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## Americans abroad: International hospitality careers

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AMERICANS ABROAD: INTERNATIONAL HOSPITALITY CAREERS

by

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Bachelor of Arts  
University of California at Riverside  
2004

A professional paper submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the

**Master of Hospitality Administration**  
**William F. Harrah College of Hotel Administration**

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Abstract

**Americans Abroad: International Hospitality Careers**

by

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This is an exploratory research paper reviewing international tourism and hospitality careers with a focus on Abu Dhabi, the capitol of the United Arab Emirates. The paper reviews the cultural aspects of business life in the country and gives Americans the necessary steps to finding a career in this foreign land.

## Americans Abroad: International Hospitality Careers

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## PART ONE

*Introduction*

The current economic crisis in California has directly affected the hospitality industry by causing lower occupancies and cancelled group programs that have created staff reductions in every lodging outlet. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, careers in leisure and hospitality have dropped 3% monthly from April to June in California with the nation's average being a 1% drop over the same months (United States Department of Labor, 2009).

Unfortunately, this crisis is occurring everywhere in the United States with hospitality professionals left unemployed with a job market that is saturated full of other experienced and qualified applicants, making it difficult to find a career in a new venue. This economy is creating the perfect time for professionals to explore the hospitality field in other countries, where the current economy hasn't caused as much havoc on the industry.

Research will focus on the history of international tourism and travel trends showing how the United Arab Emirates is becoming an exotic destination location. With the history and development of the country, Abu Dhabi, the capitol, has been selected as the focus of this research. A literature review will show the history of the country, the culture, and the growth of multi-national hospitality companies in the area. Through the knowledge of the country's business affairs, cultural norms, and labor law, Americans will have the opportunity to decide whether moving to Abu Dhabi will be a right fit for future career goals. If it is, an American will learn the necessary steps in obtaining a job in the growing hospitality industry in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates.

### *Purpose*

The purpose of this professional paper is to guide Americans into a future hospitality career outside of the United States of America. It will assist those interested in going abroad to the United Arab Emirates in understanding what is necessary in order for successful research and an easy transition abroad.

### *Statement of problem*

With the current economic crises in the United States, some Americans can only find success in the international hospitality job market. With visa restrictions and different job requirements, some job searchers find the research too difficult and need a better understanding of the application process and how to succeed in finding a career abroad. Clearly gathering career information for Abu Dhabi will assist any American in obtaining work abroad and enhancing their hospitality resume.

### *Justification*

The research conducted will benefit Americans that are struggling to find a career locally and are prepared to explore other nations. This study is important to youthful Americans who are looking for a newly adventurous lifestyle. The research will produce the steps necessary to finding a hospitality career in the United Arab Emirates. Career counselors will have the opportunity to utilize this professional paper to influence lost employees or current graduates towards a great career in a growing tourism market.

### *Constraints*

Due to the researcher being currently unemployed, there are restraints that limit this investigation to communication via telephone and internet only. Going abroad to conduct necessary research is not an option, but tourism is an easily researchable topic that does not need



physical travel. Finding an American in hospitality in the United Arab Emirates proved to be difficult, but many social networking websites show that they do exist, but are not supporters of higher education. Due to the young age of the United Arab Emirates, the organization of the government has the tendency to fluctuate with websites and statistics being available some days, but not all. These flaws can easily be corrected, but some information is critical to the modernity of the statistics about the country.

### *Key Terms*

According to the World Trade Organization (WTO), tourism is defined as the activities of persons traveling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business, and other purposes (Elliott, 2001, p. 21).

Tourism receipts cover all transactions related to the consumption by international visitors of, for instance, lodging, food and beverage, fuel, transport into the country, entertainment, shopping, etc (World Tourism Organization [WTO], 2006).

Mass tourism is the transport of large numbers of people in a short space of time to places of leisure interest and has developed from technological improvements to travel (“Tourism“, 2009).

An expatriate (in abbreviated form, expat) is a person temporarily or permanently residing in a country and culture other than that of the person’s upbringing or legal residence (“Expatriate“, 2008). In this study, the goal is to give Americans the opportunity to become expats within the hospitality industry in another country.

The Bedouin are a predominantly desert-dwelling Arab ethnic group who were previously nomadic throughout the deserts of the Middle East (“Bedouin“, 2008). In the United

Arab Emirates, the Bedouin moved with their camels and goats from one pasture to another and from one water source to another (Sturgis & Stewart, 2002).

## PART TWO

## Literature review

*Introduction*

The growth of international tourism has created a multitude of job opportunities for expatriates globally. Unemployed Americans who are prepared to explore a new country while furthering their hospitality career can easily research a location of interest and take necessary steps to a career abroad. The following section will examine international tourism and global staffing with a focus on the history and current hospitality trends of Abu Dhabi, the capital of the United Arab Emirates. Learning about the country's culture, visa requirements, labor laws, and compensation will assist an American in moving to begin a hospitality career abroad.

*History of International Tourism*

The history of tourism dates back as far as all written history. The Christian bible tells stories of the apostle Paul's travels throughout the Roman Empire. Great numbers of pilgrims have always traveled to religious attractions such as Kyoto in Japan, Benares in India, Mecca in Saudi Arabia and Christian sites throughout Europe. From the 11th through 13th centuries, Christian governments encouraged thousands of Europeans to travel in the military to recover the Holy Land from the Turks. The experience of these travelers and the knowledge and souvenirs they brought back helped to enrich and open Europe to further travel (Elliott, 1997).

In the past, only the wealthy could afford to travel to distant locations in the world making tourism a dream to all others. From the 15th through 18th centuries, the social elite would send their young men on a 'Grand Tour' to receive a classical education by visiting cultural centers in France, Germany, Austria, and Italy. During a young man's 'Grand Tour,' it became fashionable to combine travel with the purchase and collection of artifacts including

paintings, sculptures, books and manuscripts (Williams, 1998). It stimulated further overseas travel amongst the upper classes and future government leaders gained a better understanding of foreign countries, politics, and cultures (Elliott, 1997).

It wasn't until the Industrial Revolution that leisure time and a middle class appeared with the ability to travel ("Tourism", 2009). The United States issued the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 that created the 40 hour work week, producing some much needed leisure time for American employees. Governments realized that they had some responsibility over the health of their workers and recognized that time off boosted a worker's efficiency (Elliott, 1997). With this knowledge, most companies today offer paid vacation time which allows people to travel abroad without losing monetary compensation.

In the United States, the government assisted in the boom of international tourism after World War II. The Marshall Plan to help Europe after the war predicted tourism to be a dominant factor in economic progress (Elliott, 1997). In 1927, Pan American Airways (Pan Am) was launched to fly mail for the United States Post Office (USPO) and took passengers to Latin America. In 1938, the USPO offered a US\$2 million subsidy for any commercial airplane that could send mail to Europe. Pan Am put together a transatlantic fleet and offered the world's first passenger flight across the Atlantic Ocean in 1939, beginning new international travel trends (Endy, 2004).

The expansion of international tourism has been continuous, reflecting not just the growing popularity of foreign travel but the centrality of tourism within lifestyles of modern travelers (Williams, 1998). Figure 1 demonstrates the annual growth of international tourist arrivals throughout the world. The percentage of annual growth proves how international tourism has become a common feature for many travelers. This expansion seems irresistible and

