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# Professional Development to Promote Employee Engagement: A Multi-Case Study

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PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TO PROMOTE EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT:  
A MULTI-CASE STUDY

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A Dissertation  
Presented to  
the Graduate School of  
Clemson University

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Philosophy  
Educational Leadership

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by  
Starrin Shafer  
May 2010

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Accepted by:

Dr. Tony Cawthon, Committee Chair  
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Dr. Fred Switzer

## ABSTRACT

Organizations with high employee engagement have positive outcomes in their organizational results. These organizations attained greater satisfaction from their customers, employees were more productive, and increased profits. Employee disengagement is detrimental to businesses, costing companies billions of dollars every year as a result. The suffered losses are a result of high turnover, low employee and customer satisfaction, and decreased productivity. Disengaged employees affected the overall economy in the United States by approximately \$300 billion. Because employee engagement has an extensive influence on an organization's financial position, many organizations designed professional development training programs targeted at enhancing the engagement skills of their leaders.

Kahn's engagement model presented the theoretical framework for the study. Kirkpatrick's, four levels of evaluation model reinforced the theoretical basis for the study. The conceptual framework of the study illustrated the progression of participants who had attended a professional development training program focused on engagement.

The following primary research questions guided the study: How does the professional development training focused on employee engagement contribute to the application of employee engagement concepts and activities and how does the application of employee engagement concepts and activities contribute to high levels of employee engagement? Seventeen secondary research questions utilizing Kirkpatrick's four levels of evaluation also supported the study.

The study was a qualitative multi-case study and utilized within-case and cross-case analysis. Participants were leaders who had attended an engagement professional development training program and their employees. Leaders shared their reactions and learnings related to the training program including how they applied the concepts and activities learned in the program. The leaders' employees shared their experiences of the leaders' application of different activities and behaviors in the workplace. The data were collected by observations, interviews, company documents, artifacts, and other archival records. The data were analyzed utilizing a six step data analyses process. Each case was analyzed individually prior to the completion of a cross-case analysis.

There were three emergent themes pertaining to the study, *employee centric, collaboration, and career development*. Leaders who attended the program created a culture that was employee centric. Employees in this culture feel valued and respected for their contributions, a strong relationship exists between the manager and employees, and employees foster care and concern for each other. The culture also promotes open communication and involvement in the business' strategies driving collaboration among the employees. Lastly, the leaders exhibited a strong personal interest in the employees' growth and development.

General recommendations were made for organizational leaders to collaborate with learning leaders and instructional designers in the development of an engagement professional development training program. Recommendations for future research included conducting follow up studies to determine the application and results of an engagement professional training program over a continuous span of time.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We continue to learn as we travel the roads of our lives. My current journey has reached its destination, and I would like to offer my thanks to those who played important roles during this particular journey.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT.....	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iv
LIST OF TABLES.....	x
LIST OF FIGURES.....	xvi
CHAPTER	
1. NATURE OF THE PROBLEM.....	1
Introduction.....	1
Statement of the Problem.....	3
Purpose of the Study.....	4
Theoretical Framework.....	5
Conceptual Framework.....	7
Research Questions.....	10
Definitions of Terms.....	12
Research Methods.....	14
Delimitations.....	15
Limitations.....	16
Significance of the Study.....	17
Organization of the Study.....	18
2. LITERATURE REVIEW.....	19
Introduction.....	19
Employee Engagement.....	19
Impact of Employee Engagement.....	20
Engagement Theories and Models.....	23
Employee Engagement Professional Development Training Programs.....	26

Table of Contents (Continued)

	<u>Page</u>
Effectiveness of Employee Engagement Professional Development Programs.....	27
Summary.....	33
3. METHODOLOGY .....	34
Introduction.....	34
Research Design.....	34
Research Questions.....	35
Case Selection.....	39
Participants.....	41
Role of the Researcher .....	42
Institutional Review Board Approval .....	43
Data Collection .....	44
Data Analysis.....	46
Validating Findings.....	50
Ethical Considerations .....	52
Chapter Summary .....	52
4. FINDINGS.....	54
Introduction.....	54
Description of Multi-Case.....	57
Within-Case Analysis Hotel Marco .....	58
Hotel Marco Narrative .....	63
Researcher Notes .....	64
Within-Case Summary Hotel Marco .....	109
Summary of Level 1 Evaluation, Reaction to Engagement Training Program.....	110
Summary of Level 2 Evaluation, Learning Achieved from an Engagement Training Program.....	113
Summary of Level 3 Evaluation, Application Engagement Training Program Activities .....	115
Summary of Level 4 Evaluation, Results of Engagement Training Program.....	117
Within-Case Analysis Hotel Rico.....	118

Table of Contents (Continued)

	<u>Page</u>
Hotel Rico Narrative .....	123
Researcher Notes .....	123
Level 4 Evaluation, Results .....	165
Within-Case Summary Hotel Rico .....	169
Summary of Level 1 Evaluation, Reaction to Engagement Training Program .....	170
Summary of Level 2 Evaluation, Learning Achieved from an Engagement Training Program .....	173
Summary of Level 3 Evaluation, Application Engagement Training Program Activities .....	175
Summary of Level 4 Evaluation, Results of Engagement Training Program .....	177
Cross-Case Analysis .....	178
Summary of Professional Development Training Program.....	209
Chapter Summary .....	209
5. SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS .....	211
Introduction.....	211
Summary of Chapters .....	211
Overall Summary of Major Findings and Emergent Themes .....	213
Discussion of Major Findings.....	221
Overall Engagement Drivers.....	224
Recommendations for Organizational Leaders.....	224
Recommendations for Future Research .....	226
Overall Implications.....	227
Chapter Summary .....	229

Table of Contents (Continued)

	<u>Page</u>
APPENDICES	
A: Data Analysis Procedure Map .....	231
B: Institutional Review Board Acceptance.....	239
C: Leadership Information Letter .....	240
D: Employee Information Letter.....	242
E: Leadership Consent Form.....	244
F: Employee Consent Form.....	246
G: Transcription Release Form.....	248
REFERENCES .....	251

## LIST OF TABLES

Table		Page
1.	North and South Carolina Employee Engagement Indices.....	40
2.	Multi-Case Study Participants .....	41
3.	Data Analysis: Tree Nodes .....	48
4.	Data Analysis: Free Nodes.....	49
5.	Hotel Marco Within-Case Analysis: Age of Study Participants.....	61
6.	Hotel Marco Within-Case Analysis: Years of Employment.....	62
7.	Hotel Marco Within-Case Analysis: Work Area .....	63
8.	Hotel Marco Within-Case Analysis: Level 1, Reaction, Participants Reaction .....	66
9.	Hotel Marco Within-Case Analysis: Level 1, Reaction, Perceived Ways to Build Strong Employee Relationships.....	68
10.	Hotel Marco Within-Case Analysis: Level 1, Reaction, Perceived Self Development Assistance.....	70
11.	Hotel Marco Within-Case Analysis: Level 1, Reaction, Perceived Ways to Build a Better Work Environment.....	72
12.	Hotel Marco Within-Case Analysis: Level 1, Reaction, Perceived Ways to Build Strong Teams .....	74
13.	Hotel Marco Within-Case Analysis: Level 2, Learning, Ways to Affect Employee Engagement .....	78

List of Tables (Continued)

Table	Page
14. Hotel Marco Within-Case Analysis: Level 2, Learning, Ways to Improve Communication and Relationships With Employees .....	81
15. Hotel Marco Within-Case Analysis: Level 2, Learning, Ways to Assess and Discuss Career Opportunities .....	82
16. Hotel Marco Within-Case Analysis: Level 2, Learning, Ways to Improve Work Environment .....	85
17. Hotel Marco Within-Case Analysis: Level 2, Learning, Ways to Improve Team Effectiveness .....	86
18. Hotel Marco Within-Case Analysis: Level 3, Application, Activities Completed to Increase Employee Engagement .....	92
19. Hotel Marco Within-Case Analysis: Level 3, Application, Behaviors Exhibited to Improve Leadership Capabilities .....	96
20. Hotel Marco Within-Case Analysis: Level 3, Application, Career Opportunities Provided to Employees .....	98
21. Hotel Marco Within-Case Analysis: Level 3, Application, Techniques Employed to Provide Positive Work Environments .....	102
22. Hotel Marco Within-Case Analysis: Level 3, Application, Building Effective Work Teams .....	105
23. Hotel Marco Within-Case Analysis: Level 4, Results, Employees' Engagement Level .....	106
24. Hotel Marco Within-Case Analysis: Level 4, Results, Effect of Engagement on Balanced Scorecard .....	108
25. Hotel Marco Within-Case Analysis: Summary of Findings and Emergent Themes Related to Demographics .....	110

List of Tables (Continued)

Table	Page
26. Hotel Marco Within-Case Analysis: Summary of Level 1 Evaluation, Reaction .....	112
27. Hotel Marco Within-Case Analysis: Summary of Level 2 Evaluation, Learning.....	114
28. Hotel Marco Within-Case Analysis: Summary of Level 3 Evaluation, Application .....	116
29. Hotel Marco Within-Case Analysis: Summary of Level 4 Evaluation, Results.....	117
30. Age of Study Participants-Hotel Rico.....	121
31. Years of Employment of Study Participants-Hotel Rico .....	122
32. Work Area of Participants-Hotel Rico.....	123
33. Hotel Rico Within-Case Analysis: Level 1, Reaction, Participants' Reaction .....	127
34. Hotel Rico Within-Case Analysis: Level 1, Reaction, Perceived Ways to Build Strong Employee Relationships.....	128
35. Hotel Rico Within-Case Analysis: Level 1, Reaction, Perceived Self Development Assistance.....	130
36. Hotel Rico Within-Case Analysis: Level 1, Reaction, Perceived Ways to Build a Better Work Environment.....	131
37. Hotel Rico Within-Case Analysis: Level 1, Reaction, Perceived Ways to Build Strong Teams .....	132
38. Hotel Rico Within-Case Analysis: Level 2, Learning, Ways to Affect Employee Engagement.....	135

List of Tables (Continued)

Table	Page
39. Hotel Rico Within-Case Analysis: Level 2, Learning, Ways to Improve Communication and Relationships With Employees .....	138
40. Hotel Rico Within-Case Analysis: Level 2, Learning, Ways to Assess and Discuss Career Opportunities .....	139
41. Hotel Rico Within-Case Analysis: Level 2, Learning, Ways to Improve Work Environment .....	140
42. Hotel Rico Within-Case Analysis: Level 2, Learning, Ways to Improve Team Effectiveness .....	142
43. Hotel Rico Within-Case Analysis: Level 3, Application, Activities Completed to Increase Employee Engagement .....	148
44. Hotel Rico Within-Case Analysis: Level 3, Application, Behaviors Exhibited to Improve Leadership Capabilities .....	152
45. Hotel Rico Within-Case Analysis: Level 3, Application, Career Opportunities Provided to Employees .....	156
46. Hotel Rico Within-Case Analysis: Level 3, Application, Techniques Employed to Provide Positive Work Environments .....	161
47. Hotel Rico Within-Case Analysis: Level 3, Application, Building Effective Work Teams .....	165
48. Hotel Rico Within-Case Analysis: Level 4, Results, Employees' Engagement Level .....	167
49. Hotel Rico Within-Case Analysis: Level 4, Results, Effect of Engagement on Balanced Scorecard.....	169
50. Hotel Rico Within-Case Analysis: Summary of Findings and Emergent Themes Related to Demographics.....	170

List of Tables (Continued)

Table	Page
51. Hotel Rico Within-Case Analysis: Summary of Level 1 Evaluation, Reaction .....	172
52. Hotel Rico Within-Case Analysis: Summary of Level 2 Evaluation, Learning .....	174
53. Hotel Rico Within-Case Analysis: Summary of Level 3 Evaluation, Application .....	176
54. Hotel Rico Within-Case Analysis: Summary of Level 4 Evaluation, Results.....	178
55. Cross-Case Analysis: Level 1, Reaction, Participants’ Reaction .....	180
56. Cross-Case Analysis: Level 1, Reaction, Perceived Ways to Build Strong Employee Relations.....	181
57. Cross-Case Analysis: Level 1, Reaction, Perceived Self Development Assistance.....	182
58. Cross-Case Analysis: Level 1, Reaction, Perceived Ways to Build a Better Work Environment .....	183
59. Cross-Case Analysis: Level 1, Reaction, Perceived Ways to Build Strong Teams .....	184
60. Cross-Case Analysis: Summary of Level 1 Evaluation, Reaction.....	186
61. Cross-Case Analysis: Level 2, Learning, Ways to Affect Employee Engagement .....	189
62. Cross-Case Analysis: Level 2, Learning, Ways to Improve Communication and Relationships with Employees .....	190

List of Tables (Continued)

Table	Page
63. Cross-Case Analysis: Level 2, Learning, Ways to Assess and Discuss Career Opportunities .....	192
64. Cross-Case Analysis: Level 2, Learning, Ways to Improve Work Environment.....	193
65. Cross-Case Analysis: Level 2, Learning, Ways to Improve Team Effectiveness .....	194
66. Cross-Case Analysis: Summary of Level 2 Evaluation, Learning .....	196
67. Cross-Case Analysis: Level 3, Application, Activities Completed to Increase Employee Engagement .....	198
68. Cross-Case Analysis: Level 3, Application, Behaviors Exhibited to Improve Leadership Capabilities .....	199
69. Cross-Case Analysis: Level 3, Application, Career Opportunities Provided to Employees .....	200
70. Cross-Case Analysis: Level 3, Application, Techniques Employed to Provide Positive Work Environments.....	202
71. Cross-Case Analysis: Level 3, Application, Building Effective Work Teams.....	203
72. Cross-Case Analysis: Summary of Level 3 Evaluation, Application .....	205
73. Cross-Case Analysis: Level 4, Results, Employees' Engagement Level .....	207
74. Cross-Case Analysis: Level 4, Results, Effect of Engagement on Balanced Scorecard.....	208
75. Cross-Case Analysis: Summary of Level 4 Evaluation, Results .....	209

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1.1 Conceptual Framework for the Study .....	7

# CHAPTER ONE

## NATURE OF THE PROBLEM

### Introduction

Leading organizations with high employee engagement have positive results in their organizational outcomes (Asplund, Fleming, & Harter, 2007; Harter, Schmidt, & Hayes, 2002). Employee engagement is generally defined as the commitment and passion employees have to excel in their roles as members of an organization and contribute to the organization's success (Harter et al., 2002; Kahn, 1990; Ott, 2007). More specifically, researchers defined employee engagement as the satisfaction, involvement and commitment employees have for their work (Harter et al., 2002; Lockwood, 2007; O'Neal & Gebauer, 2006). These definitions share a theme of employee allegiance, and fervor for the organization. Organizational results are impacted by the passion and commitment of employees.

Research studies have shown that business units with highly engaged employees outperformed those that did not have highly engaged employees. These organizations achieved greater satisfaction from their customers, higher productivity of their employees, and an increase in profitability including earnings per share of publicly traded organizations (Asplund et al., 2007; Harter et al., 2002; Krueger & Killham, 2005; Ott, 2007).

Engaged employees have an emotional connection with their organizations by sharing purposes and values (Fleming & Asplund, 2007; Kahn, 1990). The higher the

engagement level, the greater the willingness the employee has to take extra steps to ensure the organization succeeds. This willingness was the discretionary effort the employee extends to exceed the customer's expectation and reinforce the success of the organization (Fleming & Asplund, 2007, Kahn, 1990). Studies completed by leading research groups showed that the higher the intensity of an employee's engagement, the longer the employee would stay at an organization, resulting in reduced turnover (Asplund et al., 2007; Corporate Executive Board, 2004; Harter et al., 2002; O'Neal & Gebauer, 2006; Towers Perrin, 2007). The U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics estimated that costs for private industries total over \$13,000 to replace an individual employee (O'Connell & Kung, 2007).

Because employee engagement has a substantial impact on an organization's financial outcome, many organizations designed professional development training programs targeted at enhancing the engagement skills of their leaders in an effort to affect this arena. Several studies showed the importance of professional development training programs designed to include engagement training to affect behavioral changes (Lockwood, 2007; O'Neal & Gebauer, 2006). However, if the training did not result in behavioral changes, the training was ineffective and the intended results was not achieved. If employee behavior changed and positively influenced engagement, studies showed greater organizational results (Asplund et al, 2007; Ott, 2007).

The elements identified to affect engagement should be integrated through learning and development programs offered by organizations to assist employees in their growth and development. All professional development training programs for senior

leaders and supervisors should focus on the importance, and impact, of engaging associates by focusing on the behaviors and interactions that affect employees (Lockwood, 2007; O'Neal & Gebauer, 2006).

### Statement of the Problem

Organizations that did not focus on increasing their employees' engagement levels suffered decreases in organizational performance (Asplund et al., 2007; Harter et al., 2002; Krueger & Killham, 2005; Lockwood, 2007; Luthans & Peterson, 2002; O'Connell & Kung, 2007; Ott, 2007). These decreases were often attributed to low employee satisfaction, which contributed to lower customer satisfaction and employee turnover.

Private research groups, including Gallup Consulting (Asplund et al., 2007; Harter et al., 2002) and Towers Perrin (2007), have completed formidable engagement studies. For the most part, these studies consistently showed that employee disengagement costs companies billions of dollars every year as a result of high turnover and low employee and customer satisfaction (Krueger & Killham, 2005; O'Neal & Gebauer, 2006; Towers Perrin, 2007). Estimates based on a 2005 Gallup Consulting survey showed that decreased productivity of disengaged employees affected the overall economy in the United States by approximately \$300 billion (Krueger & Killham, 2005). Organizations who do not address these needs may find themselves in the company of other organizations who have employees negatively affecting their businesses, which may lead to their future demise.

Hospitality related businesses are at extreme risk of negative effects resulting from disengaged employees as customers rely on the care given by the service employees at each encounter. If customers perceive that the employees are disengaged and does not care about them, customers may look for another service provider to meet their needs (Kaye & Jordan-Evans, 2000). Recognizing the impact that engaged employees have on their businesses, many organizations, including hotels, are investing in professional development training programs designed to provide the necessary information for senior leaders to engage their employees; this, in turn, affects the customer experience (Kaye & Jordan-Evans, 2000; Lamoureux, 2008). ASTD's research among business leaders highlighted the lack of professional development training programs focused on promoting employee engagement. Organizational leaders relied on workplace learning to improve employee engagement through the design and development of specific engagement programs for their employees in supervisory positions (2008).

#### Purpose of the Study

The primary purpose of this research study was to explore the effectiveness of a professional development training program on employee engagement levels in a particular organization. More specifically, the objective of the study was to determine how engagement training contributes to the application of engagement concepts and activities in the workplace for hotels, and how the application of engagement concepts and activities influence high employee engagement levels. An organization's professional development and training department must be able to show that specific programs affect

their audiences in ways that produce change. In general, the goal of professional development training programs was to strengthen the overall effectiveness of employees, bringing them together as high performing teams ensuring returns to the shareholders (Bates, 2004; Hughey & Mussnug, 1997; Kirkpatrick 1998; Phillips, 1996, 1997). Qualitative research methodology concepts were used to determine the effectiveness of professional development training focused on promoting employee engagement.

### Theoretical Framework

Kahn's (1990) engagement model and Kirkpatrick's (Kirkpatrick, 1998) evaluation model were selected to help explain the basis of the study. Kahn's (1990) engagement model draws from his two studies focused on employee engagement and disengagement in the workplace. Kahn found that an employee's engagement in the workplace falls into three dimensions: (a) meaningfulness, (b) safety, and (c) availability. Meaningfulness refers to the idea that employees must gain a return from the investments they make at work, which may include feeling valued, or being able to contribute to work. Influences on the meaningfulness dimension include job tasks, roles in the organization, and interactions.

Kahn (1990) found that employees must also feel safe and secure in order to share their thoughts, ideas, and feelings without fear of reciprocity. Factors that influence the safety dimension include organizational values and norms, their leader's behavior, team dynamics, and interpersonal relationships.

The last dimension is availability. Employees must have the capacity for physical, emotional, and psychological availability. Employees' lives outside of work, as well as their self-efficacy, influence this dimension.

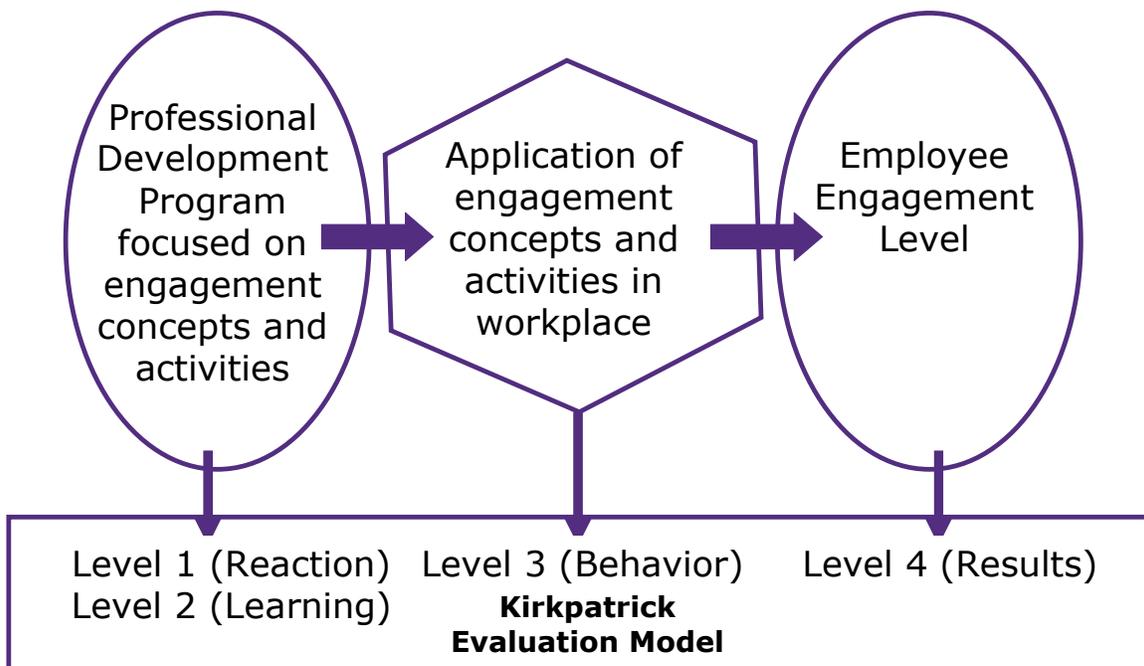
In addition to Kahn's engagement model, Kirkpatrick's (Kirkpatrick, 1998) evaluation model was also utilized to develop secondary research questions. Kirkpatrick communicated that the process of evaluation is part of a greater progression when designing professional development training programs regardless of organizational type. Kirkpatrick advocated using the following steps when designing and implementing professional development programs: "(1) determining needs, (2) setting objectives, (3) determining subject content, (4) selecting participants, (5) determining the best schedule, (6) selecting appropriate facilities, (7) selecting appropriate instructors, (8) selecting and preparing audiovisual aids, (9) coordinating the program, and evaluating the program" (p. 3).

Kirkpatrick (Kirkpatrick, 1998) identified three main reasons as to why learning leaders should evaluate professional development training programs. First, they need to show the value of the organizational design and training, and how they contributed to the overall organizational strategy. Secondly, evaluation should take place when one was determining whether to continue or discontinue specific programs. Lastly, instructional designers used evaluation when determining what curriculum updates were needed to improve learners' outcomes (Kirkpatrick, 1998). Kirkpatrick identified the following four levels of evaluation used by instructional designers. The levels were: (a) level 1, reaction; (b) level 2, learning; (c) level 3, behavior; and (d) level 4, results. Level 1 is the

participant's reaction to the learning they encountered. Level 2 is the learning that occurred at the training session in terms of a participant's skill level, attitude, or overall knowledge. Level 3 includes behavioral changes that occur in daily work routines. Level 4 refers to the return on investing time and money for the individual to attend professional development programs.

### Conceptual Framework

Figure 1 shows the conceptual framework for the study. The conceptual framework included the variables used in the study, and utilizes Kirkpatrick's model of evaluation. Kahn's (1990) three dimensions of meaningfulness, safety, and availability are embedded in the professional development program focused on employee engagement concepts.



*Figure 1.1: Conceptual Framework for the Study*

The engagement concepts and activities are defined as engagement drivers that include leadership, development, environment, and teamwork, and are drawn from specific terminology used in the hospitality organization studied (Anonymous, 2005). The organization's leadership driver explores the capability and performance of the employee's leader, including the leader's communication, performance management, and ability to build relationships. The development driver determines the employee engagement level based on the employee's opinion of the effectiveness of their work place as well as the opportunity for training and career development. The organization utilizes the environment driver to evaluate the perceptions employees have about their work environment quality in terms of the amount of work they are asked to do, how enriched and empowered they are, and the ability to balance their work and life demands. Additionally, the environment driver measures how safe and secure employees feel in their workplaces and the availability of resources to assist in life choices. The teamwork driver measures engagement with regard to assessment of work groups' effectiveness by looking at co-worker interactions and the quality of service and performance delivered by team members.

The conceptual framework for the study illustrates the progression of a leader from participation in engagement professional development training to implementation of the activities and concepts learned. Evaluation methodology is utilized to assess the results. Levels 1 and 2 of the evaluation are completed during the engagement training highlighting the four engagement drivers (leadership, development, environment, and teamwork).

Level 3 is measured once the leader returns to the workplace and applies the concepts and activities he or she experienced in the training program. Level 4 shows the influence of the leaders' application of the engagement concepts and activities on employees' engagement, as determined by an organizational satisfaction survey.

The research questions for the study were qualitative in nature and were developed based on the literature review and conceptual framework. Interviews were conducted with the leaders and employees of the identified organization.

### Research Questions

#### Primary Research Questions

The following primary research questions guided the study.

- How does the professional development training focused on employee engagement contribute to the application of employee engagement concepts and activities?
- How does the application of employee engagement concepts and activities contribute to high levels of employee engagement?

#### Secondary Research Questions

The following are the secondary research questions utilized in guiding the study. The secondary research questions were developed using Kirkpatrick's (Kirkpatrick, 1998) the four levels of evaluation to help determine the effectiveness of an engagement professional development training program focusing on the organization's engagement

drivers of leadership, development, environment, and teamwork. The secondary research questions are categorized based on by Kirkpatrick's four levels of evaluation.

#### Level 1, Reaction

- What were the participants' reactions to the professional development training program?
- How did the participants feel the professional development training program would help build stronger relationships with their employees?
- How did the participants feel the professional development training program would assist in their development?
- How did the participants feel the professional development training program would assist them with building a positive work environment for their employees?
- How did the participants feel the professional development training program would assist them with building strong teams?

#### Level 2, Learning

- Based on the professional development training program, what ways did the participants learn to affect employee engagement?
- What did the participants learn during the professional development training program that would help improve their communication and build stronger relationships with their employees?

- What did the participants learn during the professional development training program that would improve their ability to assess and discuss career development opportunities for their employees?
- What did the participants learn during the professional development training program that would improve the work environment for their employees?
- What did the participants learn during the professional development training program that would improve the effectiveness of their team?

### Level 3, Behavior

- What activities have the participants completed to increase the engagement of their employees?
- What behaviors have the participants exhibited to improve their leadership capability, including communication and building strong relationships with their employees?
- What actions have the participants taken to provide career development opportunities for their employees?
- What techniques have the participants employed to provide positive work environments?
- What have the participants done to build effective work teams?

#### Level 4, Results

- What is the overall engagement level of the employees based on the participants' last survey?
- What effect has the engagement level of the participants' employees had on their hotel's balanced scorecard?

#### Definitions of Terms

The following are definitions of terms used in the study. The definitions are presented to clarify meanings and help explain the major concepts used in the study. Many of the terms presented are utilized by the hotel organization participating in this study were cited as anonymous ensuring the confidentiality of the organization.

*Development engagement driver* assesses work effectiveness and availability of training and career development opportunities for employees (Anonymous, 2005).

*Discretionary effort* refers to an employee's willingness to take extra steps to ensure the organization succeeds (Fleming & Asplund, 2007; Kahn, 1990).

*Engagement* is the commitment and passion an employee has to excel in his or her role as a member of the organization and contribute to the organization's success (Harter et al., 2002; Kahn, 1990; Ott, 2007).

*Environment engagement driver* measures the quality of the work environment in terms of the amount of work required, job enrichment, empowerment, work-life balance, safety and security, and available resources (Anonymous, 2005).

*Leadership engagement driver* quantifies leadership capability and performance, including communication, performance management, and relationship building (Anonymous, 2005).

*Leadership teams* are the individuals on a team perceived as a leader of the organization based on their influence and empowerment levels whether paid by the hour or a salary (Carson, Tesluk, & Marrone, 2007).

*Learning leader* is an individual who strategically looks at the growth and developmental need areas of the individuals within an organization and determines curriculum and learning objectives for developmental programs (Senge, 1990, 2006). A learning leader also ensures that the employees of an organization have the tools, knowledge and resources needed to obtain identified organizational outcomes.

*Level 1 Evaluation, Reaction* measures the participant's reaction to a learning experience, typically evaluated by surveys (Kirkpatrick, 1998).

*Level 2 Evaluation, Learning* assesses what the participant learned during training and/or learning experience, typically evaluated by questionnaire, examination or demonstration (Kirkpatrick, 1998).

