

Employer Benefit Report

BEST Corporation: Hotel Training Center Room Attendant Training Program

INTRODUCTION

The Hotel Training Center Partnership (HTC) provides pre-employment and incumbent training for the hospitality sector. The partnership is led by BEST Corp., the designated training provider for UNITE HERE Local 26, the hospitality workers union that represents all 27 unionized hotels in the greater Boston area.¹ BEST Corp.'s training for room attendants has enjoyed a high placement rate and is widely respected among partner employers.

SkillWorks' theory of change is based on a dual-customer approach to workforce development in which partner employers are expected to experience positive outcomes through their engagement with sector-based training partnerships. As part of its ongoing commitment to evaluation and learning, the SkillWorks collaborative has chosen to delve more deeply into the nature of employer benefits connected to its workforce partnerships. Mt. Auburn Associates, as SkillWorks' third-party evaluator, selected two different cases to explore the types and scale of benefits employers receive from participation. Since hotel employers highly praise the room attendant program, it was selected as one case for exploration.² The following case study presents an in-depth examination of the benefits hotels receive from their participation in BEST Corp.'s training program.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Mt. Auburn's research indicates that, for the most part, the primary benefits hotels accrue as a result of sourcing from BEST Corp. are difficult to monetize. BEST Corp. focuses its screening process to find participants with the skills and enthusiasm for the hospitality industry that hotels prioritize. Hotels also value the practical experience working in the hospitality sector and the soft skills training BEST Corp. gives its graduates. Hotels do not appear to generate substantial savings in hiring costs as a result of sourcing from BEST Corp. However, interviews suggest there is some evidence of cost savings once new hires are on the job. In particular, BEST Corp. training can financially benefit hotels by shortening the time it takes a new room attendant to assume a full workload. Hotels with greater flexibility in their human resource

¹ The 27 unionized hotel partners are Ames Hotel, Back Bay Boston Hotel, Colonnade Hotel, Copley Square Hotel, Courtyard by Marriot Boston Logan Airport, Courtyard by Marriott Cambridge, Courtyard by Marriott South Boston, Fairmont Battery Wharf, Fairmont Copley Plaza, Hampton Inn & Suites (Boston), Hilton Financial District, Hotel Commonwealth, Hyatt Place Braintree, InterContinental Hotel, Lenox Hotel, Logan Airport Hilton, Nine Zero Hotel, Omni Parker House, Renaissance Boston Waterfront, Ritz Carleton Boston Common, Sheraton Boston Hotel & Towers, Sheraton Commander, Taj Boston, W Hotel, Westin Copley Place, and Westin Waterfront.

² A second case study will explore the benefits to a single employer, Boston Children's Hospital, of multiple types of workforce development engagement for its incumbent workers.

practices (such as small independent hotels) appear to benefit the most from BEST Corp.'s offering.

OVERVIEW OF BEST CORP'S ROOM ATTENDANT PROGRAM

BEST Corp.'s room attendant program introduces unemployed and underemployed participants to the hospitality industry and provides classroom instruction as well as hands-on practical experience. In order to gain acceptance into the program, applicants must attend an information session, pass an English skills test, and go through three one-on-one interviews. BEST Corp. also calls applicant references, just as a hotel employer might check references of potential employees.

The program covers hard skills such as workplace safety, ergonomics, and housekeeping and cleaning techniques as well as soft skills such as guest relations, professionalism, and positive attitudes. The material is primarily taught in the classroom or using model hotel rooms, but participants also spend two weeks shadowing room attendants at 10 of the partner hotels to experience full immersion in the room attendant job. During this shadowing, participants learn hotel routines, gain familiarity with the hotel layout, and follow a senior housekeeper, similar to the training for a new employee. Human resource and housekeeping staff from partner hotels also contribute to the curriculum by coming to BEST Corp. to teach classes and conduct mock interviews. BEST Corp. convenes quarterly employer meetings that facilitate information sharing between hotels and provide a forum for hotels to give feedback on the training program, clarify what skills or attributes their brand values, and relay their room attendant needs.

Graduates of the BEST Corp. program are eligible to apply for entry-level housekeeping positions in area hotels, in particular, the highly desirable openings at BEST Corp.'s partner union hotels. Between January 2009 and February 2013, 107 individuals have successfully completed the BEST Corp. room attendant training. Of those 107 graduates, 87 percent found new employment, and 77 percent obtained new employment in the hospitality industry.