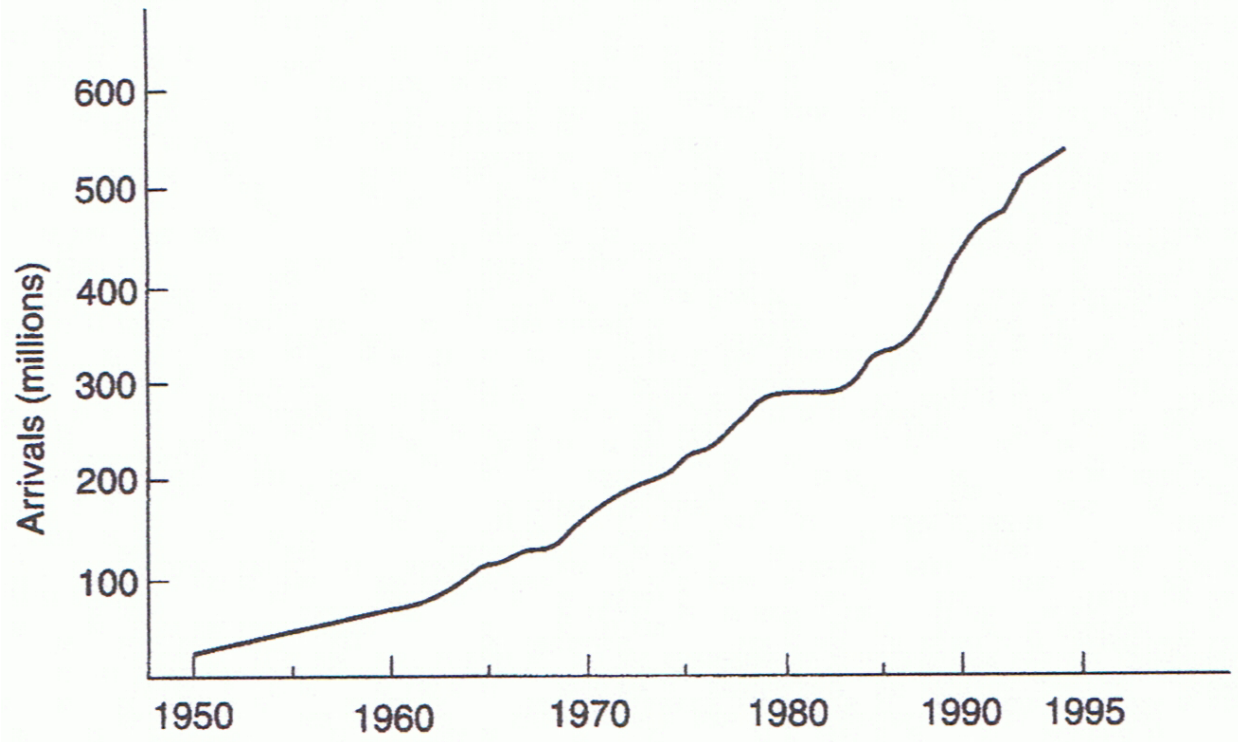


Figure 1. Increase in international arrivals, 1950-1994<sup>1</sup>

quite able to withstand the pressures of inflation, currency fluctuations, political instability and growing unemployment in most of the countries that generate the principal flows of international tourists. Neither the oil crisis of the mid-1970s, nor the economic recessions of the 1980s, nor the Persian Gulf war in the early 1990s appear to have deterred the international tourist to the extent that upward trends are reversed significantly, although annual rates of increase do show signs of deflection in response to world conditions, especially economic conditions (Williams, p. 46).

With international travel becoming an option for more classes, the tourism industry had to change in order to attract the budget minded traveler. Because of their limited budget, the journey patterns of these new tourists were inevitably shorter and their activities more

<sup>1</sup> From "Shrinking World—Expanding Horizons: The Changing Spatial Patterns of International Tourism," by S. Williams, 1998, *Tourism Geography*, figure 3:1.

intensified. Sightseeing became more important than the cultivation of social contact or the experience of culture, so the destinations of these travelers veered away from cultural centers and gravitated toward specific sights and natural beauty (Williams, 1998). The development of charter flights, cheap package tours and the jet airliner brought overseas travel to the masses, but was devastating to domestic tourism and local governments, especially on the oceanfront. Sea travel also suffered, and by 1957 passengers traveling by air over the Atlantic outnumbered those traveling by sea (Elliott, 1997).

### *Industry Changes*

International tourism has expanded at a rapid rate and has needed to evolve due to the maturity of the travel industry since the 1960s. Travel agencies have made foreign travel much easier to plan, especially with the development of package tours and the diverse travel experiences of each agent. Vacations can be created to meet the individual needs of each tourist with more marketing promotions being available through travel literature and the internet. The hospitality world has matured with each decade and has created many flexible forms of accommodation internationally. The international venues have also shaped their tourism to follow the evolution of travel by assisting travelers with guides, translators, and tours of their most scenic sites in order for tourists to receive the most for their money (Williams, 1998).

Technological advances have been the most dramatic in this past decade and have created new shifts in the standard structure of the industry. Internet technology has created new channels of distribution that facilitate direct communication and transactions between customers and suppliers. It has made it easier for travelers to book all of their arrangements online without assistance from any human contact, yet alone a travel agency, and allows them to research the destination prior to their arrival. Competition within the hospitality industry has grown with

hotels, transportation, and airlines competing to give the traveler the best discount possible (Henderson, 2007). The availability of these bargains has created a new breed of budget travelers who avoids parting with their money as best they can, known as the shoestring tourist.

### *Current Industry Trends*

According to the World Tourism Organization (WTO), tourism receipts in 1993 constituted a higher proportion of the world exports than all other sectors, other than crude petroleum, petroleum products, motor vehicles and related parts. International tourism receipts have been growing faster than world trade. Figure 2 lists the top 10 destinations according to visitor arrival and tourist receipts for 2003 and 2004. Tourism receipts are more important than tourism arrivals, and countries can be in contrasting positions. In 2008, France was ranked first for arrivals, but third in receipts while the United States ranked first in receipts, but second in arrivals (United Nations World Tourism Organization [UNWTO], 2009). The average amount of money spent on an international trip by a United States resident was US\$2,920, with an

International Tourist Arrivals (million)							International Tourism Receipts (US\$ billion)							
Rank	Series	2003		Change (%)		Share 2004*	Rank	2003		Change (%)		Share 2004*		
		2003	2004*	03/02	04*/03			2003	2004*	03/02	04*/03			
	World	690	763	-1.5	10.7	100		World	524	623	0.2	12.7	100	
1	France	TF	75.0	75.1	-2.6	0.1	9.8	1	United States	64.3	74.5	-3.4	15.7	12.0
2	Spain	TF	51.8	53.6	-0.9	3.4	7.0	2	Spain	39.6	45.2	4.4	3.8	7.3
3	United States	TF	41.2	46.1	-5.4	11.8	6.0	3	France	36.6	40.8	-5.4	1.5	6.6
4	China	TF	33.0	41.8	-10.4	26.7	5.5	4	Italy	31.2	35.7	-2.1	3.8	5.7
5	Italy	TF	39.6	37.1	-0.5	-6.4	4.9	5	Germany	23.1	27.7	0.4	8.9	4.4
6	United Kingdom	VF	24.7	27.8	2.2	12.3	3.6	6	United Kingdom	22.7	27.3	2.1	7.5	4.4
7	Hong Kong (China)	VF	15.5	21.8	-6.2	40.4	2.9	7	China	17.4	25.7	-14.6	47.9	4.1
8	Mexico	TF	18.7	20.6	-5.1	10.5	2.7	8	Turkey	13.2	15.9	10.5	14.3	2.6
9	Germany	TCE	18.4	20.1	2.4	9.5	2.6	9	Austria	14.0	15.4	3.8	0.4	2.5
10	Austria	TCE	19.1	19.4	2.5	1.5	2.5	10	Australia	10.3	13.0	0.8	10.7	2.1

Figure 2. International tourist arrivals and receipts, 2003-2004<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> From "Tourism Highlights: 2005 Edition," by the World Tourism Organization, 2006, p. 4.

average international airfare costing US\$1,400 in 2004 (Bureau of Transportation Statistics [BTS], 2006, p. 14).

Tourism is the largest industry in the world with over 125 nations considering tourism as their major industry and nearly a third of these countries considering it the top earner of foreign exchange as well as a critical source of employment (Engerman, 1994). International tourist arrivals reached 922 million in 2008, up 1.9% from 2007 (UNWTO, 2009, p. 3). Travel trends over the last 30 years show a significant reduction in 'established' tourism regions in Europe and the Americas as new, more distant and often more exotic destinations begin to attract the attention of tourists. As a result, there has been a dramatic expansion of tourism to East Asia and the Pacific, centered around the thriving tourist economies of Thailand, Singapore, Indonesia, Hong Kong, Japan, and Australia (Williams, 1998). Travel between the United States and Asia alone increased 22% from 2003 to 2004 (BTS, 2006). The United Arab Emirates promote their destinations as exotic, luxurious, and cultural, aiming to be the next travel industry trend.

