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A Comparison Of Hotel Executive Teams In Singapore And The Northeastern US*

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Abstract

Monitoring the demographics of teams increases our understanding of the types of decisions that are made and the processes used to arrive at them. Data from large hotels were collected in both the United States (US) and Singapore. Findings indicate hotel and team characteristics for Northeast US cities are similar to those of hotel managers in Singapore, with the exception of educational level and average salary.

KEYWORDS: executive teams, demographics, hotels, Singapore

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A Comparison Of Hotel Executive Teams In Singapore And The Northeastern US

The University of Massachusetts with the cooperation of Shatec Institutes conducted a study in 2003 on decision-making teams in the hotel industry. Data were collected in both the United States (US) and Singapore. Comparisons are made between City Center hotels in Singapore and the Northeastern US using demographic components of individual managers. Both similarities and differences are reported for such factors as job tenure, titles, educational background, salaries, age, nationality and gender.

The purpose of the study is to understand the changing aspects of hotel management teams. As other research has shown, monitoring the demographics of teams increases our understanding of the types of decisions that are made and the processes used to arrive at them.

Executive teams at hotels with 300 or more rooms in both Singapore and the northeastern United States (Boston, New York and Philadelphia) were asked to participate. The size dimension was chosen to ensure that participating hotels likely had a management team with more than five members so that useful comparisons could be made. The areas were selected to duplicate city environments. Surveys of this judgment sample were mailed to General Managers that agreed to participate for distribution to the team members and subsequent return for analysis.

The response rates of contacted hotels in each area were similar: 35.7% from Singapore and 38.9% from the US. This represents 57 managers from 10 Singapore executive teams and 64 managers from 11 American teams. Table 1 provides some useful comparative details.

The hotel characteristics for sample properties in Singapore and the US are similar. The most common form of ownership in our sample is franchised; however, the sample of US hotels also included 2 properties owned by a parent company. The average number of employees (577 for Singapore and 570 for US) and the average number of rooms (about 600) are similar. The employee/room ratios approach 1 to 1 for both samples.

Team characteristics are also similar between the two countries' samples with about 60 managers, an average team size of almost 6 managers, about 60% male and 40 years of age. US managers had almost two more years of lodging industry experience on average, one more year in the current position, but one half of a year less with the same hotel. The percentage of hotel managers with a 4-year college degree differed between the two countries with about 70 percent in the Northeast US compared to 51 percent of the Singapore managers. The salaries were markedly different with an average of over S\$155,000 in the US and just over S\$105,000 in Singapore, demonstrating a relationship between education

and income. The Singapore managers were more diverse in their citizenship and race characteristics.

Table 1: Study Characteristics

Hotel Characteristics	Singapore	Northeast US
Number of Hotels	10	11
Ownership: Independent	3 (30%)	2 (18.2%)
Ownership: Franchised	7 (70%)	7 (63.6%)
Ownership: Parent Co.	--	2 (18.2%)
Average # of Employees	577	570
Average # of Rooms	618	583
Employee/Room Ratio	0.93	0.98
Team Characteristics		
Number of Managers	57	64
Average Team Size	5.7	5.82
Mean Years Lodging Industry Experience	14.81	16.63
Mean Years with Hotel	5.11	4.64
Mean Years in Current Title	4.55	6.00
Education % with 4-yr. Degree or Higher	51.8%	70.3%
Gender: Male	60%	62%
Gender: Female	40%	38%
Mean Salary (US\$)	\$61,158	\$90,418
Mean Age	41.56	39.63
Citizenship: Singapore/US (respectively)	64.9%	75%
Race: Chinese/Caucasian (respectively)	75.4%	85.9%

While the percentages of male and female managers is the same overall, there are marked differences in gender breakdowns within specific position titles. As illustrated in Table 2, one-third of general managers in the US sample are female, yet there were no female general managers holding this highest level position in the sample group of Singapore managers.