HYPOTHESIS

This report intends to assess whether room attendants who go through BEST Corp.'s training offer cost savings to the hotels that hire them. While employers have consistently praised the BEST Corp. room attendant program in previous evaluations, by quantifying more specifically what employers value about the program, Mt. Auburn hoped to understand better the program's impact and where BEST Corp. adds the most value. Based on prior research and interviews, it was hypothesized that the following areas would offer benefits to hotels.³

³ Appendix A provides a more detailed description of employer hiring and training practices.
Mt. Auburn Associates, Inc.

Hiring-related Savings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less time spent during the hiring process • Reduced recruitment costs
On-the-job Savings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less time spent on training new employees • Shorter time needed for the new employee to reach a full load of rooms to clean • Less supervision • Improved retention • Lower workers' compensation costs
Improved Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved customer service • Better communication • Getting along better with others • More receptive to change

RESEARCH

In February 2013, Mt. Auburn Associates identified the hotel employers that hired the greatest number of BEST Corp. graduates since the beginning of the BEST Corp. program. This produced a list of eight area hotels. Mt. Auburn interviewed and collected data relevant to the hypothesis laid out in the section above from seven of the eight hotels.⁴ Unfortunately, the hotel that employs the most BEST Corp. graduates did not participate in the research despite repeated outreach attempts, in part due to a change in hotel ownership. Hotels varied in how much information they shared, so it was not possible to fully quantify the cost of hiring and training a new room attendant. However, the research provided sufficient data to draw some broad conclusions on the employer benefits of the BEST Corp. program.

FINDINGS

➔ *Employers follow standardized hiring practices that do not generally allow for time or cost savings based on the hiring source.*

Although hotels find BEST Corp. training as an attractive factor when they see it on an application, it does not save the hotel time since BEST Corp. graduates must follow the same hiring process as all other applicants. Hotels require BEST Corp. graduates to fill out the online application and, in almost all cases, the candidate is then screened and chosen to interview in the same way as any other candidate. Hotels do differ in the ways that they take the BEST Corp. training into consideration during the hiring process. One hotel uses BEST Corp. applicants to set a standard. Since that hotel views BEST Corp. graduates to have a certain skill set and represent a certain quality, the hotel can compare other candidates to that standard to assess whether they fall above or below the bar. Another hotel brings BEST Corp. graduates in for interviews first, followed by referred applicants, and then interviews unknown applicants last because that is the order in which it prefers to hire. In rare instances, and depending on the hotel, when a participant has already shadowed at a hotel that is looking for a room

⁴ Appendix B provides a more in-depth description of the methodology.

attendant, the hotel will shorten the interview process. However, this happens so infrequently that, generally speaking, there are no cost savings when hiring a BEST Corp. graduate.

➤ *Employers are most likely to experience a direct financial impact of hiring BEST Corp. graduates during the initial weeks after the graduate starts employment. A few hotels report that room attendant training allows graduates to achieve desired levels of productivity faster than non-BEST Corp graduates—an average savings of \$400 per graduate.*

Once a room attendant is hired, the hotel pays the employee regardless of his or her productivity. The cost of paying a room attendant while the individual attends training and works towards cleaning the standard number of rooms is a significant expense to the hotel. Hotels are able to save money when they can shorten their training period. Two of the seven hotels reported shorter training times for BEST Corp. participants. These hotels described a training period of one to five days if the person had already shadowed at the hotel as compared to one to two weeks at other hotels. The variation in the amount of training time for a new room attendant suggests there is potential for this to represent cost savings to employers, but it depends on the policies of the hotel.

After training, new room attendants start cleaning rooms on their own. Hotels differ in how many rooms they first assign to new employees, but, over a period of time, as the new room attendants gain confidence, comfort, and accuracy in their duties, the number of rooms assigned increases gradually until they reach a full allotment. Senior employees who volunteer to have new employees shadow them are usually still able to handle their full workload each day so there are not additional supervisory costs.

Cost description	(non-BEST)	(BEST)
Average # days of training	8	7
Average # days to get to full workload ⁵	12	9
Approximate cost savings of BEST Corp. room attendants during training period⁶		\$392

On average, room attendants from BEST Corp. assume a full workload three days sooner than non-BEST Corp. room attendants. But, in one hotel that hosted participant shadowing during the BEST Corp. training program and has flexible procedures, BEST Corp. participants who had experience at that hotel could start with the full allotment of rooms in as little as one to two days. Three hotels report no difference in the time it takes new BEST Corp. and non-BEST Corp.