*Level 3 Evaluation, Behavior* evaluates the participant's behavioral changes that occur in their daily work routine after attending a training session and/or learning experience (Kirkpatrick, 1998). Examination, demonstration, and observation evaluate the change in behavior.

*Level 4 Evaluation, Result* quantifies the return on investing time and money for the individual to attend professional development programs (Kirkpatrick, 1998). Various evaluation methods measure the results, including an increase in productivity, cost reduction, and increased profits.

*Return on Investment, (ROI)*, is the outcome of an investment. ROI is typically measured in either profit or cost savings such as an increase in productivity, satisfaction, etc. Determining factors utilized to proceed in a business venture include the ROI (Phillips, 1996).

*Senior leader* is a leader who has strategic decision-making or influence power within the organization (O'Neal & Gebauer, 2006).

*Teamwork engagement driver* evaluates work group effectiveness in terms of co-worker interaction, quality of service and performance (Anonymous, 2005).

### Research Methods

A qualitative multi-case study design, including within-case analysis and a cross-case analysis, was used to investigate the application of engagement concepts and activities that leaders received during an engagement professional development training program. Merriam (1998) and Yin (2003) recommend utilizing case study design when a study explores real life events. A case study design provides researchers a holistic view of the study and improves external validity (Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2003). The qualitative multi-case study allowed the researcher to examine the application of engagement concepts and activities that leaders utilized after attending an engagement professional

development program. The researcher conducted interviews with the leaders and employees who participated in the program. The researcher also made observations, compiled notes, and obtained copies of documents reinforcing the application of the engagement concepts.

The researcher utilized Creswell's (2003) data analysis and interpretation process to organize and prepare the data for analysis. Next, the data was reviewed to gain understanding subsequently coded and placed into similar groupings, which generated descriptions and themes for analysis. The researcher then interpreted the emergent themes and lastly provided a robust narrative of the findings.

When the researcher completed the within-case analysis for both research sites, cross-case analysis was employed to improve external validity and provide a dynamic interpretation of data. In cross-case analysis, reflections and groupings are made on reoccurring themes and relational patterns (Yin, 2003). Upon completion of the cross-case analysis, the researcher provided narratives giving meaning to the data analyzed and reported the findings of the study.

### Delimitations

This multi-case research study was delimited by the criteria utilized in determining the selection of the participants for the study. The participants included hotel teams within one hotel brand represented with employee engagement scores for two years averaging in the top quartile of employee engagement scores based on the global hospitality company's engagement metrics. Leaders within these organizations were

required to complete engagement training. The researcher was able to reduce cost and time by narrowing the geographic coverage of hotels located in North Carolina and South Carolina. The sites that met the criteria were exclusively confined to locations in North Carolina.

### Limitations

The weaknesses or limitations of this study centered on the researcher's existing professional relationships with participants of the study. The researcher utilized numerous validating methods to reduce potential bias. An additional limitation is the ability of the participants to evoke specific details of the professional development program they attended.

Leadership of the hotels, including the leaders' employees, participated in interviews conducted on the organization's worksite. Approximately half of the properties' employees participated in the interviews. The employees that did not participate in the interviews may have different views of their managers' application of the engagement concepts and activities of the professional development program.

Qualitative case studies utilize a cross-case analysis to limit affects to the internal validity (Yin, 2003); however, the findings may not be generalized across all teams and may be specific to the teams who participated in the study due to the small number of locations that participated in this research study.

### Significance of the Study

This study provides significance in two areas. The first area of significance focuses on the application of engagement strategies by leaders within today's organizations to drive organizational outcomes. By identifying themes, behaviors, and strategies that the leaders of these high performing work teams employed, leaders of other businesses may evaluate the practicality of including engagement strategies in their daily routines to drive outcomes.

The second area of significance in the study identifies the activities and concepts from engagement training leaders have applied in their everyday workplaces by utilizing Kirkpatrick's (Kirkpatrick, 1998) evaluation model. Learning leaders cannot provide a return on investment (or ROI) for any leadership professional development programs, or supply evidence of the impact they have on an organization, if they do not perform an evaluation on the programs. Studies completed by several researchers including Gallup Consulting and Towers Perrin highlighted the impact engaged employees have on organizational profits resulting from decreased accidents and employee turnover, increased employee and customer satisfaction, and increased productivity (Asplund et al., 2007; Harter et al., 2002; Krueger & Killham, 2005; O'Neal & Gebauer, 2006; Towers Perrin, 2007).

## Organization of the Study

This research study includes five chapters. The first chapter contains an introduction to the importance of employee engagement and the impact it has on organizational success. It also details the nature of the problem, and the reasoning for the study's commencement.

The second chapter contains a thorough literature review of various topics foundational to this study, including employee engagement, professional development training programs, and their effectiveness (including transfer of learning and evaluation).

The third chapter includes the research design, detailing how the participants were chosen, the collection of data, and how the data were analyzed.

The fourth chapter communicates the findings of each case study, including the cross-case analysis.

The fifth chapter includes a summary of the findings and reviews the conclusion, including the emergent themes of how leaders of highly engaged teams apply the concepts and activities from an engagement professional development training program. Further research and implications for learning leaders are also presented.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a synthesis of the existing literature pertinent to employee engagement and the application of training programs. The review begins with a summary of the extant literatures related to employee engagement, and continues by identifying the impact employee engagement has on organizational outcomes. Engagement theories and models are reviewed, including the theoretical framework utilized in this study: Kahn's (1990) engagement model. The literature review continues with an overview of employee engagement professional development programs, including a synthesis of transfer of learning theories. Concluding the chapter is the amalgamation of evaluation theories, including: Tyler's (Gusky, 2000), Kirkpatrick's (Kirkpatrick, 1998), Gusky's (2000), and Phillip's (1996, 1997).

#### Employee Engagement

Employee engagement research evolved from studies focused on work motivation, empowerment, organizational citizenship behavior, leadership, organizational culture, and high performing teams (Ambrose & Kulik, 1999; Deci, 1971; Maslow, 1943; Ramlall, 2004). While each of these research areas identified influencers to drive employee productivity, satisfaction, and empowerment, it was Kahn's 1990 research of

two diverse groups, which identified themes, or drivers of engagement and disengagement in the workplace.

Kahn defined employee engagement in 1990 as “the harnessing of organizational members to their work role” (p. 694). The definition expanded by researchers, (Harter et al., 2002; Kahn, 1990; Ott, 2007) described employee engagement as the commitment and passion that employees have to excel in their role within an organization. The American Society of Training and Development (ASTD), the Corporate Leadership Council, Gallup Consulting, Macey and Schneider, the Society of Human Resource Professionals (SHRM), and Towers Perrin conducted additional employee engagement research. The definition of employee engagement was expanded to include the satisfaction, enthusiasm, involvement, and commitment of an employee (Corporate Executive Board, 2004; Harter et al., 2002; Lockwood, 2007; Macey & Schneider, 2008; O’Neal & Gebauer, 2006, Paradise, 2008).

### Impact of Employee Engagement

Research on the effects of employee engagement indicated an impact on several key organizational metrics, including employee turnover rate, accident rates, customer satisfaction, productivity, income, and profits (Asplund et al., 2007; Harter et al., 2002). Further research, including studies conducted by the Corporate Leadership Council, Gallup Consulting, SHRM, and Towers Perrin, indicated that organizations with highly engaged employees had greater organizational results than those that did not. The impacted organizational results included increased customer satisfaction, employee

productivity, profits, and earnings per share of the publically traded organizations (Asplund et al., 2007; Corporate Leadership Council, 2004; Harter et al., 2002; Lockwood, 2007; Krueger & Killham, 2005; Ott, 2007; Paradise, 2008).

ASTD's survey of 750 leaders suggested employee engagement affected a variety of business outcomes (2008), including enhanced customer service, increased customer satisfaction, and increased productivity. Other engagement outcomes identified included stronger team dynamics, morale, and organizational alignment.

The Corporate Leadership Council conducted employee research on more than 50,000 employees at 59 global organizations, which identified key engagement findings. The study indicated employees with the highest level of commitment executed 20% better and were 87% less likely to resign from their organization than those employees who were not highly committed.

Gallup Consulting conducted employee and management performance research in an effort to improve organizational performance globally. Gallup researched earnings per share from organizations with highly engaged employees compared to organizations with disengaged employees. The study's population was drawn from companies who had participated in Gallup's Employee Engagement Q12 survey, comparing their earnings per share to their competitors, and percentage difference from 2004-2005 industry equivalent to a baseline three-year average from 2001-2003 (Asplund et al., 2007). The results showed that organizations with disengaged employees offered only a 3.1% increase in earnings per share to their stockholders, versus those in the top 25% of engaged

employees who had an 18% gain. The disengaged group also showed a higher incident of accidents, turnover and inventory shrinkage (Ott, 2007).

SHRM's engagement research identified engagement trends, impact, and drivers of employee engagement. SHRM's research indicated engagement might significantly affect employee turnover, productivity and commitment, or loyalty to the organization. Engagement also associated with customer satisfaction, stakeholder value, and organizational character.

Towers Perrin, another leader in employee and management research, conducted a global workforce study in 2005 to gain insight into the impact and variables that affect engagement. Over 86,000 full time employees from mid to large size companies located in 16 countries participated. The study showed that 24% of employees were disengaged. The research also showed that only 31% of disengaged employees believed that the work they completed would improve the quality of the organization's product, whereas 84% of the engaged employees held this belief (O'Neal & Gebauer, 2006). Disengaged employees were less committed (24%) to stay with their current employers than engaged employees (59%) were. Towers Perrin completed an additional global study in 2007, which investigated 40 companies' financial results in relation to their engagement data. They found that companies with the "lowest percentage of engaged employees showed year-to-year declines of 33% in operating income and 11% in earnings per share (Towers Perrin, 2007).

Engagement research presented various effects of employee engagement including turnover, customer experience, and productivity. The research further indicated

that organizations with high employee engagement have greater organizational results including earnings per share than organizations with low employee engagement.

### Engagement Theories and Models

Kahn's (1990) engagement model highlighted common themes of engagement and disengagement that emerged among his diverse research groups. The model's themes included meaningfulness, safety, and availability. Kahn (1990) defined meaningfulness as when an employee felt that the work they were doing was making a positive contribution to the organization. There were factors that influence one's degree of meaningfulness, including the tasks completed, perceived value of their position, and alignment of personal values. The degree of engagement derived from the perception the employee had on how much creativity, challenge, and degree of ownership they had on a given task. The second factor contributing to one's meaningfulness was the employee's perception of the value placed on their role as it influenced stakeholders valued by the organization. The last factor was work interactions, specifically the alignment of the employee's personal and professional values and the organization's goals and values.

Kahn's second theme affecting engagement was safety. This theme identified to what degree an employee felt they could show their true feelings and opinions without fear of negative backlash. Through Kahn's (1990) research, he found that there were influencing factors to one's safety. The degree of trust that one felt with another employee or supervisor, based on their interpersonal relationship, influenced the level of engagement. Kahn also found this existed with group and intergroup dynamics.

Management style and process also affected employee engagement based on the employees' perception of their leaders' trust in them, as well as the employees' perceived competency of their leaders. Lastly, organizational norms influenced how safe employees felt, and then determined if they were going to exert themselves.

The last theme Kahn (1990) identified to impact the level of engagement was the employees' availability. Availability are the employees' "sense of possessing the physical, emotional, and psychological resources necessary for investing [them]selves in role performances" (p. 705). Availability was determined by the employees' capacity to exert themselves physically and emotionally. Availability was also impacted by employees' self-efficacy, as well as factors influenced by their outside life and responsibilities. The more secure an employee felt in each of the dimensions, the greater the employee's engagement.

Research conducted by May, Gilson, and Harter (2004) reinforced Kahn's (1990) model. The researchers found meaningfulness had the strongest effect on engagement, followed significantly by safety. An employee's leader influenced the employee's sense of safety significantly compared to other influencers (May et al., 2004). The research also indicated that employees' emotional and physical resources had the largest impact on their availability (May et al., 2004).

The Corporate Leadership Council's 2004 engagement study encompassed 50,000 employees among 59 global organizations. The research resulted in the introduction of an engagement model based on their key findings. The model identified two categories of engagement drivers: 1) rational commitment, which included team, manager, and

organization; and 2) emotional commitment, which included job, team, manager, and organization (Corporate Executive Board, 2004). Rational commitment drove an employee's discretionary effort. This effort affected the employee's performance. Emotional commitment lent to the employee's intent to stay with the organization; affecting overall retention (Corporate Executive Board, 2004). The Corporate Leadership Council's (2004) findings indicated emotional engagement was four times more significant in driving employee effort compared to rational engagement. Employees' length of employment with their organization increased when the employees believed it was in their self-interest to stay. The Corporate Leadership Council's research also suggested that employees exerted discretionary effort when they believed their jobs had value to themselves, their teams, and their organizations. Lastly, the research indicated that an employee's manager facilitated the employee's emotional commitment to the job and organization (Corporate Executive Board, 2004).

The Corporate Leadership Council (2004) identified a number of levers of employee engagement. These levers or drivers of employee engagement included good internal communication, a reputation of integrity, and a culture of innovation. Management competencies identified to increase employee engagement included caring for employees, defending direct reports, and respecting employees as individuals. The Corporate Leadership Council's research also reviewed employee engagement of demographic groups. The researchers found no difference in employees' engagement levels based on demographics. The Council also found that perceptions of each individual

employee determined the engagement levels of the employee versus group dynamics (Corporate Executive Board, 2004).

### Employee Engagement Professional Development Training Programs

Studies completed by ASTD, Corporate Leadership Council, Gallup Consulting, Kahn, and Towers Perrin showed elements that drive employee engagement. These drivers included the importance of leadership taking a sincere interest in the employee, developing and assisting the employee growth in knowledge and career opportunities. Employees also desired a return on their investment of time and effort with the organization. This return actualized when employees felt valued for the contributions they made to the organization (Corporate Executive Board, 2004; Harter et al., 2002; Lockwood, 2007; O'Neal & Gebauer, 2006, Paradise, 2008). Good relationships between supervisors and employees strengthened the security that employees felt when they shared their thoughts and ideas. Lastly, the alignment of the organizational norms and values with employees strengthened their commitment and the perceived reputation and credibility of the organization and their team (Asplund et al., 2007; Corporate Executive Board, 2004; Kahn, 1990; O'Neal & Gebauer, 2006; Paradise, 2008).

ASTD collected data from 750 people investigating organizational processes related to employee engagement, including support, training, and evaluation of learning provided to the organizations' employees (Paradise, 2008). Business leaders, including learning and human resource professionals, focused on their organizational processes relating to the evaluation, in the learning, human resource and operation areas of the

organization. ASTD reported organizational leaders rely on workplace learning to improve employee engagement. ASTD also found that most of the organizations participating in the research, designed and developed professional development training programs focused on employee engagement for their managers and supervisors (2008). Kaye and Jordan-Evans (2000) and Lamoureux (2008) found service-related organizations, including hotels, invested in professional development training programs designed to provide the necessary information for property leaders to engage their employees, which, in turn, affects the customer experience and organizational results.

#### Effectiveness of Employee Engagement Professional Development Programs

Transfer of learning theories interweave with evaluation models to measure the effectiveness of professional development training programs. Evaluation models share a commonality with transfer of learning theories in measuring the application of skills, knowledge, and behaviors reviewed in a professional development training program. Transfer of learning theories focus on specific influencers of retention and application of content received. Evaluation and transfer of learning models are discussed.

#### Evaluation

Evaluation metrics are used to measure the effectiveness of a professional development training program. Tyler (1942) was one of the pioneers in educational evaluation, with work completed in the 1930s and 1940s (Gusky, 2000). Tyler “believed

that the essential first step in any evaluation is clarification of the program or activity's goals" (p. 48). Tyler's linear evaluation model consists of the following steps.

1. Establish broad goals or objectives
2. Classify or order the goals or objectives
3. Define the goals or objectives in observable terms
4. Find situations in which achievement of the objectives is demonstrated
5. Develop or select measurement techniques
6. Collect performance data
7. Compare the performance data with the stated objectives (p. 49)

From Tyler's model, other models evolved in evaluating educational programs. These included Metfessel and Michael, Hammond, Scriven's Goal-Free, and Stufflebeam's CIPP, (context evaluation, input evaluation, process evaluation and product evaluation) (Gusky, 2000; Phillips, 1996, 1997). While these evaluation models were utilized in higher education to evaluate professional development training programs, they were not applied in evaluation practices in the business sector. In 1959, Donald L. Kirkpatrick developed an evaluation model designed to "judge the quality, efficiency, and effectiveness of supervisory training programs in business and industry" (p. 55).

Kirkpatrick stated the process of evaluation is part of a greater progression when designing professional development programs, regardless of organizational type. Kirkpatrick (Kirkpatrick, 1998) outlined a number of steps to follow when designing and implementing development programs:

1. Determining needs
2. Setting objectives
3. Determining subject content
4. Selecting participants
5. Determining the best schedule
6. Selecting appropriate facilities
7. Selecting appropriate instructors
8. Selecting and preparing audiovisual aids
9. Coordinating the program
10. Evaluating the program (p. 3)

Kirkpatrick identified three reasons that learning leaders should evaluate professional development programs. First, learning leaders need to show the value of the organizational design and training department, and detail how they contribute to overall organizational strategies. Evaluation should also take part when one is determining whether to continue or discontinue specific programs. Lastly, instructional designers utilize evaluation methods to determine curriculum updates needed to improve learners' outcomes (Kirkpatrick, 1998).

Kirkpatrick identified four levels of evaluation to determine the overall effectiveness of a professional development training program:

- Level 1, Reaction
- Level 2, Learning

- Level 3, Behavior
- Level 4, Results

Level 1 is the participant's reaction to the learning they encountered. Level 2 is the learning that occurs when there is a change in the participant's skill level, attitude, or overall knowledge. Level 3 is behavioral changes that occur in their daily work routines. Level 4 is the return on investing time and money for the individual to attend professional development programs.

Kirkpatrick's model influenced additional models, including Gusky and Phillip's, in both higher education and the business sector. Thomas Gusky's model adapted Kirkpatrick's model for use in higher education organizations. His evaluation model outlined the five levels of professional development education (Gusky, 2000):

- Level 1, Participants' reactions
- Level 2, Participants' learning
- Level 3, Organization support and change
- Level 4, Participants' use of new knowledge and skills
- Level 5, Student learning outcomes (p. 79-81)

Phillips' Five-Level ROI Framework (1996, 1997), adapted from Kirkpatrick's four levels of evaluation model, has been utilized by organizational learning leaders to evaluate training programs. The fifth level of Phillips' model measures the return on investment, determining the monetary value of the results and costs of the program.

Regardless of the model utilized, researchers have argued that the evaluation models are flawed, specifically in measuring behavioral change and results from a

professional development program. The criticism is that researchers typically do not account for the numerous factors that may influence the outcome of evaluation, resulting in criterion bias (Brogdon & Taylor, 1950; Morrow, Jarrett & Rupinski, 1997). Criterion bias typically occurs when assessing either behavior changes or the results of a professional development training program. Participants attending professional development training programs may not always have the opportunity to practice or reinforce their learnings when they return to their worksite. This inability often distorts the evaluation of behavioral change as well as assessing the transfer of learning.

Most frequently, criterion bias actualizes when measuring results. Therefore, it is imperative that evaluators consider all of the factors that may have affected the results they are assessing. Leading evaluation theorists outlined processes to counteract criterion bias (Kirkpatrick, 1998; Phillips, 1996, 1997). These processes to counteract criterion bias included the following.

1. Evaluating only skills, behaviors and knowledge associated with the training;
2. Identifying any influencing factors to the outcome;
3. Using a control group, measuring results before and after the professional development training program while allowing time for results to occur;
4. Repeating the assessment as individuals complete the program (Brogden & Taylor, 1950; Kirkpatrick, 1998; Morrow et al., 1997; Phillips, 1996, 1997).

## Transfer of Learning

To ensure leaders have the knowledge, and are able to apply the principles of engagement, many organizations have designed training programs around engagement theories to capture their positive outcomes (Paradise, 2008). Researchers investigated the amount of learning retained and applied by the learners when they completed a training program. The study indicated that the transfer of learning from professional development training programs was strengthened by designing programs that contained learning activities which reinforced the learning in the training program with the participant, prior to the formal training, during the training, and after the training (D'Eon & AuYeung, 2001; Devlin, 2005; Lim & Morris, 2006; Saks & Belcourt, 2006).

Saks and Belcourt (2006) conducted a study that indicated by reinforcing the learning of a training program prior, during, and after the facilitator led program, knowledge transferred was 62% immediately following the program. The participants were surveyed again at 6 and 12 months after the program. After these two administrations of the survey, the transfer of knowledge from the professional development training program was 44% and 34% respectively. They also found that an organizational climate that embraced learning, with a support system to reinforce the learnings, strengthened the amount of knowledge transferred and utilized on the job after employee attendance of a professional development training program. Many organizational designers evaluate professional training development programs targeted at these principles to ensure leaders applied the concepts of engagement in the workplace in an effort to achieve measurable results.

## Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to provide a thorough review of the literature pertaining to employee engagement and the application of training programs. The review began by summarizing the impact of employee engagement on an organization's retention, productivity, and overall business outcomes.

Engagement theories and models followed this segment of the chapter, highlighting several theories and models that postulated the factors that affect engagement at work (Corporate Executive Board, 2004, Kahn, 1990; May et al., 2004; O'Neal & Gebauer, 2006).

The chapter's focus continued with an overview of employee engagement professional development programs and their effectiveness, with a concentration on evaluation and the transfer of learning. These theories outlined the value of sustained learning in the workplace with follow-up activities and evaluation of the transfer of learning. The literature review also outlined recommendations to control criterion bias when evaluating professional development programs.

## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY

#### Introduction

This chapter presents the research design and procedures utilized in this study. The chapter begins with an overview of the selected research design, followed by a review of the primary and secondary research questions. The criteria utilized for determining case selections are presented, along with a summary of expectations and role of the researcher. The other sections include the process utilized to gain Institutional Review Board approval, the processes and protocol employed in data collection, and data analysis. The chapter concludes with the strategies to enhance validity, ethical considerations, and a summary of the procedures.

#### Research Design

A qualitative multi-case study design was used to examine the experiences of leaders regarding the application of engagement concepts and activities they received during an engagement professional development training program. Qualitative multi-case study was utilized as it “allows investigators to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events—such as...organizational and managerial processes” (Yin, 2003, p. 2) Yin proposed employing the case study approach, as it is most appropriate when asking how and why questions and when the study is bounded by time. Creswell (2003), Merriam (1998), and Yin (2003) also recommend that researchers use a

multi-case study approach, a study that includes more than one case, as it provides a rich, intense picture compared to completing a single case study. Cross-case synthesis is advocated when analyzing data to improve external validity and consider the research more vigorous (Merriam, 1998; Yin 2003).

Designing a case study protocol allows researchers to augment the reliability of their study (Creswell, 2003; Yin, 2003). The protocol outlines the process and system of conducting the case study. The protocol includes research questions and interview questions utilized to uncover the participants' experiences, participant selection, summary of the case study, field procedures, and a format to follow for reporting the case study. The protocol for this study begins with the research questions.

### Research Questions

Merriam (1998) and Yin (2003) recommend that case study questions are designed to provide a clear picture of the participants' experiences surrounding the study's events. This study's protocol included the design of how and why questions to allow the participants to answer the research questions in their own words without parameters.

### Primary Research Questions

The following primary research questions guided the study.

- How does the professional development training focused on employee engagement contribute to the application of employee engagement concepts and activities?
- How does the application of employee engagement concepts and activities contribute to high levels of employee engagement?

### Secondary Research Questions

Supplemental secondary research questions were developed utilizing Kirkpatrick's (Kirkpatrick, 1998) four levels of evaluation to facilitate the determination of the effectiveness of an engagement professional development training program focused on the organization's engagement drivers of leadership, development, environment, and teamwork.

#### Level 1, Reaction

- What were the participants' reactions to the professional development training program?
- How did the participants feel the professional development training program would help build stronger relationships with their employees?
- How did the participants feel the professional development training program would assist in their development?

- How did the participants feel the professional development training program would assist them with building a positive work environment for their employees?
- How did the participants feel the professional development training program would assist them with building strong teams?

#### Level 2, Learning

- Based on the professional development training program, what ways did the participants learn to affect employee engagement?
- What did the participants learn during the professional development training program that would help improve their communication and build stronger relationships with their employees?
- What did the participants learn during the professional development training program that would improve their ability to assess and discuss career development opportunities for their employees?
- What did the participants learn during the professional development training program that would improve the work environment for their employees?
- What did the participants learn during the professional development training program that would improve the effectiveness of their team?

### Level 3, Behavior

- What activities have the participants completed to increase the engagement of their employees?
- What behaviors have the participants exhibited to improve their leadership capability, including communication and building strong relationships with their employees?
- What actions have the participants taken to provide career development opportunities for their employees?
- What techniques have the participants employed to provide positive work environments?
- What have the participants done to build effective work teams?

### Level 4, Results

- What is the overall engagement level of the employees based on the participants' last survey?
- What effect has the engagement level of the participants' employees had on their hotel's balanced scorecard?

The researcher utilized specific interview questions, which mapped directly to the research study's primary and secondary questions. The interview questions allowed the researcher to obtain a rich scope of the participants' experiences (see Appendix A).

### Case Selection

Yin (2003) recommended a two-stage screening process of candidates for the study when the study has more than 30 possible candidates. The first stage of the screening identifies the potential candidates for a study. This research study identified potential participants, consisting of hotel leadership teams representing one hotel brand from a global hospitality company with over 271 North America locations in the first stage of screening. Prospective participants were over 10,000 individuals, which averaged 40 individuals per location. The second stage of screening identifies operational criteria to determine qualified cases or participants (Yin, 2003). The second stage of the screening criteria for the candidates of this study included geographical limitations imposed due to convenience and cost of visiting the host sites to conduct the research. Potential case selections were drawn from North Carolina and South Carolina. Table 1 presents the site locations including additional criteria elements utilized in the study. The elements included are the property's employee engagement index (EEI) scores for the past two years and their compliance with the engagement professional development training program.

Table 1

*North and South Carolina Employee Engagement Indices*

Location	Employee Engagement Index			Training Completed	Incumbent Manager
	2009	2008	Average		
Charleston, SC	70	83	76.5	Yes	No
Charlotte (1), NC	100	70	85.0	Yes	No
Charlotte (2), NC	96	80	88.0	Yes	Yes
Charlotte (3), NC	78	84	81.0	No	No
Durham, NC	100	85	92.5	Yes	Yes
Greensboro, NC	81	94	87.5	Yes	Yes
Greenville, SC	70	91	80.5	No	No
Myrtle Beach, SC	71	82	76.5	Yes	Yes
Raleigh (1), NC	79	97	88.0	No	No
Raleigh (2), NC	58	85	71.5	Yes	Yes
Raleigh (3), NC	94	95	94.5	Yes	Yes
Spartanburg, SC	96	79	87.5	Yes	Yes

Table 1 identifies the potential candidates for the study, highlighting the locations' EEI scores which ranged from 71.5—94.5 % over a two year period. The table also depicts leaderships compliance of their completion of the professional development training program focused on engagement. Based on the results of the properties located in North and South Carolina, the remainder of the second screening process was completed.

The criteria establish indicated the potential site locations for the study. Table 2 identifies the cases chosen for the multi-case study.

Table 2

*Multi-Case Study Participants*

Location	Employee Engagement Index			Training Completed	Incumbent Manager
	2009	2008	Average		
Durham, NC	100	85	92.5	Yes	Yes
Raleigh (3), NC	94	95	94.5	Yes	Yes

Table 2 identifies the two properties, located in North Carolina, who met the criteria determined for the study. Both locations' EEI were in the global hospitality company's top quartile of employee engagement index results. Lastly, the leadership teams had completed the professional development training program focused on employee engagement.

Participants

Participants in this research study consisted of leaders of the global hospitality brand who completed the professional development training program focused on employee engagement and met the study's criteria with their employee engagement scores falling into the top quartile of their brand's employee engagement metrics. The employees who participated in the study accepted the invitation to share their experiences

and provide examples of how their property leaders applied the engagement concepts and activities in the workplace.

Site I had 45.2% of its 31 employees participate in the study. The participants from Site I consisted of 3 leaders and 11 of their employees. Site II participants totaled 10 employees or 47.6% of the property's 21 employees. Site II participants include 3 individuals from the leadership team and 7 employees. Overall, there were 6 leaders and 21 employees who participated in the study. The leaders completed the professional development training program focused on employee engagement between 2005 and 2006. Aliases or pseudonyms were used in the findings of the research study to ensure anonymity of the global hotel brand, the specific hotel properties and their employees. Site I is referred to as Hotel Marco and Site II as Hotel Rico.

### Role of the Researcher

Creswell, (2003) Merriam (1998) and Yin (2003) identified competencies and positions the researcher must employ when conducting research, as they are the primary mechanism to gather information. Researchers must possess skills and characteristics, which allows them to build rapport with the participants and ask suitable questions while listening with impartiality. Although it is important that researchers have an understanding of the issues being studied, it is their responsibility to identify any possible biases or preconceived ideas of the study's outcome (Creswell, 2003; Yin, 2003). Identifying potential biases is especially important when researchers complete their study in a familiar environment.

The researcher for this case study is employed by the global hospitality company utilized in this study and has facilitated the professional development training program being examined. Additionally, the researcher is familiar with several of the participants, having prior professional relationships with them. This prior familiarity evoked a feeling of rapport, comfort, and trust, which is necessary when conducting case study research, and allowed the researcher to adapt and be flexible with the interview questions based on the responses of the participants. The researcher employed numerous strategies in validating the data, which are discussed later in this chapter.

