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The Incorporation of Alcohol Awareness Activities in the Hospitality Administration Curricula

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Abstract

Hospitality administration programs provide students with knowledge of basic principles underlying the industry and prepare them to assume responsible roles in business and society. A growing body of evidence suggests that providing information to students about accurate drinking norms is associated with decreased drinking on campus (U.S. Department of Education, Higher Education Center, 2006). Accredited hospitality administration programs in the United States were surveyed to determine the extent to which alcohol awareness activities are included in courses that cover the role of legal and ethical managerial behavior concerning beverage management.

Keywords: Hospitality Management, Hospitality, Beverage Management, Alcohol, Drinking, Alcohol Awareness

Introduction

Hospitality administration programs provide students with knowledge of basic principles underlying the industry and prepare them to assume responsible roles in business and society. Legal problems, financial management, personnel management, organization theory, behavior, interpersonal communication, socio-political influences, and ethical responsibilities in the hospitality and tourism industry are “common body of knowledge” elements prescribed by the Accreditation Commission for Programs in Hospitality Administration (ACPHA) (Handbook of Accreditation, 2004). Although variously titled, these courses provide students awareness and understanding that hotel, restaurant, and tourism services are an amalgamation of legal considerations, business principles, and administrative responsibilities whose bottom line will be impacted by consumer expectations and social norms.

In researching universities and colleges that offer Hospitality Administration programs, external accreditation of programs that meet or exceed certain stated standards of educational quality were reviewed. One such accrediting body, The Accreditation Commission for Programs in Hospitality Administration, has two primary purposes listed in their Handbook of Accreditation: 1) to ensure the quality of the institution or program and 2) to assist in the improvement of the institution or program. Agencies or bodies conducting programmatic or specialized accreditation, like ACPHA, are national in range and guide accreditation of a program preparing students for a profession or occupation. Such agencies are often closely connected with professional associations in the field (Handbook of Accreditation, 2006). Our pilot study surveyed ACPHA accredited hospitality administration programs in the United States to determine the extent to which alcohol awareness activities are included in courses that cover the role of legal and ethical managerial behavior concerning beverage management.

The goals of hospitality administration education include not only marketing of hospitality goods and services, but also ethical considerations and socio-political influences affecting organizations. Other goals include improvement of student understanding of human behavior as well as organization theory, behavior, and interpersonal communication; and, of course, the legal environment of profit and non-profit organizations.

So, what does alcohol awareness education have to do with the goals of hospitality administration and management? Several points can be noted:

- 1) “Among all the drugs used in the world, alcohol is probably the oldest and most deeply entrenched in human society. In many places, it is a cornerstone of social and spiritual life, and can have iconic status as a powerful symbol of trust, status,

bonding, peace, celebration, strength, etc. Although it is relatively safe if used carefully, the power of both its social significance and, for some drinkers, its addictive potential can often override 'common-sense' drinking practice." (Alcohol Education and Research Center [AERC], 2005)

2) Transportation safety is the highest priority of the United States Department of Transportation (2006). Although all 50 States, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico have laws in place making it illegal per se to drive with a BAC of .08 g/dL or higher, alcohol was involved in 16,885 fatal crashes in 2005 and more than 1.4 million drivers were arrested for driving under the influence of alcohol or narcotics in 2004 (National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), 2006).

3) The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration will increase attention in 2007 on areas that have the greatest propensity to reduce highway injuries and fatalities, e.g., alcohol impairment (NHTSA, 2006).

4) Socialization, fun, celebration, and relaxation are some of the reasons why people drink (AERC, 2005). Socialization is a generalization that can mean:

1. to gain confidence in social situations
2. to lose anxiety about social situations
3. to appear mature or grown up
4. to feel less inhibited
5. to increase social status
6. to demonstrate group loyalty
7. to increase romantic or sexual feelings(AERC, 2005)

A Hospitality Administration faculty member can use many activities for alcohol education in the classroom. As an active learning technique, collaborative learning is a valuable teaching technique in traditional academic settings. An active learning strategy such as collaborative learning improves classrooms because students are involved as participants rather than as passive observers (Bonwell & Eison, 1991). One such activity is the use of "Fatal Vision Goggles." These goggles simulate impairment from drugs and alcohol use with the mission to promote safety in our schools and community and to contribute to the reduction of alcohol and other drug fatalities and injuries. Only the visual impairment caused by drugs or alcohol is simulated by these goggles. In combination with a presentation that could focus on responsible decision-making and legal consequences of alcohol, these goggles make a participative experience for students and, as thus, bring home the need for alcohol awareness in their future career.