#### *History of the United Arab Emirates*

The United Arab Emirates has many archeological finds including Stone Age tools and Bronze Age sites dating civilization in the area back to 5,000 B.C. There is proof that the most influential tribe of the ruling family of Abu Dhabi existed in the 15<sup>th</sup> century (Sturgis & Stewart, 2002). During colonial times from the mid 1950s onwards, the emirates were known as the Trucial States, under a system in which each of the individual emirates had separate treaty agreements (truces) with the British colonial administration. Treaties were signed as late as 1952 when Britain agreed to protect each nation against any aggression, while the nation agreed not to surrender its territory to a foreign power. These treaties created the current boundaries that form the territory of the United Arab Emirates (Sturgis & Stewart).



The United Arab Emirates was formed in 1971 after the British decided to withdraw from their Indian Ocean territories in 1968. The British had focused control over sea routes and foreign affairs, but left domestic policy to the tribes, including the social and economic development of the region. Each of the emirates, Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Sharjah, Umm al-Quwain, Ras al-Khaimah, Ajman, and Fujairah, had its own government under local leadership when the seven rulers agreed to unite. They created a constitution that set which powers were handled by the federal institution and which would remain under control of the individual emirates. According to one travel guide, “the federal government is responsible for foreign affairs, security and defense, nationality and immigration issues, education, public health, currency, postal, telecommunications, air-traffic control, labor relations, and banking” (Sturgis & Stewart, 2002, p. 50).

The Arab people of the United Arab Emirates share an interesting heritage and lifestyle, prior to the 20<sup>th</sup> century, that focused on the family and the whole tribe due to their nomadic existence. Tribes were formed with families spread from fishing villages on the coast, to small crops in the oases, in order to survive on all possible trade goods. Men would typically gather the trade goods while women would bring them to the souks, traditional markets where items were purchased or traded amongst others (Sturgis & Stewart, 2002). Many of the souks exist today and offer tourists a taste of history as well as a chance to purchase goods from in and around the Indian Ocean. Many locals await the opening of the fish souks in order to get the freshest fish for their families.

Maritime trade with East Africa, India, and Iran was a large source of income for the people of the area, but the quality of their ships was not the best for the stormy Indian Ocean. Marco Polo mentions the trade between the area and India in his book *The Travels*:

Their ships are very bad, and many of them founder, because they are not fastened with iron nails, but stitched together with thread made of coconut husk. The ships have one mast, one sail, and one rudder, and are not decked; when they have loaded them, they cover the cargo with skins and on top of these they put the horses which they ship to India for sale. They have no iron nails; so they employ wooden pegs and stitch with threads. This makes it a risky undertaking to sail in these ships (Sturgis & Stewart, 2002, p. 63).

These traditional boats, dhows, can still be found today as they are used to transport tourists on Dubai Creek and are used as housing for many low-income families in Abu Dhabi.

The people of the United Arab Emirates were no strangers to poverty until the 1920s, when crude oil was discovered in Saudi Arabia. The oil, formed millions of years ago under the desert sands, created amazing riches for the country and a new era began. In the 1950s, the seven states signed concessions with Western oil companies to exploit the oil from under the sands. The world saw the country transform from a string of tiny impoverished principalities to a regional, and increasingly international, economic power with an oil production capacity of 2.5 million barrels a day (Sturgis & Stewart, 2002, p. 38).

Oil wealth has increased the influence of Abu Dhabi as the most important of the emirates and as the natural leader to the delicate power sharing that makes up the country's politics. Abu Dhabi is the largest emirate with 85% of the United Arab Emirates total area and became the capital with all federal and government offices based in the city (Marshall Cavendish Corporation, 2007, p. 536). Most of the country's oil reserves are in Abu Dhabi, with enough oil under their sand to last at least a century, while it is estimated that Dubai will run dry by 2032

(Sturgis & Stewart, 2002). With the knowledge that the oil revenue will end at some point, Dubai, Sharjah, and Abu Dhabi have begun focusing their spending on new revenue builders.

Much of the credit for the positive development in the United Arab Emirates lies within the generosity of the ruling families. Shiekh Zayed of Abu Dhabi and Sheikh Rashid bin Saeed Al Maktoum of Dubai began using oil revenues in the 1960s to improve the quality of life for their people. These two men initiated the union of the emirates and acted as President and Vice President of the United Arab Emirates for a majority of their modern existence (Vine, 2009). The socially beneficial investments to the infrastructure have allowed the emirates to grow and evolve into the hospitality and tourism centers they are today. In its first quarter century, the country has created a distinctive culture typified by tolerance, cosmopolitanism and its unique outward looking development philosophy of a business and leisure destination (Sturgis & Stewart, 2002).

### *Hospitality and Tourism*

For years, Dubai was the center of the United Arab Emirates as far as most travelers were concerned, while Abu Dhabi was seen more as a business locale. Abu Dhabi has decided to develop their tourism sector as a way to diversify its economy and is investing their huge revenues reaped by the rise of oil prices, which have created a 62% growth in the GDP over the last five years, into tourism (Oxford Business Group, 2008, p. 154). In 2004, the Abu Dhabi Tourism Authority (ADTA) was established with an annual budget of US\$30 million with which they hope to improve regulation and marketing, as well as implement some ambitious plans for Abu Dhabi's tourism industry. According to the Oxford Business Group's 2007 country report:

ADTA aims to attract three million visitors annually by 2015, 41% of which are projected to be leisure tourists. The authority also expects to see the creation of 17,000

more hotel rooms by 2015 bringing the total number of rooms in Abu Dhabi to 25,000 (p. 154).

With these numbers, Abu Dhabi has been making many tourism headlines that are normally associated with Dubai, but gratefully, Dubai has paved the way for Abu Dhabi by proving the world that the Gulf is a safe and pleasant place to visit.

Already, the tourism market has experienced an average annual growth of 16% in recent years, and in 2005 the sector contributed just over US\$1 billion to Abu Dhabi's GDP, or about 1.2% of the economy (Oxford Business Group, 2008, p. 155). Figure 3 shows a future forecast for hotels as created by the Abu Dhabi Tourism Authority. Hospitality is an industry that is showing great promise and the government is promoting the growth through the ADTA. In 2006, Abu Dhabi's hotels reported an average occupancy rate of 81% in the second quarter with an average occupancy of 84% during the traditionally low season of the summer (Oxford Business Group, p. 155).

In the summer of 2008, a 57,000 square meter exhibition space that cost US\$2.7 billion opened in Capital Centre. When Capital Centre has finished being built, it will house 23 buildings on site including six branded hotels, four office building, eight residential apartment towers, and five mixed-use buildings (Oxford Business Group, 2009). The ADTA hopes to

Year	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Hotel guests	1.2m	1.4m	1.6m	1.8m	2.4m
Room Nights	2.4m	2.8m	3.3m	3.8m	4.2m
Rooms Needed	10,731	12,060	13,562	15,189	16,855

Figure 3. Guests, Rooms, Room Nights Forecasted in Abu Dhabi 2010<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> From "The Report: Abu Dhabi 2007," by Oxford Business Group, 2008, p. 156.

attract 235,000 tourists to Abu Dhabi for meetings, international conferences, and exhibitions (MICE) by 2015, a hopeful representation of 8% of the total tourism market (Oxford Business Group, 2008, p. 156). Paul Vincent, sales and marketing director for Abu Dhabi National Exhibitions Company (ADNEC) said:

There is an increasing recognition of what exhibitions can do for a city, in terms of economic impact and marketing value on a global scale. Therefore, the development of the Abu Dhabi exhibition venue was an obvious step to take... as the venue seeks to take advantage of the increasing number of visitors and developments; it will in turn attract more visitors and development to the emirate (Oxford Business Group, 2008, p. 157).

Looking at the Capital Centre website, international MICE events are growing on a monthly basis.

Occupancy rates in Abu Dhabi in 2006 stood at 83.8% for five star hotels with April of 2008 showing an average of 95% (Oxford Business Group, 2009, p. 16). Figure 4 shows how the luxury market is booming with a need for more four- and five-star accommodations. New

Year	Tourist arrivals (4 & 5 star guests)	Tourist arrivals growth (%)	Average stay length (days)	Total stay-nights
2006	959,979	3.3	2.6	2,495,945
2007	1,009,410	5.1	2.6	2,624,465
2008	993,394	-1.6	2.8	2,781,504
2009	1,053,153	6.0	2.8	2,948,829
2010	1,081,990	2.7	2.9	3,137,772
2011	1,130,285	4.5	2.9	3,331,367

Figure 4. Abu Dhabi: Tourism and Hospitality Indicators, 2006-2011<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> From "The Market: Real Estate 2008," by Oxford Business Group, 2009, p. 16.

luxury and cultural projects are being developed in Abu Dhabi to attract a higher class, mature audience. Saadiyat Island is set to be the location for a new branch of the Guggenheim Museum and the Louvre along with several five-star hotels, shopping malls, golf courses, a theater, and higher education venues including a branch of New York University (Oxford Business Group, 2008). A current exhibit at the Emirates Palace highlights the amazing architectural plans for many buildings on the Island. Once Saadiyat Island has been completed, it will be a cultural mecca for all tourists interested in art and architecture.

