

IMPRESSION

2020 EDITION ISSUE 9

My Hospitality
Journey:
Mr Murali Nair

Customer Service
& Why it matters

*National
Cocktail
Competition
2020*





Mr Chia Tuck Keong
Managing Director
SDH Institute

Director's Note

The end of a year is a good time to look back, reflecting on achievements, and to look forward, to see what we still need to accomplish.

Many of us will certainly be glad to have 2020 behind us! COVID-19 has brought about many changes and uncertainties for us, but if there is one thing this crisis of a generation teaches us all, it is that the resilient and dynamic spirit will bear fruit.

The world has never seemed a more bizarre place, with major disruptions to economies, industries, workplaces, communities, and schools all over the world, affecting many lives and livelihoods.

When disruption and turmoil hit, they cause great discomfort. We either stand still and be overwhelmed or we strive to innovate and create new opportunities for ourselves to grow. History has shown that these changes will inevitably lead to a more exciting and prosperous new world than before.

With this in mind, let's embrace the changes around us, look to the brightness of the future and have faith in our growth!

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RECAP 2020



We are on LinkedIn!

LinkedIn is a must for your professional future, whether you are a student, job seeker, or an entrepreneur.

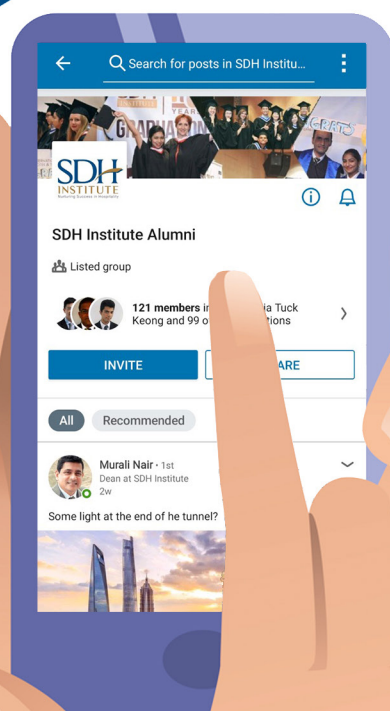
Leverage the power of LinkedIn to stay ahead of your competition and enhance your employability now.

Did you know major players in every industry are now using LinkedIn to source and view the profiles of suitable candidates? This platform also allows you to conduct research, including testimonials and reviews on your dream company.

The LinkedIn Alumni Group is our on-going effort to forge a vibrant SDH community by providing a key point of connection both between and among the school, alumni community and the industry.

This member only group will serve as the social media platform for our students and alumni to expand their professional network, as well as to keep themselves up-to-date with the latest news and developments of the industry. They can also keep apprised of the latest management best practices, professional development courses and career opportunities from our industry partners.

SCAN TO JOIN



Our Blended Learning Experience

"The global pandemic has opened a door to new normals, one of which is the harmonization of modern technology and conventional teaching. Learning is beyond purely school-based. All my classmates and I can join online classes anywhere, which is mind-blowing for many of us. All activities, including presentations, are carried out as it happens in real-time.

There is indeed no barrier between lecturers and students as we continue to participate actively in daily discussions which are as dynamic as usual. Bringing everybody closer and overcoming the physical distance itself while taking part in online classes helps to push us further in our studies.

I have never felt left behind because my lecturers always respond to my question as though they are right in front of us. In order to stimulate us during the e-Learning lesson, my lecturers share their stories and case studies along with concepts and definitions making lessons more interesting.

My classes are always filled with laughter. It feels good to be back in school when the campus reopened, and we got to interact with one another in person. My lecturers also continue to bring invaluable lessons to life and I consider myself very fortunate as I get to experience both of these learning methods concurrently.

SDH Institute has created valuable experiences and made my learning journey more enjoyable!"

Nguyen Thi Hai Nhi

*Diploma in Aviation
and Travel Operations*



"This experience has been different from what I am used to. I love the fact that I get to study in the comfort of my own home and spend more time with my loved ones, and as a bonus, I can save travelling time!

At the same time, I also look forward to studying in a physical classroom setting during our alternate day schedules as I feel I am more productive when my classmates and I have face-to-face discussions, exchanging our views on current issues. We also get to have hands-on practical sessions for modules such as hotel operations management."

