



Food Services

People in Hong Kong enjoy eating out. Tourists coming to Hong Kong can find every conceivable cuisine being served in a fascinating range of eateries from street vendor stands to the most elegant restaurants. All this attention on food also means jobs. Even so, there are many job seekers in this industry, so competition is often keen.

Generally speaking, a restaurant is divided into four areas, namely, the dining room, the kitchen, the bar/soda fountain and the administrative office.

THE RESTAURANT

The dining room is manned by the sales manager, captains, waiters, junior waiters, cashiers and delivery staff. These people are usually responsible for a guest's first impression of the business, and it is, therefore, important for them to be well-mannered and courteous.

Most large restaurants also run bars and soda fountains serving alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks to their customers. The operation of this division is under the supervision of the bar captain, under whom are a number of assistant bartenders, trainee bartenders and soda fountain attendants. To be a bar captain, an expert knowledge of all kinds of drinks as well as a sociable disposition are essential.

On the other hand, kitchen staff rarely meets guests. They are supervised by the chief cook, though in some hotels or large restaurants the kitchen division is administered by an executive chef, who is an expert in various types of cuisine. The executive chef is mainly responsible for developing new menus, preparing cost lists and participating in promotion planning. This job requires a creative and artistic mind.

Since the development of chain restaurants, systematic management has become increasingly important and the administration of a restaurant has taken on the role of coordinating the work of different departments and ensuring the quality of food and services provided to guests.

Because of the importance of the administrative office, the educational requirements and qualifications required for entry are higher than for other divisions. Although administrators and managers in the catering industry may be promoted from dining room, kitchen or bar staff who have demonstrated their own potential for management duties, nowadays, most large restaurants recruit post-secondary and university graduates in catering management or other disciplines as executive trainees.



These newly recruited trainees usually receive on-the-job training so that they can familiarise themselves with the different areas of work and acquire the necessary practical experience to be promoted to the management team.

The general manager is responsible for the administration work which ensures ensuring the smooth operation of the establishment and for reporting to the board of directors and making policy recommendations. He is assisted by a group of departmental managers; divisional managers in charge of the other three divisions, a personnel manager to take care of all matters relating to staff, and an administrative manager for daily office routines, budgeting expenditures and also public relations.

FAST FOOD FRANCHISES

Fast food chains have experienced rapid growth in recent years, fuelled by the seemingly insatiable desire, especially among the young, for quick, convenient and affordable food. This trend is opening up a new career path for energetic young people. Fast food enterprises require considerable management and logistical expertise to handle bulk purchasing and the delivery of raw materials to many different outlets.

McDonald's, for example, welcomes graduates from hospitality management and business & management programmes as well as secondary school graduates with at least two years of working experience to join their management team. Training is on-the-job and includes daily hands-on experience of operations, self-study modules and intensive classroom training held at the Roca Training Centre.

At McDonald's, the management development programme helps the management trainee to acquire the necessary management skills needed for day-to-day restaurant operation as well as soft skills needed for managing people and serving customers.

The McDonald's Management Development Program has been accredited by the Hong Kong Polytechnic University. Graduates of McDonald's training program can also apply existing credits towards their higher diploma studies at the Polytechnic University.

The typical salary of a management trainee in a fast food enterprise would be about \$8,000-\$10,000 a month plus benefits.

FURTHER TRAINING

With the flourishing expansion of the food industry in Hong Kong, there is a keen demand for trained staff. To meet the need of this industry, formal institutional training is available at the University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Chinese University of Hong Kong, Chinese Cuisine Training Institute, Caritas Continuing and Adult Education Service and Hong Kong Baptist University. Both newcomers to this field and experienced staff may broaden or refresh their knowledge of this field at these academic institutions.

Catering is a round-the-clock activity and anyone considering a career in the industry should be prepared to work shifts and on public holidays. But if you like meeting people, the industry offers the challenge of serving customers, listening to their needs and keeping them satisfied.