Producing eye catching sporting events is clearly a significant component of the emirate's strategy to raise its profile through international exposure. The emirate is currently awaiting the opening of their Formula One (F1) race track on Yas Island with the premier Grand Prix, which is also the grand finale of the 18 race F1 calendar, occurring November 1, 2009. At the signing of the seven year contract to host the Grand Prix, the crown prince of Abu Dhabi, Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, spoke of the significance of the deal for the emirate saying, "A Formula One Grand Prix is one of the world's most prestigious sporting events... and is unrivalled in terms of continuous global resonance... This partnership is such an exciting one for Abu Dhabi and the entire UAE (Oxford Business Group, p. 166)."

Abu Dhabi Motorsports Management (ADMM) was created in 2008 to manage the event, operations and marketing, as well as a restaurant, boutique, and functioning marina. ADMM's management team consists of leading industry professional pulled from around the world to ensure the delivery of a world class, state of the art motorsports venue (Abu Dhabi Motorsports Management L.L.C. [ADMM], 2009). The Grand Prix on Yas Island will be a great help in meeting the ADTA's 2015 goals.

### *Global Staffing*

Tourism consists of a multitude of sub-categories including tourism administration and development, passenger transportation, hospitality, attractions, tour operation and retail travel. An additional miscellaneous category includes providers of travel insurance, currency exchange and travel literature (Henderson, 2007). The International Council on Hotel, Restaurant, and Institutional Education (ICHRIE) divides the hospitality industry into five different segments: food services, lodging services, recreational services, travel and tourism services, and convention and meeting services (Riegel & Dallas, 2007).

Hospitality and tourism is one of the five top exports of 83% of countries, and the main export for 3% of the total global workforce and 8% of the worldwide workforce if indirect jobs are included (Riegel & Dallas, 2007, p. 7). Employment in hotels, on campsites and in other forms of tourist accommodation (holiday residences, bed and breakfast style accommodation, etc.) rose by an average of 2.5% per year between 1993 and 2006, increasing from 180,000 to 250,000 lodging locations (Niel, 2008). The hospitality and tourism industry is one of the largest employers of minorities and women and it affords them the advancement opportunities at levels higher than many other fields of work (Riegel & Dallas).

Due to the seasonality of many tourist destinations, labor needs can fluctuate dramatically due to the time of year, global economics, and political conditions (Engerman, 1994). When looking to work abroad, it is important to research the location to further understand the seasonality of the area and the tourist travel trends. Figure 5 shows 2004 inbound tourism broken down by the purpose of their travel. Knowing why a destination is popular will assist in guaranteeing a career without seasonal fluctuation. Finding a location with a proper balance of business and leisure will promote better job security.

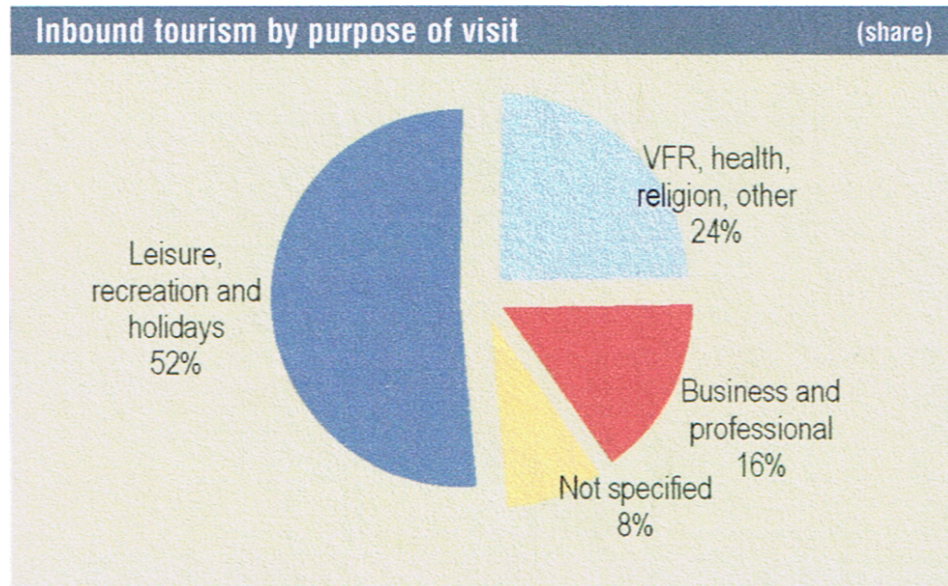


Figure 5. Inbound Tourism by Purpose, 2004<sup>5</sup>

The recruitment, retention, and utilization of global talent are essential elements of modern-day success. Expatriates are often selected from those within the organization and must assess themselves on all relevant dimensions of the job and decide whether to pursue a global assignment. “Someone who is interested in the country and culture has a better chance to succeed. They’re appreciative of being sent and aren’t looking for other kinds of perks to make it worthwhile to go,” says Melanie Young, director of Global Talent Management (Mondy, 2008, p. 460). Expatriate selection criteria should include cultural adaptability, strong communication skills, technical competence, professional or operational expertise, global experience, country-specific experience, interpersonal skills, language skills, family flexibility, and country-specific considerations (Mondy).

International assignments for expatriates cost three to five times an assignee’s host country salary per year and more if currency exchange rates become unfavorable. The largest expatriate costs include overall salary, housing, cost-of-living allowances, and physical

<sup>5</sup> From “Tourism Highlights: 2005 Edition,” by the World Tourism Organization, 2006, p. 2.



relocation. In agreement, a current employee of ADMM admitted to making three times what his salary had been in California (M. Doutreleau, personal communication, May, 29, 2009).

United States citizens living overseas can exclude up to US\$80,000 of gross income earned abroad with credits against any foreign income taxes paid by American expatriates (Mondy, 2008, p. 465).

### *Multi-national Corporations*

When a hospitality company decides to expand its business into a foreign country, it is influenced by brand recognition and labor acquisition. The company must research the tourism market of the area to learn where tourists are traveling from since their brand must be recognizable in order for their venue to be selected over any other. It is important to survey the locals to discover their attitude towards the brand so that their approval is met and they will recommend the venue to incoming guests. Many governments in developing countries will attract hospitality companies in order to evolve their tourism efforts. As incentives, developing countries offer tax breaks and concessions on land sales or leases in order to attract new developments (Yu, 1999).

Acquiring labor can be a difficult process in a foreign market. One perk is that some labor in other countries is less expensive than locally. Labor laws are different in every country and minimum wages can be as low as one dollar per hour in countries such as China and Russia (Yu, 1999). These prices assist in a balanced budget for building properties and for many 'back of the house' employees. In order for higher class service, there is an increased demand for managers with a formal education in hospitality and tourism management. Other skilled employees of interest, such as human resources and sales managers, should be committed to

providing high-quality guest service in a professional manner while keeping an eye on costs and profits (Riegel & Dallas, 2007).

There are many multi-national companies that are experiencing positive success throughout the world. Inter-Continental Hotels was one of the earliest companies to develop internationally and its successful brand is the Holiday Inn. The Holiday Inn has been one of the leaders in international hotel development, with its first European hotel established in 1968 and its first Asian hotel in 1973. Starwood Hotels and Resorts has become one of the largest global hotel chains by acquiring the Westin hotel chain and ITT Sheraton Corporation in 1998. While Sheraton is a well established brand internationally, Westin hotels consist of more recent, modern hotels and resorts in highly visited tourist destinations. Marriott International has been aggressive in expanding hotel operations in developing countries and has acquired a 49% stake in the famous Ritz-Carlton brand. They also acquired Renaissance Hotels in 1997, a hotel brand know for the elegance and history of their hotel buildings (Yu, 1999).