#### Institutional Review Board Approval

The researcher applied for expedited status from the Institutional Review Board, (IRB). The IRB approved the research study (see Appendix B), at which time the researcher sent an overview of the study inviting the leaders and employees of the research sites to participate in the study (see Appendices C and D). The researcher secured the participants' consent for their participation (see Appendices E and F) prior to conducting data collection. Following a criterion of the IRB, the participants were given the option to abandon their participation in the research study at anytime. The participants had the opportunity to review the data collected from their interviews to ensure its accuracy and that it represented their perspectives (see Appendix G). This process is also known as member checking (Creswell, 2003; Yin, 2003).

### Data Collection

Case study protocol identified by Yin (2003) outlined guiding principles when collecting case study data. These included utilizing multiples sources of evidence, use of a case study database and retaining a chain of evidence. Yin suggested utilizing as many sources of evidence as possible. Examples of these sources include documentation, archival records, interviews, direct observations, participant observations, and physical artifacts. The data collected for this study included observations and interviews with the leaders who attended the engagement professional development training program, interviews with the leaders' employees, company documents, artifacts and other archival records.

Interviews were conducted in person with the leaders. Employee interviews occurred individually and in group sessions. An interpreter was utilized to translate the interview questions with employees whose native language was one other than English. The interpreters utilized were employed at the specific sites participating in the study and translated routinely at their properties. The interviews were guided by open-ended, probing questions. This approach allowed free flowing responses by the participants. This less structured interview format offered flexibility for the researcher to reply with appropriate follow-up questions based on the participants' responses (Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2003).

Each interview session lasted approximately 60 minutes. The researcher completed three leadership interviews, and two group employee interviews at Site I, Hotel Marco. One group consisted of five employees, and the other group consisted of six

employees. The researcher completed six interview sessions at Site II, Hotel Rico. The sessions consisted of three individual leadership and three group employee sessions. One employee group session consisted of two employees; the remaining two sessions had three employees each.

The research study participants did not receive any incentives for their participation. The researcher did, however, provide food and beverages for the participants as several of the interviews occurred during meal periods.

Yin's (2003) principle of maintaining a chain of evidence allows individuals reading the case study to follow the study from origin to conclusion. Kirkpatrick's (Kirkpatrick, 1998) evaluation model was utilized as a guide in the data collection for the study. Data for levels 1 and 2 evaluations were obtained by posing questions to the leadership regarding the engagement professional development training program. The level 3 evaluation was based on the data collected during the research study. The organization's employee engagement scores documented the level 4 evaluation.

Participants agreed to allow the researcher to capture data from the interviews utilizing a digital recording device as well as pen and paper. The digital recording device ensured that all narratives were captured; they were later transcribed in their entirety into Microsoft Office Word®. The transcripts were sent to the participants via overnight courier for member checking. Member checking allowed the participants to ensure the accuracy of the data (Creswell, 2003). The data was then transferred into *NVivo 8*® software.

The researcher took notes throughout the interviews as well as when the researcher completed observations. Observations included interactions between the leaders, the leaders and their employees, and between the employees. Observation notes and interview notes were notated using pen and paper and later summarized based on the researcher's perceptions. The researcher transcribed the notes and placed into *NVivo 8*® for coding. Photographs of company documents and archival records were recorded and uploaded into *NVivo 8*® for coding.

Another case study data collection principle Yin (2003) recommends is the use of a case study database placing all data in two collections, one for the specific data and the second to include the report of the researcher. The case study database is typically completed electronically. In following Yin's guidelines, the researcher contained the data from the research study electronically in two database collections.

### Data Analysis

Data collected at each site were placed in a case study database. The data were analyzed independently following Creswell's (2003) data analysis and interpretation process.

1. Organize and prepare the data for analysis.
2. Synthesize data, gaining a general sense of the information.
3. Complete detailed analysis on data utilizing a coding process.
4. Describe and theme data.

5. Determine how to communicate findings.
6. Interpret the data (p. 191-193).

Following these guidelines, the data were first organized and prepared for analysis. This included transcribing interviews, typing written notes, and sorting documents received utilizing Microsoft Office Word®. The researcher utilized *NVivo 8*® software to complete the remaining steps in the analysis process. Secondly, the data were reviewed to gain an understanding and reflect on its meaning. The third step included detailed analysis by coding the data and organizing into groupings using tree nodes based on the conceptual framework for the study. During the coding process, free nodes were included as additional categories. The data were coded using a total of 11 tree nodes, 88 sub-nodes, and 12 free nodes. The researcher reviewed all of the data, noting overall themes. Groupings were categorized by evaluation level and by the hospitality organization's engagement drivers.

Step 4 utilized the coding process to generate descriptions of the setting, people, categories, and themes for analysis. Table 3 identifies each case and the number of tree nodes and entries for each element of the study. Step 5, the researcher advanced the description and themes determining how the data would be characterized in the study's narrative. The sixth step interpreted and made meaning of the data, identifying the learnings from the case study. Descriptions on each group reflected the emerging themes and patterns.

Table 3

*Data Analysis: Tree Nodes*

Research Site	Name of tree node	Number of sub-nodes	Number of entries
Hotel Marco	Reaction	9	25
	Learning	7	22
	Application	25	228
	Results	4	33
	Engagement	0	21
	Questions	1	5
Hotel Rico	Reaction	9	16
	Learning	7	9
	Application	21	81
	Results	4	15
	Questions	1	5

The data analysis contained 11 tree nodes, 88 sub-nodes, and 947 entries. Table 4 includes the name of the free nodes utilized in the study.

Table 4

*Data Analysis: Free Nodes*

Research Site	Name of Node	Number of entries
Hotel Marco	Development	33
	Environment	89
	Family	18
	Leadership	80
	Pride	16
	Teamwork	42
Hotel Rico	Development	33
	Environment	65
	Family	22
	Leadership	50
	Personal Care	14
	Teamwork	25

Again, free nodes were not attached to any element of the study, rather utilized to create new themes or reinforce existing themes.

When both cases were interpreted, the researcher employed cross-case analysis, which identified groups, recurring themes, and relational patterns cross both locations. Cross-case analysis improved external validity and provides a dynamic interpretation of data (Merriam, 1998; Yin 2003). Upon completion of the cross-case analysis, the

researcher provided narratives giving meaning to the data analyzed and reported the findings of the information (Creswell, 2003; Yin, 2003).

### Validating Findings

The researcher followed the recommended strategies of Creswell (2003) to ensure the precision of the findings. These strategies included the following.

- Triangulation of various data sources
- Member checking to determine accuracy of data
- Providing rich, thick descriptions to communicate findings
- Presentation of negative or discrepant information
- Clarify researcher bias
- Spend prolonged time in the field
- Use peer debriefing to enhance accuracy
- Use an external auditor to review (p. 196)

Following Creswell's (2003) process, the researcher first triangulated the data. This strategy required the researcher to rationalize identified themes collected from numerous data sources. The data sources included site interview transcriptions, collected artifacts, and researcher notes.

Continuing with Creswell's strategies (2003), the researcher utilized member checking procedures. As stated earlier, the participants of this study reviewed the interview transcripts to ensure their accuracy (see Appendix G). They also had an opportunity to review the overall themes the researcher identified when analyzing the

data. This phase of member checking allowed the participants to ensure that the themes identified accurately represented the essence of their perspective.

Maintaining Creswell's approach (2003), the researcher reported the findings of the study utilizing rich, thick descriptions. The robust descriptions included in the narrative allowed the readers to experience the data, as if they were observing the examples along side the participants.

Creswell (2003) and Yin (2003) both recommend that a researcher clarify potential biases and limitations of a study. For this study, potential biases included previous professional relationships with a number of the study's participants and familiarity of the professional development training program investigated. Throughout all aspects of the study, the researcher concentrated on providing a holistic view of the research, reporting findings that may positively and/or negatively affect the organization's professional development training program.

The researcher spent sufficient time in the field, ensuring an in-depth knowledge of the program and the application of the program's concepts and activities. Review of the program's curriculum and supporting materials was completed prior to visiting the case locations. The researcher's dissertation committee chairs provided peer debriefing and external auditing as they assessed the research study's progression providing beneficial feedback to the researcher.

### Ethical Considerations

Several measures were taken during the study to ensure the convenience and safety of the individuals who participated. The researcher scheduled site visits with the leader of each property. The leaders scheduled interviews with employees who volunteered to participate in the study based on business needs and the personal preferences of the employees. The interview sessions were conducted in a controlled method by utilizing set open-ended questions. The design of the questions was specific to the leaders who attended the professional development training program, as well as to their employees (See Appendix A).

Additional practices employed included providing pseudonyms for the organization, the individual hotel properties, the participants, and specific location to protect their identities. Additionally, the digital recordings were removed from the researcher's digital recording device and computer hard drive, and transferred to a compact disc (CD) for deposit.

As mentioned previously, the researcher employed several methods to strengthen the validity of the study and reduce potential bias and delimitations. The methods utilized included member checking of data, triangulation of data sources, and cross-case analysis.

### Chapter Summary

This chapter provided an overview of multi-case study, highlighting the processes used. A qualitative multi-case study design was utilized to investigate the application of engagement concepts and activities that leaders received during an engagement

professional development training program. The chapter covered the specifics of the study's design and reviewed the research questions, case selection, role of the researcher, Institutional Review Board approval, data collection, data analysis including the emergent themes, strategies employed to validate findings, ethical considerations, and a summary of the process.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### FINDINGS

#### Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of an in-depth analysis of data from a multi-case study. The analysis of data includes within-case analysis and a cross-case analysis. The researcher sought to determine how engagement training contributes to the application of engagement concepts and activities in the workplace for hotels, and how the application of engagement concepts and activities influence high employee engagement levels. The researcher analyzed the data independently, utilizing Creswell's (2003) qualitative data analysis and interpretation process. The process utilized included:

1. Organizing and preparing the data for analysis, including transcribing the interviews.
2. Synthesizing the data by reviewing all transcriptions, notes and collected artifacts giving the researcher a holistic view of information.
3. Completing a detailed analysis on data utilizing a coding process.
4. Creating themes of data utilizing a coding process.
5. Describing emerging themes through narratives that paint rich descriptions.
6. Interpreting findings and communicating study learnings.

The chapter begins with the within-case analysis for the first setting. The chapter presents a within-case analysis of the case including a description of the case and a summary of the participants' demographics.

The findings of the study are organized and presented based on the secondary research questions aligned with Kirkpatrick's (Kirkpatrick, 1998) four levels of evaluation. The levels of evaluation include (a) reaction, (b) learning, (c) application, and (d) results. The secondary research questions for each level of evaluation were:

#### Level 1, Reaction

- What were the participants' reactions to the professional development training program?
- How did the participants feel the professional development training program would help build stronger relationships with their employees?
- How did the participants feel the professional development training program would assist in their development?
- How did the participants feel the professional development training program would assist them with building a positive work environment for their employees?
- How did the participants feel the professional development training program would assist them with building strong teams?

#### Level 2, Learning

- Based on the professional development training program, what ways did the participants learn to affect employee engagement?
- What did the participants learn during the professional development training program that would help improve their communication and build stronger relationships with their employees?

- What did the participants learn during the professional development training program that would improve their ability to assess and discuss career development opportunities for their employees?
- What did the participants learn during the professional development training program that would improve the work environment for their employees?
- What did the participants learn during the professional development training program that would improve the effectiveness of their team?

### Level 3, Behavior

- What activities have the participants completed to increase the engagement of their employees?
- What behaviors have the participants exhibited to improve their leadership capability, including communication and building strong relationships with their employees?
- What actions have the participants taken to provide career development opportunities for their employees?
- What techniques have the participants employed to provide positive work environments?
- What have the participants done to build effective work teams?

#### Level 4, Results

- What is the overall engagement level of the employees based on the participants' last survey?
- What effect has the engagement level of the participants' employees had on their hotel's balanced scorecard?

The chapter continues with a summary of findings and the emergent themes determined by the analysis of data for the within-case analysis of the first research site. The chapter then presents the within-case analysis of the second research site. The organization of this case's analysis parallels the analysis of the first case, including a description of the case, summary of the participant's demographics, analysis of secondary research questions, and case summary. After a rich description of results for each case, a cross-case analysis was completed. The chapter concludes with an overall summary of findings, including emergent themes.

#### Description of Multi-Case

A qualitative multi-case study design was utilized to investigate the application of engagement concepts and activities that leaders received during an engagement professional development training program. Within-case analysis identified unique themes and patterns for each case. Lastly, cross-case synthesis highlighted commonalities and differences between the two cases.

Aliases or pseudonyms ensure the anonymity of the global hotel brand, the specific hotel properties, and their employees. The first case is referred to as Hotel Marco and the second case is identified as Hotel Rico; the global hospitality brand is named Sedona. Hotel Marco and Hotel Rico, both located in North Carolina, met the study's criteria prior to case selection. The hotels' leadership had completed the required engagement training.

### Within-Case Analysis Hotel Marco

#### Description of Case

Hotel Marco is a property associated with the global hospitality company Sedona, which has over 271 North America locations. Hotel Marco, with approximately 150 guest rooms, has hosted overnight guests since 1986. Hotel Marco's engagement index results were in the company's top quartile of engagement indices. The engagement index for 2009 and 2008 was 94 % and 95%, respectively. Hotel Marco employed 31 employees at the time of the study, which included both leadership and hourly paid employees.

#### Introduction to Participants

A total of 14 subjects participated in this study. Participants of the study included 3 managers who are members of Hotel Marco's leadership team and 11 of their employees who are hourly paid employees. The participants represented 45.2% of the total staff.

Hotel Marco's leadership team consists of Stephanie, Martha, and Suzanne. Stephanie has been the general manager of Hotel Marco for over 10 years, and has been

with Sedona, the global hospitality company, for over 20 years. Stephanie completed the company's engagement training in 2006, 4 years ago.

Martha oversees the front desk, restaurant, and engineering departments of the hotel. She has worked with Stephanie for over 10 years at Hotel Marco. Martha has worked with Sedona for 17 years, at various locations prior to her tenure at Hotel Marco. Martha attended the engagement training class with Stephanie in 2006.

Suzanne has been with Sedona since 2001. She joined the leadership team at Hotel Marco in 2009, where she leads the housekeeping department. Prior to this role, Suzanne provided human resources support to the Sedona hotels located in the Raleigh area. She attended the engagement training in 2005 during her role in human resources.

Eleven hourly paid employees participated in the study. The employees included Steven, Holly, Jeff, Kyle, Shirley, Barb, Scott, Sally, Chris, Heidi, and Susan.

Participants who work in the housekeeping department include Barb, Chris, Heidi, Holly, Jeff, Kyle, Sally, and Shirley. Holly and Sally have worked approximately 4 to 6 years in the housekeeping area; Barb, Heidi, and Shirley have worked 7 to 10 years and Chris, Jeff, and Kyle have worked for more than 10 years.

Scott has worked in the maintenance area for approximately 7 to 10 years. Susan has worked the front desk at Hotel Marco for 4 to 6 years. Steven has worked in various areas of the hotel for 1 to 3 years.

## Summary of Participants' Demographics

Participants' demographics included their gender, age, length of employment and their work area at the hotel. Tables and explanatory narratives follow the participants' age ranges.

### *Gender*

Fourteen participants, 3 leaders and 11 of their employees from Hotel Marco participated in the study. Three of the participants were male (21.4%) and 11 were female (78.6%).

### *Age*

The participants' ages ranged from 18 to 60 years of age. Table 5 depicts a summary of the age ranges.

Table 5

*Hotel Marco Within-Case Analysis: Age of Study Participants*

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Age Range	Participant
18-25	Steven
36-40	Holly, Jeff, Kyle, Shirley, Suzanne
41-45	Barb, Scott, Stephanie
51-55	Martha, Sally
56-60	Chris, Heidi, Susan

---

*Years of Employment*

The participants have worked for Hotel Marco ranging from 1 year to more than 10 years. Table 6 depicts a summary of the participants' years of employment.

Table 6

*Hotel Marco Within-Case Analysis: Years of Employment*

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Years of Employment	Participant
1-3	Steven
4-6	Holly, Sally, Susan
7-10	Barb, Heidi, Scott, Shirley, Suzanne
More than 10	Chris, Jeff, Kyle, Martha, Stephanie

---

*Work Area*

The participants of the study worked in the housekeeping, maintenance, and front desk areas of the hotel. The managers, members of the leadership team, notated they worked in “other” due to their oversight of the entire hotel. Additionally, one hourly paid employee who worked jointly in the housekeeping and front desk areas, declared his department as “other” as well. Table 7 depicts a summary of the participants’ work area.

Table 7

*Hotel Marco Within-Case Analysis: Work Area*

Work Area	Participant
Housekeeping	Barb, Chris, Heidi, Holly, Jeff, Kyle, Sally, Shirley, Suzanne
Maintenance	Scott
Restaurant	n/a
Front Desk	Susan
Other	Martha, Stephanie, Steven

Hotel Marco Narrative

The following section of this chapter provides a narrative of the participants' perceptions of how engagement training contributed to the application of engagement concepts and activities in the workplace, and how the application of engagement concepts and activities influenced high employee engagement levels. Measurement of the application of engagement concepts and its effect on employee engagement levels follows Kirkpatrick's four levels of evaluation, (a) reaction, (b) learning, (c) application, and (d) results (Kirkpatrick, 1998). The secondary research questions, aligned with the levels of evaluation, communicate the application of engagement concepts and the effects on high employee engagement levels. The secondary research questions are organized utilizing subheadings identifying the various data collection methods used such as artifacts and interviews.

### Researcher Notes

When participants of the professional development training program were asked questions regarding their reaction to the engagement program, they appeared slightly uncomfortable. Each leader of the hotel shared a concern with the researcher that it had been many years since they took the training; they hoped that they would be able to answer questions. When the researcher reassured them that it was important to share their experiences as they remembered them and that it was acceptable to not answer questions that they felt they could not, the participants relaxed and appeared at ease.

The interviews were conducted individually with the leaders of the hotel (Stephanie, Martha, and Suzanne) in a living room of a suite at the hotel. They seemed relaxed and comfortable, and appeared to enjoy stepping away from their active day. Although, Stephanie, Martha, and Suzanne each had difficulty remembering specifics of the training program, they recalled that the program gave them an opportunity to participate in activities focused on engaging their employees.

The hourly paid employees were interviewed in two group settings. The suite's living room area was again utilized for the sessions. The employees appeared to be at ease during both group interviews.

#### Level 1 Evaluation, Reaction

Five secondary research questions correlated to Kirkpatrick's level 1 evaluation, reaction (Kirkpatrick, 1998).

- What were the participants' reactions to the professional development training program?

- How did the participants feel the professional development training program would help build stronger relationships with their employees?
- How did the participants feel the professional development training program would assist in their development?
- How did the participants feel the professional development training program would assist them with building a positive work environment for their employees?
- How did the participants feel the professional development training program would assist them with building strong teams?

*Interview Responses to Level 1 Secondary Research Questions*

*Secondary Research Question Level 1: What were the participants' reactions to the professional development training program?*

Stephanie and Martha felt that the training program gave them the opportunity to share their ideas, concerns, and challenges with other managers attending the training. They also expressed having enjoyed the opportunity to reconnect with their peers, as well as meeting the leaders who were new to Sedona.

Suzanne felt the tools and resources were very beneficial and could foresee using them when she returned to her property. When Suzanne was asked, what she thought could be improved in the program; she reflected for a moment and then shared her belief that there was too much information covered in the allotted time. She recommended that the class be offered in several sessions. Suzanne said, "I think it is a lot of information for

a short time. I believe maybe if it is done in two or three levels it will be much better...it is a lot of information in one class only.”

Table 8 summarizes the leaders’ reactions to the engagement professional development training program they attended.

Table 8

*Hotel Marco Within-Case Analysis: Level 1, Reaction, Participants’ Reaction*

Summary of findings	Emergent theme
Long time period since attending program, difficult to recall specifics	Program recall
Facilitator involved participants with various activities	Learner focused
Tools and resources are applicable Opportunity to share ideas and questions with classmates	Practicality Collaboration
Connected with managers they knew and opportunity to meet new Sedona managers	Networking opportunities
Large amount of information covered in short amount of time	Content overload

The emergent themes based on the participants’ reactions to the professional development training program were the following: a difficulty with *program recall*, an appreciation for the program’s *learner focus*, and the *practicality* of tools and resources. Other emergent themes included the ability to *collaborate* and *network* during the

training program. The last theme that emerged was the large amount of information covered, leading to *content overload* for the participants.

*Secondary Research Question Level 1: How did the participants feel the professional development training program would help build stronger relationships with their employees?*

When asked how they felt the training program would help build stronger relationships with their employees, Martha, Stephanie, and Suzanne had difficulty sharing specifics related to the training program. They were, however, extremely passionate and eager to share their perspectives on how they have built strong relationships at Hotel Marco.

Martha was the most passionate in her journey to build a strong team. Martha's eyes lit up as she explained that she feels a personal responsibility for impacting each of her employees' lives; assisting them, and their families, to grow and have life experiences they may not have otherwise had. Martha shared her feelings:

As a person, I am that way; it's just a natural part of me. I can't just shut it off, and say well, you know we have to get involved. It just reemphasized that we were doing the right thing... helping them with their personal situations. I mean that's a huge part to me, connecting their personal life here at work, because you can't just shut it off.

Stephanie, Martha, and Suzanne all communicated they felt the training program affirmed their leadership practices. Stephanie articulated the sense of affirmation with her statement:

I feel like the way we run this property is all about engagement, before we ever had the program. It just made us feel great that we were on that track and we've been on that track for 10 years.

It appeared that the leadership team all shared many of the same feelings, even though the interviews were conducted separately. These shared feelings included their belief that their normal leadership practices reinforced built a strong team. Suzanne shared her thoughts on the applicability of the program and how it related to life at Hotel Marco. "I believe the whole training is applicable to what we do everyday ...how we take care of each other, how we take care of others."

The perception of Hotel Marco's leadership of how the professional development training program helped them to build stronger relationships with their employees are communicated in Table 9.

Table 9

*Hotel Marco Within-Case Analysis: Level 1, Reaction, Perceived Ways to Build Strong Employee Relationships*

Summary of findings	Emergent themes
Program focuses on employee experience and relationship with manager	Leader-employee relationship
Program reinforced daily practices of taking care of each other	Reciprocal value relationship

Emerging themes included the importance of the *leader-employee relationship* along with ensuring that it is a *reciprocal value relationship*. The reciprocal value relationship focuses on ensuring that all employees take responsibility in taking care of each other every day.

*Secondary Research Question Level 1: How did the participants feel the professional development training program would assist in their development?*

Stephanie, Martha, and Suzanne all restated they felt the training reinforced and validated what has been their normal behavior and activities at the hotel. They communicated they felt the engagement training would be helpful to managers who were not leading their employees with relationships based on engaging their team. Stephanie shared, “I remember Martha and I discussing saying, wow this is what we do everyday. But, how great that it is being giving out to the other properties that we know aren’t doing it.”

Suzanne reinforced the applicability and the importance of utilizing the tools and resources identified in the professional development training program. Suzanne recommended,

I think we just want to continue remembering to use the training every day...it’s a great training and like I say it’s not to close the book and put it on the shelf. It’s, go back to the book and use what we learned in the class.

Table 10 summarizes participants’ perception of how the training program would assist in their self-development with the presentation of emergent themes.

Table 10

*Hotel Marco Within-Case Analysis: Level 1, Reaction, Perceived Self Development Assistance*

Summary of findings	Emergent themes
Program reinforced daily practices of taking care of each other	Reciprocal value relationship
Program outlined leadership behaviors to build engaged teams	Leadership engagement behaviors
Tools and resources are applicable	Practicality

The emergent themes include a *reciprocal value relationship*, as mentioned earlier; this theme focuses on the team’s commitment to exhibit behaviors of care and concern. *Leadership engagement behaviors* were identified as an important area for managers to focus on in their development. The last theme was *practicality*, which focuses on the perceived value of utilizing the tools and resources presented in the training program as a way to assist in one’s leadership development.

*Secondary Research Question Level 1: How did the participants feel the professional development training program would assist them with building a positive work environment for their employees?*

When Martha was asked how she felt the training would help build a positive work environment, she felt very strongly that a positive environment was a result from

everything the leadership team has been doing for the employees. Martha added that the training might have given them a few new ideas, but felt it also supported what she and the other managers have been doing. Martha said,

I think we were already doing many of those things prior to the training, it just took us maybe to another level, it reinforced it, but it also gave us ideas of things and made us feel it was ok.

Martha also conveyed that the leadership team at Hotel Marco might work longer hours than other managers to accomplish the day's operational work because of their focus on taking care of each other. Martha continued,

It may take us an extra couple of hours every day to do our work, but because of the commitment, we have personally, and the way we like to run our business, we feel it is important. So we take the extra time to do it.

The leadership team each communicated their personal commitment to the employees and their families. Stephanie was sincere when she shared her feelings about the hourly paid employees at the hotel saying,

I know that many managers do not care if the employees enjoy their jobs or not. Me, this is my second family and is one reason I've been here for over 10 years. I love my staff, it is not so much about climbing the corporate ladder; it is about feeling that I'm making a difference where I am.

The last area identified to provide a better work environment by all managers was the importance of putting yourself in the employee's shoes and truly understanding what struggles an employee has, what they value and what they want to experience. Suzanne

shared her thoughts, “You need to bring yourself in their situation to understand them better. You know with everything going on right now with the economy...put yourself in their shoes...we need to help everybody.”

Table 11 represents the emergent themes identified with the participants’ beliefs of how the training program would help them build a positive work environment for their employees.

Table 11

*Hotel Marco Within-Case Analysis: Level 1, Reaction, Perceived Ways to Build a Better Work Environment*

Summary of findings	Emergent themes
Program reinforced daily practices of taking care of each other	Reciprocal value relationship
Leadership has strong sense of family and commitment to employees	Family culture
Leadership place themselves in the shoes of their employees	Empathy

The emergent themes affecting a positive work environment again included *reciprocal value relationship* of the employees taking care of each other. Other themes included *family culture* and *empathy*. Leadership felt that they reinforced the learnings of the training as they have utilized many of the activities suggested in the training program when they interact with the employees at their hotel. Leadership feeling a strong sense of

family for each other and their employees strengthened the importance of showing empathy to the employees.

*Secondary Research Question Level 1: How did the participants feel the professional development training program would assist them with building strong teams?*

The leadership team again, felt that putting themselves in the shoes of their employees would assist them in building a strong team as well as providing a positive work environment. Stephanie, Martha, and Suzanne felt that they were already doing many of the activities described in the training program to build strong teams. They did not state their opinion in a boastful way, rather with pride. Stephanie, Suzanne, and Martha all felt the training program would help them build strong teams as it reinforces their leadership views and behaviors. Martha said,

It gives you permission to do the extra things; it lets you know this is what Sedona wants you to do. If you choose not to do it, then you are affecting the outcome and the results that the positive affect has on associates.

The leaders also recognized the importance of being on the same page as they focused on building a strong effective team. Martha said, “It takes a very long time to get that message through and it takes consistency in leadership to pull that off. Stephanie and I have been here together for 10 years giving us that consistency.” Stephanie reinforced this view, “If you have all your managers going [to the training] It puts people, hopefully on a similar page.”

The leadership team also recognized the culture of the hotel and the culture of Sedona were aligned and were reinforced by the training program. Martha seemed pleased as she viewed the culture as the normal way of life at the hotel. Martha said, “It becomes a way of life, just like the culture of Sedona, it is just as much a part of our culture now.”

The emergent themes based on leaderships’ perceptions of how the professional development training program would help build stronger teams included *empowered leaders, leadership alignment, empathy and cultural alignment*. The emergent themes are presented in Table 12.

Table 12

*Hotel Marco Within-Case Analysis: Level 1, Reaction, Perceived Ways to Build Strong Teams*

Summary of findings	Emergent themes
Reinforcement of leaders’ decisions and strategies	Empowered leaders
Program identifies need for leadership to agree on hotel goals and strategies	Leadership alignment
Leadership place themselves in the shoes of their employees in every facet	Empathy
Reinforces organizational culture with hotel’s culture	Cultural alignment

## Level 2 Evaluation, Learning

Secondary research questions linked to Kirkpatrick's level 2 evaluation, learning, are listed below (Kirkpatrick, 1998).

- Based on the professional development training program, what ways did the participants learn to affect employee engagement?
- What did the participants learn during the professional development training program that would help improve their communication and build stronger relationships with their employees?
- What did the participants learn during the professional development training program that would improve their ability to assess and discuss career development opportunities for their employees?
- What did the participants learn during the professional development training program that would improve the work environment for their employees?
- What did the participants learn during the professional development training program that would improve the effectiveness of their team?

### *Interview Responses to Level 2 Secondary Research Questions*

*Secondary Research Question Level 2: Based on the professional development training program, what ways did the participants learn to affect employee engagement?*

The leadership team shared several things they learned that would affect employee engagement. The learnings included the importance of knowing the employees

on an individual basis, specifically understanding what they valued, what development opportunities they were looking for and ways leadership could assist them. The employees' developmental areas often had a shared impact on their personal life and their role at Sedona. Martha shared examples of a one on one meeting she had with one of her employees,

I think the personal one on one with the associates is a way to engage employees.

I have helped Jeff get a loan to get a car. I helped him make his oil change appointments because of interpreting. I help all the associates with the doctors and insurance calls.

