

**Program Name:** Marriott International - Pathways to Independence

Your name and date: John Sedlander, August 15, 2002

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**Mission:**

*Pathways to Independence . . . A training for Jobs Program* is a six-week entry-level training program designed to help people with barriers to employment transition into the workforce in the hospitality industry.

The goals of Pathways are to:

- Help participants become independent and employable
- Assist participants in developing a strong work ethic
- Train or re-train, and "try out" before hiring
- Hire qualified and motivated people.

This could be a model to study as we develop an "employment readiness" approach to temporary and seasonal jobs at COTS.

**Principles:** (expressed)

Reasons that Marriott offers the training program:

- Recruits good associates for our businesses
- Contributes to the economic development of the communities where Marriott does business
- Assists Marriott with tapping an underutilized labor source
- Generates Work Opportunity Tax Credit, a federal incentive for employers to hire disadvantaged and "hard to hire" groups of people
- Contributes to Marriott's reputation as a community-minded employer and good corporate citizen.

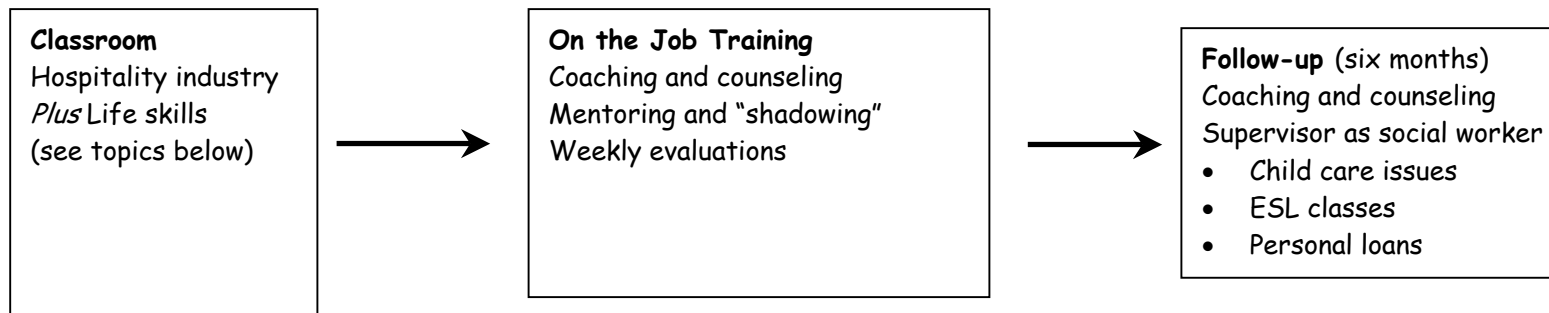
Other reasons, not necessarily expressed:

Marriott pays entry level wages for thousands of positions: housekeepers, dishwashers, cooks, et al. A variety of factors (lack of child care, poor education, undeveloped work ethic, and language barriers) keep job performance low and turnover high. Pathways to Independence addresses these barriers with a six-week training program and six-month follow-up to attract and retain low wage workers. The company looks to government funding sources to help pay for the training.

### Program Structure:

In relationship to Marriott's overall workforce, Pathways to Independence is relatively small, but it works well and the Public Relations value is high.

A combination of **classroom** and **on the job training** makes up the initial six-week training session. Classes are interactive and participative. A formal six-month **Follow-up** helps keep the new employee on track. The Program Coordinator checks in one-on-one in informal follow-up sessions.



Life skills topics include:

Maintaining a positive attitude

Committing to long-term job placement

Servicing customers and handling complaints

Using basic first aid

Opening and managing a checking account

Communicating effectively

Completing job applications and resumes

Setting and achieving goals

Being dependable and reliable

Participating in a teamwork environment

Using customer service telephone skills

Formulating a personal budget

Meeting expenses with entry-level wages

Accepting and offering constructive criticism

Job interviewing skills

Working with diverse groups of people

Building confidence and self esteem

Balancing work and personal life

Preventing workplace accidents and food illnesses

Establishing and managing credit

Differentiating between necessities and luxuries

Exploring careers in the hotel industry

Adhering to grooming and hygiene policies

Managing and coping with stress

### How does the program define or measure success?

Over 3,500 graduates over the past ten years

Over 80% graduation rate

Over 85% retention rate after 90 days

Over 55% retention after one year

**Describe a successful participant.**

A successful participant completes the course and stays on the job afterwards.