With hotel branding being so important to a location, these multi-national companies will always be growing and acquiring new brands in order to share more of an international influence. Michele Sison, United States Ambassador to the United Arab Emirates from 2004-2007 said:

The United Arab Emirates is a booming, multi-cultural center that has resulted in a booming American interest in the country... When I came in 2004, there were only 500 American companies, but in the last three years, more than 700 companies have set base here (Embassy of the United Arab Emirates in Washington D.C., 2009, expression 10).

Each of the international brands listed above have been building or showing interest in Abu Dhabi. In order to keep up with the current tourism pace, 10 new hotels will need to be

constructed by 2010 and it is these multi-national companies that are taking on projects to meet this need (Oxford Business Group, 2008, p. 102).

### *Working in the United Arab Emirates*

Americans in the hospitality industry have job opportunities throughout the world. When searching for an international career, it is important to research the location in order to understand all necessary facts such as the cultural norms, visa requirements, hiring laws, and compensation that will affect an expatriate. As of July 2009, there are more than 30,000 Americans living and working in the United Arab Emirates (Embassy of the United Arab Emirates in Washington D.C., 2009, ¶ 5). With nearly 50 weekly nonstop flights from the United States, it is a great country for a career move.

### *Cultures and Norms*

Arabic is the official language with English being widely spoken. Signage is generally in Arabic and English and these are also the languages of business and commerce. United Arab Emirate nationals make up less than a quarter of the population with the majority being expatriates (Sturgis & Stewart, 2002, p. 90). Among the 75% of the population that are expatriates, Indians form the biggest group followed by Pakistanis, other Asians and non-UAE Arabs. Many Filipinos, and people from the Indian sub-continent including Indians, Pakistanis, Bangladeshis and Sri Lankans, work in hospitality, or provide manual labor for the construction industry. Westerners (British, American, and Australian) tend to have managerial level careers with multinational corporations like the ones listed earlier. Nationals of the country generally work for the government or state-owned oil companies, although they are being encouraged to develop their entrepreneurial skills in the private sector (Sturgis & Stewart).

Arab hospitality is legendary due to their Bedouin culture. According to one travel guide, “In the desert camps of the Bedouin, any stranger in need would first be welcomed with cups of coffee, and then royally fêted, as far as the harsh desert existence allowed” (Sturgis & Stewart, 2002, p. 92). This cultural ideal is continued in many of the hotels today. Upon arrival at the Emirates Palace, guests are welcomed and offered a sofa to relax on, and a cup of traditional Arabian coffee before checking in to the hotel. The gentleman that pours the coffee is in traditional garb and speaks Arabian and English, a perfect welcome to weary travelers.

### *Religion.*

The United Arab Emirates is an Islamic state where Muslims adhere to the conduct of Islam, praying five times a day, donating to charity, and fasting. Within the communities, the call to prayer is sounded five times a day through speakers on the local mosques. Unlike several Gulf States, other faiths are tolerated and officially sanctioned; giving expatriates the opportunity to maintain their faith while in a Muslim country. Currently, there are a total of 59 churches, two Hindu temples, and one Sikh temple, with the government granting free land to those wanting to build a place of worship (Vine, 2009, p. 77). This religious freedom is more similar to American ideals than the current negative connotations of the Muslim culture. These negative connotations are far from the truth in the United Arab Emirates where the concept of tolerance is emphasized thoroughly by the government (Sturgis & Stewart, 2002).

Islam influences the laws of the United Arab Emirates. All seven emirates are governed by a double legal system where the Secular Courts try criminals and commercial cases while the Sharia Courts try cases relating to family and personal behavior and offenses against Muslim religious law (Marshall Cavendish Corporation, 2007). Islamic states have decency laws under Sharia and arrests have occurred in Abu Dhabi and Dubai as a result of foreigners being too

affectionate in public, particularly during Ramadan. In case of arrest, it is important to know how to contact the United States embassy or consulate in order to assist in defense and translation (Dunston & Monaghan, 2007).

Observant Muslims do not eat pork, drink alcohol or smoke. Due to the diversity of the population in the United Arab Emirates, most hotel restaurants include pork on their menus and have alcohol available, with the exception of Sharjah, which is a dry emirate. With the rise in foreign expatriates, grocery store chains have grown throughout the Middle East with specialty sections for non-Muslim shoppers. Spinneys, is one example, that has a back room with an Arabic label of warning where pork products and alcohol can be purchased by non-Muslims. Residents are required to have an alcohol permit in order to purchase and store alcoholic beverages in their homes.

#### *Etiquette.*

Due to the Bedouin and Arab cultures in the United Arab Emirates, proper etiquette differs from most American cultures. Dining etiquette seems to be the most important for incoming business folk as business meals are a popular expression of friendship in the Middle East. It is considered unclean to touch food or people with the left hand. It is polite not to finish the entire plate, but to leave a bit of food when the meal has ended. If eating with a Muslim, do not order or ask for pork or any pork products. If only one person is eating, it is polite to offer food to any others at the table. Arab hosts will always offer tea or coffee and acceptance is a sign of being grateful, even if only a sip is consumed. Alcohol shouldn't be inquired upon unless the host is the one inquiring (Embassy of the United Arab Emirates in Washington D.C., 2009).

Elderly people are revered in Arab cultures and it is polite to greet them first. Standing up for new guests and older, higher ranking people is also important to the culture. Men are expected to stand when a non-service woman enters a room.

*Gender relations.*

Americans should be cautious of their attire and be sure to dress modestly as a sign of respect for the culture. Women should cover their chest and shoulders and wear clothing that is at least knee-length while in public. Headdresses are required while on religious property, but will be provided to guests upon entry. Tank tops, small dresses and bathing suits are becoming more acceptable at the beaches, but should only be worn once on the sand. Walking through the city in such attire will create a traffic diversion with men honking their car horns and commenting out of the car windows. Muslim women wear their customary abayas and headdresses in order to assist in keeping their men focused, without any distractions that the female body can create.

Due to the restrictions of many expatriate visas, mostly of the Indian sub-continent, men do not bring their spouses and families to the United Arab Emirates. As a result, there are three times as many men as there are women in the country (Vine, 2009, p. 6). In most public places, it is inappropriate for a man to speak or make eye contact with a woman. Americans will find it unfriendly at first, but can grow accustomed to not being bothered during day-to-day routines. Meeting people on the street, grocery store, or shopping mall is next to impossible due to this cultural difference. Expatriates tend to lodge within condominium complexes filled with other expats of their country, so the swimming pool and gym become venues where an American can make friends and feel at rest from the Muslim culture. In the business world, however, eye

contact is extremely important as Arabs find the eyes to be “the window to the soul.” It is important to Arabs to know a person’s heart and soul in order to conduct business (Yu, 1999).

It is common to see men walking together and holding hand, but public displays of affection are generally uncommon amongst couples. While some couples hold hands in public, any further display is considered inappropriate. Hotel properties are an appropriate place for expatriates to escape these cultural rules and to have the opportunity for a romantic date or walk on the beach. Less modest attire and physical touches can be seen at hotel bars and nightclubs where single expatriates can feel at home and find friends and partners within their emirate. Hotels offer tourists the culture of their homeland while surrounded in the Muslim culture.

Expat women shouldn’t experience any harassment as long as they follow the local and cultural norms. They should sit in the back seat of taxis, in the women’s section of buses, and enjoy the family sections of restaurants and beaches. Dedicated women’s lines at banks and government departments offer women preferential service in order to keep both sexes at an appropriate comfort level (Dunston & Monaghan, 2007). Unlike other locations in the Middle East, women can drive and are not required an escort while in public.

Women have full rights to education and are protected in the workplace in the National Constitution. Four cabinet ministers are women, including Sheikha Lubna Al Qasimi, Minister of Foreign Trade, who was on Forbes magazine’s 2007 list of the 100 most powerful women in the world (Embassy of the United Arab Emirates in Washington D.C., 2009, ¶ 4). As of 2007, twice as many United Arab Emirate national women graduated from universities than national men. Of all government education and health-care workers, 75% are women (Marshall Cavendish Corporation, 2007, p. 541).

As a sign of respect, it is not acceptable to shake the hand of an Emirati woman unless she offers her hand first (Dunston & Monaghan, 2007). The Muslim society is very conservative regarding interactions between men and women, so even in the business world it is inappropriate to touch, even for a handshake, any woman unless she offers her hand first. Rather, a Muslim woman might simply put her hand over her heart to show their sincere welcome to a visitor (Embassy of the United Arab Emirates in Washington D.C., 2009). Business men should never compliment a woman, enquire about a female family member, or bring gifts for females related to colleagues. Many Muslim employees take offense to any of these actions, so it is recommended to remain aloof around female company (CV Tips, n.d.).