Stephanie also reinforced the importance of caring for her employees. Stephanie explained how important the employees were to her, it was evident that she was very genuine as she talked about the importance of building a strong relationship with each employee. Stephanie also shared how the engagement levels of the employees are determined. She stated,

We know our engagement scores we get every year. But, I personally don't wait for that once a year score to get the feeling of whether my employees are engaged or not. I can tell by watching them and how they interact with each other.

All of the managers spoke about the importance of involving the entire team in the strategy of the hotel. Stephanie, Martha, and Suzanne communicated the hotel belonged to every employee who worked there. It was important to each of the leaders that the employees had an understanding of the business and service strategy. Martha shared how the employee meetings were an outlet to celebrate accomplishments and to

brainstorm solutions to improve the hotel's performance. Martha also felt the employees' engagement could be measured by their interactions and participation in hotel initiatives.

She illustrated this by offering,

The participation of our all-associate meetings is tremendous. How comfortable [the employees] are sharing their ideas and talking and participating either in small groups or in front of everyone, the whole group...we measure [engagement]...just in every day communications we have with them, we feel it, we know it, we know its...so many activities that we do and their participation level.

The conversations held with Stephanie, Suzanne, and Nancy to determine what they learned at the training program to affect an employee's engagement, revealed several emergent themes. The themes summarized in Table 13 include *personal interest, varied engagement metrics, career development, and collaboration.*

Table 13

*Hotel Marco Within-Case Analysis: Level 2, Learning, Ways to Affect Employee Engagement*

Summary of findings	Emergent themes
Holding one-on-one sessions with employee to determine development desires, personal needs, and concerns	Personal interest
Engagement levels determined by annual survey, observations with others, and participation in hotel activities	Varied engagement metrics
Training program availability focused on employee growth	Career development
Team hotel meetings focused on celebrations, learning, problem solving, and implementation of ideas	Collaboration

*Secondary Research Question Level 2: What did the participants learn during the professional development training program that would help improve their communication and build stronger relationships with their employees?*

The passion of each individual leader at Hotel Rico is evident as they share their insight and perceptions of their learnings to assist them in building strong relationships with their employees. It was clear that all three members of the leadership team were employee and family centric as they ensure they always make time to talk to an employee in need whether personally or professionally. They also observed the interactions of the employees with their fellow teammates and customers to gauge any needs the employee

may have, whether again it is from a professional development standpoint or if they need an open ear from Stephanie, Suzanne, or Martha. The leaders shared examples of how they make themselves available to the employees. Martha began by sharing her philosophy,

My philosophy of how I work is that the employees know that there is not anything that they could come to me with that I won't stop and help them. Most of the time I stop immediately and interrupt whatever I am doing to help them. Stephanie felt she was approachable most of the time. She laughed sharing that budget time isn't an easy time for employees to talk to her. Her mood turned somber yet respectful as she shared a difficult time. She explained,

I'm very approachable most of the time. *[Laughs]*...my staff will tell me when I'm not. Usually around budget time, they hang a warning sign on my door, for real...but they know I will do whatever I need to do to help them. Actually one day Martha had to sit me down and say, your mood is really affecting the staff. Part of it was that I was so unhappy in my personal life, and I didn't realize how it was affecting the employees until she took me aside. I know it was really hard for her to sit her boss down and say, you know we all love you but this is really affecting the team. I've taken that to heart. It was years ago, but I could start crying now just thinking about it again. It had a real impact on me to realize that the mood I come in with really does resonate throughout the building. I will publically apologize and take responsibility for my actions. I've said to the

employees, I know I haven't been a real nice person lately, and I want to apologize. I think it is important to show them I am human too.

When Stephanie communicated this event, her eyes were watery; it was obvious she was still moved to realize that her behavior influenced those around her. I understood that her employees had a larger meaning to her; more than just people who worked there, they were people she respected and cared for, and sincerely felt remorseful for how her behavior affected them.

Stephanie, Martha, and Suzanne all stated communication was a high priority for Hotel Marco. They said the professional development training program gave tools and resources they could use daily. Suzanne shared how their daily meetings contribute to open lines of communication by sharing,

Daily stand up is very important because they [the employees] know what is going on in the hotel...I think communication is key; because the class talks a lot about communication...listening is very important. Because when they [the employees] feel you listen to them, they really are going to come back to you. And it's not only listen, its listen and resolve it. Because if you listen...but you never resolve it, they are not going to feel that you are there for them. So listen and resolve right away...8 o'clock when I pass out the keys, I talk to them and I say...today we are going to focus on this...So they know everything.

The themes that emerged from discussing what the leadership team learned about communication and building strong relationships with their employees included being

*employee and family centric, conducting observations and having open communication.*

The summary of findings and emergent themes are outlined in Table 14.

Table 14

*Hotel Marco Within-Case Analysis: Level 2, Learning, Ways to Improve Communication and Relationships with Employees*

Summary of findings	Emergent themes
Acknowledging and valuing employee as individual versus employee only	Employee centric
Spending time with employees to determine what is important to each one individually	
Observing associate interactions with teammates and customers	Observations
Inclusion of employees' family to hotel supported functions	Family centric
Leadership always available to assist employees with any needs, personally and professionally	Open communication

*Secondary Research Question Level 2: What did the participants learn during the professional development training program that would help improve their ability to assess and discuss career development opportunities for their employees?*

Although, Martha, Stephanie, and Suzanne had difficulty recalling specifics from the program, they all identified a key activity presented in the training program to

identify career goals and developmental needs, a one on one session with the employees.

Martha shared what she focused on in a one on one session offering,

We talk about their personal goals... as it relates to where they want to go in the company and what they want to have happen during their tenure here is a key part of my conversation with them. A lot of it happens during their reviews...I talk then throughout the year, I'll come back to them one on one. It won't be all the time in a sit down, you know, one hour conversation about that...I'll say come in and talk to me for a few minutes for 15 minutes, 30 minutes. How are you, where are you with this, and what can I do to help you get to this level. And they'll share with me, the obstacles...and we'll try to get back on track again.

Two themes emerged from the interviews, lack of *program recall* and the importance of leadership being *employee centric*. The findings and emergent themes are presented in Table 15.

Table 15

*Hotel Marco Within-Case Analysis: Level 2, Learning, Ways to Assess and Discuss Career Opportunities*

Summary of findings	Emergent themes
Long time period since attending program, difficult to recall specifics	Program recall
Spending time with employees to determine what is important to each one individually	Employee centric

*Secondary Research Question Level 2: What did the participants learn during the professional development training program that would improve the work environment for their employees?*

Stephanie, Martha, and Suzanne again had some difficulty in remembering specifics of the training program due to the length of time that had passed since they attended. Individually, each provided examples of things they thought were important to create a positive environment for their employees. Martha feels strongly that by taking a personal interest in the employees she is able to connect with them, and help them develop and grow. She feels her reward is seeing the guests and the employees happy. She explains further,

Where else will they go that someone will take a personal interest in them. Bringing them together on a regular basis in our associate meetings, in our departmental meetings, is something they don't get. They can go work in a hospital or wherever else. How awesome is that to engage people to bring them together and let them hear each others ideas and train. We give them training so they are all on the same page. We get feedback from the guests we tell the employees how much they enjoyed their stay. The employees feel so much pride in their job. When you help them feel pride in their job, why would they want to leave. Nobody helps them to feel that way.

Martha has a strong commitment to each employee. She shared, They know anytime they come they're going to get the help they need, and they know that we'll go the extra mile to take care of them if we have to drive them

somewhere or we have to make a phone call for them go with them to the Dr.'s appointment to interpret...I won't leave this property without taking care of them. Stephanie shared the importance of integrating their professional life with their personal life. She provided the following,

I think it's the approachability and the follow through. We do a lot of things like employee appreciation week, housekeeping week, and different things during the year where we try to involve their families it's always a key part to it. We want to know their families as much as we know them. We send birthday cards to their house, things like that.

The summary of findings and emergent themes related to the learnings of improving the work environment for employees are outlined in Table 16. The emergent themes were, *program recall, open communication, and employee centric.*

Table 16

*Hotel Marco Within-Case Analysis: Level 2, Learning, Ways to Improve Work Environment*

Summary of findings	Emergent themes
Long time period since attending program, difficult to recall specifics	Program recall
Leadership always available to assist employees with any needs, personally and professionally	Open communication
Providing training programs that helps employee grow both personally and professionally	Employee centric
Spending time with employees to determine what is important to each one individually	

*Secondary Research Question Level 2: What did the participants learn during the professional development training program that would improve the effectiveness of their team?*

The leadership team mentioned several key learnings they felt would improve the effectiveness of their team. The managers all agreed that it was important to maintain an individual focus on each employee; however, they also value the strength of the team. Team meetings are held to help everyone grow and have an opportunity to share their ideas. Suzanne spoke about the importance of the relationship between the manager and the employee. A relationship that is based on trust, respect, and focusing on the growth and development of everyone. Suzanne explained her views,

I think they feel engaged with me, because they are doing a great job at the hotel, they feel like they are paying me back for how I am treating them. Which is with a lot of respect... We thank them every day; they know how much we appreciate them. I think giving more training would be helpful, so they can learn more can be up to date in everything that is going on with the company.

*Career development*, leadership being *employee centric* and providing opportunities for *collaboration* were the emergent themes related to the learning the managers received at the training program directed to improve the effectiveness of their team. These themes are highlighted in Table 17.

Table 17

*Hotel Marco Within-Case Analysis: Level 2, Learning, Ways to Improve Team Effectiveness*

Summary of findings	Emergent themes
Training programs focused on employee growth	Career development
Spending time with employees to determine what is important to each one individually	Employee centric
Team hotel meetings focused on celebrations, learning, problem solving and implementation of ideas	Collaboration

### Level 3 Evaluation, Application

There are five secondary research questions correlated to Kirkpatrick's level 3 evaluation (Kirkpatrick, 1998).

- What activities have the participants completed to increase the engagement of their employees?
- What behaviors have the participants exhibited to improve their leadership capability, including communication and building strong relationships with their employees?
- What actions have the participants taken to provide career development opportunities for their employees?
- What techniques have the participants employed to provide positive work environments?
- What have the participants done to build effective work teams?

#### *Artifacts Related to Level 3 Secondary Research Questions*

Artifacts that corresponded to the secondary research questions were collected at the research site. The artifacts illustrated various communication mediums used by leadership to communicate hotel performance measurements, guest feedback, and employee communication.

#### *Interview Responses to Level 3 Secondary Research Questions*

The leadership team at Hotel Marco appeared relieved when they were advised the next set of questions would be related to their application of activities and concepts of the professional development training program versus having to recall their reaction or

learnings from a program they took several years ago. The leadership team's employees who participated in the research study were asked questions related to the leadership's team application of engagement concepts and activities. Their input is included in this section of the findings.

*Secondary Research Question Level 3: What activities have the participants completed to increase the engagement of their employees?*

The leadership team shared a number of activities they completed to increase the overall engagement of their employees. Two of the main areas that the managers spent their time on was conducting one on one sessions and ensuring the employees felt they are recognized. Martha shared details on these activities,

Spending time with them personally to find out where they are, and what they need to do to get to the next level. What their goals are, their personal...work goals, to make their 8 hours here or 10 hours worthwhile and feel valuable here.

Martha also told how important it was to help the employees grow and develop their skills, "[I have] one on one time with them to give them the feedback...reinforce what they are doing, and to help them move through something that they maybe [are] not doing as well."

Suzanne reiterated the importance of recognizing the employees in her interview. "Taking those opportunities where you can reward the employees and recognize them publicly because they just love that...having fun at work too, I mean, work is hard, its long, its tiring and our staff here works really hard."

Stephanie felt the hotel belonged to all the employees, based on her view, the employees should have the opportunity to provide input on the hotel's strategies and initiatives. Stephanie explained how she shared the results of the engagement survey with the employees and how she involved them in brainstorming solutions.

When the results came out, I shared it with my leadership team, which is really myself, Martha my Guest Care and Suzanne our supervisor. Then I did a high-level overview with the staff at one of our associate meetings. We've not been real good in the past at following up on that. And that is something that weighs on me every time the engagement survey comes around again. I say oh, there is that question, how often do you follow up and all of that. So we've tried to do a more concentrated effort this year...like Suzanne met with the team.

When the leadership team was asked how they have utilized the tools, they received at the training class, they again seemed uncomfortable, a few of them laughed nervously. The leaders explained that although they felt strongly the tools were valuable they had not be able to utilize them as they would like based on operational demands of the hotel. Martha gave her thoughts,

We work, you know minimum 10 hour days and usually more and we still don't get on the website...It's a very important program but so are a whole lot of other things with Sedona and there's so much time in the day to be honest. Engaging our associates takes so much time every day there is never a day that we don't spend a lot of time with individual associates.

Stephanie and Martha shared many of the same views. Stephanie explained,

It's not because I don't think it's a great resource, it comes down to time. Should I be sitting at this computer [accessing the tools] or should I be out there taking care of my guests.

The hourly paid employees who participated in the research study explained what they thought the leaders had done to increase their overall engagement. Susan shared how the leaders have involved the employees in brainstorming sessions and empowering them to take ownership by stating,

I have an example...Scott developed a training program...When a guest calls down about the AC or the hair dryer or...the high speed internet access; Martha...saw to it that all of us got trained...so guests responses were quicker...it makes it easier for the other person...every time somebody new comes in they go through Scott's program.

Steven, Barb, and Susan continue discussing how the managers have engaged them. The employees highlighted the importance of their relationship with the leaders and how much personal care each one shows to the employees. They shared,

*Steven:* [Martha] is always there to give you instructions or ask you what do you think, to get your feel of it, cause not only does she work with the guests; we also work with them too. So, we are able to interact and let her know what the guests feel.

*Barb:* We always open their hearts to us every time. We are comfortable to talk to them, we are comfortable to ask them questions, and the moment we ask them, the moment we need help we ask them they just do it right away.

*Susan:* Yeah and then the thing is to we get great cues from Martha., because she is, I mean I have worked in several places you know the most successful ones you see the manager doing, you know, putting their hand in and get. You know, the manager is more involved, but she does, she cleans, she cleans, she does trash, she does anything at all.

*Barb:* Any problem we have; they just tell us and we talk about it...we understand more and more because when I start working here my English is not that good, I don't speak very good English...but, I have people who have patience. If they don't have patience I don't think I would be here that long because I don't understand many...Stephanie is to the same and we just work together real good and any information they have, they don't hide anything from us they just bring it up they tell us what is good, tell us what is going to help us with the job, tell us what is in the room. So we really learn, we keep learning, learning every time.

Lastly, the employees shared how the feeling of family helped the team to accomplish their goals and provided an open forum for communication. They expressed,

*Scott:* We have like a teamwork and then we treat them like a family so, it's like you know we are getting used to it and at times we are like comfortable.

*Steven:* Like your family there is something, because you are always there to help one another, so when you bring that to your job and you are willing to help them. It makes their job easier because you are not always saying you have to do this, and I'm not doing that. So it's just like when you have problem within your

family, and you see this is going on, you are willing to help because you have that family feeling.

Several emergent themes came to life when asking the leaders of Hotel Marco and their employees what they have applied to increase employee engagement. The themes are outlined below in Table 18 and include, leadership taking a *personal interest* and being *employee centric*, *career development*, *collaboration*, and *competing initiatives*.

Table 18

*Hotel Marco Within-Case Analysis: Level 3, Application, Activities Completed to Increase Employee Engagement*

Summary of findings	Emergent themes
Holding one-on-one sessions with employee to determine development desires, personal needs and concerns	Personal interest
Recognizing and valuing employee for their contributions	Employee centric
Training programs focused on employee growth	Career development
Meetings focused on problem solving and implementation of ideas to improve work and service experiences	Collaboration
Numerous job initiatives limiting managers from utilizing available tools and resources to increase employee engagement	Competing initiatives

*Secondary Research Question Level 3: What behaviors have the participants exhibited to improve their leadership capability including communication and building strong relationships with their employees?*

The leadership team reinforced spending time with the employees, determining their needs both from a standpoint of development and making work more enjoyable. Stephanie shared a conversation she had with one of the employees the morning of the research interviews.

I always try to hit on..how are things going on at work, is there anything you need. Like this morning I went to talk to Barb about coming to the group setting, so we talked about that and I'm leaving and I'm like is there anything you need, do you have everything you need today? She is like, oh yeah, I'm doing good right now, but I'll let you know. So touching on them from a work standpoint, touching base with them on a personal standpoint.

Stephanie spent one on one time with the employees to discuss their career growth. Although she communicated informally with them on a daily basis, Stephanie explained how she utilized the time she spends completing the employees' yearly performance review to discuss career goals and developmental needs. She explained,

As soon as I finish my review with them, I sit down and ask them, you know how do you see yourself for the next year? What are your goals and now I already finished your review, I want you to tell me what I can do better for you. What do you need from me to do your job better, or how I can help you...I use their review time as it is the beginning of the year to sit with everyone that reports to me.

Jeff who works in housekeeping and Scott who works in maintenance talked about their meetings with their leader, Martha. As they shared examples, they appeared comfortable with their relationship with Martha, Suzanne, and Stephanie. They explained,

*Jeff:* Martha seems very nice and she asks us a question what do you want and she says you don't know something you go ask her, she can show everything.

*Scott:* Its like a whole associate just sometimes...[or] individual one on one explaining how can we satisfy the guest.

The employees were very thankful that the leaders take the time to provide training and the opportunity to grow. Steven shared his views on the hotel's cross training program saying,

Yes, I know Martha has the, I can't think of the name of it at the moment, but it's a program where if you are thinking about another position, that she can do cross training. Like one day if you want to, if you ever think about working in the restaurant one day she can take you from the front desk and let you work with the restaurant people so you can learn their position or if you want to learn engineering. You can work with engineering one day. So I like that about the cross training, being able to learn about the position. So one day if you do want to move into another position you are welcome to. Also Stephanie, she teaches the front desk how to do accounts and how to learn how to do that stuff. It furthers your education within the company and like if one day if you do have a choice to

move up the corporate ladder it put more things on your resume to show that you know what to do and how to do it.

Taking time to be available for the employees is extremely important to the leadership of the hotel. The employees interviewed, also appreciated knowing that they could count on their managers for anything they may need. Suzanne explains, “the other thing is we have so much communication they feel so free to come anytime to me and say I need you for 2 minutes. They close the door and I am there for them.”

The Spanish-speaking employees reinforced how important it was to be able to trust the leaders to help them both personally and professionally. They expressed,

Translator [Suzanne]: They said that from a personal standpoint and business...they said that sometime when they feel that they need to talk to someone and feel comfortable they come to me because they know I will listen to them. And if I need to talk to them about work, or if they have problem with work, or if something that needs to be done, they come to me. We always talk about it.

The leadership and hourly paid employees of Hotel Marco shared many examples that confirmed the managers are building strong relationships with their employees. Table 19 highlights the emergent themes of *personal interest, career development, and trust*.

Table 19

*Hotel Marco Within-Case Analysis: Level 3, Application, Behaviors Exhibited to Improve Leadership Capabilities*

Summary of findings	Emergent themes
Holding one-on-one sessions with employee to determine development desires, personal needs and concerns	Personal interest
Training program availability focused on employee growth	Career development
Employees comfortable sharing their professional and personal needs with the managers	Trust

*Secondary Research Question Level 3: What actions have the participants taken to provide career development opportunities for their employees?*

The leadership team again provided examples of how they have identified career opportunities for their employees. The leaders have shared many of the activities and actions they have completed in prior questions presented to them. They reinforced cross training in other departments, opportunities at other Sedona hotels, providing feedback on the employees' performance and providing training that would help the employees grow both professionally and personally. Martha shared the details of the cross training program stating,

Cross training them and, and helping them build relationships with people in other departments...having them have the experience of doing what that other person did has helped us to build a very effective team...And then again, our personal care and interest in them has paid off.

Suzanne, the housekeeping leader is very involved in the Hispanic community. One of her goals, personally and professionally is to ensure that the Hispanic community including the Hispanic employees at Hotel Marco have knowledge of community events, political events and any other information that will assist them in their growth. Suzanne shares her commitment with fervor,

Anything new in the community my team knows that, and it feels so good that they know everything going on. I think this is development for them because they used to not know what's going on in the community; labor regulations...census 2010.

When the hourly paid employees were asked about being provided career opportunities, they spoke proudly that they worked with people who believed in them. Scott began by sharing his experience interviewing for another job with Sedona Hotels. "A long time ago, they had a position in Cary....I made a joke and said can I speak with Miss Rita, in front of Miss Martha, can I get the job? So I got to leave, that's you know your opportunity." Steven gave his input, "They care about your well being and Sedona is such a good company so, I believe as long as you are with the company they are happy for you."

The Spanish-speaking employees in housekeeping also shared having the opportunity to grown and learn. They said Suzanne talks with them about their opportunities including assisting them with resources to learn English. The employees shared their thoughts,

*Translator (Martha):* She said that especially in the review I talk to them about what is their next step and the one thing needed in order to move to the next step. They said we can learn here but to go to the next step we need to improve our English. So we are working, so hard for them to learn English.

The leadership and hourly paid employees of Hotel Marco gave a number of examples of how the managers provided career opportunities. Table 20 summarizes the findings and identifies the emergent themes of *career development* and *life skills training*.

Table 20

*Hotel Marco Within-Case Analysis: Level 3, Application, Career Opportunities Provided to Employees*

Summary of findings	Emergent themes
Cross training with other departments	Career development
Opportunities for positions at other Sedona properties	
Feedback on current performance	
Training programs to help with life skills including computer training and English classes	Life skills training

*Secondary Research Question Level 3: What techniques have the participants employed to provide positive work environments?*

The leadership team at Hotel Marco had described numerous activities they employed to create a positive work environment. Martha explained how they recognized employees for receiving guest comments. She recognized,

In our all-associate meetings, we read our comment cards in front of everyone and on our bulletin board where we put our guest comments. They [employees] read them, and we do a huge celebration in our all-associate meeting.

The leadership team strongly communicated how important it was to recognize their employees for their contributions. It was important to each one of the leaders to communicate how much their employees were valued. Martha shared an experience when her manager, Stephanie, and Stephanie's manager, Tiffany recognized Martha for her commitments to Sedona, Hotel Marco and its employees. She expressed,

I know one of the biggest recognitions I received was when Stephanie recognized me with a nomination for manager of the year. Never ever in my wildest dreams did I ever think that she would do that, it just never crossed my mind, I was completely surprised. That sent a big message to me about how she feels about my work performance.

The hourly employees who participated in the study also explained how leadership ensured they were recognized for their contributions to the hotel. Barb began by explaining the public recognition.

They [the managers]...recognize the good things. They just don't do it one on one, if they were to do it one on one no one would know about it. So, they wait until everyone is there, they call your name and share what you have done....So there is no hiding it. Everyone knows about it. We all know the good things we are doing.

Stephanie, Martha, and Suzanne had provided examples of how they have involved the employees at Hotel Marco in problem solving issues and setting strategies at the hotel. Scott stated the daily meeting allowed everyone to know what was going on at the hotel. Scott and Steven also communicated that they have tried to solve guest problems at the meetings.

Susan, another employee, explained what the managers' communications and relationship meant to her by explaining,

They open the door for us and they open their hearts for us. What that means is that they make their face so comfortable to us, you know what they say communication is the first one, because if you don't see this [Susan shows a smile] then you don't want to see what is on the inside. We are so comfortable to work with them. We are also very happy to come to work every day with them because they communicate with us...If we don't come into work sometime, I call Stephanie can I speak to Stephanie whoever the front desk or can I speak to Suzanne or Martha. I say hello how are you guys doing there. What's going on. Are you guys busy, we are doing good. I mean how much you are with your

family, I say, everything is fine. So we do that for each other because we all together.

The Spanish-speaking employees, Shirley, Chris, Holly, Heidi, and Sally who participated in the survey communicated that there was a deep respect that the employees held with Martha their manager. They said, “even though I [Martha] am the department manager they give me respect. But I also treat them with respect; like we are the same I don’t look or act like I am higher than them.”

Both leadership and their hourly paid employees described activities that promote positive work environments at Hotel Marco. These findings including the emergent themes, *employee centric, collaboration, and open communication* are identified in Table 21.

Table 21

*Hotel Marco Within-Case Analysis: Level 3, Application, Techniques Employed to Provide Positive Work Environments*

Summary of findings	Emergent themes
Department incentive programs	Employee centric
Performance recognition (guest feedback, employee of the month, manager of the year, perfect attendance)	
Employee celebrations (birthdays, anniversaries, outings)	
Flexibility in scheduling to meeting employee lifestyle	
Reciprocal relationship focused on respect	
Meetings focused on problem solving and implementation of ideas to improve work and service experiences	Collaboration
Leadership always available to assist employees with any needs, personally and professionally	Open communication
Daily meetings	
Monthly meetings	

*Secondary Research Question Level 3: What have the participants done to build effective work teams?*

During the research study, the leadership team shared how they have built a positive work environment and an engaged team of employees by involving them in the action planning and strategies of the hotel. When Martha was asked what she had done to

build effective work teams, she shared it came down to one thing, “relationships.” Martha explained she believed that if there were strong relationships between the employees and the managers they could accomplish anything. Martha explained that ensuring that the employees understood the whole picture was also another key factor in building an effective team. She mentioned,

Helping them to understand how the whole hotel operates, not just their area. Cross training them and, and helping them build relationships with people in other departments. Having them have the experience of doing what that other person does has helped us to build a very effective team.

The hourly paid employees felt that they were an effective team because they had open communications, understood what needed to be accomplished, and conveyed a commitment to one hotel or one team. Susan, Barb, and the Spanish-speaking employees all consider Hotel Marco to be an effective team and shared their thoughts on how they achieved this. They offered,

*Barb:* The top is communication. We are not afraid to communicate. I am not afraid to talk to front desk people and I’m not afraid to talk to maintenance or houseman.

*Susan:* I think we are really good, because like Barb was saying if she needs something...she calls front desk. Whenever we see each other, we talk to each other, even though we have seen them already today. With Scott, we can call him on the radio or Jeff; it’s always a good response.

*Translator:* They think because we communicate very well, Martha, Stephanie and I. We are always on the same page. We do our meeting and pass the same message to everybody, so the employees always are up to date with what is going on. They say we are like one team. There is no difference. There is only one department because communication is very good and everybody works together...one team.

The leadership and hourly paid employees of Hotel Marco identify several elements, which make them an effective team. The findings and emergent themes of *collaboration, career development, and open communication* are identified in Table 22.

Table 22

*Hotel Marco Within-Case Analysis: Level 3, Application, Building Effective Work Teams*

Summary of findings	Emergent themes
Meetings focused on problem solving and implementation of ideas to improve work and service experiences	Collaboration
Commitment of employees to work together to accomplish goals	
Cross-training employees	Career development
Explaining hotels overall mission and strategies to accomplish goals	
Sharing information with employees regardless of role or department	Open communication
Positive employee relationships with each other and leadership	
Feeling of one team	

Level 4 Evaluation, Results

Secondary research questions linked to Kirkpatrick’s level 4 evaluation, results, are listed below (Kirkpatrick, 1998).

- What is the overall engagement level of the employees based on the participants’ last survey?
- What effect has the engagement level of the participants’ employees had on their hotel’s balanced scorecard?

*Interview Responses to Level 4 Secondary Research Questions*

*Secondary Research Question Level 4: What is the overall engagement level based on the participant's last survey?*

The leadership of Hotel Marco were on target when asked what the engagement level of their employees were based on the last engagement survey. Martha said, “between 92 and a 100%”, Stephanie said, “94%”, and Suzanne said, “between 92 and 94%.” All three shared with pride that the engagement score had been 100% a few years ago. Hotel Marco’s actual engagement score for 2009 was 94%. Table 23 summarizes the findings.

Table 23

*Hotel Marco Within-Case Analysis: Level 4, Results, Employees' Engagement Level*

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Summary of findings	Emergent theme
Managers all knew the score was in the mid 90's Remembered the hotel had achieved a score of 100	Engagement centric

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*Secondary Research Question Level 4: What effect has the engagement level of the participants' employees had on their hotel's balanced scorecard?*

The leadership team has not seen a direct impact to the hotel's balanced scorecard from their employees' engagement; however, they have seen changes in employee and guest experiences. Stephanie, Martha, and Suzanne all believe that when the economy

improves and the hotel sales increase, they will see an impact to the hotel's financial position. Martha speaking with pride explained how the employees' engagement has made a difference. She offered,

I've seen our associates go from just checking someone in, to welcoming guests with this enthusiasm and this excitement coming across to the guests. I see that the associates really care about their performance. They care about how other people feel because of their experience through the check in process....It comes back to making them feel so much pride. I've seen their hearts get bigger, and I've seen the smiles on their face more....We know we have engaged associates, we just can't figure out what we need to do to get the scores to reflect it sometimes.

Stephanie also doesn't understand why the results of the hotel have not been impacted more by the employees' engagement. She shared a conversation she had with the quality inspector who completed an inspection on Hotel Marco.

A couple of inspections ago, we had a 92 score, I said [to the inspector] so based on what you saw, what would you think my guest score would be. She said high 80's, low 90's. I said what you would think if I told you high 70's. She was like there is no way, and I said that is where we are. So I actually started focusing on the service score because we are a 23 year old hotel and it's been 5 years since our renovation.