In addition to the General Manager position, males dominate the positions of Chief Engineer (100%), Food and Beverage Manager, Rooms Division Manager and Sales and Marketing Manager in both samples, although the Rooms Division position is more gender balanced in the US sample. In Singapore, females are more likely to hold management positions in Housekeeping and Human Resources. Interestingly, the Housekeeping Management position in the Singapore group is completely occupied by females compared with 66% in the US sample. The split between the two samples is similar in the Human Resource Manager title, with 89% female compared to 50% in the US group. When the gender balance is viewed by ownership type, it is evident that females are more

likely to hold management positions with corporate-owned properties than franchised or independent properties in both countries.

Table 2: Gender by Job Titles (%)

	Gender			
	Female		Male	
	<i>SIN</i>	<i>US</i>	<i>SIN</i>	<i>US</i>
General Manager	0	33.3	100	66.7
Chief Engineer	0	0	100	100
Comptroller	55.6	33.3	44.4	66.7
Food & Beverage	14.3	28.6	85.7	71.4
Housekeeper	100	66.7	0	33.3
Human Resources	88.9	50.0	11.1	50.0
Rooms Division	11.1	46.2	88.9	53.8
Sales & Marketing	33.3	45.5	66.7	54.5
Other	50.0	33.3	50.0	66.7
Totals:	40.0	37.5	60.0	62.5

Looking at gender differences by educational level reveals some contrast between the two countries' sample of managers, as shown in Table 3. While the majority of managers in both countries have a 4-year college degree or beyond, a higher percentage of females than males (63% and 48% in Singapore; 75% and 67% in the US) have achieved that level of education. By contract, males, particularly managers in Singapore are more likely to have an associate degree than females.

Table 3: Gender by Educational Level

	Gender			
	Female		Male	
	<i>SIN</i>	<i>US</i>	<i>SIN</i>	<i>US</i>
High School	14.3%	4.2%	9.1%	0%
Some College	4.8	12.5	30.3	22.5
Associate Degree	19.0	8.3	12.1	10.0
4-Year Degree	52.4	54.2	36.4	52.5
Master's & Beyond	9.5	20.8	12.1	15.0
Total:	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 4 illustrates the difference in age is much less significant than it is for salary in each country. The average age for all managerial positions in each

country hovers around 40. The exception is that the ages of the General Managers and Chief Engineers is slightly higher (45 years of age) and the Food and Beverage Managers in Singapore along with Housekeeping and Rooms Division Managers in the Northeast US are slightly lower (35 years of age). Hotel executive team managers in the Northeast US sample earned higher salaries (by S\$50,000 on average) than those in Singapore in all but one category, Housekeeping. The most significant contrasts are in General Management salaries with an average of S\$245,690 in the US compared to S\$155,172 in Singapore and in Food and Beverage Management (S\$235,776 in the US and S\$79,952 in Singapore).

Table 4: Age and Salary by Job Title

Job Title	Age		Salary	
	<i>SIN</i>	<i>US</i>	<i>SIN</i>	<i>US</i>
General Manager	45.5	44.8	S\$155,172	S\$245,690
Chief Engineer	45.0	43.3	108,621	137,931
Comptroller	42.8	40.7	121,252	175,172
Food & Beverage	35.4	41.7	79,952	235,776
Housekeeper	51.0	33.7	112,759	93,909
Human Resource	42.33	43.5	90,281	144,828
Rooms Division	38.3	35.9	85,698	151,810
Sales & Marketing	43.7	37.5	119,983	138,028
Other	43.4	35.7	126,872	118,966
Averages:	41.6	39.6	S\$105,445	S\$155,888

In summary, hotel and team characteristics for Northeast US cities are similar to those of hotel managers in Singapore, with the exception of educational level and average salary. Job titles held by males and females are more balanced in most categories in the US while there are gender dominant areas clearly evident in Singapore. Female managers have a higher level of education in both countries, perhaps indicating a preference for documented educational achievement as a tool of career advancement.