⁵ One hotel cited a much longer time for room attendants to get to a full workload than the others. The average days and costs do not include this response. This hotel stated that non-BEST graduates take two to three months to assume a full workload and that BEST graduates take three to four weeks. The long time to assume a full workload at that hotel may be due to its sources of new employees—the hotel relies more on Craigslist or employee referrals than on trained hires.

⁶ The approximate cost is calculated by: (average days of training (non-BEST) – average days of training (BEST)) + (average days to get to full workload (non-BEST) – average days to get to a full workload (BEST)) x daily wage of a room attendant.

room attendants to assume a full workload. The overall lack of difference in training time and time required for a full workload is likely due to the fact that most new room attendants are hired through employee transfers and training programs, already have room attendant experience, and can adjust quickly to their responsibilities.

➔ *Hotels have not experienced longer-term cost savings related to lower turnover rates or lower rates of workers' compensation claims.*

On average, the retention rate for BEST Corp.-trained room attendants was the same as non-BEST Corp.-trained room attendants—85 percent. Since all partner hotels are unionized, it can generally be assumed that union pay and benefits are likely the main reasons for the high retention rate across the board, rather than an employee's participation in the BEST Corp. training program.

Employers commonly report that BEST Corp. relieves some “hiring risk”; however, there was insufficient data to support whether short-term retention after hire was higher for BEST Corp. graduates. While six of the seven hotels mentioned that hiring room attendants from BEST Corp. presents less risk than hiring outside, unknown applicants, hotels also reported the same 90-day retention rate for both BEST and non-BEST hires. This is, in part, as a result of the fact that hotels report that even non-BEST hires are seldom “outside” hires. Since many are actually transfers from another hotel or are personal referrals from current employees, the typical non-BEST hires represent a lower hiring risk than truly unknown candidates.

Even though the BEST Corp. program provided its graduates with training in lifting techniques and other ways to avoid injury, hotels did not report any significant cost savings in workers' compensation claims. Interviews suggest this is not a major cost for hotels, so the savings from any differential would be negligible. Hotels also report that they review lifting and physical technique trainings during their room attendant orientation, so all employees gain this knowledge, which would also reduce the likelihood of any differential between BEST and non-BEST hires.

➔ *Employers praise the performance of employees hired through BEST Corp., but with BEST Corp. graduates representing only a fraction of the room attendant personnel, it is difficult to translate that performance into a quantifiable benefit for the hotel.*

Hotel employers report a generally high level of performance from BEST Corp. graduates. BEST Corp. graduates are declared “superstar performers” and “high-caliber applicants.” The hotels interviewed cite the lack of disciplinary issues and the lack of below-the-bar performances, and mention how many times BEST Corp. graduates are employee of the month. Beyond praising individual participant performance, employers uniformly express their appreciation that BEST Corp. graduates feel more like “known quantities” than candidates hired through Craigslist or off the street.

Employers value the experience of BEST Corp. graduates as much for the soft skills proficiency as for the specific occupational skills gained. The BEST Corp. training incorporates several

elements that signal to employers that BEST Corp. graduates have critical soft skills needed for success:

- **Understanding of the physical nature of the job.** Employers are generally concerned about how comfortable a new hire will be with repetitive physical tasks. Almost all hotels interviewed explained their wariness with applicants who claim to understand the demands of the job because of prior experience cleaning houses or doing their own housework. The training and concrete experience participants gain through BEST Corp. greatly alleviate hotels' concern.
- **Ability to work as a team.** The format of the BEST Corp. training brings a cohort of participants together full-time for seven weeks. Participants in the program learn and advance together, practicing the teamwork skills hotels value. This, coupled with the on-the-job shadowing element, appears to give employers confidence that BEST Corp. graduates can work well in a team environment.
- **Ability to interact with many different cultures.** The diversity of BEST Corp. participants mirrors the diversity of staff and guests in hotels. Successful completion of the program gives employers an indication of a candidate's ability to work with diverse cultures.
- **Willingness to learn and accept feedback.** Employers comment that the feedback BEST Corp. participants receive during the room attendant program trains participants to sustain an ongoing desire to learn once they are hired.

