Opportunities in Hospitality Management

Why Hospitality Management?
Leisure and hospitality is a substantial and growing part of the Lower Hudson Valley economy. Over the last 10 years, this sector grew at a faster rate and added more jobs than any other part of the local economy. Within the last four years, job growth has been especially robust. Looking forward, the New York State Department of Labor predicts that rapid job growth will continue in the Hudson Valley’s leisure and hospitality sector into 2022.

Leisure and hospitality includes restaurants, hotels, resorts, casinos, country clubs, and other types of amusement and recreation businesses. It caters to residents as well as visitors. The sector is also evolving. Restaurants are serving healthier and locally sourced foods. Microbreweries are adding tasting rooms and restaurants. The accommodation industry is trending toward smaller, limited-service hotels, although there is a large, casino development underway in Sullivan County that will surely draw on the neighboring labor force.

By its nature, this field is both labor-intensive and local. Some of the entry-level jobs do not require education beyond a high school diploma, but there are also many middle-skill jobs that demand further education and training. These middle-skill jobs offer pathways into management and other higher-skilled positions. Many hospitality businesses actively invest in their employees and promote from within.

What is Hospitality Management?
People who work in this field provide a range of services. They prepare food, serve meals, clean rooms, repair fixtures, and otherwise provide support to leisure and hospitality businesses. The accommodation industry is trending toward smaller, limited-service hotels, although there is a large, casino development underway in Sullivan County that will surely draw on the neighboring labor force.

The name of the game in hospitality is customer service. These businesses depend on customer satisfaction, and they seek employees at every level with an understanding of how to achieve it.

Where are the jobs in leisure and hospitality?
Among the industries included in this sector, restaurants and other food service businesses support the most jobs by far. Restaurant staffing is largely divided between the customer-facing “front-of-the-house” dining area and the “back-of-the-house” kitchen and food preparation area.

Hotels are another large part of this sector, and they have a similar staffing structure, with customer-facing jobs at the front desk and concierge areas, and housekeeping and maintenance jobs largely out of public view. Full-service hotels are large establishments that offer a variety of services for their guests, including restaurants and bars, room service, retail shops on the premises, and fitness centers. They often have banquet rooms and ballrooms to accommodate business meetings and other social gatherings. With this range of services, there are more jobs at every level, and there is more specialization.

Limited-service hotels typically do not have on-site restaurants or most other amenities. They usually offer continental breakfasts, Internet access, and sometimes, unattended game rooms or fitness rooms. Fewer staff are needed to carry out these smaller operations and workers often wear more than one hat. As one industry expert said, staff are expected to be a “Jack of all trades.” The day-to-day responsibilities of managers may be more varied. Over the past few years, new hotel development in the Lower Hudson Valley has trended towards limited-service.

Front desk/concierge service is a common function among most businesses in the hospitality field. Beyond restaurants and hotels, variations on this can be found in country clubs, amusement parks, resorts, and casinos—all of which have a strong presence in the Lower Hudson Valley. There are also concierges outside hospitality, in luxury residences and health care facilities, for example.

In all types of businesses in this field, there are also sales, communication, marketing, and event planning jobs.

What do employers want?
Much of the entry-level work in this field requires little more than a positive attitude, basic language skills, punctuality, and an ability to take direction. A high school diploma is preferred, but not strictly required at this level. Food safety and sanitation certification is often necessary for kitchen work. Even at the most entry level, strong customer service skills are essential for any position that interacts with customers.
LEISURE AND HOSPITALITY JOBS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Typical Education</th>
<th>Certification/License</th>
<th>Yrs of Experience</th>
<th>Median Salary*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Food Server**</td>
<td>HS</td>
<td>Alcohol Awareness</td>
<td>0–1</td>
<td>19K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cook, Prep or Line**</td>
<td>HS + training</td>
<td>ServSafe</td>
<td>0–1</td>
<td>26K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guest Service Agent**</td>
<td>Some college</td>
<td></td>
<td>0–1</td>
<td>28K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintenance Technician**</td>
<td>HS + Technical Training</td>
<td></td>
<td>0–1</td>
<td>35K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Front Desk Manager</td>
<td>Associate</td>
<td></td>
<td>2–4</td>
<td>35K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Restaurant Manager</td>
<td>Some college</td>
<td></td>
<td>2–4</td>
<td>38K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sous Chef</td>
<td>Associate</td>
<td>ServSafe</td>
<td>2–5</td>
<td>42K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotel Engineering Manager</td>
<td>Some college or technical training</td>
<td>Stationary engineer; fire safety director</td>
<td>2–5</td>
<td>49K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housekeeping Manager**</td>
<td>HS + OJT</td>
<td></td>
<td>2–5</td>
<td>52K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director, Sales &amp; Marketing</td>
<td>Associate</td>
<td></td>
<td>3–6</td>
<td>44K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive Sous Chef</td>
<td>Associate</td>
<td>ServSafe</td>
<td>4–7</td>
<td>44K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restaurant Manager</td>
<td>Associate</td>
<td></td>
<td>4–8</td>
<td>45K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotel Operations Manager</td>
<td>Associate</td>
<td></td>
<td>4–7</td>
<td>47K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director of Hotel Engineering</td>
<td>Associate or technical training</td>
<td>Stationary engineer; fire safety director license</td>
<td>5–7</td>
<td>51K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive Chef</td>
<td>Associate</td>
<td>ServSafe</td>
<td>5–10</td>
<td>51K</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hospitality Certifications In this field, the certifications largely concern restaurant workers. Food safety certification is heavily preferred, if not required, for nearly every position in the kitchen. This even includes restaurant positions that may not directly handle food.

