

Case Study

Palestinian Territories Hotel Workforce Development Project





Diyafa Hospitality Management & Consultants group partners (left to right): Issa Dahdal, CHA, CHT; Awni Inshewat, CHA, CM; and Rami Zeidan, CHT, CHE. Diyafa-HMC has been AHLEI's international associate and partner for the Palestinian Territories since 2012.

For more than sixty years,

the American Hotel & Lodging Educational Institute (AHLEI), the non-profit education and training arm of the American Hotel & Lodging Association (AH&LA), has worked diligently with many partners globally to develop several regions to their full hospitality workforce potential.

To achieve its goals, AHLEI works with government entities, workforce agencies, hospitality associations, hotels, clubs, military lodging, and academic institutions to deliver new projects that address the training and education demands of the hospitality and tourism sectors.

AHLEI's professional staff members research, evaluate, select, and implement preferred solutions by drawing on our core competencies in the areas of hospitality learning and training, professional certification, and marketing development. AHLEI uses this expertise to assist countries with expanding their hospitality and tourism standards, impacting their regional development and economic growth.

This case study was written by Elizabeth Johnson, Senior Public Relations & Marketing Manager, in collaboration with Ed Kastli, Vice President of International Sales. It was prepared using company information and statistics provided by Mr. Awni Inshewat, Mr. Issa Dahdal, and Mr. Rami Zeidan of Diyafa Hospitality Management & Consultants Group (Diyafa-HMC).

Disclaimer: This case study is written solely for educational purposes and is not intended to represent successful or unsuccessful managerial decision making. The authors do not intend to illustrate either effective or ineffective handling of a workforce development and/or a training and learning situation.

Summary



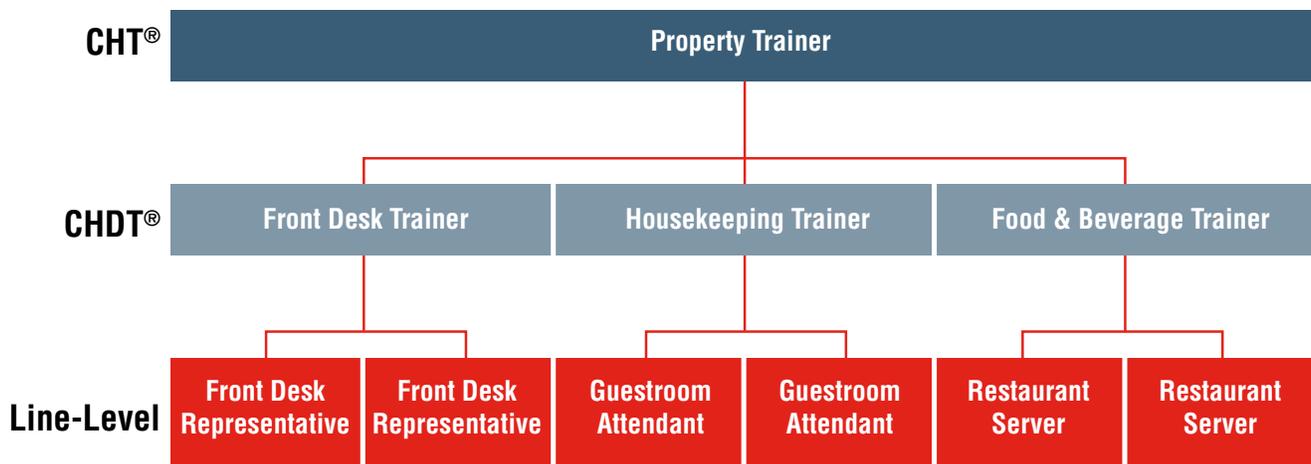
Diyafa Hospitality Management & Consultants Group (Diyafa-HMC) has been the American Hotel & Lodging Educational Institute’s international associate and partner for the Palestinian Territories since 2012. Diyafa-HMC was established in 2009, offering professional consulting and operational services to the hospitality industry in Palestine. As one of AHLEI’s global partners, they are committed to raise services and standards to international guest expectations through education and training. The organization is directed by managing partners Awni Inshewat, CHA, CM; Issa Dahdal, CHA, CHT; and Rami Zeidan, CHT, CHE.