Sandeep

*Advanced Diploma in Hospitality
and Tourism Management*



Professional Certified in Hotel Analytics (CHIA) - Vателиens as well!

Professional Certified in Hotel Analytics (CHIA) - Vателиens as well! CHIA is the only hotel-related certification for hotel and tourism industry professionals focusing on analytics. This globally recognised professional credential validates students' advanced knowledge in hotel industry analytics, including foundation metrics, definitions, formulas and methodologies. Achieving this certification means that one will have a place among the best professionals in the hotel industry and opens the doors to future career opportunities.

SDH Institute - Vatel Singapore is perhaps the only branch of Vatel France that is offering CHIA in Asia and probably among the almost 50 Vatel franchises around the world. It is therefore a special benefit of students who enrol in Vatel Singapore to have the unique opportunity to be certified in hotel analysis that do no less than boost their hospitality careers. We would like to congratulate our students who have successfully passed their CHIA exam in 2020!

Vatel MBA
*in International
Hotel Management*

Ho Hoang Dieu Linh
Le Thanh Uyen Vy
Mederova Aisuluu
Nguyen Thi Thu Thao
Nguyen Tri Nguyen
Vivian Nguyen

**Vatel
Bachelor's
Degree**
*in International
Hotel Management*

Dang Minh Hoang
Ethan Peter Lim
Janice Tanadi
Toh Zheng Yu Jeremy
Vu Thuc Nhi Nguyen
Wu Ka Man
Xie Peiting

SDH Institute
*Advanced Diploma in
Hospitality and Tourism
Management*

Sandeep
Viet Phuong Dinh

Audit Activity with Commonwealth Culinary Creations Pte Ltd

Earlier in March this year, our group of Vatel MBA students audited the packaging section of one of Singapore's exemplary food manufacturers, Commonwealth Culinary Creations Pte Ltd (CCC), a subsidiary of a Singapore-based investment company called Commonwealth Capital Pte Ltd. CCC positions itself as among the largest providers of commercial food products and services in Singapore that specialises in high quality bakery and pastry products¹.

This audit exercise was part of the students' requirements in their Operations and Revenue Management module, and an ongoing effort to collaborate and foster relationships with leaders in the industry.

True to the module's learning outcomes, the operations audit aimed at bringing the MBA students as close as possible to the workplace applying the underpinning concepts of their lessons at hand. The objectives of the operations audit therefore were to evaluate the packaging process to identify potential improvements by determining areas where production efficiencies and operations effectiveness could be increased.

Through the generosity of Mr. Selvam Sevasamy, the Executive Director (ED) of CCC, even in the midst of the Covid-19 global pandemic, the group consisting of 5 MBA students managed to hold preliminary meetings with management and staff as well as conduct the actual audit. Precautionary measures were taken to ensure the health and safety of the students and the staff who were involved.

The MBA students consisted of Madina Assylbekova, Vo Xuan Hao Khuyen, Ho Hoang Dieu Lihn, Vu Minh Anh, and Nguyen Tri Nguyen. Prior to the actual audit, the team visited the CCC factory where the ED presented an impressive overview of the company, its market, its operational size in Singapore and in the Asian region, as well as the factory's production line that is housed in its own building at the west side of Singapore. During the audit proper, the group had their own specific tasks assigned according to the different sections of the packaging department of the factory where pastries and baked food were prepared before distribution to various food outlets mostly in Singapore.

According to these students, this experience was so memorable and impactful in their learning journeys because it gave them hands-on exposure to real-world food production not only through observation but via honest-to-goodness investigation as well as improvement generation. The findings and recommendations of the activity were documented in a 20-page audit report and was submitted to Mr. Selvam.

¹ Commonwealth Culinary Creation. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.commonwealthculinary.com/general/aboutus.aspx>

Customer Service: Why It Matters

Customer service skills are essential for almost any hospitality job, whether you work in a hotel or resort, restaurant or bar, on a cruise ship or for an airline. While many successful professionals in the industry are naturally gifted in this area, even those who are not can become proficient experts over time.