All of the managers felt that the engagement level of the employees would also affect their finances based on low turnover, as they would not spend money recruiting and training new employees. Martha said,

Low turnover definitely helps us because when you have to constantly recruit new people, it costs \$2000 to train a new person. When you are constantly doing that, you are just wasting money.

Table 24

*Hotel Marco Within-Case Analysis: Level 4, Results, Effect of Engagement on Balanced Scorecard*

Summary of findings	Emergent theme
Positive guest and employee interactions	Indirect engagement impact
Positive guest feedback	
Low turnover	
No increase to balanced scorecard metrics	

Table 24 communicated the findings and emergent themes associated with the study's question, what effect has the engagement level of the participants' employees had on their hotel's balanced scorecard? The theme indentified was *indirect engagement impact*.

## Within-Case Summary Hotel Marco

### Summary of Participant's Demographics

The participants from Hotel Marco consisted of 14 employees. The participants were aged between 36 years and 40 years and were predominately female. The majority of participants worked in the housekeeping area of the hotel. Most of the participants had been a part of Hotel Marco's team from 7 years to more than 10 years.

Table 25 includes a summary of the participants' demographics. The emergent themes for each demographic area are identified.

Table 25

*Hotel Marco Within-Case Analysis: Summary of Findings and Key Demographics*

Demographics	Summary of findings	Key demographic
Gender	11 female; 3 male	Female
Age	18 – 60 years old	36 – 40 years old
Work area	Housekeeping Restaurant Maintenance Front Desk Other	Housekeeping
Years of employment	1 – more than 10 years	7 – more than 10 years

Summary of Level 1 Evaluation, Reaction to Engagement Training Program

The leadership of Hotel Marco attended a professional development training program focused on engagement concepts and activities. One member of the leadership team attended the training program in 2005, while the remaining members attended in 2006.

The members of the leadership team had difficulty recalling specifics of the program since it had been a minimum of four years since attending. Level 1 evaluation metrics are typically assessed at the conclusion of the professional development training program in an effort to capture reactions to the program. The researcher was unable to

access the evaluation metrics captured by Sedona at the time of the program, which necessitated including interview questions during the study.

Level 1 evaluation is highlighted in Table 26. The emergent theme identified is *collaboration* based on the professional development training program focused on employee engagement.

Table 26

*Hotel Marco Within-Case Analysis: Summary of Level 1 Evaluation, Reaction*

Reaction area	Emergent theme	Overall reaction theme
Overall reaction	Program recall	Collaboration
	Learner focused	
	Practicality	
	Collaboration	
	Networking opportunities	
	Content Overload	
Employee relationships	Leader-employee relationship	
	Reciprocal value relationship	
Self development	Reciprocal value relationship	
	Leadership engagement behaviors	
Work Environment	Practicality	
	Reciprocal value relationship	
	Family culture	
	Empathy	
Strong Teams	Empowered leaders	
	Leadership alignment	
	Empathy	
	Cultural alignment	

Summary of Level 2 Evaluation, Learning Achieved from an Engagement Training  
Program

Level 2 evaluation metrics, like level 1, are obtained at the conclusion of a professional development training program to measure what learnings the participants achieved during their attendance. Similar to the leadership team's responses to level 1 questions, they had difficulty recalling specifics of the program. Again, the researcher was unable to access the evaluation metrics captured by Sedona at the time of the program dictating the inclusion of interview questions related to what the participants learned during the research study.

Level 2 evaluation, learning, is summarized in Table 27. The summary includes learning metrics and the emergent theme of learning, employee centric.

Table 27

*Hotel Marco Within-Case Analysis: Summary of Level 2 Evaluation, Learning*

Learning area	Emergent theme	Overall learning theme
Employee engagement	Personal interest	Employee centric
	Varied engagement metrics	
	Career development	
	Collaboration	
Employee relationship	Employee centric	
	Observations	
	Family centric	
	Open communication	
Assessing career opportunities	Program recall	
	Employee centric	
Work environment	Program recall	
	Open communication	
	Employee centric	
Team effectiveness	Career development	
	Employee centric	
	Collaboration	

### Summary of Level 3 Evaluation, Application Engagement Training Program Activities

Level 3 evaluation metrics, unlike levels 3 and 4, are obtained after a participant has attended a professional development training program. Application metrics typically are measured on a continual basis after a participant's attendance. Completion of the first evaluation occurs a minimum of 30 days after the participant has attended the program allowing them the opportunity to apply what they learned in their actual role in their workplace.

The leadership team was very comfortable explaining how they have applied different concepts and activities in the workplace sharing numerous examples with the researcher. The examples they shared were all *employee centric*, which is outlined in Table 28.

Table 28

*Hotel Marco Within-Case Analysis: Summary of Level 3 Evaluation, Application*

Learning area	Emergent theme	Overall application theme
Employee engagement	Personal interest	Employee centric
	Employee centric	
	Career development	
	Collaboration	
	Competing initiatives	
Leadership capabilities	Personal interest	Employee centric
	Career development	
	Trust	
Career opportunities	Career development	Employee centric
	Life skills training	
Work environment	Employee centric	Employee centric
	Collaboration	
	Open communication	
Team effectiveness	Collaboration	Employee centric
	Career development	
	Open communication	

Summary of Level 4 Evaluation, Results of Engagement Training Program

Level 4 evaluation metrics, like level 3, are acquired after a participant has attended a professional development training program and has had an opportunity to apply the concepts and activities in the workplace. Results are typically measured on an ongoing basis in an effort to correlate the results to the professional development training program. Measurements of the results vary from organization to organization. Sedona hotels utilize engagement survey metrics along with measuring guest satisfaction, and various operational measurements such as turnover.

The leadership team knew the approximate engagement score for Hotel Marco. The leadership team felt that their operational results were not reflective of their engaged employees citing various rationales including reduced sales based on the economy and the need of a renovation at the hotel. They gave annotative operational examples as evidence of the impact of engaged employees. Table 29 summarizes the result areas and emergent theme, *engagement impact*.

Table 29

*Hotel Marco Within-Case Analysis: Summary of Level 4 Evaluation, Results*

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Learning area	Emergent theme	Overall results theme
Engagement level	Engagement centric	Engagement impact
Balanced scorecard	Indirect engagement impact	

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## Within-Case Analysis Hotel Rico

### Description of Case

Hotel Rico is one of Sedona's 271 North American properties. Hotel Rico opened in 1998 with approximately 120 guest rooms. Hotel Rico's engagement index results were in the company's top quartile of engagement indices. The engagement index for 2009 and 2008 was 100 % and 85% engagement respectively. At the time of the study, Hotel Rico employed 21 employees; participants totaled 10 employees or 47.6% of the property's 21 employees. Participants included three individuals from the leadership team and seven hourly paid employees.

### Introduction to Participants

Participants of the study included 11 participants, 3 members of Hotel Rico's leadership team and 8 of their employees. One hourly paid employee resigned prior to the initial member checking and was removed from the study resulting in a total of ten participants. The remaining 10 participants represented 47.6% of the total employees.

Hotel Rico's leadership team consists of Nancy, Craig, and Abigail. Nancy has been the general manager of Hotel Rico since the hotel opened in 1998 and has been with Sedona, for over 20 years. Nancy completed the company's engagement training in 2005, 5 years ago.

Craig is responsible for the front desk, restaurant, and engineering departments of the hotel as well as assisting Abigail with any needs in the housekeeping area. Craig has worked with Sedona since 1992 at various properties prior to joining the leadership team at Hotel Rico 4 years ago. Craig attended the engagement professional development training program in 2005.

Abigail has been with Sedona since 1990 at various locations. She joined Hotel Rico upon its opening in 1998 as an employee. In 2008, Abigail was promoted to a member of the leadership team. Abigail, although considered a member of the leadership team is an hourly paid employee and did not attend the engagement training program.

Seven hourly paid employees participated in the study. The employees included Joshua, Krystal, Natalie, George, Joe, Julia, and Ramona.

Joshua, Krystal, and Natalie work in the housekeeping department. Joshua has worked for Hotel Rico for approximately 7 to 10 years; Krystal has worked for more than 10 years and Natalie has the least amount of seniority, having worked with her teammates for 1 to 3 years.

George has worked in the maintenance area for 1 to 3 years. Joe and Julia serve guests at the hotel's restaurant. Joe has worked at the hotel for 4 to 6 years, while Julia has served for 7 to 10 years. Ramona has been working the front desk at Hotel Rico for 4 to 6 years.

## Summary of Participants' Demographics

Participants' demographics include their gender, age, length of employment and the area of their work at the hotel. Tables and explanatory narratives are provided for the demographics.

### *Gender*

Ten participants, three leaders and seven of their employees (hourly paid) from Hotel Rico participated in the study. Three of the participants were male (30.0%) and 7 were female (70.0%).

### *Age*

The participants' age ranged from 18 years to 55 years of age. Table 30 depicts a summary of the age ranges.

Table 30

*Age of Study Participants-Hotel Rico*

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Age range	Participant
18-25	Joe, Natalie
26-30	Ramona
31-35	Joshua
36-40	Craig, George
41-45	Krystal
46-50	Julia, Nancy
51-55	Abigail

---

*Years of Employment*

The participants' have worked for Hotel Rico from 1 year to over 10 years. Table 31 depicts a summary of the years of employment of the participants.

Table 31

*Years of Employment of Study Participants-Hotel Rico*

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Years of employment	Participant
1-3	George, Natalie
4-6	Craig, Joe, Ramona
7-10	Joshua, Julia
More than 10	Abigail, Krystal, Nancy

---

*Work Area*

The participants of the study work in the housekeeping, maintenance, restaurant, and front desk areas of the hotel. The leadership of the hotel identified their work area as other, as they oversee all hotel operations. Table 32 depicts a summary of the work area.

Table 32

*Work Area of Participants-Hotel Rico*

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Work area	Participant
Housekeeping	Joshua, Krystal, Natalie
Maintenance	George
Restaurant	Joe, Julia
Front Desk	Ramona
Other	Abigail, Craig, Nancy

---

Hotel Rico Narrative

The subsequent portion of this chapter presents a narrative of the participant's perspective of how they have applied the activities and concepts they learned from a professional development program focused on employee engagement. Assessment of the training program and its effect on employee engagement levels adheres to Kirkpatrick's four levels of evaluation, (a) reaction, (b) learning, (c) application, and (d) results (Kirkpatrick, 1998). Secondary research questions also parallel the levels.

Researcher Notes

Nancy, Craig, and Abigail are members of Hotel Rico's leadership team. When Nancy and Craig who had attended the professional development training program, met with the researcher for their interviews, they both were apprehensive about being able to

answer specific questions regarding the training class due to the length of time that had passed since they attended the program. The researcher encouraged the leaders to share what information they were able, and not to be concerned with not being able to answer any specific questions. After the researcher encouraged Nancy and Craig, they appeared to be at ease as they participated in the interviews.

Even though Abigail is considered a member of the leadership team, she is an hourly paid employee and had not participated in the training program. The researcher utilized interview questions focused on questions directed to the employees of the leaders who had attended the employee engagement professional development training program.

The researcher held all interviews in the hotel's boardroom. The setting was private and comfortable for individual and group interviews. Interviews were conducted individually for all members of the leadership team. The leadership team included Nancy, Craig, and Abigail. Group interviews were conducted for the employees with the exception of one employee who participated in an individual interview. A hotel translator interpreted the researcher's questions to Spanish-speaking employees. The employees who participated in the research study appeared relaxed and at ease.

#### Level 1 Evaluation, Reaction

Five secondary research questions linked to Kirkpatrick's level 1 evaluation reaction were utilized (Kirkpatrick, 1998).

- What were the participants' reactions to the professional development training program?

- How did the participants feel the professional development training program would help build stronger relationships with their employees?
- How did the participants feel the professional development training program would assist in their development?
- How did the participants feel the professional development training program would assist them with building a positive work environment for their employees?
- How did the participants feel the professional development training program would assist them with building strong teams?

*Interview Responses to Level 1 Secondary Research Questions*

*Secondary Research Question Level 1: What were the participants' reactions to the professional development training program?*

Nancy and Craig both had difficulties remembering specifics from the engagement training program, but they did state that they felt the training program offered a number of tools and activities they could utilize to engage their employees. Nancy also felt that the class reinforced many of the activities and practices she utilized to engage her employees in the past. She said,

I think [the class] reinforced what I already probably practiced...it is really what I use everyday. Knowing your staff, developing them, gearing your style to the individuals, not having a blanket style. This program reinforced what I already

knew, what I was already practicing. A few new ideas that maybe I didn't have; I incorporated. It gave me different tools to use; the take-a-ways were good.

Craig shared the professional development training class was offered at the hotel he worked. He conveyed that he felt it was difficult to stay attentive as he was continually thinking about work. He felt it would be good to offer a variety of class options at various locations to avoid work distractions for the participants. He expressed,

It [the class] was good. The only difficult part was it was at the hotel where I worked. And at the time...I might have still been in banquets so using the banquet space probably not as conducive, I mean it was still good.

Table 33 reviews the leaders' reactions to the engagement professional development program they attended and the emergent themes of *program recall*, *reinforcement of engagement behaviors and activities*, *engagement tools*, and *variety of class options*.

Table 33

*Hotel Rico Within-Case Analysis: Level 1, Reaction, Participants' Reaction*

Summary of findings	Emergent themes
Long time period since attending program, specifics difficult to recall	Program recall
Program acted as a reinforcement of behaviors and activities	Reinforcement of engagement behaviors/activities
Class filled with activities and resources	Engagement tools
Prefer to attend class other than at worksite to ensure focus on program versus operation of hotel	Variety of class offerings

*Secondary Research Question Level 1: How did the participants feel the professional development training program would help build stronger relationships with their employees?*

Craig appeared to be slightly uncomfortable when I asked the interview question related to building stronger relationships with employees. He said he knew all the information in the class was good, but again, due to the time that had passed since he took the class, he couldn't provide any specifics.

Nancy conveyed she thought the class would be good for new managers, energize long term managers and provided tools she could use to engage her employees. Nancy shared in a non-boastful way that she already possessed and utilized many of the behaviors that were discussed in the program. Again she thought they were a good refresher. Nancy said,

I already possessed some of the skills set, it was just fine tuning those. Maybe teaching a few new tricks so to speak. I think it's a really great program for new leaders, especially in our company. [The program] may be a re-energizer for older leaders who may be in a rut.

Table 34 outlines the summary of findings and emergent themes of *program recall* and *employee centric* in determining how the participants of an engagement training program felt the content would help them build stronger relationships with their employees.

Table 34

*Hotel Rico Within-Case Analysis: Level 1, Reaction, Perceived Ways to Build Strong Employee Relationships*

Summary of findings	Emergent themes
Long time period since attending program, specifics difficult to recall	Program recall
Strengthen relationships individually	Employee centric
Education on generational differences	

*Secondary Research Question Level 1: How did the participants feel the professional development training program would assist in their development?*

When I asked the participants how they felt the training program would assist in their development. Craig shared that he thought there wasn't enough time for the program and it felt that everything was "jammed in". Craig said,

I've taken other leadership training classes which are over a longer period of time. You get a lot more information...because its spread over a long period of time you don't feel like it is being jammed in....in the engagement program, there was only so much time, it was all jammed in so it didn't feel like you could really kind of enjoy it. It was more like, let's get through this.

Nancy was thoughtful as she answered the same question, she appeared to like that the class spoke about the importance of individualizing interactions with each employee based on their needs, desires, and generational impact. She also inferred that the class reinforced her leadership practices in the past and gave her a few new ideas by stating,

This one [training class] was more what I would call right on time....it spoke to many levels of generations, needs and wants....this one was really about engaging people, how do you lead them. ....for me personally, it just reemphasized some things I had been doing, things I need to continue doing, or find a new approach to doing.

Table 35 summarizes the findings and presents the emergent themes of *reinforcement of engagement behaviors and activities, employee centric and inadequate class time* answers the question, how do the participants feel the professional development training program would assist in their development?

Table 35

*Hotel Rico Within-Case Analysis: Level 1, Reaction, Perceived Self Development Assistance*

Summary of findings	Emergent themes
Good information that reinforced and reenergized needed leadership behaviors	Reinforcement of engagement behaviors/activities
Importance of focusing on each employee individually	Employee centric
Education on generational differences	
Number of activities for class time inadequate	Inadequate class time

*Secondary Research Question Level 1: How did the participants feel the professional development training program would assist them with building a positive work environment for their employees?*

Nancy thought that most of the information would be helpful in building a good work environment, she reiterated, “there were good tools to walk away to use.” Craig shared that he thought any training program would be helpful to build a positive work environment. “In my opinion, any class where you can get information to possibly give

you more understanding of what a manger can do, more ideas, more information. It is beneficial as a manager.”

Table 36 provides a summary of the findings and emergent theme. The emergent theme identified was *variety of engagement activities*.

Table 36

*Hotel Rico Within-Case Analysis: Level 1, Reaction, Perceived Ways to Build a Better Work Environment*

Summary of findings	Emergent theme
Variety of ideas and activities to employ in different situations	Variety of engagement activities

*Secondary Research Question Level 1: How did the participants feel the professional development training program would assist them with building strong teams?*

The leadership team felt that the training program would help them build a strong team. Nancy was complimentary of the class saying that the engagement training program, “really dealt with human behavior and how you can get productivity results, loyalty, or tenure.” Nancy continued to share the behaviors that she felt would help to engage her team. She stated,

If people feel like that you are listening, you are taking their ideas and running with them, or at least addressing their ideas, and you are concerned about where

they want to go with their career from a development standpoint it will engage them.

Table 37 outlines the leadership of Hotel Rico perceived ways to build strong teams. The emergent themes are *employee centric* and *personal interest*.

Table 37

*Hotel Rico Within-Case Analysis: Level 1, Reaction, Perceived Ways to Build Strong Teams*

Summary of findings	Emergent themes
Being available to listen to employees	Employee centric
Implement employees' ideas and suggestions	
Taking interest in employees' career development	
Showing care and concern for employees	Personal interest

Level 2 Evaluation, Learning

The secondary research questions correlated to Kirkpatrick's level 2 evaluation, learning are listed below (Kirkpatrick, 1998).

- Based on the professional development training program, what ways did the participants learn to affect employee engagement?

- What did the participants learn during the professional development training program that would help improve their communication and build stronger relationships with their employees?
- What did the participants learn during the professional development training program that would improve their ability to assess and discuss career development opportunities for their employees?
- What did the participants learn during the professional development training program that would improve the work environment for their employees?
- What did the participants learn during the professional development training program that would improve the effectiveness of their team?

*Interview Responses to Level 2 Secondary Research Questions*

*Secondary Research Question Level 2: Based on the professional development training program, what ways did the participants learn to affect employee engagement?*

Hotel Rico's leadership felt there were several things the training program shared that would influence an employee's engagement. Nancy stated that in order for leaders to engage their employees, so must the managers. Nancy said, "it all comes back to leadership. We have to be engaged to engage them." Nancy continued to share other examples that she learned from the professional development training program including conducting a rap or one-on-one session with employees. Nancy said she hasn't completed

formal sessions since the training, she is more informal and conducts her one-on-ones in a casual manner. She expressed,

I have done several of those [one-on-one sessions] right after that training.

Recently, no I haven't. I think because it is more of a one-on-one individual everyday kind of thing....We have to be on top of our game, so to speak to be in tune with them and to understand where they are coming from.

Craig was very sincere when he shared that the main thing he has learned in engaging employees is gaining their respect and trust. He felt that the best way to accomplish this is to work side by side them, showing he would do anything he would ask of them. Craig articulated,

I get in and work with the associates. I show them that what they are doing is also something that I am willing to do...whatever they need, they can come to you.

They come and talk to you about things. I feel that, that can lend to keeping people around. They want to be involved in something like that. They like coming to work.

Table 38 identifies the findings and emergent themes of *personal interest*, *employee centric* and *leadership engagement* based on the leaders' perspective of what they learned at the professional development training program to affect employee engagement.

Table 38

*Hotel Rico Within-Case Analysis: Level 2, Learning, Ways to Affect Employee Engagement*

Summary of findings	Emergent themes
Holding one-on-one sessions with employee to determine development desires, personal needs, concerns	Personal interest
Importance of focusing on each employee individually	Employee centric
Spending time with employees to determine what is important to each one individually	
Leadership willing to help employees; doesn't ask them to do anything they would not	
Leaders need to feel motivated and engaged	Engaged leadership

*Secondary Research Question Level 2: What did the participants learn during the professional development training program that would help improve their communication and build stronger relationships with their employees?*

The managers of Hotel Rico again had difficulty answering questions focused on what they had learned based on the training program. Both Craig and Nancy gave several examples of how they could increase their communication and build stronger teams; however, it was unclear if their perspectives were a result of the learning they received at the professional development training program focused on employee engagement or from other experiences.

Craig, in response to other interview questions, inferred how much he felt it was important to be available for the employees and work along side of them. Craig, who is clear and concise in his responses, answered the question of what he learned to build a strong team and good communication, “just be open, be willing to go in and do what they are doing.”

Nancy, who shared her perspectives by providing numerous examples, again communicated several examples to the question asked. Nancy stated strongly that she expected everyone to show care and concern for each other. The importance of this type of relationship was perceived as a non-negotiable value for Nancy. She also spoke about the importance to individualize your communication and development of each employee as each one has different talents. Nancy spoke about employees’ strengths and weaknesses,

You need to develop their strengths and work around the weaknesses, because you are not always going to fix their weaknesses. And it does need to be against their individual styles to get the best out of them. And what works for them.

Nancy continued and talked about the impact of helping individuals develop in their roles, “you need to develop their strengths and work around the weaknesses, because you are not always going to fix their weaknesses.” Nancy felt that it was important for leaders to develop a strong sense of trust with their employees. Nancy also spoke about the importance of sharing information even when it wasn’t positive news. When Nancy has news that is not so favorable to share, she becomes concerned that her communication may not be always be received positively and the employees may feel

that they have disappointed her. She said that she was unsure if it would cause them to be disengaged, but her stronger feeling was that they were able to overcome any challenges prevailed,

I know they are up to it...there is probably some sense that I am disappointed in them, and that is probably not fair to them some days and they may disengage.

What they need to hear, is here is what happened, this is what we are going to do, lets move forward...I trust them to do their job...I want them to be the best they can be and see that because they are the best.

The themes that emerged from discussing what the leadership team learned about communication and building strong relationships with their employees included developing a *reciprocal value relationship* with them, being *employee centric*, providing *career development opportunities*, and *empowering* employees to complete their job expectation. The summary of findings and emergent themes are outlined in Table 39.

Table 39

*Hotel Rico Within-Case Analysis: Level 2, Learning, Ways to Improve Communication and Relationships With Employees*

Summary of findings	Emergent themes
Reinforcement of taking care of each other	Reciprocal value relationship
Spending time with employees to determine what is important to each one individually	Employee centric
Be willing to assist employees with needs	
Provide feedback that will help them grow	Career development
Grow employee strengths, work around weaknesses	
Trust employees to make decisions and complete job duties	Empowered employees

*Secondary Research Question Level 2: What did the participants learn during the professional development training program that would help improve their ability to assess and discuss career development opportunities for their employees?*

Craig was unable to recall any specifics from the professional development program in relation to the questions focused on career development opportunities. Nancy also had difficulty recalling specifics from the program; she identified several key activities presented in the training program; the importance of completing a one-on-one session and determining what developmental needs an employee may have. Nancy shared an example of what occurs with the employees by offering,

We look at where they [the employees] need to be and where they want to go. We look there first and then, whether it be capabilities...or if it's a situation where they need education, then we talk about that. Then we look at avenues for that whether it is you need a GED or we need to look at computer classes.

Three themes emerged from the interviews, lack of *program recall*, the importance of leadership being *employee centric*, and providing *career development* opportunities for the employees. Table 40 presents the finding and emergent themes.

Table 40

*Hotel Rico Within-Case Analysis: Level 2, Learning, Ways to Assess and Discuss Career Opportunities*

Summary of findings	Emergent themes
Long time period since attending program, difficult to recall specifics	Program recall
Spending time with employees to determine what is important to each one individually	Employee centric
Determining skills/knowledge training needed by employee	Career development
Providing training resources	

*Secondary Research Question Level 2: What did the participants learn during the professional development training program that would improve the work environment for their employees?*

Craig was unable to participate in the discussion regarding what he had learned at the training program that would improve the work environment based on the length of time that had passed since he attended the training. Nancy reiterated the importance of asking the employees what they would like to have different and not assuming you know. “Continue to talk to them...ask questions; more about what’s important to them. Don’t assume you know what is important to them.”

The summary of findings and emergent themes related to the learnings of improving the work environment for employees are outlined in Table 41. The emergent themes were, *program recall* and *employee centric*.

Table 41

*Hotel Rico Within-Case Analysis: Level 2, Learning, Ways to Improve Work Environment*

Summary of findings	Emergent themes
Long time period since attending program, difficult to recall specifics	Program recall
Spending time with employees to determine what is important to each one individually	Employee centric

*Secondary Research Question Level 2: What did the participants learn during the professional development training program that would improve the effectiveness of their team?*

The leadership team shared several practices focused on team effectiveness from the training program. The managers shared the significance of sharing information with the employees in an effort for them to understand the business demands of the hotel and valuing the employees' input in making decisions that would affect their business. Nancy again reiterated the importance of focusing on what is important to each employee, as well as entrusting the hotel in the hands of the employees. Nancy was passionate when she shared her perspective,

The team has to feel like they have a say. It can't be top down. It is usually better if its bottom up, as far as decision making goes....frankly they run the buildings for the most part. The better trained they are, they more empowered they are, the better your building runs, the happier your guests are, because they are empowered and they can make the decisions. They don't need me, that's the way it should work. They shouldn't need me or Craig around for the most part....that is where the pride level comes in and that sense of engagement in my opinion is that this is their hotel, not my hotel.

*Open communication, leadership being employee centric and providing opportunities for collaboration that develops empowered employees were the emergent themes related to the learning the managers received at the training program directed to improve the effectiveness of their team. These themes are highlighted in Table 42.*

Table 42

*Hotel Rico Within-Case Analysis: Level 2, Learning, Ways to Improve Team Effectiveness*

Summary of findings	Emergent themes
Sharing information with employees to work together to accomplish goals	Open communication
Spending time with employees to determine what is important to each one individually	Employee centric
Team hotel meetings focused on celebrations, learning, problem solving and implementation of ideas	Collaboration
Employees working together to accomplish goals	
Trust employees to make decisions and complete job duties	Empowered employees

Level 3 Evaluation, Application

Five secondary research questions link to Kirkpatrick’s level 3 evaluation (Kirkpatrick, 1998).

- What activities have the participants completed to increase the engagement of their employees?
- What behaviors have the participants exhibited to improve their leadership capability, including communication and building strong relationships with their employees?

- What actions have the participants taken to provide career development opportunities for their employees?
- What techniques have the participants employed to provide positive work environments?
- What have the participants done to build effective work teams?

#### *Artifacts Related to Level 2 Secondary Research Questions*

Artifacts corresponding to the secondary research questions were collected. The artifacts depict communication to the employees regarding hotel goals and performance. Additional artifacts included guest comments, and employee pictures.

#### *Interview Responses to Level 3 Secondary Research Questions*

Nancy and Craig, members of Hotel Rico's leadership team relaxed when they were told the remainder of the interview session would focus on engagement concepts and activities they have placed into practice at the hotel and would not have to recall any specifics from the professional development training program they attended in 2005. Nancy and Craig's employees, who participated in the research study, were asked questions related to their application of engagement concepts and activities. Their perspectives are found in the Level 3, application secondary research questions.

*Secondary Research Question Level 3, Application: What activities have the participants completed to increase the engagement of their employees?*

The leadership team shared a number of activities they have completed and felt had an impact on the overall engagement of their employees. Craig and Nancy both mentioned the development plans that have been in place for several employees. Craig shared development opportunities that the front desk employees have been working on,

We have programs that give...the front desk associates [opportunity to get] involved in different aspects of the hotel. For example, paying bills, accounts receivable, learning those aspects getting them involved in that to increase their knowledge where they can possibly move onto you know an assistant general manager position.

Abigail, who had been an hourly employee for many years, had been promoted to a supervisor after Nancy mentored Abigail and provided a development plan. Abigail proudly communicated her experience on becoming a supervisor,

Nancy had helped me pass the supervisor interview ...with her support and both her and Craig behind me. They give us a chance to actually grow if we would like to take that opportunity. Her [Nancy's] door is always open to help us. We actually go into her office, anything we pretty much ask of her to help get us to a certain point she takes that opportunity and she does that. A lot of joy when I passed the interview, because I never had a General Manager that took the time to see exactly what kind of person I was, what I was capable of doing, and the hard effort I put out.

Nancy also gave a number of examples sharing the focus that the leadership team places on special events that are important to their employees such as birthdays and anniversaries. Nancy explained how the employees celebrate each other's milestones and also shared examples of celebrations that she has done. She provided,

George who is the newest member on our team will show up with a meal cooked from his wife for the team members in the break room...Over the last couple of years...I tend to do a birthday card personally for the people, but [our employees]...will come showing up with balloons on their own dime, [and celebrate their fellow teammates. They are engaged with each other....I arranged Ramona's graduation [party] last week....it was something, a big milestone for her. She's been with this team for almost 4 years, so we did that.

Nancy and Craig both felt that there were a number of tools available to them to engage their employees, however have not been able to make use of them due to the demands of the hotel. They also explained that Sedona requires an engagement action plan outlining initiatives hotel leaders will implement to increase their employees' engagement. Both Nancy and Craig indicated that they have plans and goals to affect their employees' engagement, they felt the action plan acted more of a check and balance process. Craig said, "I think everybody management wise, has their agenda's. What they feel they need to work on. Sometimes having to put it down in an action plan, you do it just because you have to do it."