The National Restaurant Association offers three different types of ServSafe® training certifications: one for managers, one for employees, and one for serving alcohol.

TIPS (Training for Intervention ProcedureS) Alcohol Certification offers education and training for the responsible service, sale, and consumption of alcohol.

Beyond restaurants, there are certain disciplines that may require licensure or certification in order to operate. For example, hotel engineering management positions could require a Stationary Engineer License, which authorizes workers to operate high-pressure boilers. People in this line of work do not need a professional engineering background (e.g., a 4-year engineering degree). Rather, candidates must have several years of experience in the relevant trade, an engineering certificate or a similar combination of relevant education and experience.

Education and experience requirements based on the advertised preferences of major hotel and restaurant brands.

*Median salary was supplied by Payscale.com and represents self-reported earnings in Westchester County, New York.

**Median salary for these titles is based on Occupational Employment Statistics for the entire Hudson Valley.

This field was selected for attention because it also has many jobs that typically require education or training beyond a high school diploma. While it is possible to advance from an entry-level position into a supervisory one with additional experience alone, typically, employers prefer more formal education and training for middle skill jobs.

The first tier of middle skill jobs in hospitality includes:

- Guest Service Agent
- Hotel Maintenance Technician
- Prep or Line Cook
- Food Server

Employers may seek candidates with job-specific training for some of these jobs (cook, maintenance) while prioritizing those with customer service experience for others. In many cases, especially in hotels, people in customer-facing jobs have some college education.

Given the importance of customer service in this sector, many employers also mentioned the following interpersonal skills:

- Strong communication skills, both verbal and written
- Good listening skills
- Teamwork skills
- Problem-solving skills

While all employers offer some degree of on-the-job training, the employers interviewed in connection with this research emphasized that they do not want to teach basic interpersonal skills. They are willing to enhance these skills and teach technical skills. They expect candidates, especially those who are career-minded, to come equipped with those “softer” skills. Employers report difficulty finding this kind of talent.
The second tier of middle skill jobs includes such jobs as:
- Front Desk Manager
- Sous Chef
- Assistant Restaurant Manager
- Housekeeping Manager
- Hotel Engineering Manager

In these positions, responsibilities may include managing schedules, training and supervising staff, handling customer complaints and inquiries, managing inventory, and keeping facilities in good condition. The nature and scope of responsibilities depends on the size, type, and structure of the business.

For all of these jobs, employers require a few years of experience and additional training, certifications, or academic credentials. For example, hotels will normally require their engineering managers to hold a Stationary Engineer License. For other management positions, an associate degree is preferred. Employers interviewed in the course of this research believe that higher education gives people the communication skills, the subject matter expertise, and the professionalism to take on management responsibilities, which go beyond supervising workers.

The rising influence of social media and customer ratings websites underscores the need for a management team with the skills to promote strong organizational performance across metrics.

With additional years of experience and more education, people can progress into a third tier of middle skill positions, such as:
- Executive Sous Chef
- Restaurant Manager
- Hotel Operations Manager
- Director of Hotel Engineering
- Sales and Marketing Director

Managerial positions are responsible for overall business management, like promoting profitability, setting initiatives, overseeing purchasing, and managing budgets and resources. This level of responsibility will often require at least an associate degree from a related program.

With more experience and usually a bachelor’s degree, people can move into higher-level jobs in the sector, such as General Manager.

**HOSPITALITY MANAGEMENT CAREER PATHS**

In addition to advancement within restaurant or hotel operations, people starting out in these customer-facing roles can also move into sales, marketing, communications, and other management support operations.

Pay figures reflect median wages, as reported by New York State Department of Labor for the Hudson Valley, where available. Otherwise, the data was supplied by Payscale.com and represents self-reported earnings in Westchester County, New York.