We have compiled a list of the most common skills one should be equipped with being in the customer service and hospitality industry





1

Excellent Communication Skills

When you are communicating with a guest, keep it simple and to the point. There should be no doubt what is expected and what will be received so there can be no misunderstanding. Be specific and communicate clearly with your guests.

2

Patience is Virtue

Everyone says this – and with good reason. It is critically important to take the time to fully understand what the customer is telling you and how best to solve a problem. Make sure you understand what they truly want so you can give them the solution that best serves their needs.

3

Practice actively listening in every conversation

When you actively listen to your customers, they feel like they are being heard. Start by mentally screening out any distractions, such as background noise or worrying about the line of customers forming behind. Keep an open mind as you face the guest, maintain eye contact, and focus on what he or she is saying.

4

Be Positive and Persuasive

Positive language plays a big role in how your customers perceive your message. When you avoid negative phrases, even 'bad' news can come across as positive and constructive. You can practice persuading your customers to your way of thinking by always using their name, leading with active words, and avoiding statements that start with your own personal thoughts or beliefs.

5

Empathy

It's not only important to hear and understand what your customer is saying, it is also vital to recognize how he/she is feeling. Put yourself in their place and think about how you would feel in that situation and how you would want to be treated.

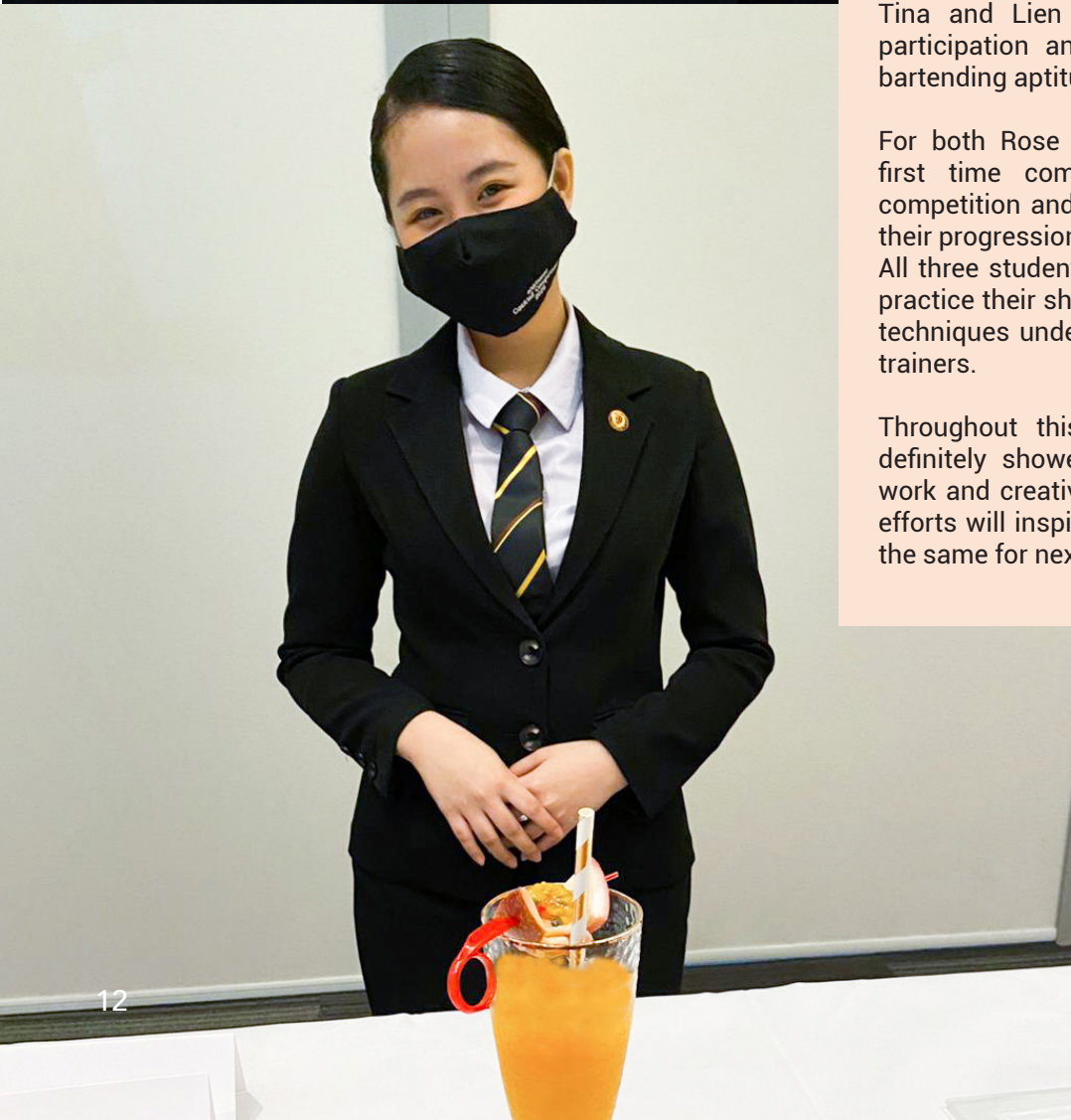


Three of our very own students from the Advanced Diploma in Hospitality and Tourism programme participated in the highly anticipated event of the year; the 2020 National Cocktail Competition.

We are proud to say that Ton Nu Mai Truc (Rose), clinched 4th position in the finals for the student category, for her concoction - My Passion. We would also like to take this opportunity to thank Tina and Lien for their enthusiastic participation and demonstrating their bartending aptitude!

For both Rose and Lien, it was their first time competing in a cocktail competition and we were proud to see their progression from Day 1 of training. All three students had only 2 weeks to practice their showmanship and mixing techniques under the guidance of their trainers.

Throughout this whole journey, they definitely showed determination, hard work and creativity! We hope that their efforts will inspire other students to do the same for next year's competition!





“ I am very happy that I got this opportunity to join this competition, and even more so when I advanced into the finals! At the start, I was a bit concerned as it is my first time participating in such a big event. Throughout the training sessions, I felt more confident in myself and became really passionate about bartending, due to the influence of my trainers. Although the training lasted only 2 weeks, I am really grateful to the lecturers and mentors who have inspired me, especially Mr Edwin Yeong, for staying back with us to practice our showmanship.

