

the week

SKILLS OF SERVICE

NHI's two-year diploma course in hotel management is honing talent for Oman's growing hospitality sector



Habert Val
theweek@spointnews.com

Oman is seeing growth of its hospitality sector. Helping groom talent for this field is the National Hospitality Institute (NHI). The

institute, whose culinary courses have always been popular, is now seeing a growing number of students opt for its all-round two-year diploma course in hotel management. This course, they feel, will give them the extra edge when they step out to chart careers in the hospitality industry at home and abroad.

The course, intended to create future managers, includes 18 months of classroom study followed by six months of internship at a 4 or 5-star hotel in Oman. They are trained in all facets of knowledge and skills required for a junior supervisory level role.

Students currently studying the course say the training - culinary

skills to front office duties - has shaped them for management roles. Meanwhile, some of those who passed out have other

secured management jobs in hotels or are close to opening their own restaurants.

"The programme is designed to suit new entrants, working professionals, as well as leaders in the industry," said Robert Macken, principal of NHI, adding that the course also includes in-depth information on concepts like risk management, facilities management and design, accounting and human resource management.

Freshly Hinec, course coordinator, said that students have been showing great interest in practical training on operations such as housekeeping, food and beverages, food production and front office. They are also made respon-

sible for planning, organising and operating events, in which they participate in designing and cooking various menus as well as keeping up-to-date with current hospitality trends.

"I want to open my own restaurant as well as a hotel someday,

and this course provides the perfect foundation for my dreams," said Abdallah al Kharusi, a budding chef interested not just in the prospect of managing a hotel, but also in the other opportunity this

career offers - of interacting with people from different cultures.

Hazem Sadek, another diploma student, said the course has helped him build his social skills and confidence besides teaching him how the hotel industry functions.

"I found it easy to develop social skills that are needed in this industry as we Omanis are very welcoming to people from around the world. Hotels in Oman are looking to employ Omanis in key positions

and I hope to get those soon," he said.

Similar sentiments were echoed by other students, too like Kevin Hines, who said this course has shown me the depth of sophistication of the industry and at the same time helped improve certain aspects about myself on a professional level.

Berna Letfi was confident he will be able to manage a restaurant of his own in Muscat, while Abdul Majied said he plans higher studies in the US after gaining experience in Oman.

Students who have earned the diploma affirm that the course has equipped them with what it takes to survive in the hotel industry, and to consider ventures of their own, which could lead them to a better position and in turn, help provide employment to others.

Mahsa Sharifi, a former NHI diploma student, said, "When I started this course, I had no idea about the hospitality business. Now having completed the course, I realise the importance of every aspect that I learnt. It has given me the confidence to work at higher levels in the hotel industry in the Middle East and elsewhere. I may even set up my own establishment."

For Aimee Anderson, another ex-student, the diploma went a long way in building her personality and sharpening her potential in many fronts. "Not only did the hotel management diploma teach

me skills required for the industry, it also broadened my horizon and helped me grow as a person. It taught me to expect the unexpected and that I'm capable of doing much more than I thought I could."



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