

## How to Hire and Train Great Hospitality Employees: The 51% Rule

**H**iring really good employees and then properly training them is the lifeblood of any successful hospitality business. And it is also the greatest challenge of every hospitality business.



Quite the paradox, right? It is the most difficult task, yet it is critically important. So how do great operators do it, year after year, for many years?

### Great operators practice...

...what is called the 51% rule. The rule says that we hire with 51% of what is important — which I will detail — and 49% will require training those hires, regardless of position, to their positions. The 51% factor means that when you are interviewing for a server, manager, cook, or any position, you are asking thoughtful, insightful questions that determine a few required traits, or you move on and do not hire that person. For the sake of your business's culture, your sanity, and for all those who have to work with the folks you hire, you should focus on hiring only people who are:

- Kind
- Intelligent

- Have a strong work ethic
- Are emotionally self-aware and honest
- Have a desire to make people happy

Note that none of these traits indicate “experienced,” nor devilishly good-looking! Remember, you cannot teach

anyone intelligence, empathy, nor to smile. It is impossible, as you likely know based on experience. The 51% reflects the intangible aspects of someone's personality that we cannot teach nor train. The 49% are the technical proficiencies we can and will teach — as long as the 51% is there.

### Make sense?

Someone who is bright, articulate, fun to be around, is a boost to your conversation, and is willing to learn is someone you can train to do almost anything. Even if it is a cook who must have cooking experience, stop hiring that snarling applicant with a bad attitude. Why? Because the other cooks have to work with that person! If you would not happily introduce that candidate to your significant other or your mother, don't bother.

### The return on this investment...

If every new hire, evaluation,



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praise, disciplinary action, etc. is performed with “the 51%” in mind, you will, over time, see that your culture is always improving. Your employees are enjoying coming to work every day. They don't have to work with anyone with a bad attitude or a know-it-all. And by the very nature of intelligent, kind,

and friendly employees who are well trained, your service levels and the success of your business will progress.

As always, let me know if I can help you deploy these or any other ideas to help you with your restaurant. I assure you, I have the 51%!

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