Even though it has been months since the competition, the adrenaline and excitement are still fresh in my memory, and I hope I get to experience this again!

- Rose on her cocktail competition experience

National Cocktail Competition 2020



“ I am very fortunate to be given the opportunity to participate in this year's cocktail competition. Despite the difficult conditions when the event took place (as it was during the COVID-19 pandemic), the school had still created favourable conditions to help us cross all barriers and reach for our dreams. Although this year's contest is held online, it was a very interesting experience for me.

Through these opportunities, I have gained great experiences and acquired many new things in the Food and Beverage industry. I would also like to thank Ms Didi, Mr Edwin and the teachers at the school for their support in this competition, I really appreciate it!

- Tina on her cocktail competition experience



SDH INSTITUTE AND UNIVERSITY OF WEST LONDON STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP



UNIVERSITY OF
WEST LONDON
The **Career** University

We are delighted to announce our partnership with University of West London (UWL) to offer their BA (Hons) Airline and Airport Management program to learners in Singapore. Designed to build skills and knowledge required of a manager in the global aviation industry, this undergraduate program in aviation management focuses on learner's employability while offering a high-quality academic experience.

The partnership with UWL not only offers our Diploma in Aviation and Travel Operations graduates a degree pathway, it also provides local polytechnic diploma holders in aviation management as well as professionals in the air transport sector an appealing option to upskill and upgrade their qualifications with a highly reputable UK university in this field. The University of West London is located in the heart of one of the UK's most successful business regions, with strong connections to many national and multinational organisations.

The University prides itself on being "The Career University" offering over 140 undergraduate and postgraduate courses with a strong focus on employability and practical experience. UWL is ranked as the top modern university in London, 8th modern university in the UK and ranked as the 50th university nationally by the Guardian University Guide 2019.

In The Times and The Sunday Times Good University Guide 2020 rankings, UWL is ranked 52 in the UK of over 150 universities, rising an impressive 31 places in the league table, which was the biggest rise in the UK. In the National Student Survey (NSS) 2020, the University of West London was ranked the top university in London and in the top 25 in the UK for overall student satisfaction. Moreover, 98% of graduates are in employment or further study within six months of graduation**.