The hourly paid employees who participated in the interviews provided a number of examples when asked what had their manager done to increase their engagement. They were all very comfortable sharing their experiences, even when asked what improvements could be made. The employees shared examples of how they have supported their fellow teammates when they asked for help or if they noticed they needed assistance. They offered,

*Ramona:* As a team I feel the staff here is absolutely great. We just don't stick to our department, we kind of help each other out. If Joe needed help in the kitchen making coffee, if I have time then I'll do that. George always asks me, Ramona do you need help? So you know everybody helps each other.

*Joe:* The teamwork getting better falls within a person because we are already a good team and have each others back, and that is something that not too many people understand.

*Ramona:* I agree, as a team I feel like we are pretty good. We balance each other out and even though we get on each other's nerves at times, we are able to laugh at each other at the end of the day. You know, I really feel like our team is pretty strong so I completely agree with Joe.

Josh who works in the housekeeping department not only shared his experiences helping his teammates he also communicated how the employees took ownership of the hotel. His following example was communicated through a translator,

*Josh:* As a team, he always is able to help the ladies, the housekeepers.

Sometimes he goes upstairs and he delivers towels. The ladies don't have to ask him to come down and get them. He does that by himself; That's the way they work as a team....the employees don't have to wait for managers to tell them to do something when they don't have to. Whatever it is, they can just go and do that without asking or the manager telling them. Josh says that's the way he works you know. He is empowered and that way incase the guest needs something quick, nobody has to tell him to do it. He is going to do it.

When asking the leaders of Hotel Rico and their employees what they have applied to increase employee engagement, several themes emerged. The themes are outlined below in Table 43 and include, leadership being *employee centric*, providing opportunities for *career development*, *empowering employees*, developing a *reciprocal value relationship* and operating a hotel with *competing initiatives*.

Table 43

*Hotel Rico Within-Case Analysis: Level 3, Application, Activities Completed to Increase Employee Engagement*

Summary of findings	Emergent themes
Celebrating employee occasions i.e. birthdays, anniversaries, graduation	Employee centric
Providing development feedback	Career development
Outlining development plan for employees focused on their goals	
Mentor/coach employees through manager application process	
Employees take initiative to accomplish work assignments and guest needs	Empowered employees
Manager and employees support each completing work activities and personal needs	Reciprocal value relationship
Numerous job initiatives limiting managers from utilizing available tools and resources to increase employee engagement	Competing initiatives
Action planning process viewed as a check and balance process	

*Secondary Research Question Level 3: What behaviors have the participants exhibited to improve their leadership capability including communication and building strong relationships with their employees?*

The leadership team felt that spending time with the employees specifically one-on-ones was what helped them to be in tune with their employees. Craig explained what occurred during his discussions.

I sit down and ask them how they are doing, what things they are working on, what are their goals, how are they feeling at work. What are the things at work that I can assist them, what I can do as a manager to help them. Things like that.

Craig felt that one-on-ones shouldn't be done in conjunction with an employee's yearly review. He said, "A review to me is about their performance over the past year. You can talk about goals for the next year. But to me I like to separate the two."

Nancy shared that she had conducted formal one-on-one meetings with her employees immediately following her attendance at the training program, but now she has weekly one-on-ones, which are very informal. She said,

I'd say every 6-8 days I talk with them, I don't call them formalized raps....whether it is an inspection or working side by side with them at the desk, or in the restaurant bussing tables. It just depends on the individual.

Nancy still hears employees talk about some of the same topics today in her informal meetings as she did in her formal sit down meetings. Nancy shared some of the things the employees share with her including using herself as an example. These were,

Some of the feedback was some that I still hear today. Which is, they like being here, the flexibility, the environment we have here, the family atmosphere. Some of the weaknesses or things to work on include the ability to grow. I think sometimes it comes back to us when we talk further and dig further, it is their inability to move. I have to point out you can go anywhere you want to go, but sometimes you have to pack up and go. Because you know, the opportunities are not going to be right here. Here is where I had to move in my career to go where I wanted to go and this is why I haven't moved in my career. Because I haven't wanted to go, and here is the opportunities. I use myself a lot in those discussions about career progression to explain.

Hotel Rico's hourly paid employees who participated in the study all have had experience having a casual one-on-one session. When discussing formalized sessions, a few of the employees had met with their leader and others had not. The employees all shared a feeling of trust and comfortableness with both Nancy and Craig. Nancy has two employees who report to her, Abigail and Craig, While Abigail had communicated that Nancy mentored her through the process to become a manager; she and Nancy also have discussions focused on housekeeping improvements.

Although Craig said he never had a formal one-on-one to discuss his developmental opportunities with Nancy he said, "No, never have had a sit down one on one, but we do that constantly during the week. It's a give and take daily."

The employees said that the communication was very strong and they had discussions almost on a daily basis with their managers; reinforcing what Nancy and Craig had shared. The employees seemed proud to have the type of relationship with their leaders that they could share their ideas and concerns. They said,

*Ramona:* Yes, definitely if they need to address something or if we need to go to them, we have one on one moments where we can sit in there office and we can shut the door and we can address any issues that need to be addressed.

*George:* We go and sit down and talk about anything and if I have new ideas on how to improve things, I go and sit with them and explain, they are always able to help, you know. I speak with Mr. Craig almost every day about things that we can improve and you know.

*Ramona:* Yes, I feel comfortable talking to them about climbing the ladder and everything. We had an associate here that used to work here and now she is at the full service so I feel comfortable talking to Nancy about it because she understands that everybody kind of wants to grow and everything. I don't feel locked down here, I feel that I am open to speak with her about that.

The leadership and hourly paid employees of Hotel Rico shared many examples that confirmed the managers were building strong relationships with their employees. Table 44 highlights the emergent themes of *personal interest, career development, and trust*.

Table 44

*Hotel Rico Within-Case Analysis: Level 3, Application, Behaviors Exhibited to Improve Leadership Capabilities*

Summary of findings	Emergent themes
Holding one-on-one sessions with employee to determine development desires, personal needs and concerns	Personal interest
Customized employee development plans based on agreed upon path	Career development
Examples of successful employees who have progressed with the organization	
Employees comfortable sharing their professional and personal needs with the managers	Trust
Employees are comfortable knowing their managers are always available to them	

*Secondary Research Question Level 3: What actions have the participants taken to provide career development opportunities for their employees?*

The leadership team again shared how they have been able to uncover employee’s career goals in the one-on-ones conversations they have had. Once the managers have a clear understanding of the employees’ goals, they then recommend learning paths ensuring that the employees are prepared for their next step. Craig shared examples of how several employees grown their skills and knowledge by learning new processes and gaining certifications.

We talked about giving the opportunities to front desk folks. We've also have engineers on property um, who we try to give more experiences to. He's [engineer] a certified pool operator now. So giving him the chance to go to training classes to get certified and letting him know the options available....he runs with it...[I follow up] and see how he is doing.

Craig also provided insight as to why some managers become frustrated when employees don't want to take advantage of an opportunity. He shared his advice,

I think the main challenge is sometimes as a manager you want to give people as many opportunities as you can, but they have to make the decision to do it. It has to be something they want to do.

Nancy had provided several examples of providing career development for her employees throughout the interview; however she focused on identifying and preparing employees for Sedona's approval process to apply for supervisory positions. She shared, Sedona's has an internal program to prepare hourly employees for an entry level, which gives them the ability to interview for an entry level management job. It's a process...to get them qualified to interview for entry level management jobs within this company. They take a series of classes they have to pass and actually be endorsed by their existing leader and GM...I currently have one employee approved who is my room care leader, Abigail. And then I have another employee here, my lead on the desk who has completed his supervisory training and is now in the online process of finishing his Harvard required classes....I have another desk employee, Yvonne, who is been covering the audit for the full time auditor

who has been out all week. She has expressed an interest to start the process in January. So, we will be assessing her capabilities to start the program.

It was evident that Nancy was very passionate about her role as a mentor for employees wanting to take on a supervisory role. Nancy's passion has touched her employees which was evident when they shared examples of opportunities they have been given.

Nancy had mentored Abigail and this guidance continues today as Abigail learns strategic planning which is needed to be successful in today's business climate. Abigail shared,

She [Nancy] brings me in on budget. She'll talk to me about the budget. She'll sit down and say Abigail, you know this is housekeeping budget, this is the way the budget works and involves me....Craig is actually suppose to do some training with me, front desk training....we are just trying to fit it in.

George and Joe shared how they started at Hotel Rico in one position, but have been given the opportunity to learn others. Both voiced,

*George:* For me, I started working here as general clean and minor maintenance and then I had learned maintenance.

*Joe:* Yes, I actually cross-trained in general clean and minor maintenance, housekeeping and asked to train at the front desk. But I wanted to stay in the kitchen. I love to cook, so there are more opportunities and I decided, if I quit cooking then I could talk to Miss Nancy, I am sure she wouldn't mind to see what kind of job to see what's there is for my type of person.

Ramona, who had just been recognized by her teammates with a graduation party for her completion of her bachelor's degree said,

I had an opportunity to cross train in the kitchen as a waitress, but because I was in school it didn't work out... Miss Abigail always jokes around, but I am pretty sure she is serious; if I want to cross train in housekeeping that's open for me as well.

The Spanish-speaking employees who participated in the research study with the assistance of the hotel's translator shared that they hadn't had a conversation with any of the managers about the careers yet, but they would tell the managers what they would like to learn if they sat down with them. Josh expressed interest in cross-training to other areas of the hotel.

*[Translator]:* Josh says that if he got time to sit with the managers, he would ask them if he can move up, to a different position. He has worked here for about 9 years and he thinks he is able to work in the engineer department because he knows a lot of things about how everything works here. He is sure is he could ask Miss Nancy she is going to give him the opportunity to do that.

Several of the other Spanish-speaking employees expressed interest in learning English and computer skills,

*[Translator]:* Natalie wants to learn English, she wants to go back to school and learn English, she is going to ask her manager about learning other things.

*[Translator]:* Krystal wants to learn English too. She was going to school for two years, she understands a lot of English and she can speak a little English too, but

she wants to improve that. She says that when she was going to school, Miss Nancy gave her, her support. She bought the books for her and everything. But that it is hard to work and go to school. She' like to improve the language and oh, computers; she'd like to learn computers.

The leadership and hourly paid employees of Hotel Rico shared numerous examples of the career opportunities they have had. Table 45 summarizes the findings and identifies the emergent themes of *career development* and *life skills training*.

Table 45

*Hotel Rico Within-Case Analysis: Level 3, Application, Career Opportunities Provided to Employees*

Summary of findings	Emergent themes
Cross training with other departments Opportunities for positions at other Sedona properties Training programs focused on employee growth Mentor/coach employees through manager application process	Career development
Training programs to help with life skills including computer training and English classes	Life skills training

*Secondary Research Question Level 3: What techniques have the participants employed to provide positive work environments?*

The leadership team at Hotel Rico shared several activities they have completed to provide a positive work environment including employee celebrations, recognition programs, and employee mentoring. Craig spoke about several of these activities,

We post weekly different resources available to the employees, employee assistance programs...so if they have any issues, they are going through like needing a babysitter or childcare they can get the help they need. Even to the point of quitting smoking....We just had an employee graduate from college so we had a little get together the day before your graduation...I find most of the time people don't necessarily want something grand. A simple thank you goes a long way. So that's what I do more so than anything else. It's just thanking people.

Nancy shared that the economy has put stress on so many of her employees that her goal has been to reduce their stress by having a workplace that is fun. She said,

This year for me, it's been about trying to reduce the amount of stress level on the employees as possible both internally within the hotel and what I can take off their plate externally. I want them to have fun when they are here.

Many of the hourly paid employees shared examples of how their managers have shown their personal interest to them, from coaching them for next steps to recognizing them for their job performance or simply saying thank you. The employees offered,

*Abigail:* When I got ready [for my interview] Nancy said Abigail, what kind of suits do you have....I said I got a light blue suit...She said I want to do something special for you because you have worked very hard and I think the world of you and I can see you going places. So she actually went out and bought me a suit. She said I'm doing this because I care. You have put out so much effort at this hotel to help it grow...I want to do something nice for you.

*Craig:* I was actually given an award...I was the operations manager of the year for the Carolina's

*Ramona:* Whenever you do something good, they are always saying thank you. They definitely recognize our birthdays. They note that in the break room. I told you, they had the surprise graduation party for me. They always do little things like that. They definitely recognize when you went above and beyond. They acknowledge and at least say thank you.

Although several employees shared examples of things the managers have done to provide a positive work environment, there were also employees who had concerns. Their concerns surrounded receiving fair pay, lack of inclusion due to language barriers and comparison of the work environment last year versus this year. They articulated,

*George:* Since I have become an engineer here [I wonder] if the money I am getting is enough. That's the only thing....I spoke to them already about this and I have already had the chance to raise my salary two times. But that's the question that I have. They [managers] they are nice, they always thank us for everything we do here and that is something that I like.

*Joe:* They have told me like everybody else you did a good job and everything....but it's all about money, it's just the job you can do. Because like now, I may not be getting paid enough, but in the future, I could get paid a whole lot more. The only thing about them [the managers] is that they recognize the things that I have done.

*Ramona:* The guest scores I feel like it can be recognized a little more, but they do put up the score chart on the board...and they write good job on there and everything. But, verbally you know, getting recognized it could be a little better.

*[Translator] Krystal:* She said that before she was really happy because when they work hard and they have, a lot of things to do they always ah, have a bonus from the manager office.

*George:* We understand that the economy is not good, we don't have enough guests, we understand that. You know, it's not their [the managers] fault, but you know, it's not the same.

*Ramona:* I used to hear about how the group would go out together. How they had pop up lunch where they used to buy everyone lunch and we all would sit down together and they got someone else cover the desk. I would love to have that because I have heard so much about it....I talk to George about it all the time, we always try to plan a group outing because we heard how fun it used to be...it never works out. We would love to experience it, because I have heard a lot about it as well.

*[Translator] Josh:* He said that sometimes the information we have here is only in English and sometimes they don't know what benefits we have.

The hourly paid employees who shared these concerns were respectful and sincere in wanting to feel proud and comfortable in their workplace. Leadership and their employees described several activities that affect the work environments at Hotel Rico. These findings including the emergent themes, *employee centric*, *personal interest*, and *employee engagement concerns* are identified in Table 46.

Table 46

*Hotel Rico Within-Case Analysis: Level 3, Application, Techniques Employed to Provide Positive Work Environments*

Summary of findings	Emergent themes
Department incentive programs	Employee centric
Performance recognition (guest feedback, room inspections, small thank you gifts, hotel and regional awards)	
Employee celebrations (birthdays, graduations, luncheons)	
Resources/assistance available to employees professionally and personally	
Coaching/Mentoring employees through developmental opportunities (role playing, wardrobe etc.)	Personal interest
Compensation concerns	Employee engagement concerns
Comparison of work environments	
Lack of inclusion	

*Secondary Research Question Level 3: What have the participants done to build effective work teams?*

Hotel Rico’s leadership and hourly paid employees all shared examples of how the team works together to accomplish the goals of the hotel and to ensure each other has what they need to complete their jobs. Nancy, the general manager explained how she

sets the expectation for her team, and then gives them the freedom to accomplish their goals saying,

You set the expectation, you check and then you step back and then you go back and you reward for great job or we regroup if it didn't happen. Then you met the goal and then you set a new goal and move on. Or we revisit the goal if we didn't. What didn't work, what do we need to do again. What needs to happen differently? Let's regauge and move forward again.

Nancy also spoke about the importance of involving employees in determining how the hotel will accomplish specific strategies and goals. Her eyes sparkled with pride as she shared an example of involving one of her employees when the hotel needed to make adjustments to their food service. She stated,

We needed to reset the buffet this past year [to reduce costs]...I let the cook be involved, because she's a 25-year veteran....I said you have been here 3 years and spent the last 22 year in food and beverage, you tell me what you have seen here in the last 3 years, what should we cut. While she wasn't happy on the first part of the conversation about having to cut anything at the end of it, she felt better about it, because she got to make the decision of what was going to be cut.... she felt empowered that she was part of the process.

Craig reinforced Nancy's view of involving employees,

You have to let or give people responsibilities. Have them be a part of the process. When people feel that they are a part of it then they are more apt to pay

more attention to things. Feel like they are a part of the team versus I am just another person on the staff.

Ramona expressed the ownership she has for Hotel Rico, appreciating the freedom the managers give employees. She expressed,

I feel that managers don't go through a power trip, they give us an opportunity to voice our opinion. For an example, Miss Esther was sick one morning and she came to the front desk in tears saying she didn't feel good. I said all right you are going home. So, I ended up sending her home and I went to Craig. I told Craig we need to figure this out....they give us room to voice our opinions and they don't have, I am the manger you just sit down. They don't have that attitude.

Craig shared his feelings on the importance of connecting with each employee on a personal level. Genuine and sincere he said he wanted to get to know his employees in an effort to build a comfort level and trust. He offered,

Find out about each associate's family and not just work things. You can get tied into we have to do this, and do this and this; but find out how their family is doing, how this person is doing. You know getting involved with them that way....I think that it feels more open, if there is a problem, they will come to you because they see that you are truly interested in them as a person not just them as a worker as an associate.

Abigail, Ramona, and Joe all spoke proudly of their team and the sense of family and commitment they have for each other.

*Abigail:* We work together; once again, we are family so they [the employees] work together, they are awesome together. If we, ever are short staffed, any employee no matter what department, work as a team they have no problem to jump in and say ok, what do you need me to do, Miss Abigail.

*Ramona:* We check on each other all the time, just to see if we need help and everything. We lend a helping hand in different departments like I said before. We just make sure everything is ok. Just like this morning I was standing at the front desk and Tyler peeked his head out [and said], Miss Ramona make a list of sodas so I can stock up the market. You know, he really didn't have to that; so just checking in with each other to make sure we are ok.

*Joe:* The way I see it, our teamwork, I feel is like a dynasty. Because if one person falls you got three more people there to help them get back up. We never let anyone take a slack for themselves. Like if somebody has a problem in a room, we help them.

The leadership and hourly employees of Hotel Rico identify several elements, which have made them an effective team. The findings and emergent themes of *collaboration, empowered employees, leaders taking a personal interest* in the employees and the team having a strong *reciprocal value relationship* with each other are identified in Table 47.

Table 47

*Hotel Rico Within-Case Analysis: Level 3, Application, Building Effective Work Teams*

Summary of findings	Emergent themes
Involving employees to provide solutions for hotel needs and objectives	Collaboration
Employees work together to accomplish work assignments	Empowered employees
Employees understand expectations and feel comfortable in making decisions	
Leadership connects with employees on a personal basis	Personal interest
Employees have a strong sense of family and team	Reciprocal value relationship

Level 4 Evaluation, Results

Secondary research questions connected to Kirkpatrick’s level 4 evaluation, results, are listed below (Kirkpatrick, 1998).

- What is the overall engagement level of the employees based on the participants’ last survey?
- What effect has the engagement level of the participants’ employees had on their hotel’s balanced scorecard?

*Interview Responses to Level 4 Secondary Research Questions*

*Secondary Research Question Level 4: What is the overall engagement level based on the participant's last survey?*

When first asked what was the employee engagement level based on the last survey, both Nancy and Craig stated confidently, 100%. Then, both stepped back and questioned themselves whether that was correct. Nancy said, "100%...I think, hmm, was that the score? Yes, my employee engagement score was a 100%." Craig was unsure if the 100% was for the overall engagement score or for the leadership score, "We had 100%, but I think that was for leadership. I don't think that was for engagement." Craig continued stating that he and Nancy were very surprised by the outcome of the survey, when he was asked why were they surprised he said, "I guess as a manager you don't always see the good things. The bad things stick out so bad so you are always remembering the bad things that are happening like an employee illness or a performance issue." Craig then said many times your own perception is different from others, "you don't always see yourself as saying thank you to people or things like that, and when the score comes up and you see it. You go, what exactly did we do? It's just something you are used to doing, and you just always do it so you don't see it.

Hotel Rico's last year's employee engagement score was 100%, which correlated with what the managers shared. Table 48 summarizes the findings.

Table 48

*Hotel Rico Within-Case Analysis: Level 4, Results, Employees' Engagement Level*

Summary of findings	Emergent theme
Managers remembered score was 100%	Engagement centric

*Secondary Research Question Level 4: What effect has the engagement level of the participants' employees had on their hotel's balanced scorecard?*

The leadership team has seen an impact on areas of their hotel's balanced scorecard. Their guests' experience metric is higher than the average Sedona hotel, and their turnover has decreased. However, they have not seen an impact to the hotel's profits. Nancy explains, "Guest experience is right below green level, 84, year to date I'm a 84.5. Green status is 85%." When asked how Hotel Rico's guest score compares with other Sedona hotel Nancy answered proudly,

The brand is running 81%. The company does correlate employee satisfaction to guest tracking. So there you have it. Financially, I don't know what to say about that, it's been a tough year. This particular hotel sits in the middle of a business park and we count on large corporations for our travel, which pretty much haven't traveled this year. So financial impact...it's not been a great year financially, but it's not because of my employees, it's the entire market, not just this hotel. This entire market is down double digits.

The hotel's balanced scorecard has also seen other affects from their high employee engagement including reduced turnover and a decrease in accidents. Nancy was happy to share examples,

The last turnover [employee] in this building was a year and half ago, July; and that was a shared engineer...he chose a different career path....And accidents, it's been over a year or two ago. We don't get hurt here. We have a pretty strong safety record.

Craig's view on the affect of their employees' engagement was simply stated, If your associates aren't engaged, if they are not happy and don't want to be here, your guests see that. And they [the guests] are not going to come and you won't make money. You won't be able to give to your owners and they won't get what they should get. It's very, very simple and Sedona as a company, since I've been with them, has always prided themselves on having the most happy associates.

They get what they need, they have happy associates, and guests see that and keep coming back.

The summary of findings and emergent themes based on the question, what effect has the engagement level of the participants' employees had on their hotel's balanced scorecard are highlighted in Table 49.

Table 49

*Hotel Rico Within-Case Analysis: Level 4, Results, Effect of Engagement on Balanced Scorecard*

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Summary of findings	Emergent theme
Positive guest feedback	Indirect engagement impact
Low turnover	
Decreased accidents	

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Within-Case Summary Hotel Rico

Summary of Participant's Demographics

Hotel Rico had 10 employees participate in the research study. The participants' ages ranged between 18 years and 55 years and were predominately female. The majority of participants identified themselves as working in housekeeping or other, indicating they worked in more than one area of the hotel. The participants' tenure with Hotel Rico was between 1 year and more than 10 years.

Table 50 includes a summary of the participants' demographic. Emergent themes are also included.

Table 50

*Hotel Rico Within-Case Analysis: Summary of Findings and Key Demographics*

Demographics	Summary of findings	Key demographic
Gender	7 female; 3 male	Female
Age	18 – 55 years old	n/a
Work area	Housekeeping Restaurant Maintenance Front Desk Other	Housekeeping/Other
Years of employment	1 – more than 10 years	n/a

Summary of Level 1 Evaluation, Reaction to Engagement Training Program

The leadership of Hotel Rico attended an engagement professional development training program in 2005. The members of the leadership team obtained tools and activities from the program to utilize with their employees.

Due to the amount of time that had passed since the managers attended the training program, both Nancy and Craig had difficulty recalling specifics of the program. Level 1 evaluation metrics are assessed at the conclusion of the professional development training program in an effort to capture reactions to the program. The researcher did not

have access to the evaluations that were administered in 2005 requiring the researcher to obtain the leadership's reaction at the time of the research study.

Table 51 summarizes the emergent themes based on level 1 evaluation, reaction metrics. The emergent themes were *employee centric* and *program time/content overload*.

Table 51

*Hotel Rico Within-Case Analysis: Summary of Level 1 Evaluation, Reaction*

Reaction area	Emergent theme	Overall reaction themes
Overall reaction	Program recall	Employee centric
	Reinforcement of engagement behaviors/activities	Program time/content overload
	Engagement tools	
	Variety of class offerings	
	Networking opportunities	
	Content Overload	
Employee relationships	Program recall	
	Employee centric	
Self development	Reinforcement of engagement Behaviors/activities	
	Employee centric	
	Inadequate class time	
Work Environment	Variety of engagement activities	
Strong Teams	Employee centric	
	Personal interest	

Summary of Level 2 Evaluation, Learning Achieved from an Engagement Training  
Program

Level 2 evaluation metrics, like level 1, are typically captured at the conclusion of a professional development training program to assess what learnings the participants captured during their attendance. The leadership team had comparable responses to level 1 questions, specifically having difficulty in recalling specifics of the training program. Similarly, the researcher was unable to access Sedona's evaluation metrics resulting in the use of interview questions related to level 2 evaluation.

Table 52 summarizes level 2 evaluation, learning. The summary includes learning metrics and the emergent themes of *employee centric* and *empowered employees*.

Table 52

*Hotel Rico Within-Case Analysis: Summary of Level 2 Evaluation, Learning*

Learning area	Emergent theme	Overall reaction themes
Employee engagement	Personal interest	Employee centric
	Employee centric	Empowered employees
	Engaged leadership	
Employee relationship	Reciprocal value relationship	
	Employee centric	
	Career development	
	Empowered employees	
Assessing career opportunities	Program recall	
	Employee centric	
	Career development	
	Employee centric	
Work environment	Program recall	
	Employee centric	
Team effectiveness	Open communication	
	Employee centric	
	Collaboration	
	Empowered employees	

### Summary of Level 3 Evaluation, Application Engagement Training Program Activities

Level 3 evaluation metrics, are obtained after a participant has attended a professional development training program. Level 3, application metrics are assessed on an ongoing basis after a participant's attendance. The first evaluation occurs a minimum of 30 days after the participant has attended the program giving them time to apply their learnings in the workplace.

The leadership team provided numerous examples of how they had applied the various concepts and activities at their hotel. The emergent themes were *personal interest, career development, and employee concerns*, and are outlined in Table 53.

Table 53

*Hotel Rico Within-Case Analysis: Summary of Level 3 Evaluation, Application*

Learning area	Emergent theme	Overall reaction theme
Employee engagement	Employee centric	Personal interest
	Career development	Career development
	Empowered employees	Employee concerns
	Reciprocal value relationship	
	Competing initiatives	
Leadership capabilities	Personal interest	
	Career development	
	Trust	
Career opportunities	Career development	
	Life skills training	
Work environment	Employee centric	
	Personal interest	
	Employee engagement concerns	
Team effectiveness	Collaboration	
	Empowered employees	
	Personal interest	
	Reciprocal value relationship	

#### Summary of Level 4 Evaluation, Results of Engagement Training Program

Level 4 evaluation metrics, like level 3, are assessed after a participant has attended a professional development training program and has had an opportunity to apply the concepts and activities in the workplace. Results are measured on an ongoing basis in an effort to associate the business outcomes to the professional development training program. The results or business outcomes are measured differently among organizations. Sedona hotels employ engagement survey metrics along with assessing other key measures including guest satisfaction, turnover, and accident rates of employees.

Hotel Rico's leadership team was aware of their approximate engagement score. The leadership team also was aware of how their employees' engagement affected key business outcomes. The hotel's profit margins did not show an increase from previous years, however the leadership team concluded this was due to the affect of the economy on their overall sales. Table 54 summarizes the result areas and emergent theme, *engagement impact*.

Table 54

*Hotel Rico Within-Case Analysis: Summary of Level 4 Evaluation, Results*

Learning area	Emergent theme	Overall reaction theme
Engagement level	Engagement centric	Engagement impact
Balanced scorecard	Indirect engagement impact	

Cross-Case Analysis

The cross-case analysis examines the within-case analysis for Hotel Marco and Hotel Rico in an effort to determine the common themes between both cases. A within-case analysis was completed on the following the secondary research questions utilizing Kirkpatrick’s (Kirkpatrick, 1998) four levels of evaluation. The levels of evaluation include (a) reaction, (b) learning, (c) application, and (d) results. The secondary research questions align with the levels of evaluation. The findings of the cross-case analysis provide clarification on how professional development training focused on engagement contributes to the application of employee engagement concepts and activities and how do these concepts and activities contribute to high levels of employee engagement.

Level 1 Evaluation, Reaction

This segment of the cross-case analysis focuses on the five secondary research questions linked to Kirkpatrick’s level 1 evaluation reaction were utilized (Kirkpatrick, 1998).

*Secondary Research Question Level 1: What were the participants' reactions to the professional development training program?*

The common emergent theme for the secondary research questions focusing on the participants' reactions to the professional development training program was *program recall*. Both cases, Hotel Marco and Hotel Rico the leadership team had difficulty responding to the question posed as approximately four years had passed since the managers had completed the training program.

Table 55 summarizes each case's emergent themes and the common theme resulting from the cross-case analysis. *Program recall* was the emergent theme identified from the cross-case analysis.

Table 55

*Cross-Case Analysis: Level 1, Reaction, Participants' Reaction*

Case	Emergent theme	Common emergent theme
Hotel Marco	Program recall Learner focused Practicality Collaboration Networking opportunities Content overload	Program recall
Hotel Rico	Program recall Reinforcement of engagement behaviors/activities Engagement tools Variety of class offerings	

*Secondary Research Question Level 1: How did the participants feel the professional development training program would help build stronger relationships with their employees?*

The common emergent theme for the secondary research question focusing on how the participants' felt the professional development training program would help

them build stronger relationships with their employees was *employee centric*, focusing on the relationship between the employee and their managers

Table 56 highlights the emergent themes and the common themes derived from the cross-case analysis. The common theme was *employee centric*.