Since 2012, Diyafa-HMC, on behalf of the Compete Project funded by USAID, and in cooperation with the Arab Hotel Association, has organized, implemented, and supervised an extensive hospitality training program using AHLEI programs and certifications. They have had tremendous success, training and certifying more than a third of the Palestine Territories’ hospitality labor force, using the Cascade Training Model developed by AHLEI and the Egyptian Tourism Federation more than a decade ago.

This document will outline the implementation of the Cascade Training Model by Diyafa-HMC, the personnel and organizations involved in the program, and the success of the training initiatives for the hospitality industry in the Palestinian Territories.

About the Cascade Training Model

This proven technique, now used in many countries, evolved from a hospitality training project originally funded by USAID in Egypt starting in 2002. With this model, AHLEI works with area hospitality organizations such as Diyafa-HMC, to identify and train a select group of trainers, who earn the Certified Hospitality Trainer (CHT®) designation. These trainers then train departmental trainers, who earn either the Certified Hospitality Department Trainer (CHDT®) designation or the Certified Hospitality Supervisor (CHS®) designation (the CHS® was used in the Palestinian Territories). Professionals in both of those groups then train line-level workers at local hotel sites. In this way, training “cascades” through all levels of a hospitality organization, ensuring a continuum of consistent, measurable training. This training approach is built upon generating local workforce development skills and providing training with both immediate and long-term results for the local hospitality community.



Diyafa-HMC Implements the Cascade Training Model in Palestinian Territories

Using the Cascade Training Model, Diyafa-HMC selected 14 trainers to go through a program delivered by AHLEI Master Trainer Jennifer Calhoun, CHE, CHT, after which they sat for the Certified Hospitality Trainer (CHT®) exam. These individuals then acted as mobile trainers who delivered the Certified Hospitality Supervisor (CHS®) program to more than 100 hand-selected candidates within four regions of Palestine: East Jerusalem, Ramallah, Bethlehem, and Jericho.

Next, these supervisors conducted training for line-level staff in the housekeeping, restaurant service, and front desk areas of hotels. More than 600 participants from 51 hotels, five colleges, and eight restaurants went through the training and certification process.

In the Palestinian Territories, the cascade model was used to train the following numbers of hospitality professionals:

- 14 master trainers (CHT®)
- 100 department trainers (CHS®)
- 600 line-level employees

Beyond this cascade training, Diyafa-HMC also conducted certification preparation and exams for the Certified Hotel Administrator (CHA®) and Certified Hospitality Educator (CHE®), facilitated and proctored by AHLEI Master Trainer George Ubbelohde, CHA, CHE, CHT, and Awni Inshewat, CHA, managing partner, Diyafa-HMC. Department head certifications for housekeeping executives, food and beverage executives, and rooms division executives were also presented.



George Ubbelohde, CHA, CHE, CHT, presented a Certified Hospitality Educator (CHE®) workshop as part of the training initiatives in the Palestinian Territories.



AHLEI trainer Jennifer Calhoun, CHE, CHT (back row, center) with 14 individuals who were selected to become Certified Hospitality Trainers (CHT®) as part of the Cascade Training Model used by Diyafa-HMC and the USAID Compete Project to train and certify Palestinian hospitality employees.



Representatives from organizations involved in the training process celebrate the success of the Palestinian program (from left): George Ubbelohde, CHE; Ihab Jabari, Senior Cross-Sector Lead Deputy Chief of Party, DAI, Compete Project; Ed Kastli, AHLEI vice president, international sales; Ghassan Al Jamal, USAID, Private Sector Development Specialist USAID, Private Sector Development Specialist; and Diyafa-HMC partners Awni Inshewat, CHA, CM; Issa Dahdal, CHA, CHT; and Rami Zeidan, CHT, CHE.