*Business affairs.*

With the amount of diversity in the United Arab Emirates, it is important to understand the cultural differences of the staff around you. Facial expressions are important to understand being that Americans show their emotions moderately and may be taken offensively by other nationalities. Latins and Arabs are very expressive and will show emotion quickly while Asians are taught to control all facial expressions (Yu, 1999). This is important to know as a manager in order to maintain reactions and observe fellow staff members.

In Muslim culture, Friday is the holy day and day of rest, so the weekend in the United Arab Emirates is on Friday and Saturday. As a result, many businesses are closed on Friday, but most entertainment venues (i.e. shopping malls, grocery stores, tourist attractions) are only closed through the morning hours. If an employee works on a Friday, they should be given a substitute day of rest or be paid his normal wage plus a supplement of 50% of that wage. No worker should be required to work more than two consecutive Fridays (Gulf Talent, 2007).



Where the United States runs on a monochromic schedule in which deadlines and speed are essential, the Middle East runs on a polychromic schedule in which many things occur at once (Yu, 1999). According the Embassy of the United Arab Emirates in Washington D.C.:

The concept of time in the Middle East is generally seen as fluid, and many Middle Easterners are more relaxed about when an appointment or event ends or begins, both at work and at a social gathering. Visitors should always be on time or notify the host if you will be delayed because of traffic or other reason, but it would not be unusual for visitors to be kept waiting (¶ 10).

In the business world, the time required for a decision is directly proportional to its importance: the more important the matter, the longer the decision-making process. If a foreign manager tries to speed things up, he or she is regarded by the locals as downgrading the importance of the work. Giving a deadline indicates that the manager is overly demanding, rude, pushy, and exerts undue pressure (Yu, 1999).

An online job search information center makes the following recommendations for resume writing for positions in the United Arab Emirates:

1. Resumes should be written in descending chronological order.
2. Mention proficiency of any language, especially the languages of the Middle East.
3. All resumes should be accompanied by a cover letter stating why the applicant is the best fit for the open position (CV Tips, n.d.).
4. Many venues will ask for a photograph of the applicant with their resume. Select a professional photo as it will be placed in the applicants file as a reference piece to the hiring committee (Human Resources, personal communication, July 24, 2009).

Once an application has been received and the company is interested in conducting an interview, two options are selected from: a phone interview or a physical interview. It is most likely that phone interviews will be conducted until the company is set on who to hire, and then an invitation and plane ticket may be offered in order for a final interview. These physical interviews typically occur only with the highest positions available within the organization. It is recommended, while in a physical interview, that the interviewee does not sit until invited by the interviewer. It is also important to avoid criticizing past employers so the interviewer knows that respect is a cultural attribute shared within both persons (CV Tips, n.d.).

### *Visa Information*

A visitor's visa is easily obtained by Americans upon entry to the United Arab Emirates for an interview. An American passport will be stamped with a 30 day visa with no questions asked about the purpose of the visit. Before traveling into the country (or any country), it is important to check the current visa requirements as there are several countries that require an application for a visitor's visa prior to the guests arrival.

In order to obtain a work visa in the United Arab Emirates, an American will need to find a host or sponsor based in the country. The host or sponsor will complete a visa application form with a copy of the United States passport, valid at least six months from the expected time of arrival in the United Arab Emirates. This will be turned in along with the job offer on official letterhead. The Embassy requires a minimum of three business days to process the visa application and the visa is valid for up to 10 years with a maximum stay of six months per entry (Embassy of the United Arab Emirates in Washington D.C., 2009).

Simone Fischer, Assistant Manager of the Human Resources Department at the Emirates Palace in Abu Dhabi said, "...that in regards to visa sponsorship, Emirates Palace is providing

their staff with the Employment Visa needed to take on employment here in the United Arab Emirates (S. Fischer, personal communication, July 13, 2009).” Knowing that so many of the venues depend on expats to bring in hospitality experience, the visa process is made simple, but the employee must possess professional competence or the educational qualifications the country is in need of that an unemployed national does not already possess (Gulf Talent, 2007).

### *Labor Laws*

The Labor Law of 1980 covers aspects of the employment relationship for all employees working in the United Arab Emirates, whether national or expatriate. The items covered include those related to labor contracts, working hours, wages, leave, safety at work, discipline, termination of employment contracts, end of service benefits, compensation for occupational diseases, labor inspections, and penalties (Oxford Business Group, 2008). Article 10 states that when National workers are not available, preference in employment shall be given to workers of Arab nationality before workers of other nationalities (Gulf Talent, 2007). The government is increasingly emphasizing the importance of the training and recruitment of locals and nationals rather than expatriates where possible (Sturgis & Stewart, 2002).

ADMM has a set goal that 20% of their staff will be nationals who are trained and nurtured in which ever position suits their resume. “Unfortunately,” says Mathias Doutreleau, Director of Commercial for ADMM, “many of the nationals require full training and are only hired into high positions in the company (M. Doutreleau, 2009).” Nationals receive a higher salary than all expatriates and have less experience in the field at hand. It is common for the United Arab Emirates to use race as a deciding factor in wage payments. If an American and Indian person has the same job, it is common practice that the American will make a higher salary.

The laws for children ensure that 15 years is the youngest working age. Employers must keep files of all children from 15-18 years of age with their birth certificate, health examination (physical and psychological), a letter of consent from their parents, along with a current address. Children as young as 12 years of age can begin an apprenticeship, but must follow the same rules. Children should not work at night, specifically between the hours of 8 p.m. to 6 a.m. They can work six days a week with a maximum of seven hour days. They require a one hour minimum break with a maximum schedule of four successive hours and are not allowed to work overtime (Gulf Talent, 2007).

A woman is not allowed to work at night, from 10 p.m. to 7 a.m., unless she is an executive manager, technical staff, in health services, or in the case of an emergency. Women shouldn't work anywhere that is hazardous, arduous or physically or morally detrimental to her being. Women are required to be paid an equal wage to that of a man if she performs the same work. After one year of continuous work with an employer, a woman is entitled to 45 days of maternity leave at full pay (half pay if less than one year). In the 18 months after delivery, she is entitled to two additional breaks each day, neither of which shall exceed half an hour, which are considered part of her working hours (Gulf Talent, 2007).

Federal and local governments have instituted reforms aimed at improving working conditions and workers' rights for the unskilled expatriate laborers of the country. The country is committed to treating all guest workers with dignity and respect. According to the United Arab Emirates At-A-Glance 2009 report:

Ensuring the fair and on-time payment of workers is a particular priority of the labor policy enforcement, which is beginning to impact positively on the labor climate of the country. Improving working conditions is another area for action that has seen noticeable

progress. In 2007, 122,000 facilities were inspected by the Labour Ministry personnel, resulting in penalties for 8,588 violations to working conditions and workers' rights (p. 74).

The Ministry has since introduced a free hotline for the general public to call in order to report mistreatment of employees (Vine, 2009).

Since the United Arab Emirates is an Islamic state with religion being such an important facet of everyday life, questions arise regarding an applicant's life that would not be acceptable in the United States. Inquiries about marital status and age, even asking for a photo with application are requirements for personnel files. A medical examination is a requirement prior to employment and any injuries or diseases are required to be listed in personnel files (Gulf Talent, 2007). It is common to see requirement in job descriptions that ask for a specific sex, nationality, personality characteristic, even hair color that would not be allowed in the United State. Deborah Gibb, a Scottish flight attendant for Etihad airlines based out of Abu Dhabi said, "If a member of the cabin crew gets married, they are no longer allowed to fly and are assigned a desk job. If an unmarried female were to be diagnosed with an STD or pregnancy [sex out of wedlock], she would be deported instantaneously (D. Gibb, personal communication, June 8, 2009)." Companies are allowed to put these discriminatory clauses into their work contract in order to secure their employment needs.