Table 56

*Cross-Case Analysis: Level 1, Reaction, Perceived Ways to Build Strong Employee Relations*

Case	Emergent theme	Common emergent theme
Hotel Marco	Leader-employee relationship Reciprocal value relationship	Employee centric
Hotel Rico	Program recall Employee centric	

*Secondary Research Question Level 1: How did the participants feel the professional development training program would assist in their development?*

The cross-case analysis's secondary question focused on how the participants felt the training program would help in their development. Hotel Marco and Hotel Rico's leadership spoke about the importance of learning the activities and behaviors affecting

employee engagement; resulting in the emergent theme of *leadership engagement behaviors*.

Table 57 highlighted each case’s emergent themes and common theme. The common theme was *leadership engagement behaviors*.

Table 57

*Cross-Case Analysis: Level 1, Reaction, Perceived Self Development Assistance*

Case	Emergent theme	Common emergent theme
Hotel Marco	Reciprocal value relationship Leadership engagement behaviors Practicality	Leadership engagement behaviors
Hotel Rico	Reinforcement of engagement behaviors/activities Employee centric Inadequate class time	

*Secondary Research Question Level 1: How did the participants feel the professional development training program would assist them with building a positive work environment for their employees?*

The leaders of Hotel Marco and Hotel Rico spoke of many elements they felt would help them build a positive work environment, including a variety of engagement activities, instilling a family culture, empathy, and building a reciprocal value relationship; a common theme did not exist between the two cases. However, the cross-case analysis identified *employee centric* as the emergent theme. Table 58 summarizes the cross-case analysis emergent theme as well as each case's.

Table 58

*Cross-Case Analysis: Level 1, Reaction, Perceived Ways to Build a Better Work Environment*

Case	Emergent theme	Common emergent theme
Hotel Marco	Reciprocal value relationship Family culture Empathy	Employee centric
Hotel Rico	Variety of engagement activities	

*Secondary Research Question Level 1: How did the participants feel the professional development training program would assist them with building strong teams?*

The cross-case analysis's secondary question focused on how the participants felt the training program would assist them in building strong teams, did not clearly identify any common theme. However, the within-case analysis highlighted emergent themes of empowerment, employee centric and cultural and leadership alignment, a cross-case theme of *personal interest* emerged. Table 59 highlights each case's emergent themes and the cross-case theme.

Table 59

*Cross-Case Analysis: Level 1, Reaction, Perceived Ways to Build Strong Teams*

Case	Emergent theme	Common emergent theme
Hotel Marco	Empowered leaders Leadership alignment Empathy Cultural alignment	Personal interest
Hotel Rico	Employee centric Personal interest	

## Cross-case Summary of Level 1 Evaluation, Reaction to Engagement Training Program

Completion of a cross-case analysis of Hotel Marco and Hotel Rico's leadership teams' reaction to an engagement professional development training program identified several emergent themes. The emergent themes included difficulty with *program recall* as the managers had attended the class four to six years ago. The managers at both hotels felt that the program provided *networking opportunities* and reinforced the *leadership engagement behaviors* that would influence their employees' overall engagement levels. The managers communicated that they felt there were a number of useful tools and resources with the program; however, they felt there was too much information delivered in the class time leading to *content overload*.

Table 60 summarizes the emergent themes of the cross-case analysis. The overall emergent themes for level 1, reaction consist of *program recall*, *networking opportunities*, *content overload*, and *leadership engagement behaviors*.

Table 60

*Cross-Case Analysis: Summary of Level 1 Evaluation, Reaction*

Case	Emergent theme	Level 1, reaction Emergent themes
Hotel Marco	Program recall  Learner focused  Practicality  Collaboration  Networking opportunities  Content Overload  Leader-employee relationship  Reciprocal value relationship  Leadership engagement behaviors  Family culture Empathy  Empowered leaders  Leadership alignment  Cultural alignment	Program recall  Networking opportunities Content overload

*Cross-Case Analysis: Summary of Level 1 Evaluation, Reaction*

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Case	Emergent theme	Level 1, reaction Emergent themes
Hotel Rico	Program recall	Leadership engagement behaviors
	Reinforcement of engagement behaviors	
	Engagement tools	
	Variety of class offering	
	Employee centric	
	Inadequate class time	
	Variety of engagement tools	

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Level 2 Evaluation, Learning

The secondary research questions correlated to Kirkpatrick's level 2 evaluation, learning is addressed in this section of the cross-case analysis (Kirkpatrick, 1998).

*Secondary Research Question Level 2: Based on the professional development training program, what ways did the participants learn to affect employee engagement?*

The common emergent theme for the secondary research question focused on the learnings the participants' captured to affect employee engagement was *employee centric*. The leadership from both hotels, Hotel Marco and Hotel Rico, shared different activities and concepts that focused on the employee. Employee centric promotes a culture where employees are valued and respected for their contributions; a strong relationship exists

between the manager and employee fostering care and concern while providing an atmosphere of open communication and involvement in the business' strategies.

The emergent themes from within-case analysis the common theme from the cross-case analysis was employee centric. The analysis is summarized in Table 61.

Table 61

*Cross-Case Analysis: Level 2, Learning, Ways to Affect Employee Engagement*

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Case	Emergent theme	Common emergent theme
Hotel Marco	Personal interest Engagement metrics Career development Collaboration	Employee centric
Hotel Rico	Personal interest Employee centric Engaged leadership	

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*Secondary Research Question Level 2: What did the participants learn during the professional development training program that would help improve their communication and build stronger relationships with their employees?*

The common emergent theme for the secondary research questions focusing on how the participants' felt the professional development training program would help them build stronger relationships with their employees was *employee centric*, focusing on the relationship between the employee and their managers.

Table 62 highlights the emergent themes and the common themes derived from the cross-case analysis. The common theme between the cases was employee centric.

Table 62

*Cross-Case Analysis: Level 2, Learning, Ways to Improve Communication and Relationships with Employees*

Case	Emergent theme	Common emergent theme
Hotel Marco	Employee centric Observations Family centric Open communication	Employee centric
Hotel Rico	Reciprocal value relationship Employee centric Career development Empowered employees	

*Secondary Research Question Level 2: What did the participants learn during the professional development training program that would help improve their ability to assess and discuss career development opportunities for their employees?*

The secondary research questions focused on what the participants learned to assess and discuss their employees' development opportunities identified two common emergent themes, *program recall*, and *employee centric*. While managers from both Hotel Marco and Hotel Rico had difficulty recalling specifics of the training program, they reviewed several key learnings, which focused on the employee including having one-on-one discussions to discover the employee's desire regarding their career development.

Table 63 provides a visual display of each case's emergent themes. The common emergent themes were *program recall* and *employee centric*.

Table 63

*Cross-Case Analysis: Level 2, Learning, Ways to Assess and Discuss Career Opportunities*

Case	Emergent theme	Common emergent themes
Hotel Marco	Program recall	
	Employee centric	Program recall
Hotel Rico	Program recall	Employee centric
	Employee centric	
	Career development	

*Secondary Research Question Level 2: What did the participants learn during the professional development training program that would improve the work environment for their employees?*

The leaders of Hotel Marco and Hotel Rico shared a number of examples from the professional development training program that they felt would improve the work environment for their employees. The common emergent themes recognized were again *program recall* and *employee centric*. Table 64 summarizes the cross-case analysis findings.

Table 64

*Cross-Case Analysis: Level 2, Learning, Ways to Improve Work Environment*

Case	Emergent theme	Common emergent themes
Hotel Marco	Program recall	Program recall
	Open communication	Employee centric
	Employee centric	
Hotel Rico	Program recall	
	Employee centric	

*Secondary Research Question Level 2: What did the participants learn during the professional development training program that would improve the effectiveness of their team?*

The cross-case analysis’s secondary question focused on how the participants felt the training program would improve the effectiveness of their team. Each case had shared several key activities and concepts they reviewed at the engagement training program including the importance of sharing information and involving employees in strategic decision making for the hotel.

Table 65 identifies the common emergent themes found in the cross-case analysis. The themes included employee centric and collaboration.

Table 65

*Cross-Case Analysis: Level 2, Learning, Ways to Improve Team Effectiveness*

Case	Emergent theme	Common emergent themes
Hotel Marco	Career development	Employee centric
	Employee centric	Collaboration
	Collaboration	
Hotel Rico	Open communication	
	Employee centric	
	Collaboration	
	Empowered employees	

Cross-case Summary of Level 2 Evaluation, Learning Received from an Engagement Training Program

A cross-case analysis of Hotel Marco and Hotel Rico’s leadership teams’ learning received from an engagement professional development training program identified several emergent themes. Two common themes, personal interest and open communications, were grouped with employee centric. Employee centric, as discussed earlier is a culture, which embraces open communication and care and concern. Other common themes identified included program recall, career development, and collaboration.

Table 66 highlights the emergent themes. The themes included are career development, collaboration, employee centric, and program recall.

Table 66

*Cross-Case Analysis: Summary of Level 2 Evaluation, Learning*

Case	Emergent theme	Level 2 , learning emergent themes	
Hotel Marco	Personal interest	Career development	
	Varied engagement metrics	Collaboration	
	Career development	Employee centric	
	Collaboration	Program recall	
	Employee centric		
	Observations		
	Family centric		
	Open communication		
	Program recall		
	Hotel Rico	Personal interest	
		Employee centric	
Engaged leadership			
Reciprocal value relationship			
Career development			
Empowered employees			
Program recall			
Open communication			
Collaboration			

### Level 3 Evaluation, Application

The cross-case analysis reviewed the five secondary research questions linked to Kirkpatrick's level 3 evaluation (Kirkpatrick, 1998).

*Secondary Research Question Level 3: What activities have the participants completed to increase the engagement of their employees?*

The cross-case analysis' secondary research question focused on the participants' application of activities to increase the engagement of their employees identified common themes of *employee centric*, *career development*, and *competing initiatives*. The leadership from both hotels, Hotel Marco and Hotel Rico, identified several activities that they completed with their employees including focusing on the employee and their needs as well as, career development discussions and planning. The leaders communicated that there are a large number of activities and resources they obtained from their attendance to the professional development training program, however their operational responsibilities do not afford them the time needed to explore or utilize the resources.

Table 67 summarizes the common emergent themes and each case's individual emergent themes. The common emergent themes were *employee centric*, *career development* and *competing initiatives*.

Table 67

*Cross-Case Analysis: Level 3, Application, Activities Completed to Increase Employee Engagement*

Case	Emergent theme	Common emergent themes
Hotel Marco	Personal interest	Employee centric
	Employee centric	Career development
	Career development	Competing Initiatives
	Collaboration	
	Competing Initiatives	
Hotel Rico	Employee centric	
	Career development	
	Empowered employees	
	Reciprocal value relationship	
	Competing Initiatives	

*Secondary Research Question Level 3: What behaviors have the participants exhibited to improve their leadership capability including communication and building strong relationships with their employees?*

The common emergent themes for the secondary research questions focusing on what the participants have done to build strong relationships with their employees

included showing a *personal interest* in each employee by getting to know what is important to each individual through one-on-one conversations. These conversations have also promoted a feeling of *trust* between the employee and their manager. Both leadership teams also had a number of career development discussions with their employees in an effort to assist them in the career growth.

The Cross-case analysis' common emergent themes were *personal interest, career development, and trust*. The themes are highlighted in Table 68.

Table 68

*Cross-Case Analysis: Level 3, Application, Behaviors Exhibited to Improve Leadership Capabilities*

Case	Emergent theme	Common emergent themes
Hotel Marco	Personal interest	Personal interest
	Career development	Career Development
	Trust	Trust
Hotel Rico	Personal interest	
	Career development	
	Trust	

*Secondary Research Question Level 3: What actions have the participants taken to provide career development opportunities for employees?*

The cross-case analysis's secondary question focused on actions the participants have employed in an effort to provide career development opportunities for their employees. The leadership teams from both hotels and their employees communicated a number of activities that they utilize at their hotels. These activities share commonalities that encompass their employees' development, both from a professional and personal standpoint.

Table 69 summarizes each case's emergent themes and the common themes. The common themes were *career development* and *life skills training*.

Table 69

*Cross-Case Analysis: Level 3, Application, Career Opportunities Provided to Employees*

Case	Emergent theme	Common emergent themes
Hotel Marco	Career development	Career development
	Life skills training	Life skills training
Hotel Rico	Career development	
	Life skills training	

*Secondary Research Question Level 3: What techniques have the participants employed to provide positive work environments?*

The leaders of Hotel Marco and Hotel Rico and their hourly employees spoke of many different activities, interactions, and concepts they utilize to build a positive work environment for their employees. The common emergent theme that encapsulated the activities was employee centric. Again, employee centric promotes an environment where employees feel valued and respected for their contributions. Strong relationships exist between the manager and their employee, fostering care and concern. The atmosphere is one of open communication and involves the employees in the hotel's strategy and problem solving meetings.

Table 70 summarizes each case's emergent themes. The common theme identified was *employee centric*.

Table 70

*Cross-Case Analysis: Level 3, Application, Techniques Employed to Provide Positive Work Environments*

	Emergent theme	Common emergent theme
Hotel Marco	Employee centric Collaboration Open communication	Employee centric
Hotel Rico	Employee centric Personal interest Employee engagement concerns	

*Secondary Research Question Level 3: What have the participants done to build effective work teams?*

The cross-case analysis's secondary question focused on what participants have done to build effective work teams. The leadership team at Hotel Marco and Hotel Rico gave a number of examples of how they have applied the learnings from the training program to build a stronger team. The common theme amongst the two hotels was collaboration. The leadership teams explained how they employees are cross-trained throughout the hotel, which they felt, reinforced a feeling of ownership and responsibility. Both hotels' leadership team also stated the employees are involved in the

execution of the hotel’s strategy and is involved in determining steps to complete the hotel goals.

Each case’s emergent themes are identified in Table 71 along with the cross-case common theme. The common theme was *collaboration*.

Table 71

*Cross-Case Analysis: Level 3, Application, Building Effective Work Teams*

	Emergent theme	Common emergent theme
Hotel Marco	Collaboration Career development Open communication	Collaboration
Hotel Rico	Collaboration Empowered employees Personal interest Reciprocal value relationship	

Summary of Level 3 Evaluation, Application Engagement Training Program Activities

Level 3 evaluations are typically measured beginning 30 days after a participant has attended a professional development training program and then typically assessed on

an ongoing basis. The leadership team provided numerous examples of how they had applied the various concepts and activities at their hotel.

The common emergent themes were employee centric, career development, collaboration, and competing initiative. The themes are outlined in Table 72.

Table 72

*Cross-Case Analysis: Summary of Level 3 Evaluation, Application*

Case	Emergent theme	Level 3, application emergent themes
Hotel Marco	Personal interest	Employee centric
	Employee centric	Career development
	Career development	Collaboration
	Collaboration	Competing initiatives
	Competing initiatives	
	Trust	
	Life skills training	
	Open Communication	
Hotel Rico	Employee centric	
	Career development	
	Empowered employees	
	Reciprocal value relationship	
	Competing initiatives	
	Personal interest	
	Trust	
	Life skills training	
	Employee engagement concerns	
	Collaboration	

## Level 4 Evaluation, Results

The cross-case analysis reviewed the secondary research questions connected to Kirkpatrick's level 4 evaluation, results, are listed below (Kirkpatrick, 1998).

*Secondary Research Question Level 4: What is the overall engagement level based on the participant's last survey?*

The cross-case analysis's secondary question determined how aware the leadership was of their employee survey metric. The leadership teams at both hotels were aware of the approximate survey score. Awareness of the yearly engagement score and the metrics that determine the hotel's ranking reinforced the common emergent theme of engagement centric.

Table 73 highlights each case's emergent themes and the common theme. The common theme identified was *engagement centric*.

Table 73

*Cross-Case Analysis: Level 4, Results, Employees' Engagement Level*

	Emergent theme	Common emergent theme
Hotel Marco	Engagement centric	Engagement centric
Hotel Rico	Engagement centric	

*Secondary Research Question Level 4: What effect has the engagement level of the participants' employees had on their hotel's balanced scorecard?*

The cross-case analysis's secondary question reviewed the effect the employees' engagement level had on the hotel's balanced scorecard. The balance scorecard fuses the results in key areas of the business including customer results and business results. Leadership at both hotel identified business outcomes as the result of their employees' high engagement level including reduced turnover and accident as well as an increase in guest experience. Neither hotel was able to determine an affect to the financial portion of the scorecard. Both leadership teams speculated that this was a result of decreased sales due to the economy.

The common emergent theme resulting from the cross-case analysis was *indirect engagement impact*. Each case's emergent themes and the common theme are summarized in Table 74.

Table 74

*Cross-Case Analysis: Level 4, Results, Effect of Engagement on Balanced Scorecard*

Case	Emergent theme	Common emergent theme
Hotel Marco	Indirect engagement impact	Indirect engagement impact
Hotel Rico	Indirect engagement impact	

Summary of Level 4 Evaluation, Results of Engagement Training Program

Level 4 evaluation metrics are determined after a participant has attended a professional development training program and has had an opportunity to apply the concepts and activities in the workplace. Results are assessed on a continuing basis in order to correlate business outcomes to the professional development training program.

Hotel Rico and Hotel Marco’s leadership teams were able to communicate the indirect impact their highly engaged employees made to the business results including reduction of turnover and accident costs and increase to their guests’ satisfaction. Table 75 summarizes the result areas and the overall emergent theme of *engagement impact*.

Table 75

*Cross-Case Analysis: Summary of Level 4 Evaluation, Results*

Case	Emergent theme	Level 4, results Emergent Theme
Hotel Marco	Engagement centric Indirect engagement impact	Engagement impact
Hotel Rico	Engagement centric Indirect engagement impact	

Summary of Professional Development Training Program

Cross-case analysis identified three emergent themes related to the study as drivers of employee engagement. The emergent themes were *employee centric*, *collaboration and career development*. Based on the data collected during the study at both research sites, leaders whose behavior centered on the employee, involved employees as business partners in development and executing hotel strategies, and were personally involved in employees' development resulted in highly engaged behaviors of their employees.

Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the findings from each within-case analysis and cross-case analysis. The findings, following Kirkpatrick's (1998) four levels of evaluation, included emergent themes based on the participants' reactions and learning they

received from their attendance of a professional development training program focused on employee engagement. Further, the findings identified emergent themes related to the participants' application of engagement concepts and activities and the results of their impact on employees. Lastly, within-case analysis identified overarching emergent themes in relation to the professional development training program.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to review the study including a discussion of the key findings and recommendations. The study was a qualitative multi-case study including within-case and cross-case analysis, which investigated the application of engagement concepts and activities that leaders received during an engagement professional development training program. The study utilized a number of data sources including face-to-face interviews, summary notes, and artifacts. The data was stored in a database utilizing *NVivo 8*® software. The overall cross-case coding contained 12 free nodes, 11 tree nodes, 88 sub-nodes, and 947 entries. The data were analyzed and 104 overall themes and 12 emergent themes were discovered.

The study was guided by the following primary and secondary research questions. The research questions followed the conceptual framework of the study.

#### Summary of Chapters

Chapter One provided an overview of the study, statement of the problem and the purpose of the study. The theoretical and conceptual framework, primary research questions, and 17 secondary research questions, which directed the study, closed the chapter.

The theoretical framework for the study was based on Kahn's (1990) engagement model. Kirkpatrick's (Kirkpatrick, 1998) evaluation model reinforced the theoretical foundation for the study. The conceptual framework of the study depicted the progression of participants who had attended a professional development training program focused on engagement and followed their reaction and learning of engagement concepts and activities. The progression continued measuring the participant's application and results based on their attendance to the training program.

The second chapter contained a thorough literature review on a number of areas foundational to this study. The literature review encompassed employee engagement, professional development training programs, and their effectiveness.

Chapter Three specified the research methodology. Elements included the research design, research questions, overview of a multi-case study including within-case and cross-case analysis, a description of the case selection, overview of participants, role of the researcher, data collection and analysis, validations of findings and ethical consideration.

Chapter Four highlighted the findings from the within-case analyses. The secondary research questions, theoretical framework, and conceptual framework directed the analysis for the findings. Findings included the participants' reaction to the professional development training program, key concepts learned at the training, activities and concepts applied in the workplace, and the organizational results realized from the participant's attendance at the professional development training program.

Chapter Five summarizes the study, including an overall recap of major findings and emergent themes based on the secondary research questions utilized to guide the study. Additionally a discussion on the key findings as they related to the literature, the theoretical framework, and recommendations for learning leaders and future research are presented.

### Overall Summary of Major Findings and Emergent Themes

The purpose of this section is to communicate a narrative summary of the major findings and emergent themes identified during the cross-case analysis of data from two hotel leadership teams representing one global hotel brand. The secondary research questions, as discussed earlier, were based on the theoretical and conceptual framework. The findings of the study depict the commonalities of the participant's experience and application of concepts and activities based on the professional development training program they attended focused on engagement. The findings are categorized following the secondary research questions utilizing Kirkpatrick's (Kirkpatrick, 1998) four levels of evaluation. The levels of evaluation included (a) reaction, (b) learning, (c) application, and (d) results.

#### Summary of Level 1 Evaluation, Reaction to Training Program

This segment summarizes the common themes uncovered through the cross-case analysis of data from two hotel leadership teams representing one hotel global brand. The

findings illustrated the emergent themes based on Kirkpatrick's level 1 evaluation, reaction. Secondary research questions included:

- What were the participants' reactions to the professional development training program?
- How did the participants feel the professional development training program would help build stronger relationships with their employees?
- How did the participants feel the professional development training program would assist in their development?
- How did the participants feel the professional development training program would assist them with building a positive work environment for their employees?
- How did the participants feel the professional development training program would assist them with building strong teams?

The emergent theme for the participants' overall reaction to the professional development training program was lack of *program recall*. The length of time between the participants actually taking the professional development training program and the research study spanned a minimum of four years resulting in the managers' difficulty recalling specifics of the program.

*Employee centric* was the emergent theme identified in asking the question, how the program assisted in building stronger relationships with employees. The managers perceived the program to be helpful in developing strong employee relationships as it

provided a number of tools and resources to build a culture with open communication and fostering care and concern for each other.

The secondary question focused on how the training program would assist the participants in their development identified the emergent theme of *leadership engagement behaviors*. The review of engagement activities and concepts emphasized *leadership engagement behaviors* that the participants' could employ on a daily basis. The networking opportunities with other Sedona managers enabled idea sharing and reinforcement of engagement activities and experiences.

The final two questions focused on the participants' reaction to the professional development training program in terms of building a positive work environment and building strong teams, did not identify common themes cross-case. However did identify emergent themes. The first question focused on providing a positive work environment, highlighted a number of emerging themes from each individual case. The leadership at Hotel Marco identified the themes of *reciprocal value relationship*, *family culture*, and *empathy* Hotel Rico felt the *variety of engagement activities* would be helpful in instilling a positive work environment. The emergent theme identified in the cross-case analysis was *employee interest*.

The cross-case analysis directed to the final question related to level 1 evaluation, reaction, building strong teams also did not identify a common theme. Hotel Marco's leadership felt the program *empowered leaders*, *aligned leadership*, and the *hotel's culture* all focused engagement practices including showing *empathy* for employees. Hotel Rico's leadership felt an environment focused on taking a *personal interest* and

being *employee centric* would build strong teams. The overall emergent theme was *personal interest*.

#### Summary of Level 2 Evaluation, Learning from Training Program

The cross-case analysis of two hotel leadership teams highlighted in the following section, are correlated to Kirkpatrick's level 2 evaluation, learning. The secondary research questions included:

- Based on the professional development training program, what ways did the participants learn to affect employee engagement?
- What did the participants learn during the professional development training program that would help improve their communication and build stronger relationships with their employees?
- What did the participants learn during the professional development training program that would improve their ability to assess and discuss career development opportunities for their employees?
- What did the participants learn during the professional development training program that would improve the work environment for their employees?
- What did the participants learn during the professional development training program that would improve the effectiveness of their team?

*Employee centric* was the common theme participants identified to affect their employees' engagement. As stated earlier, employee centric promotes a culture where

employees feel valued and respected for their contributions to the organization. An employee centric culture also promotes strong caring relationships between all individuals in an atmosphere that promotes open communications. Both leadership teams shared numerous examples from the training program that encompassed *employee centric* activities.

*Employee centric* was again the common emergent theme when asked what was learned to improve communication and build stronger relationships with their employees. The professional development training program focused on numerous concepts and activities; however, the majority of these highlighted the importance of understanding the employee and what is important to each as an individual.

The remaining questions focused on what participants learned to assist in their development, building a positive work environment, and building a strong team, all revealed the same emergent themes of *program recall* and *employee centric*. Following Kirkpatrick's evaluation model (Kirkpatrick, 1998) assessing level 2 evaluation should be completed prior to the participant leaving the professional development training program to ensure accuracy of the participant's learning. The researcher was unable to obtain Sedona's evaluation surveys that were completed at the time of the engagement training program and therefore secondary research questions directed to level 2 evaluation was included in the study. *Employee centric* was seen as the common theme managers shared for all level 2, learning secondary questions, as the activities and concepts in the learning program focused on building an environment that promotes a positive employee culture.

## Summary of Level 3 Evaluation, Application of Engagement Activities and Concepts

This section presents a summary of the emergent themes identified through cross-case analysis of secondary research questions correlated to Kirkpatrick's level 3 evaluation, application (Kirkpatrick, 1998). The secondary research questions included:

- What activities have the participants completed to increase the engagement of their employees?
- What behaviors have the participants exhibited to improve their leadership capability, including communication and building strong relationships with their employees?
- What actions have the participants taken to provide career development opportunities for their employees?
- What techniques have the participants employed to provide positive work environments?
- What have the participants done to build effective work teams?

The emergent themes related to the activities managers completed to increase the engagement of their employees were *employee centric*, *career development*, and *competing initiatives*. The managers gave several examples of building a culture focused on the employee and coaching them through customized career development programs. Both leadership groups stated there were a number of activities and resources that they had not utilized due to the operational demands of the hotel causing a feeling of competition between the operational aspect of the hotel and their commitment to the employee engagement.

*Personal interest, career development, and trust* were the common themes in relation to determining what the managers had done to improve their leadership capability in building strong relationships with their employees. The managers communicated that by taking a sincere *personal interest* in each employee through one-on-one sessions, casual conversations and working side by side assisted them in building *trust* with the employees. The trusting relationship allowed open communication regarding the employees' career goals. The managers felt their relationship with the employees strengthened, by completing different activities that encompassed these common themes.

Reflecting on what actions the managers had taken to provide career development opportunities for their employees, two emergent themes evolved. The manager shared they had one-on-one sessions with employees outlining *career development* plans that were tailored for each employee. The plans determined training the employee would need and cross training opportunities were identified within their own hotel or at other hotels within Sedona. The managers also provided opportunities for *life skill training* such as basic to advanced computer skills or language training.

The managers of both Hotel Marco and Hotel Rico focused on the employee by strengthening their relationships, involving the employees in business strategies, and having an open door for any concerns they may have, promoted a culture, which is *employee centric*, and promoted a positive work environment.

The participants built effective work teams by focusing on the emergent theme of *collaboration*. Both teams shared examples of how the employees are involved in

problem solving hotel concerns and are cross-trained which reinforced a sense of ownership. Involving the employees, provided them a holistic view of the business, which has shown to be important when an organization must make business related adjustments and employees understand the affects and repercussions of the business conditions.

#### Level 4 Evaluation, Results

This segment reviews the emergent themes identified through cross-case analysis of secondary research questions correlated to Kirkpatrick's level 4 evaluation, results (Kirkpatrick, 1998). The secondary research questions included:

- What is the overall engagement level of the employees based on the participants' last survey?
- What effect has the engagement level of the participants' employees had on their hotel's balanced scorecard?

The emergent themes related to the employees' engagement level based on the last engagement survey was *engagement centric*.

The managers cited *indirect engagement impact* when asked what effect has the employees' engagement had on the hotel's balanced scorecard. Leadership from both Hotel Marco and Hotel Rico shared examples of the indirect impact. The turnover rates of both hotels have been reduced, as they haven't had an employee resign in over a year. Both locations also have seen a reduction in accidents as well. One of the hotels has been

accident free for almost two years. Although the economy has affected both hotels' overall sales, their guests' experience has increased.

### Discussion of Major Findings

The current study revealed a number of emergent themes related to the secondary research questions. This portion of the chapter discusses the major findings in this study and is aligned utilizing Kirkpatrick's Evaluation Model (Kirkpatrick, 1998).

Eleven major findings were drawn that describe attributes shared to both hotel teams in this study. The major findings in this study are provided below:

#### Level 1 Evaluation, Reaction

Level 1 evaluation, reaction measurement should be assessed at the conclusion of a professional development training program as recommended by Kirkpatrick (Kirkpatrick, 1998) in an effort to accurately assess the participants' reactions to the program. Participants in this research study could not recall specific feelings regarding the engagement program they attended.

Participants viewed this professional development training programs that contained practical tools and resources favorably. For learners to be engaged and attentive in a training program, they must feel that the program's content has value in their area of influence (Zemke, R. & Zemke, S., 1981).

