeper diversity education through training. Diversity training can help build trust between co-workers, generate better communication with guests and create a more harmonious work environment.