The work week has 48 working hours with an average of eight hours a day. Service businesses, especially hotels, can increase the hours to nine hours a day, but not to exceed 48 in a work week. The daily working hours should not exceed five successive hours without breaks for rest, meals, and prayer amounting to no less than one hour. During the holy month of Ramadan, hours are reduced for all employees. Overtime hours are supplemented with at least a 25% wage

increase for the excess hours. If overtime occurs between 9 p.m. and 4 a.m., the hours are supplemented with at least a 50% wage increase. The number of overtime hours shall not exceed two per day, unless it is an emergency (Gulf Talent, 2007).

Each employee should receive seven paid holidays that revolve around religious and national holidays. If an employee has to work one of these holidays, an employer must provide a substitute holiday or pay a 150% wage increase for that day. Each employee is also entitled to special leave without pay for performing their pilgrimage to Mecca. This leave is not considered sick or vacation time and allows for up to 30 days unpaid leave (Gulf Talent, 2007).

After six months of employment, a worker can accrue two days a month of leave with 30 days of leave time available after one year of service. Employers can fix the date for employee leave and split the time into two periods for the employee, but unlike the United States, the employee is paid the full wages prior to his leave. If an employee must work during these annual leaves, the employer shall pay normal wages plus an allowance in lieu of the leave. Sick leave is allowed after three months of employment, but is only paid after a medical examination. If the illness is due to drugs or alcohol consumption, no wage will be given and the misconduct will be noted in the employee file (Gulf Talent, 2007). There is a zero tolerance rule in the workplace for the use, yet alone existence of narcotics and alcohol.

### *Compensation*

Wages are paid in the monetary unit of the United Arab Emirates, the dirham (AED), which is linked to the dollar, mainly because that is the currency of the international oil trade. The current exchange rate of AED 3.675 to the dollar has not changed since 1980 (Sturgis & Stewart, 2002, p. 311). Salaried employees are paid once a month while hourly, daily, and weekly employees are paid at least once every two weeks. The United Arab Emirates does have

a minimum wage, but since it is fixed to each occupation and locations cost of living, the wage fluctuates often. Money can only be deducted from the employee's paycheck in the following cases:

1. Repayment of loans or money advances up to 10% of the paycheck.
2. Contributions to social security and insurance.
3. Contributions to an employee provident fund (EPF is comparable to the American 401K, but it can be used for ailments, disabilities, or periods of unemployment).
4. Contributions towards any welfare scheme or in respect of any other privileges or services provided by the employer and approved by the labor department.
5. Fines imposed for any offences committed.
6. Any debt exacted in a court ruling (alimony or creditors) up to 25% of the paycheck (Gulf Talent, 2007, p. 15).

It is also illegal to require employees to purchase food or commodities through their employer (Gulf Talent).

A big incentive to expatriates is the fact that residents of the United Arab Emirates don't pay income tax. The only taxes in the country are on alcohol and tourism taxes on hotel rooms (Dunston & Monaghan, 2007). Many Westerners are employed on generous expatriate terms with their company providing the international move, local accommodation, and a high tax free salary (Sturgis & Stewart, 2002). At the end of an expatriates contract, the employer is required to bear the cost of the worker's repatriation back home or an agreed upon location. This includes travel for the expatriate and any family members as well as the shipping of their belongings (Gulf Talent, 2007).

Accommodation is very important seeing that living conditions for low and middle class expatriates are becoming harder to come by in the Dubai and Abu Dhabi (Oxford Business Group, 2009). Many expatriates of the low and middle classes find themselves commuting into work from the outskirts of the city in order to afford a larger living space for a cheaper rent. Unlike the United States, leases do not exist allowing the landlord to change the price of the unit at any time. When accommodations are provided by the company, they tend to be more affordable, close to work, and more consistent in price. According to Article 101 of the labor law, if an employer does house employees a distance from the work place, the employer must provide transportation, a suitable living space with drinking water, first aid facilities, and recreation facilities (Gulf Talent, 2007).

### *Conclusion*

International tourism has evolved greatly since the end of World War II and has become a major revenue builder for many countries. With current travel trends leading tourists to new exotic destinations, the United Arab Emirates is working hard to appeal to visitors with new luxury hotels, cultural phenomenon, and competitive sporting events that will satiate anyone's travel cravings. Multi-national corporations and the government have been building many of these new projects and hire a majority of expatriates to fill the highly skilled management positions that develop.

The government of Abu Dhabi is determined to diversify their income away from oil and into other aspects of the country including tourism and hospitality. The oil wealth has assisted in the development of infrastructure and an ultimate vision of what the country will be in the future. The benefit to the new birth of the union of the emirates allows the ruling families to plan ahead and shape the country to the most beneficial needs of the touring public. While the city center of



Dubai was built quickly, Abu Dhabi has had more time to focus on their goals and expectations and will become one of the most important cultural and architectural centers of the world.

With all of these new job opportunities appearing monthly throughout the United Arab Emirates, it has become a great location for hospitality careers for interested expatriates. While the Muslim culture is different than American culture, the norms are based around modesty and politeness. An American with common sense and a broad awareness will have no problems adjusting to the new culture. In the business world, an American may need to adjust the way they work, but will find the many new cultures of the workplace interesting and beneficial to self growth. Women should not fear the move as the society is very progressive and protective of all females in the country.

An American interested in making the move to the United Arab Emirates needs to understand the labor laws and visa requirements of the country. While the large compensation is tempting, the person must be the right fit for the community as well as the company. Once a self evaluation has been conducted to see if a career abroad is the right fit, the job search can begin.

## PART THREE

### *Introduction*

With the current economic crises in California, many professionals in the hospitality field have found themselves unemployed in a saturated job market. Group business has slowed to the point that budgets have been rewritten and there are more qualified individuals than there are available positions. Americans have this opportunity to look for a career abroad in a location where tourism is thriving. Hospitality in Abu Dhabi is a growing market that is currently hiring qualified individuals from countries worldwide.

Knowing the history of international tourism and the revenues that it brings to all countries allows a person to select the right career destination. A benefit to Abu Dhabi is the amount of wealth that already exists due to oil revenues and the amount of money the government is dedicating to the growth of the country and tourism marketing. The new hotels that are opening every month are opportunities that and unemployed American should take full advantage.

The Muslim culture of the country may be very different from that of the United States, but should be easy to navigate for a level-headed American. Knowing the labor laws, visa requirements, and the culture of business affairs allows a person to make an educated decision of whether or not the country is a right career fit. Once that decision has been made, it is time to begin the process of obtaining a job in the United Arab Emirates. The process of getting a job in the United Arab Emirates takes patience and a lot of time online.

### *Results*

The following results have been achieved through participation observation and interviews with expatriates in Abu Dhabi. Results may change with the evolution of the

hospitality industry and advances in technology along with the further advances of the multinational companies.

### *Finding the right venue*

Starwood Hotels and Resorts is opening a new venue in Abu Dhabi named the Aloft W Hotel, a newer Westin brand. Speaking with several employees in the Human Resources Department resulted in the knowledge that they are hiring 100% expats for all available positions. The Irish gentlemen answered the question stating, “The locals tend to train for government positions within the community and the hospitality industry pulls from many countries worldwide (Human Resources, personal communication, July 24, 2009).” For an American searching for a career abroad, the United Arab Emirates is definitely a high need location with job opportunity for experienced hospitality employees.

There are many different venues in the tourism industry that are hiring positions within the hospitality field. This research paper will focus on hotels and resorts because of their high level of expatriate employees, but Abu Dhabi has great opportunity for anyone interested in working in Motorsports events with ADMM, in Capital Centre with MICE, or in cultural sites like the incoming Louvre and Guggenheim.

The first step to finding the right venue is to create a list of all of the hotels that are located in Abu Dhabi. This list can be created by reviewing different travel guides, the Visitor’s Center website, or online accommodation websites in order to find out where tourists are being told to go. Finding which hotels are popular to American tourists will be advantageous seeing that the employer will be looking for an employee who can meet the needs of their guest demographics.

Splitting this list into two separate categories, international brands with locations in your city and brands only located within your city of interest. This division will allow further research into the multi-national companies that are located at home so that a person can begin work locally and transfer abroad. With high performance, positive characteristics and a yearning to move abroad, employers will be encouraged to promote the applicant outside of the United States. Transfers are more attractive to companies because the employee already understands the company brand, the software systems, and is in line with the company culture.