* Modern universities are defined as higher education institutions that were granted university status in, and subsequent to, 1992. UWL received the rankings listed above when compared to all other modern universities ranked in the guides/surveys cited.

** These are the latest figures according to Employment Performance Indicators (EPI) released by the Higher Education Statistics Agency HESA in 2018.

My Hospitality Journey:

Mr Murali Nair

SDH Dean

An education in Hospitality and Tourism opens up a wide array of career options. The industry spreads across so many different areas of expertise. If you are a person who is not really sure about what you want to do in your life, as are most people in the world, your options are wide open after getting a degree in hospitality management. You will have plenty of time to pick your area of specialisation when you are more sure about it.

In this article, we are introducing Mr Murali Nair, who has had an incredibly diverse career. From working as a management trainee in a fast-food chain to a general manager of a resort and country club, and now Dean of SDH Institute.

Some of you may have seen him around campus; some may have been taught by him! Read on to find out his career journey and gain some insights on the factors you should consider before deciding on your first career after graduation.





Can you tell us about how your hospitality journey started?

I have had an interesting career journey over the past 35 years or so. I started my journey in the early 1980s after having completed my National Service. I joined KFC as a management trainee for 6 months, then went on to being a store manager for 3 months, before deciding that this was the industry for me. I then did a Diploma in Hotel Management in Switzerland, and returned to Singapore and began my hotel career as a waiter in a fine dining restaurant, gradually working my way up to becoming an Assistant Restaurant Manager. I then did my degree in Travel Industry Management at the University of Hawaii.

Upon graduation, I joined the Hyatt International Hotels and did several pre-opening projects in Jakarta, Bali and Johannesburg. After 7 years within the Hyatt chain, and having achieved the title Director of Food and Beverage, I decided to become a liquor and tobacco distributor. This began my entrepreneurship journey.

Fast forward 7 years, I opened a licensed warehouse dealing with liquor and tobacco. In 2003, I decided to go back to the Hospitality Operations and became the General Manager of a large resort and country club. They needed to rebrand themselves and renew their membership. I did this for over a year and then started my business in hospitality consultancy services, primarily training and education.

Today, my focus is more on mainstream education in the hospitality industry through SDH Institute.

What is your approach to life?

My golden rule is to be humble always. Be open to continued learning throughout your life. You will be more respected and a wiser leader equipped to develop your staff more effectively.

What do you think are your greatest strengths and weaknesses?

My greatest strength is that I always learn – not only from my mistakes but also from my successes. I will never forget what I have learnt. My weakness will probably be in identifying what really motivates every person. Every human being is different and has different buttons that ignite high performances. This is very complicated and a continuous challenge for every leader.

At work, what puts a smile on your face?

Watching my team work together happily puts a smile on my face. When my staff are driven to do things without being asked to do so – this puts a smile on my face. Praising and acknowledging my team's success puts a big smile on my face.

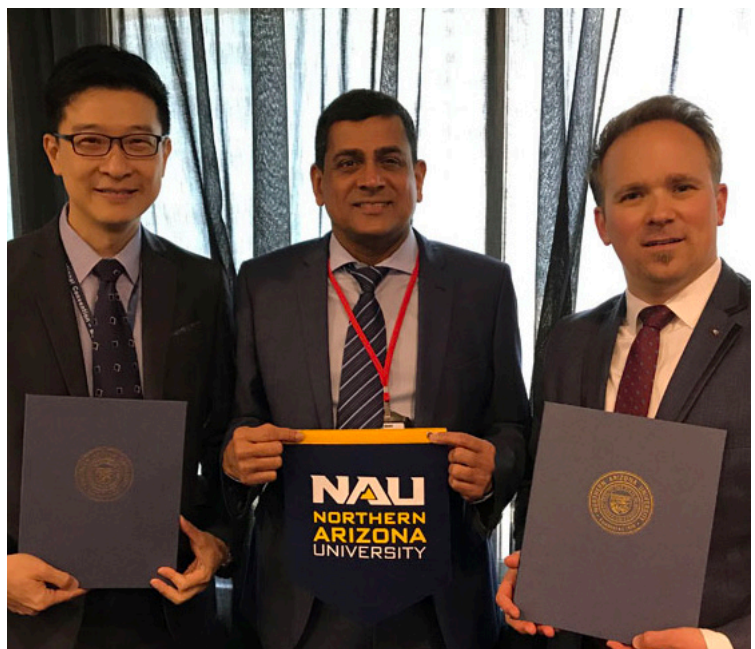
What advice do you have for students trying to decide on their first role after graduation?

