

1983

Interview with Hank Wolpert

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Recommended Citation

Groves, David L. (1983) "Interview with Hank Wolpert," *Visions in Leisure and Business*: Vol. 2 : No. 3 , Article 29.

Available at: <https://scholarworks.bgsu.edu/visions/vol2/iss3/29>

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INTERVIEW OF HANK WOLPERT

BY

DAVID L. GROVES

ABSTRACT

Hank Wolpert, during his term as president of the Dallas Area Hotel Sales Management Association, instituted a career development program to help professionals enter and re-enter the hospitality profession. This is an example of one of the few organizations that has taken a responsibility to help professionals. It is an exemplary program. One of the biggest problems is lack of orientation and information about the profession on a realistic level.

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES IN THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY

QUESTION 1: What is the basic purpose of the monthly career night as sponsored by the H.S.M.A. (Hotel Sales Management Association) referral committee?

ANSWER: The basic purpose is to help people obtain entry level positions or to re-position themselves in new jobs in the Dallas area. One realizes the basic needs of this type of workshop because there are always a tremendous number of calls and individuals seeking information about positions in the field. An association like the H.S.M.A. can help alleviate this pressure because the common denominator is the profession and not any of the particular properties. The need is there.

QUESTION 2: What is the basic format of the workshop?

ANSWER: The career meeting is held once a month at each of the area hotels with coffee and donuts being the only expense. Rotation of the meeting keeps the cost to a minimum. Professionals in the Dallas area H.S.M.A. provide the necessary expertise for the training session. Information is presented in a general session on the realities of the profession for new as well as those re-entering the profession. Such information presented includes the nature of sales, what most organizations are looking for, where to look for employment, how to go about approaching the organizations, resume writing, etc. The basic nature of the introductory session is preparation. Also included in this preliminary session is information about the pitfalls, that is, the high pressure and rejection associated with these types of positions. This helps to screen individuals and helps them realize that this type of

employment may not be for them.

QUESTION 3: What is the nature of the follow-up contact after the general session?

ANSWER: There are four primary groups: 1) those with no experience, 2) those with experience and seeking new employment, 3) those who have lost their jobs and want to re-enter the profession, and 4) those who are in the job and having problems. The basic nature of each of the small groups is individual contact. The nature of this profession is follow-up to the initial session such as how to follow-up on an interview and how to individualize resumes. The final outcome of these sessions is an invitation to come to the monthly luncheons and to follow up on the individual contact with counseling toward specific nature of the help needed. At each session there are approximately 15 individuals and over an average three month period we were able to help about nine people to obtain employment or re-employment.

QUESTION 4: How does this type of program help the employer?

ANSWER: The Association keeps a standing resume book so that hotels and motels can selectively go through the it and determine potential candidates. These hotels and motels can then contact the association and find out who has been working with these individuals so that they can provide greater information in the selection and screening process.

QUESTION 5: What is the basic nature of this type of program?

ANSWER: The nature of this type of program is to serve as a bridge between the employer and employee and help increase the amount of professionalism. Each organization has a responsibility for a public information night that gives information on salaries, nature of employment, future job picture, who to contact, etc. The basic nature of this type of public information night is to channel interest and help create opportunities through the presentation of factual information, the giving of articles, job brochures and the development of tools such as resume books.