Guest Service Gold® and Certified Guest Service Properties

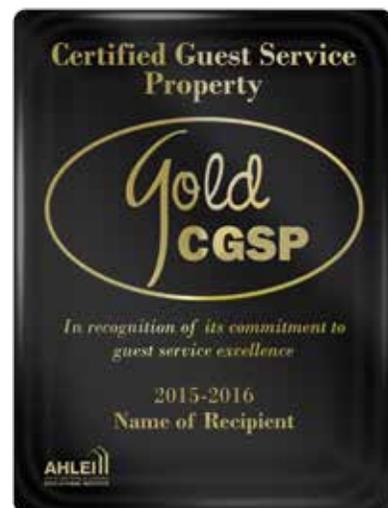
Diyafa-HMC also introduced the Guest Service Gold® training program with the Certified Guest Service Professional (CGSP®) designation. This AHLEI training program shows hospitality professionals how to achieve a new standard of exceptional service based on emotionally engaging with guests in memorable ways. Eleven properties were selected, based on their commitment to training and professional development. From those properties, 300 participants representing front desk, housekeeping and food service earned the Certified Guest Service Professional (CGSP®) designation. Recognized worldwide, the CGSP® is the highest acknowledgment of award-winning guest service for employees in the hospitality industry. By completing the training and individual certifications, each of the 11 properties earned the title of Certified Guest Service Property. Because of this, Palestinian Territories has the most Certified Guest Service Properties of any country outside the United States of America.



Managers representing 11 hotels that earned the Certified Guest Service Property designation were honored during a presentation with Diyafa-HCM partners.

The Certified Guest Service Properties, which represent various geographical locations in the Palestinian Territories, including East Jerusalem, Ramallah, Bethlehem, and Jericho, are:

- Azzahra Hotel
- Ritz Hotel
- Ambassador Hotel
- St. George Hotel
- Jericho Resort
- Jacir Palace Hotel
- Mövenpick Hotel Ramallah
- Manger Square Hotel Bethlehem
- Murad Tourist Resort
- Royal Court Hotel
- Caesar Company for Tourism Investment



Recognition for Outstanding Hospitality Training

In the fall of 2014, Compete Project USAID held a ceremony at the Intercontinental Jericho to honor all who participated in this landmark hospitality training program. Representatives from the hospitality sector and the Palestinian Ministry of Tourism were present to acknowledge the astounding success of this partnership. The numbers speak for themselves—**with a hospitality labor force of only 3,000, the Diyafa-HMC program has trained and certified more than 1,300 employees in less than two years.**

Testimonials

"This is to certify that the USAID funded Compete Project, implemented by DAI, contracted DIYAFA Hospitality Management & Consulting Group to deliver training courses for the hospitality employees. Three separate contracts were executed by DIYAFA, starting on July 2012 to May 2014. DIYAFA on behalf of USAID/Compete project made an extensive study of the Tourism and Hospitality Education System Gaps and organized, implemented, and supervised the training programs as outlined by the AHLEI training modules. DIYAFA-HMC coordinated with the Arab Hotel Association to assist in promoting the training plan among its members.

The performance of the DIYAFA-HMC was satisfactory, and according to the implementation schedule. This certificate was given upon the request of DIYAFA-HMC."

Said Abu Hijleh
Chief of Party
The Compete Project

"It was a true pleasure to work with DIYAFA-HMC Group through the Compete Project that was funded by USAID. The management at The Ambassador Hotel in Jerusalem found it very beneficial in upgrading the service level, in addition to the staff's morale.

Your determination and professionalism was clear in delivering all training programs: CHS®, CRDE®, CFBE®, CHHE®, TRAC, and finally the CGSP®. Thank you for all your efforts."

Tamer Abu Dayyeh, CHS
Hotel Manager
Ambassador Hotel, Jerusalem

"The St. George Hotel Jerusalem has the pleasure to be part of the USAID Compete Project training in cooperation and collaboration with the Arab Hotel Association. The training program was informative with enriching sentient skills and real testimonials of engaging with guests to provide exceptional service and going the extra mile to maintain memorable service. Our staff had immense delight in learning how to achieve and express their assurance to deliver a unique service.