**At what level would a participant enter the program?**

Persons with employment barriers, including: welfare and public assistance recipients, homeless persons, recent immigrants and persons with disabilities.

<b>Program Approach</b> (Application)	<b>Method</b> (How it's used?)	<b>Outcome</b> (What would it look at COTS?)	<b>Measurement</b> (How do we measure success?)
<b>Human Growth &amp; Transformation</b>	60 hours of classroom (2 weeks) 120 hrs of occupational training (4 wks) followed by six months of counseling	COTS can use its temporary and seasonal labor as a six-month training period and a successful work experience for our members.  Job placement would be in the community outside of the COTS organization.	The number of people who complete the training/work experience program.  The number of people able to obtain and retain a permanent job at the end of the program.
<b>Staff Interaction with Clients</b>	The employee's supervisor is his/her social worker: teach, coach, monitor, and evaluate . . .  But also: help arrange child care and transportation, manage money, and deal with other outside-the-job skills.	The immediate tasks at hand (maintenance, food service, cleaning, shelter staff, Emmaus House, etc.) are only half the job.  There would be a big, new emphasis on getting COTS employees ready to work for someone else.  We might even follow up with counseling at the employee's new job!	Improved ratings on weekly evaluation sheets.  Reduced turnover (unless it's to get a good job elsewhere).

<b>Client-to-Client Interaction</b>	No formal structure	No formal structure	Not applicable
<b>Client Self-Help</b>	Standards are very clear: Punctuality, grooming, teamwork, courtesy, polite language, willingness to accept constructive criticism, etc.	COTS client would need to comply with program requirements. Incentives are COTS paychecks, followed by better chances of other employment.	Improved ratings on weekly evaluation sheets.

**Does this promote a responsible and accountable lifestyle? How?**

Pathways to Independence demonstrates what employers expect from a "responsible and accountable" employee and gives program participants a chance to experience how it feels.

**What are the client decision points in this program?**

- 1) Apply to become part of the program.
- 2) Accept a job after the training period is complete.
- 3) Look for their next permanent job.

**What would you change to make the program or concept more useful in our setting?**

A training period of six weeks seems too long. Since our employment is temporary or seasonal, employees could begin real work much sooner. A probationary period could still be in effect.

We may want to provide low-cost housing to encourage a stable environment while learning and working.

Permanent employment will mean that COTS will help with job placement at the end of our program.

### **Additional Issues:**

- **Staffing**

Supervisory hours may actually be no different than the constant scramble to replace people who leave or to clean up problems caused by poorly trained staff. In fact, COTS does on-the-job training already!

Placement in permanent jobs is a concern. Can we find a way to fund a job counselor, or could we use the services of other agencies in this field such as PPSC?

- **Aftercare**

Marriott's experience (and that of other people who have studied the "Welfare to Work" question) feel that on-going counseling is important to staying successful on the job.

- **Costs**

Salaries, benefits, and other personnel related costs for a job counselor would be additional costs.

Funding may be available. Marriott has found federal, state, and local grants, either to pay trainers/counselors, and to support wages for trainees.

### **Additional Comments**

Critics contend that Marriott takes advantage of vulnerable workers who can't get jobs elsewhere. They pay low wages and vigorously battle unionization efforts.

Marriott may be altruistic, but much of their motivation is their own profitability. For job placement to work in Petaluma or anywhere else, COTS must be able to show employers that it makes good business sense to hire our grads.

We may need to extend case management to employees after they have found other jobs (and are no longer homeless). Simple job referral isn't enough.

## Sources

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