One activity using "Fatal Vision Goggles" could be a Sobriety Tests for students. Before starting the activity, put tape down to represent the "line" the person being tested for sobriety will walk. Ask a male volunteer to perform the sobriety test by walking the straight line. Next, have them wear the .08 Fatal Vision Goggles and perform the same test. Compare the results. Try the same with a female student except use .15 Fatal Vision Goggles. You can also have two people use the goggles and try passing a basketball back and forth.

Methodology

A survey addressing training provided in the area of substance abuse was emailed to all hospitality administration programs provisionally and fully accredited by the *Accreditation Commission for Programs in Hospitality Administration (ACPHA)*. *twenty-three universities are ACPHA accredited in the United States*. A total of replies were received, yielding a response rate of 33%. This study was conducted to ascertain the extent to which alcohol awareness education and activities are currently included within hospitality administration training.

Findings

The universities that responded to the survey were NYC College of Technology, University of Missouri-Columbia, Virginia Tech, Widener University, Missouri State University and Texas Tech University. These universities represent 33% of the total surveys that were emailed. When asked the types of Hospitality Administration degrees that are offered by these institutions, the answers started with

Associate of Applied Science degrees up to Doctorates. The following table represents the types and number of Hospitality Administration degrees that are offered by these institutions:

Associate of Applied Science Degree	Baccalaureate	Master of Science	PhD
1	6	4	2

These programs can be found in the following departments: Hospitality Management; Hotel and Restaurant Management; Hospitality and Tourism; School of Hospitality Management; Hospitality and Restaurant Administration and Nutrition; Hospitality and Retailing.

When asked in which course alcohol liability was taught, the responses indicated the following:

Name of Course	Percentage
Introduction to Hospitality Management	33%
Food System Management II	17%
Beverage Control Management	67%
Legal Aspects of Hospitality Industry	33%
Restaurant Operations	33%
Resort and Club Management	17%
Survey of Beverages	33%
Other	50%

When asked what activities are used in teaching alcohol liability, the following table shows the responses:

Activity	Percentage Use
Lecture	83%
Hands-On	33%
Internships	17%
Alcohol Consumption Models	33%
Lab	33%
Problem-Solving	17%
Other	17%

This presentation will use “Fatal Vision” goggles as one activity for teaching alcohol liability. When asked what types of activities were for this section of the curriculum, none of the responses indicated use of these goggles. In fact, only 17% had ever heard of “Fatal Vision” goggles.

When asked how much time was spent on alcohol liability within their particular Hospitality programs, 50% of the respondents indicated 3-5 hours of teaching, whereas the other 50% indicated they spent more than 6 hours on the topic.

Conclusion

Increased alcohol awareness and incorporation of alcohol awareness activities into the hospitality administration curriculum is the type of environmental management advocated by the Higher Education Center in their comprehensive prevention approach to reducing alcohol and other drug use on college campuses (DeJong, et al, 1998). Survey results did not suggest that alcohol awareness education differs substantially across hospitality administration curricula. Our conclusion as to incorporation of alcohol awareness activities in hospitality administration programs is based upon a small number of surveys sent to the director of such program. It is not known whether the surveys were actually completed and returned by the director or by the university faculty member who actually teaches the course. We, in no way, are suggesting generalization of the results of this survey to all Hospitality Administration program because of the small number of responses.

Because traffic safety is a concern of the Federal Government, it would be beneficial to expand this study to include those 443 management and business administration programs currently accredited in North America by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (2006) to compare relative levels of alcohol awareness training across disciplines.

The use of the “Fatal Vision” goggles as one of many activities within the Hospitality Administration programs serving to enhance student awareness of alcohol consumption might be an option as well as the current alcohol consumption models that are currently used.

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