Table 1 represents an American participant's research that shows brands within Abu Dhabi and the participant's home in San Diego, California. The list is created with the venues they should be applying to at home for a possible transfer and the venues they should be applying to abroad for immediate expatriation

Table 1

*Participant Hotel Brands in San Diego and Abroad*

Brand	Abu Dhabi	San Diego
Starwood Hotels & Resorts	Sheraton Khalidya Hotel	Sheraton Suites at Symphony Hall
	Le Meridien	The US Grant
	Sheraton Abu Dhabi Hotel & Resort	The Westin Gaslamp Quarter
	Le Royal Meridien Abu Dhabi	The Westin San Diego
	Aloft Abu Dhabi	W San Diego
		Sheraton San Diego Hotel & Marina
	Sheraton Mission Valley	

Brand	Abu Dhabi	San Diego
		Four Points by Sheraton
		Sheraton La Jolla
		Sheraton Carlsbad Resort & Spa
InterContinental Hotels & Resorts	InterContinental Abu Dhabi	Crowne Plaza Hotel Mission Valley
		Hotel Indigo Gaslamp Quarter
Hilton International	Hilton Bayunah Hotel	Hilton San Diego Gaslammo Quarter
	Hilton Corniche Hotel Apartments	Hilton San Diego Bayfront
	Hilton Abu Dhabi Hotel	Hilton San Diego Airport
		Hilton San Diego Mission Valley
		Hilton San Diego Resort & Spa
		Hilton La Jolla Torrey Pines
		Hilton San Diego- Del Mar
Marriott International	Courtyard Marriott Abu Dhabi	San Diego Marriott Hotel & Marina
	International Airport	San Diego Marriott Gaslamp Quarters
		Residence Inn Downtown San Diego
Located only in Abu Dhabi		
Accor	Novotel Center Hotel	
Kempinski Hotels	Emirates Palace	

Brand	Abu Dhabi	San Diego
Rotana Hotel Management	Al Maha Arjaan Beach Rotana Centro Yas Island	
One to One Hotels	The Village	
Shangri-La Hotels & Resorts	Abu Dhabi Shangri-La	
Aldar Hotels & Hospitality	The Yas Hotel	
Rezidor Hotel Group	Radisson Blu Hotel Yas Island	

### *The application process*

Once a proper list of venues is put together, the next recommended step would be to research the career tabs on each of the websites. Collecting each site as a favorite will assist in conducting weekly career research, especially for the foreign locations. Checking for positions in which the applicant is most qualified and trained and only applying for those will aid the hiring committee in reviewing applications of the most serious applicants.

Applying for positions in multi-national companies from home consists of two steps. First, the applicant should apply for positions of interest via the career tab on the website. Most American based companies require the application in an electronic format. Second, the applicant should create a personalized cover page introducing who they are, their current career goals, and their future international goals within the company. In proper professional attire, the applicant

should stop in to the Human Resources office of the venue with the cover letter and resume in hand. Along with the applicant's career goals, the Human Resources employee will use the visit to sense professional characteristics, manners, and physical appearance. Asking for a tour of the property will show initiative and assist in an applicant's decision of which venue is best suited.

Applying for positions abroad is more difficult due to the time difference as well as the United Arab Emirates polychromic schedule. Participants noted that applications submitted from the career tab on the website came back unanswered, without verification that they were received, but this may be a cultural ideal to Americans. The Emirates Palace Hotel's website does send an automatic verification of the receipt of an application and provides contact information to the Human Resources office in case the applicant has further questions. Most of the online applications do not have a location for a cover letter, but do require a photograph and resume with the submission. If the position of interest is not open to an applicant at the time, emailing a cover letter with resume and photo attached will allow Human Resources offices to file the resume in case the proper position does open. If an applicant will be in the country, be sure to drop applications at each venue as is recommended at home.

### *Interviews abroad*

For a majority of international applicants, a phone interview with several members of management is sufficient prior to being hired. These interviews are very similar to phone interviews within the United States, but the questions asked can venture into personal realms such as marital status and religious beliefs. Some applicants, like Mathias Doutreleau, are hired after one interview with one executive while others, like Deborah Gibb, spend a month interviewing with human resource employees before being hired (M. Doutreleau, 2009).

Deborah visited Abu Dhabi with her 30 day visitor's visa in order to visit the Human Resources

office and made herself known to Etihad airlines. When she was finally hired, she felt that she had become friends with the Human Resources Manager and took him to coffee as a sign of appreciation (D. Gibb, 2009).

When a hospitality company in Abu Dhabi is hiring an international executive or manager, they will most likely prefer a physical interview. With current technology trends, the cheaper option is to conduct a video conference interview. This allows the employer to see the applicant, their characteristics, and mannerisms and also allows multiple people to be at the interview table.

If the company's technology is not as advanced, an applicant is offered a complimentary flight and lodging in order for a physical interview. Physical interviews are very similar to those in the United States, but it is important to have a strong knowledge of the culture. Await an invitation to be seated, stand if a non-service woman, high ranking manager, or elderly person enters the room, make eye contact with the interviewer, shake the hand of a woman only if it is offered, and speak fondly of your past positions showing your respect for employers. It is recommended to take advantage of your visit and ask for a tour of the property as well as employee housing. When interviewing for a management position, it is beneficial to ask about the diversity of your staff in order to study their work mentalities and culture prior to being hired.

#### *Contract Negotiation*

Upon being hired to work in Abu Dhabi, the next step is contract negotiations. The employment contract will list job requirement details, the dates of hire, which can have an open or closed ending, the salary and benefits that are included as the wage, and information on staff accommodations. Be sure to look over the contract and ask questions that may not be listed in the contract such as transportation needs, cell phone usage, and repatriation. These items should



be in the contract, so request a revision if they are not already listed. Pay close attention to the expatriation and repatriation details of the contract to ensure that the move will suit the needs of a new hire and their family, if necessary.

### *Expatriation and Repatriation*

Moving to a foreign country will not be the easiest without assistance. An ideal expatriation package consists of the aid of movers who assist in the packaging of one's home and the delivery of the items to the new home. It took Mathias Doutreleau six weeks to have his items delivered via movers from California to Abu Dhabi. In the meantime, he was lodged at a local hotel until he had purchased the furniture necessary to move into the employee apartment building (M. Doutreleau, 2009). Transportation upon arrival will also require prior planning as not many people wish to drive around a foreign city after a fifteen hour flight. Some expatriates travel between work and home via a private service, taxi service, or carpool with other residents in staff housing who have a rental car or purchased a car upon arrival. This makes transportation a good question to bring up in the contractual stages of the position.

Other than accommodations and transportation, many companies offer new employees cultural orientations to familiarize them with the history and culture of the Muslim country. The ADTA provides its staff at many tourist locations and will send them to an interested company to teach historical and cultural facts and answer any question, no matter how preposterous. This will allow new employees to understand and begin adapting to the new culture.

When a contract has ended and it is time to go back home, the repatriation clause in the contract is very important. As with the move to the country, there needs to be a plan for movers to pack and ship all the home that has been built. In addition, it is important to have the terms of your lease listed in the contract so that there is enough time in between the final days of working

and the moving date. Labor law states that staff accommodations are to be vacated 30 days after the receipt of a final paycheck, unless otherwise stated in an employment contract (Gulf Talent, 2007). This should give an expatriate enough time to sell goods that are not going home such as excess furniture, used vehicles, and any purchased electronics that will not work in the United States.

### *Conclusion*

After learning the history of international tourism and the trends towards new, exotic places, Abu Dhabi is an ideal location for an upcoming vacation. With so many tourists adding to the revenue of the hospitality sector, the capital of the United Arab Emirates is an ideal location for Americans searching for hospitality careers abroad. With the knowledge of the culture and business norms of the country, an American should be able to succeed abroad, as long as they can find a position. The process of finding a career in Abu Dhabi is not that different from finding a job in the United States, but the time frame is longer and more patience is required. By following the results of this research, an American can follow a systematic process and check weekly for a position that will suit their resume perfectly. This process will allow any current unemployed professionals to take advantage of their downtime and begin looking at a hospitality career in a beautiful country such as the United Arab Emirates.

### *Recommendations*

This research can be improved in the future by interviewing Americans who have been successful in the application and relocation process and are currently working in the hospitality industry. Learning the pros and cons of the hospitality industry of the United Arab Emirates from a firsthand perspective may create further reasons as to why and American may or may not want to work in the United Arab Emirates. Furthermore, participant observation should have a

longer time period as the application process does take much longer than Americans are accustomed to.

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