Thank you for the DIYAFA-HMC team of professionals and experts that were assembled to facilitate such a dedicated, knowledgeable, and enlightened training. The St. George Hotel Jerusalem was honored to be entitled to the designation of Guest Service Gold® certificate. It is with great pride that the hotel management team receive the Certified Guest Service Property plaque to enforce our passion to excel and fluoresce in our commitment to provide exceptional guest service."

Amjad Ghannam, Director of Operations
St. George Hotel Jerusalem



Palestinian hotel employees participated in training to become Certified Hospitality Trainers (CHT®) and Certified Hospitality Supervisors (CHS®) using the Cascade Model.

Certified Hospitality Trainer (CHT®)

The Certified Hospitality Trainer designation recognizes and validates the knowledge and skills possessed by property-level training executives or directors, or department heads at a hospitality company. Successful candidates demonstrate mastery of training concepts such as instructional design, assessing training needs, measuring and evaluating training, mentoring, hourly employee orientation, and management development and executive education.



With the cascade training model, local trainers are selected to go through the top-level CHT® program and are then responsible for training the next levels of staff.

Certified Hospitality Supervisor (CHS®)

Line-level employees are often promoted to supervisory positions because they show an understanding of the many skills needed to keep a shift or department functioning smoothly. Supervisory job skills may include: scheduling, training, interviewing, disciplining, inspecting, and conducting performance reviews; making decisions and judgment calls while performing daily duties; and providing input on hiring and firing decisions within a department.



Line-Level Training and Certification

Hospitality skills certification for hospitality employees brings the professional clout of AHLEI's certification programs to the people who are on the frontlines with guests. AHLEI offers designations for those who work in food and beverage, guest service, and housekeeping positions. Assessing skills and knowledge and recognizing employee achievement through certification builds confidence and encourages employees to make hospitality a career.

Guest Service Gold®

Guest service is the foundation of hospitality and every employee needs to understand the importance of delivering high-quality guest service. This program focuses on seven traits that hospitality professionals can use to deliver service above and beyond the call of duty. Training prepares individuals to earn the Certified Guest Service Professional (CGSP®) designation, and for properties to achieve the title of Certified Guest Service Property.



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ARAB HOTEL ASSOCIATION



3rd March 2014

Dear All,

Subject: The AHLA certification program

The AHLA certification program offered for Palestinian Hotel staff from different cities and hotels throughout the country has been well received by both the hotel owners and their staff. The generous support of the Compete Project funded by USAID and the keen administration of Diyafa, the hospitality company that exerted all necessary efforts to ensure the success of this program were both highly appreciated by the board of the Arab Hotel Association.

More than 1000 staff members were offered training and certification in line with the Hotel association's strategy to improve the Palestinian hotel industry and the capacity and skill of its staff in order to advance the industry's competitive advantage and its ability to better position itself visa vie the internal and external competition.

The hotel association's interest in this program based on the necessity to improve staff skill on one hand and to better organize and standardize the hotel industry's labor force in Palestine. There is no doubt that the majority of the staff members who took these courses were interested in both the

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certification and the skills associated with this certification. Similarly, hotel owners and managers were eager both to offer such an opportunity for their staff and to ensure a minimal standard of skill guaranteed by their achievements in the courses as well as their certification. It is the hotel association's desire and strategy to realize a better-organized incentive system to train their staff in order to develop the labor force, which will be protected simultaneously by law.

There hasn't been any study to indicate the impact of this program on the industry, however, based on a number of hotel owners feedbacks, it is apparent that this program was direly needed. It is also clear that this program, despite its apparent benefit does not cover the continuously increasing demand to keep the industry up to projected standards. Hence, future collaboration with AHLA, Diyafa as well as the compete project are necessary to ensure the continued competitiveness of the Palestinian hotel industry in specific and the entire hospitality offer in Palestine in general.

President

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