I would advise students to find a job with an organization committed to training and development. It is always good to start with the established chains as they are more structured in the policies and processes. Do not be too fixed in your choice of department. If your ultimate goal is to be a GM, the more exposure you have to different departments the better prepared you will be for your future GM role. The main point to remember is that you need to start at the bottom. Rest assured, with your degrees, you will rise to the top much faster.

As you can see from my career path, despite having done a hotel management diploma and degree, my career journey was far from focused and straight. From hotel management to liquor and tobacco distribution, retail, warehousing and logistics, and finally training and education.

My degree in travel industry management equipped me with the confidence and capability to excel in every role I have played. It took me to Europe, the United States, Africa and Southeast Asia, and it did not limit me to one career path. Let your heart and passion lead the way. A good tertiary education is also important as it creates the foundation upon which you can build your life journey towards success and ultimately, self-actualization.

Wishing all of you the best of luck in your career journey!



Aviation and Its Role



Aviation is one of the most global industries, connecting people, cultures, and businesses across continents. Aviation provides the only rapid worldwide transportation network, making it essential for global business. It generates economic growth, facilitates international trade and tourism, as well as create millions of jobs.

Tourism

One of the industries that rely most heavily on aviation is tourism. Tourism is the key pillar of economic development and growth of many developing countries. These countries rely on a steady inflow of tourists, without which, their economies would decline significantly as the current pandemic demonstrates.

Air connectivity is a key driver for growth for these attractive tourist destinations. Advances in air transport have changed the way people and businesses connect with each other. More people in more parts of the world than ever before are taking advantage of safe, fast, and efficient travel.

Enabling Trade

Air transport is vital to many industries' global supply chains, facilitating international trade, particularly for valuables and perishable goods. Robust delivery is essential to businesses that rely on urgent delivery such as parts for machinery and equipment and medical supplies.

Exporters of perishable goods such as food and flowers – many of whom are located in developing countries – can only reach export markets by air, providing growth to developing countries that benefit from such trade.

Supporting Employment

According to research done by the Air Transport Action Group (ATAG), the global air transport sector supports 65.5 million jobs and \$2.7 trillion in global economic activity. Some of these roles are within the industry itself, at airports, for airlines, and in civil aerospace and air navigation services.

There are many types of airport-based jobs in the aviation industry allowing you to work in a wide variety of roles. Some of those roles include:

- Pilots
- Air traffic controllers
- Airport spatial planning
- Airport management and executive roles
- Customer service roles in airline ticketing, check-in, cabin crew, and retail



Our Vatel Bachelor's degree students had an interactive Q&A session with a special guest speaker, Ms Monica-Yeo Alsagoff back in the month of September. Ms Monica has over 25 years of experience in establishing brands, developing 360° marketing and communications strategies, and cultivating global networks across diverse industries in the Asia Pacific and the Middle East markets.

Our students were engaged throughout this short session as Ms Monica shared her vast experience as well as insight into the strategies businesses are applying to keep consumers engaged in this unprecedented time.



1 lucky winner will stand a chance to win a mystery prize by answering the following question correctly!

How many years of experience did Mr Murali Nair gained from his stint at Hyatt International Hotels?

- A) 3
- B) 12
- C) 7

To Enter:

Follow us on our official Instagram account (@sdhinstitute) and DM us your answer!

Answer Format: Impression09_Your answer (Example: Impression09_A)

T&C *Contest closes on 31 December 2020. Multiple entries from the same applicant will not be accepted. Winner will be drawn randomly. Winner will be notified via direct message through the social media account from which the winning applicant was selected.



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