Research completed by ASTD and the Corporate Leadership Council identified engagement practices that drive employee engagement (Corporate Executive Board,

2004; Paradise, 2008). These drivers included leadership taking a sincere interest in employees, developing and assisting in employees' career development, and providing an atmosphere of open communication. This research study found an employee centric culture promoting high employee engagement is viewed favorably by participants and reinforces previous studies' research.

### Level 2 Evaluation, Learning

Kirkpatrick's evaluation model recommends assessing Level 2 evaluation metrics at the conclusion of a professional development training program in order to determine the learning that was achieved during an individual's attendance (Kirkpatrick, 1998). This study was unable to accurately assess the participants' learnings attained from their attendance to a professional development training program as the assessment was completed four years after the participants' attendance.

This study revealed professional development training programs that are employee centric and extend practical activities, concepts, and resources are likely to be retained by participants, which reinforces adult learning principles (Zemke, R. & Zemke, S., 1981).

### Level 3 Evaluation, Application

The participants of a professional development training program focused on engagement behaviors and activities expressed a sincere personal interest in employees developed trusting relationships, resulting in an employee centric culture as seen in this

research study. This finding reinforced Kahn's (1990) engagement model drivers of safety and meaningfulness.

The Corporate Leadership Council (2004) identified managerial competencies to increase employee engagement included respecting employees and their career goals and aspirations. Participants of this study perceived themselves as a coach and mentor in the development of their employees, both from a professional and personal standpoint strengthening the research completed by the Council.

This study found the participants of the professional development training program instilled an environment of collaboration by promoting employee ownership and involvement in the hotel's strategic decision making process. Further, the participants applied the concepts and activities of an engagement program as they felt the overall organizational structure emitted an employee centric culture as a key business initiative. These two findings support the engagement research completed by Kahn (1990) which outlined employees must feel their contributions to an organization are valued. Additionally, Kahn postulated the degree of an employee's engagement is based on the amount of ownership, creativity, and alliance their personal values has with the organization's goals and values.

#### Level 4 Evaluation, Results

This study found employee engagement directly and indirectly affected various hotel business metrics including productivity, turnover, accident rates, customer feedback, sales, and profit margins. This finding reinforced previous research, which

indicated the impact of employee engagement on the same key organizational measures (Asplund et al., 2007; Harter et al., 2002).

This research study reinforced Kahn's (1990) engagement model including the model's theme of meaningfulness, safety, and availability. Hotel Marco and Hotel Rico's highly engaged teams resulted from leadership who focused on creating a positive experience for each other and their customers through trust, collaboration, and genuine care.

#### Overall Engagement Drivers

Three drivers of employee engagement emerged when completing the cross-case analysis of Hotel Marco and Hotel Rico. The emergent themes were *employee centric, collaboration and career development*. Based on the analysis of data, leaders whose interactions are centered on the employees as individuals, who embrace employee collaboration on organizational initiatives, and mentored their employees' growth and development were found to have highly engaged employees.

#### Recommendations for Organizational Leaders

As organizations, identify ways to improve their overall results for their customer and enhancing employee experiences, learning leaders are asked to develop professional development training focused on employee engagement. Organizational leaders should collaborate with learning leaders and instructional designers in the development of an engagement professional development training program. The leaders could utilize the

study in developing and/or assessing current training curriculum that focuses on employee engagement. The following are recommendations for the design and evaluation of engagement professional development training programs.

Participants who have attended professional development training programs should complete an evaluation at the conclusion of the training session to measure their reactions (level 1 evaluation) and learnings (level 2) from the training program. Evaluations completed at the conclusion provide findings that are more accurate and reinforce the validity of the results. Learning leaders may then utilize the information in designing additional professional development training program and updating present curriculums.

It is recommended that instructional designers create training programs that contain concepts, activities, tools, and resources that participants perceive as practical and believe they can utilize in their workplace. A design partnership between designers, subject matter experts, and sample population of the targeted audience would strengthen the quality of the training program as its design was created with feedback from individuals utilizing the information presented in their work responsibilities.

Based on the findings of this study, learning leaders should ensure that the content of engagement training programs focus on leadership competencies that reinforce a respectful relationship between the managers and employees. This training should provide coaching/mentoring skills to guide managers on providing career development support to their employees. Additionally, learning programs should reinforce the elements of an employee centric culture focusing on a collaborative, environment that

welcomes employee collaboration, open communication, and care and concern for each other.

Lastly, organizational leaders should ensure professional development training program evaluation metrics are determined during the design stages of a program. Identifying how the results of learning are measured, limits criterion bias, ensures accuracy of the evaluation process, and determine show the professional development training program contributes to organizational strategies and results.

#### Recommendations for Future Research

The following are recommendations for further research regarding the application of activities and concepts from a professional development training program, and how the application effects high employee engagement.

This study's research study was limited as it consisted of two hotel brands associated with a global hospitality brand and the findings may not be generalized. It is recommended that future studies be conducted focusing on the application (level 3 evaluation) and results (level 4 evaluation) of engagement concepts and activities from a professional development training program. Completion of additional studies may reinforce the findings of this study and provide stronger implications to learning leaders and instructional designers.

This study focused on the application of engagement concepts and activities, and their effects on employees in the hospitality industry. The results may be unique to the specific properties, global hospitality brand, or the hospitality industry; therefore, it is

recommended researchers conduct studies whose audiences are associated with various industries and organizations.

Leadership teams participating in this study had strong tenure at their properties giving them an opportunity to build strong relationships with their employees. The leaderships' length in position may have influenced the outcome of the study. When conducting future research, it is recommended studies investigate the influencing factor of tenure on employee engagement.

Follow up studies should be conducted to determine if the application and results of an engagement professional training program continue over a continuous time span. Organizational and learning leaders could utilize the research outcomes to determine what type of sustainment support is required to reinforce the participants' application of engagement concepts and activities received at a training program.

### Overall Implications

This study's findings may be used as a guide and benchmark when designing, delivering, and assessing engagement programs. The training program identified concepts and activities focused on engaging employees and their contribution to high levels of employee engagement. The findings uncovered the importance of assessing level 1 and level 2 evaluation at the conclusion of the training program. Additionally, the program content, including management competencies, tools, and resources should be supportive of an employee centric culture; a culture collaboration, respect for the individual and personal interest in the growth and development of all employees.

Although the researcher has made recommendations directed to organizational leaders and for future research focused on measuring the effects of an engagement professional development training program, engagement training programs may not achieve the desired and/or expected results. This situation may occur when organizational leaders do not support the nature of the employee engagement program. Organizational leaders consist of front line supervisors to the Chief Executive Officer. If all other recommendations are in place and a number of leaders within an organization are developing employee centric environments and behaviors, it can take only one leader to not “walk the talk” to cause disengagement amongst the employees. Additionally, the leaders themselves are often “forgotten employees” and are not engaged by *their* leader. This situation may unveil the question, “why am I suppose to interact with my employees that way, when my manager doesn’t act that way with me”? This double edge sword has the potential to eradicate the positive behaviors associated with driving employee engagement within an organization. The organization’s executive leadership ultimately are the owners of employees’ engagement.

Based on the executive leadership team’s ownership of employee engagement, professional development training programs should be designed and developed for this audience first, and then cascade to the balance of the company’s leadership. Executive leadership must support the concepts, behaviors, and activities of employee engagement as part of their organizational culture. Executive leadership should also display the same behaviors and apply engagement activities with *their* employees, as they expect those same employees to do with their associates.

Executive leadership who embrace an engagement environment along with the previous recommendations assists organizations in creating an employee centric environment. By implementing these recommendations, organizations can increase employee engagement and experience positive organizational outcomes.

### Chapter Summary

The overall purpose of this study was to determine how engagement training contributed to the application of engagement concepts and activities in the workplace for hotels, and how the application of engagement concepts and activities influence high employee engagement levels. Chapter 5 summarized the common emergent themes for both hotel locations related to the secondary research questions in this study. The chapter then presented major findings that were drawn from the common emergent themes in conjunction with the relevant literature. The chapter closed with general recommendations for learning leaders and instructional designers and recommendations for future research focused on engagement professional development training programs.

## APPENDICES

## Appendix A

### Data Analysis Procedure Map

#### Research Question #1

How does professional development training focused on employee engagement contribute to the application of employee engagement concepts and activities?

Research Question	Organization Engagement Driver(s)	Kirkpatrick's Evaluation Level	Statistical Analysis
1. What were your reactions to the professional development training program?	Leadership Environment Development Teamwork	Level 1	Qualitative case-study Cross-case synthesis
2. How do you feel the professional development training program has helped you to build stronger relationships with your employees?	Leadership	Level 1	Qualitative case-study Cross-case synthesis
3. How do you feel the professional development training program has assisted in your development?	Development	Level 1	Qualitative case-study Cross-case synthesis
4. How do you feel the professional development training program has assisted you to build a positive work environment for your employees?	Environment	Level 1	Qualitative case-study Cross-case synthesis
5. How do you feel the professional development training program has assisted you in building strong teams?	Teamwork	Level 1	Qualitative case-study Cross-case synthesis
6. Based on the professional development training program, what way did you learn you affect employee engagement?	Leadership Environment Development Teamwork	Level 2	Qualitative case-study Cross-case synthesis
7. What did you learn during the professional development training program that helped to improve your communication and build stronger relationships with your employees?	Leadership	Level 2	Qualitative case-study Cross-case synthesis

Research Question	Organization Engagement Driver(s)	Kirkpatrick's Evaluation Level	Statistical Analysis
8. What did you learn during the professional development training program that would improve your ability to assess and discuss career development opportunities for your employees?	Development	Level 2	Qualitative case-study Cross-case synthesis
9. What did you learn during the professional development training program that would improve the work environment for your employees?	Environment	Level 2	Qualitative case-study Cross-case synthesis
10. What did you learn during the professional development training program that would improve the effectiveness of your team?	Teamwork	Level 2	Qualitative case-study Cross-case synthesis

Research Question #2

How does the application of employee engagement concepts and activities contribute to high levels of employee engagement?

Research Question	Organization Engagement Driver(s)	Kirkpatrick's Evaluation Level	Statistical Analysis
11. What activities have you completed to increase the engagement of your employees?	Leadership Environment Development Teamwork	Level 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Qualitative case-study</li> <li>• Cross-case synthesis</li> </ul>
12. What behaviors have you exhibited to improve your leadership capability including communication and building strong relationships with your employees?	Leadership	Level 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Qualitative case-study</li> <li>• Cross-case synthesis</li> </ul>
13. What actions have you taken to provide career development opportunities for your employees?	Development	Level 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Qualitative case-study</li> <li>• Cross-case synthesis</li> </ul>
14. What techniques have you employed to provide a positive work environment?	Environment	Level 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Qualitative case-study</li> <li>• Cross-case synthesis</li> </ul>
15. What have you done to build an effective work team?	Teamwork	Level 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Qualitative case-study</li> <li>• Cross-case synthesis</li> </ul>
16. What is the overall engagement level of the employees based on your last survey?	Leadership Environment Development Teamwork	Level 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Qualitative case-study</li> <li>• Cross-case synthesis</li> </ul>
17. What affect has the engagement level of your employees had on your hotel's balanced scorecard?	Leadership Environment Development Teamwork	Level 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Qualitative case-study</li> <li>• Cross-case synthesis</li> </ul>

### Leadership Interview Questions

<b>Secondary Research Question</b>	<b>Interview Question</b>	<b>Question</b>	<b>Organization Engagement Driver(s) Targeted</b>	<b>Kirkpatrick Evaluation Level</b>
1	1	How effective was the facilitator of the professional development training program you attended?	Leadership Development Environment Teamwork	1
1	2	How conducive was the environment of the professional development training program to your learning?	Leadership Development Environment Teamwork	1
1	3	How did you enjoy the professional development training program?	Leadership Development Environment Teamwork	1
1	4	What topics of the professional development training program were most beneficial?	Leadership Development Environment Teamwork	1
1	5	What recommendations do you have to improve the professional development training program	Leadership Development Environment Teamwork	1
2	6	In what ways do you feel the content of the professional development training program is applicable to your role?	Leadership	1
3	7	How would you rate the professional development training program as a development program to help you do your job better compared to other development training programs?	Development	1
4	8	How do you feel the content of the professional development training program will help build a better work environment?	Environment	1
5	9	How do you feel the content of the professional development training program will help build a strong team?	Teamwork	1
6	10	Based on the professional development training program, what are ways you are able to determine the individual engagement level of your employees?	Leadership Development Environment Teamwork	2
6	11	Based on the professional development training program, what are ways to engage and retain employees?	Leadership Development Environment Teamwork	2

<b>Secondary Research Question</b>	<b>Interview Question</b>	<b>Question</b>	<b>Organization Engagement Driver(s)/Targeted</b>	<b>Kirkpatrick Evaluation Level</b>
6	12	Based on the professional development training program, how will you increase your overall dept/hotel's engagement?	Leadership Development Environment Teamwork	2
6	13	What engagement strategies did you learn during the professional development program?	Leadership Development Environment Teamwork	2
7	14	Based on the professional development training program, what is a key principle in developing an engagement plan for each of your employees?	Leadership	2
7	15	Based on the professional development training program, what are characteristics of your leadership style that may influence your employee's engagement, positively, negatively?	Leadership	2
8	16	Based on the professional development training program, what did you learn that would help assess employee's career development opportunities?	Development	2
9	16	Based on the professional development training program, what ways did you learn would improve the work environment?	Environment	2
10	15	Based on the professional development training program, what did you learn that would build stronger teams?	Teamwork	2
11	16	What is your engagement strategy you have currently in place for your employees? • Is it the same or different for each employee?	Leadership Development Environment Teamwork	3
11	17	How often do you utilize the resources of the engagement website?	Leadership Development Environment Teamwork	3
11	18	What are your suggestions to improve the website?	Leadership Development Environment Teamwork	3
11	19	What are your responsibilities for the hotel's engagement action plan? • What have you submitted? • How did you use the engagement website?	Leadership Development Environment Teamwork	3

Secondary Research Question	Interview Question	Question	Organization Engagement Driver(s)/Targeted	Kirkpatrick Evaluation Level
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How often does someone follow up on the plan?</li> <li>Who follows up on the plan</li> </ul>		
11	20	<p>What are the concepts and activities you learned in the professional development training program that you have applied in your job?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How did they help increase your team's engagement?</li> </ul>	Leadership Development Environment Teamwork	3
11	21	<p>What are your responsibilities for the hotel's engagement action plan?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What have you submitted?</li> <li>How did you use the engagement website?</li> <li>How often does someone follow up on the plan?</li> <li>Who follows up on the plan</li> </ul>	Leadership Development Environment Teamwork	3
12	22	<p>How did the results of your RFM (Retention Focused Manager) survey compare to the survey results your employees completed?</p> <p>What strategies did you put into place to improve engagement?</p>	Leadership	3
12, 13	23	<p>Tell me about having a "stay" interview or "one-on-one" rap session with your employees?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What questions did you ask?</li> <li>Did you document the meeting?</li> <li>What was your follow-up?</li> </ul>	Leadership Development	3
13	24	<p>What have you done to provide development opportunities for your employees?</p> <p>What have been your challenges?</p>	Development	3
14	25	<p>What have you done to recognize and reward your team?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What have been your challenges?</li> </ul>	Environment	3
14	26	<p>What have you done to provide a better work environment for your employees (job enrichment, work-life balance, safety, resources, amount of work)?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What have been your challenges?</li> </ul>	Environment	3
15	27	<p>How focused would you say that the leadership team is on increasing the</p>	Teamwork	3

<b>Secondary Research Question</b>	<b>Interview Question</b>	<b>Question</b>	<b>Organization Engagement Driver(s) Targeted</b>	<b>Kirkpatrick Evaluation Level</b>
		<p>employee's engagement at your hotel?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What specific things are you doing as a team to increase the engagement level?</li> <li>• What strategies are in place to increase the overall hotel team's engagement?</li> </ul>		
15	28	<p>What have you done to build an effective work team?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What have been your challenges?</li> </ul>	Teamwork	3
16	29	<p>What is the overall engagement level of the employees based on your last survey?</p>	Leadership Development Environment Teamwork	4
17	30	<p>What affect has this had on your hotel's balanced scorecard?</p>	Leadership Development Environment Teamwork	4

## Employee Interview Questions

<b>Secondary Research Question</b>	<b>Interview Question</b>	<b>Question</b>	<b>Organization Engagement Driver(s) Targeted</b> <i>Items in ( ) are indirect drivers targeted</i>	<b>Kirkpatrick Evaluation Level</b>
11	1	How focused would you say the leadership team is on increasing employee engagement at your hotel? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What specific things have they done?</li> </ul>	Leadership Development Environment Teamwork	3
11	2	How effective do you feel the hotel is as a team in meeting their objectives? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What improvements could be made?</li> </ul>	Leadership Development Environment Teamwork	3
12, 13	3	Has your manager/leader had a “one-on-one” rap session with you to discuss what you enjoy at work, suggestions to improve, your aspirations? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tell me about your discussion</li> <li>• How often does this occur?</li> </ul> Is it outside of your yearly review?	Leadership Development	3
13	4	What development opportunities has your mgr/leader discussed with you (cross training, training programs)?	Development	3
14	5	How have you been recognized and rewarded by your mgr/leader? Your team?	Environment	3
14	6	How has your mgr/leader provided a better work environment for you (job enrichment, work-life balance, safety, resources, amount of work)?	Environment	3
15	7	In what ways does the hotel team work effectively together?	Teamwork	3
16	8	How committed and passionate do you feel the entire team is to work here versus a year ago? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What specific things have you seen that makes you say this?</li> </ul>	Leadership Development Environment Teamwork	4

## Appendix B

### Institutional Review Board Acceptance

**From:** Daniel Harris  
**Sent:** Friday, December 11, 2009 11:08 AM  
**To:** Tony Cawthon  
**Cc:** starris@clemson.edu  
**Subject:** Validation of IRB2009-351 "Professional Development to Promote Employee Engagement"

Dr. Cawthon,

The Chair of the Clemson University Institutional Review Board (IRB) validated the protocol identified above using Exempt review procedures and a determination was made on **December 11, 2009**, that the proposed activities involving human participants qualify as Exempt from continuing review under **Category B2**, based on the Federal Regulations (45 CFR 46). You may begin this study.

Please remember that no change in this research proposal can be initiated without prior review by the IRB. Any unanticipated problems involving risks to subjects, complications, and/or any adverse events must be reported to the Office of Research Compliance (ORC) immediately. You are requested to notify the ORC when your study is completed or terminated.

Attached are documents developed by Clemson University regarding the responsibilities of Principal Investigators and Research Team Members. Please be sure these are distributed to all appropriate parties.

Good luck with your study and please feel free to contact us if you have any questions.  
Please use the IRB number and title in all communications regarding this study.

**Daniel Harris**  
IT Coordinator  
Office of Research Compliance  
223 Brackett Hall  
Clemson University  
Phone: 864-656-1450

## Appendix C

### Leadership Information Letter

#### **Information Concerning Participation in a Research Study Clemson University**

Professional Development to Promote Employee Engagement: A Multi-Case Study

#### **Description of the research and your participation**

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Tony Cawthon, Ph.D. along with Starrin (Starr), Shafer, Ph.D. candidate in Educational Leadership at Clemson University. The purpose of this study is to explore the effectiveness of a professional development program on employee engagement levels in a particular organization. Starr can be reached at 864.525.6015 or 864.281.9278. Dr. Cawthon can be reached at 864.656.5100.

Your participation will include sharing your thoughts, feelings and observations on the professional development training program focused on employee engagement. The interviews will be conducted one-on-one. The conversations will be audio-recorded to ensure that all information is captured. After the interviews are completed, they recordings will be transcribed. You may be asked to answer additional questions to clarify information from the interviews. The transcribed recordings will then be sent to you where you will have the opportunity to verify the information. You may request changes to the transcript.

The amount of time required for your participation in the interviews will be approximately 60 minutes. Additional time will be required to verify the transcriptions of the recorded interviews. This will take no more than 30 minutes.

#### **Risks and discomforts**

There are no known risks associated with this research as you have control over the information you share during the interview.

#### **Potential benefits**

This research may help us to understand what engagement concepts and activities drive employee engagement in the workplace, thus providing a better work experience for employees, a greater customer experience and potential increase to an organization's business outcomes.

### **Protection of confidentiality**

We will do everything we can to protect your privacy. Identities will be held confidential through a coding process. Additionally, your identity will not be revealed in any publication that might result from this study.

### **Voluntary participation**

Your participation in this research study is voluntary. You may choose not to participate and you may withdraw your consent to participate at any time. You will not be penalized in any way should you decide not to participate or to withdraw from this study.

### **Contact information**

If you have any questions or concerns about this study, or if any problems arise, please contact Dr. Tony Cawthon at Clemson University at 864.656.5100. If you have any questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant, please contact the Clemson University Office of Research Compliance at 864.656.6460.

### **Consent**

**I have read this consent form and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I give my consent to participate in this study.**

Participant's signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

A copy of this consent form should be given to you.

## Appendix D

### Employee Information Letter

#### **Information Concerning Participation in a Research Study Clemson University**

Professional Development to Promote Employee Engagement: A Multi-Case Study

#### **Description of the research and your participation**

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Tony Cawthon, Ph.D. along with Starrin (Starr), Shafer, Ph.D. candidate in Educational Leadership at Clemson University. The purpose of this study is to explore the effectiveness of a professional development program on employee engagement levels in a particular organization. Starr can be reached at 864.525.6015 or 864.281.9278. Dr. Cawthon can be reached at 864.656.5100.

Your participation will include sharing your thoughts, feelings and observations on the application of engagement activities managers learned in a training program. The interviews will be conducted in small groups. The conversations will be audio-recorded to ensure that all information is captured. After the interviews are completed, they recordings will be transcribed. You may be asked to answer additional questions to clarify information from the interviews. The transcribed recordings will then be sent to you where you will have the opportunity to verify the information. You may request changes to the transcript.

The amount of time required for your participation in the interviews will be approximately 60 minutes. Additional time will be required to verify the transcriptions of the recorded interviews. This will take no more than 30 minutes.

### **Risks and discomforts**

There are no known risks associated with this research as you have control over the information you share during the interview.

### **Potential benefits**

This research may help us to understand what engagement concepts and activities drive employee engagement in the workplace, thus providing a better work experience for employees, a greater customer experience and potential increase to an organization's business outcomes.

### **Protection of confidentiality**

We will do everything we can to protect your privacy. Identities will be held confidential through a coding process. Additionally, your identity will not be revealed in any publication that might result from this study.

### **Voluntary participation**

Your participation in this research study is voluntary. You may choose not to participate and you may withdraw your consent to participate at any time. You will not be penalized in any way should you decide not to participate or to withdraw from this study.

### **Contact information**

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### **Consent**

**I have read this consent form and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I give my consent to participate in this study.**

Participant's signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

A copy of this consent form should be given to you.

## Appendix E

### Leadership Consent Form

#### Consent Form for Participation in a Research Study

#### Clemson University

#### Professional Development to Promote Employee Engagement: A Multi-Case Study

#### **Description of the research and your participation**

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Tony Cawthon, Ph.D. along with Starrin (Starr), Shafer, Ph.D. candidate in Educational Leadership at Clemson University. The purpose of this study is to explore the effectiveness of a professional development program on employee engagement levels in a particular organization. Starr can be reached at 864.525.6015 or 864.281.9278. Dr. Cawthon can be reached at 864.656.5100.

Your participation will include sharing your thoughts, feelings and observations on the professional development training program focused on employee engagement. The interviews will be conducted one-on-one. The conversations will be audio-recorded to ensure that all information is captured. After the interviews are completed, they recordings will be transcribed. You may be asked to answer additional questions to clarify information from the interviews. The transcribed recordings will then be sent to you where you will have the opportunity to verify the information. You may request changes to the transcript.

The amount of time required for your participation in the interviews will be approximately 60 minutes. Additional time will be required to verify the transcriptions of the recorded interviews. This will take no more than 30 minutes.

#### **Risks and discomforts**

There are no known risks associated with this research as you have control over the information you share during the interview.

#### **Potential benefits**

This research may help us to understand what engagement concepts and activities drive employee engagement in the workplace, thus providing a better work experience for employees, a greater customer experience and potential increase to an organization's business outcomes.

### **Protection of confidentiality**

We will do everything we can to protect your privacy. Identities will be held confidential through a coding process. Additionally, your identity will not be revealed in any publication that might result from this study.

### **Voluntary participation**

Your participation in this research study is voluntary. You may choose not to participate and you may withdraw your consent to participate at any time. You will not be penalized in any way should you decide not to participate or to withdraw from this study.

### **Contact information**

If you have any questions or concerns about this study, or if any problems arise, please contact Dr. Tony Cawthon at Clemson University at 864.656.5100. If you have any questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant, please contact the Clemson University Office of Research Compliance at 864.656.6460.

### **Consent**

**I have read this consent form and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I give my consent to participate in this study.**

Participant's signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

A copy of this consent form should be given to you.

## Appendix F

### Employee Consent Form

#### **Consent Form for Participation in a Research Study Clemson University**

Professional Development to Promote Employee Engagement: A Multi-Case Study

#### **Description of the research and your participation**

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Tony Cawthon, Ph.D. along with Starrin (Starr), Shafer, Ph.D. candidate in Educational Leadership at Clemson University. The purpose of this study is to explore the effectiveness of a professional development program on employee engagement levels in a particular organization. Starr can be reached at 864.525.6015 or 864.281.9278. Dr. Cawthon can be reached at 864.656.5100.

Your participation will include sharing your thoughts, feelings and observations on the application of engagement activities managers learned in a training program. The interviews will be conducted in small groups. The conversations will be audio-recorded to ensure that all information is captured. After the interviews are completed, they recordings will be transcribed. You may be asked to answer additional questions to clarify information from the interviews. The transcribed recordings will then be sent to you where you will have the opportunity to verify the information. You may request changes to the transcript.

The amount of time required for your participation in the interviews will be approximately 60 minutes. Additional time will be required to verify the transcriptions of the recorded interviews. This will take no more than 30 minutes.

#### **Risks and discomforts**

There are no known risks associated with this research as you have control over the information you share during the interview.

#### **Potential benefits**

This research may help us to understand what engagement concepts and activities drive employee engagement in the workplace, thus providing a better work experience

for employees, a greater customer experience and potential increase to an organization's business outcomes.

### **Protection of confidentiality**

We will do everything we can to protect your privacy. Identities will be held confidential through a coding process. Additionally, your identity will not be revealed in any publication that might result from this study.

### **Voluntary participation**

Your participation in this research study is voluntary. You may choose not to participate and you may withdraw your consent to participate at any time. You will not be penalized in any way should you decide not to participate or to withdraw from this study.

### **Contact information**

If you have any questions or concerns about this study, or if any problems arise, please contact Dr. Tony Cawthon at Clemson University at 864.656.5100. If you have any questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant, please contact the Clemson University Office of Research Compliance at 864.656.6460.

### **Consent**

**I have read this consent form and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I give my consent to participate in this study.**

Participant's signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

A copy of this consent form should be given to you.

## Appendix G

### Transcription Release Form

#### **Release Form for Participation in a Research Study Clemson University**

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#### **Description of the research and your participation**

Thank you for participating in a research study conducted by Tony Cawthon, Ph.D. along with Starrin (Starr), Shafer, Ph.D. candidate in Educational Leadership at Clemson University. The purpose of this study is to explore the effectiveness of a professional development program on employee engagement levels in a particular organization. Starr can be reached at 864.525.6015 or 864.281.9278. Dr. Cawthon can be reached at 864.656.5100.

#### **Verification of transcription**

Attached you will find a transcription of the interview you participated in. Please review the information verifying that the information represented is accurate. If you have any requested changes to the transcription, please note the request on the actual transcription and return to me.

#### **Risks and discomforts**

Again, there are no known risks associated with this research as you have control over the information you share during the interview.

#### **Potential benefits**

This research may help us to understand what engagement concepts and activities drive employee engagement in the workplace, thus providing a better work experience for employees, a greater customer experience and potential increase to an organization's business outcomes.

### **Protection of confidentiality**

We will do everything we can to protect your privacy. Identities will be held confidential through a coding process. Additionally, your identity will not be revealed in any publication that might result from this study. Aliases will be completed with the authorization of transcription use.

### **Voluntary participation**

Your participation in this research study is voluntary. You may choose not to participate and you may withdraw your consent to participate at any time. You will not be penalized in any way should you decide not to participate or to withdraw from this study.

### **Contact information**

If you have any questions or concerns about this study, or if any problems arise, please contact Dr. Tony Cawthon at Clemson University at 864.656.5100. If you have any questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant, please contact the Clemson University Office of Research Compliance at 864.656.6460.

### **Consent**

**Please complete one of the following:**

- I have reviewed the transcriptions and consent to my participation in this study. There are NO changes to the transcript.**

Participant's signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

- I have reviewed the transcriptions and consent to my participation in this study. There are changes noted on the transcript, which is attached.**

Participant's signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**I have translated the transcription and consent form to the above study participant.**

Translator's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Translator's signature: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Background Information**

Please complete the following information, which will be used for background information in the study:

### **I work in the following department(s):**

Housekeeping    Maintenance    Restaurant    Front Desk    Other

### **I have been employed at this hotel for:**

Less than 1 year    1-3 years    4-6 years    7-10 years    10 or more years

### **My age falls within the following time span:**

18-25 years    26-30 years    31-35 years    36-40 years    41-45 years  
 46-50 years    51-55 years    56-60 years    61 years or older

My gender is:    Female    Male

*Please retain a copy of this form for your records.*

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