CONCLUSION

BEST Corp. graduates are a reliable workforce source for unionized Boston-area hotels. BEST Corp.'s room attendant program helps improve the skills and behaviors of its chosen participants to fit the traits desired by employer hotels. Employers also notice that BEST Corp. participants are characterized by a good work ethic, their desire to exceed standards, and to not let BEST Corp. down.

Finding room attendants that fit well with existing staff is important to hotels, and BEST Corp. assists hotels by vetting candidates and preparing them for the job. Among the seven hotels interviewed, there was resounding agreement on what qualities were important in room attendants. Partner hotels consider their employees to gain much more than a job when they are hired. Hiring a new employee at these unionized hotels is the beginning of what is expected to be a long relationship, unlike hiring at other facilities or in other industries that might consider employees to be more transitory. Room attendants are expected to be the face of the brand. They may offer the primary interaction guests have during their stay, and employers rely on room attendants to give guests the best possible hotel experience. The BEST Corp. room attendant program equips participants with the approach to hospitality and to hard work that is most sought after by hotels. Although hotels may use other sources to find workers with those characteristics, hotels trust that BEST Corp. graduates will have the attitude they require.

Examining hotels' hiring and training costs, however, did not yield many differences between BEST Corp. graduates and non-BEST Corp. graduates, except at the two partner hotels where BEST Corp. graduates assumed a full workload more quickly. This is largely because, regardless of an employee's prior training or experience, hotels generally have set hiring processes and training programs. Flexibility would allow hotels to modify their standard practices to take advantage of BEST Corp. graduates' qualifications and training and reduce their hiring and training costs.

Implications for Funders

The conclusions of this study have implications for future funding of BEST Corp.'s pre-employment program. SkillWorks' primary interest in this study was driven by its dedication to a dual-customer model, a foundational element of the SkillWorks approach, which suggests employers should benefit from the workforce development initiatives as well as participants. A secondary interest was the desire to demonstrate a positive financial return to employers from using the BEST Corp. program in the hope that employers might at least partially underwrite the program as a sound business investment with a demonstrated positive financial return. Although the study did not demonstrate a significant positive financial return to employers. It did document employers' deep satisfaction with the program, as well as evidence positive business impacts that were more difficult to monetize, in part because of the limitations of the data as well as the relatively small scale of the program.

While BEST Corp. meets SkillWorks' goal of providing a benefit to employers through the development of a pool of motivated workers who understand the physical demands of the job, BEST Corp.'s greatest value is providing unemployed or underemployed individuals the opportunity to qualify for stable well-paid jobs in luxury hotels that would otherwise be likely out of reach. In addition, as documented by BEST Corp.'s recent social return on investment (SROI) study, there is a broader societal return earned through reduced transfer payments and increased tax revenues, which emphasizes that helping a participant get on his feet, maintain employment, and stabilize his family produces broader gains than those related to the individual or to the business.⁷

The findings of this study suggest that ongoing support from the public and philanthropic sectors will be needed to continue the program and that it is, in fact, warranted. Finding employment for unskilled workers, particularly in positions with such a high starting wage, decreases pressure on community services and contributes to the local economy. As funders weigh their commitment to the various initiatives they sponsor, programs that have documented success and strong partner relationships, like BEST Corp., should be considered an effective fit.

⁷ Harrison, Anthony. *Social Benefit Analysis of Hotel Training Center's Room Attendant Training Program*. 2013. Mt. Auburn Associates, Inc.

Appendix A:

Hospitality Workforce Practices: Hiring, Training, and Retaining Room Attendants

Frequency of Hiring

The hospitality industry is highly sensitive to economic market conditions. As a result, hotels generally adjust their staffing numbers depending on the season and their occupancy levels. Throughout the BEST Corp. room attendant training program, hotel staffing needs have fluctuated, slowing during the recession and rebounding in more recent years.

At present, there are, on average, two room attendant positions open a year at the hotels interviewed. Hotels usually hire new staff in the spring in preparation for the busy summer season. This coincides with BEST Corp.'s room attendant program graduation, which is purposely timed so participants can apply for open positions.

Hiring Process

Hotels also point out that hiring the right person assumes greater significance when there is potential for long-term employment. Given how important it is to find the “right” person, it is not a surprise that most hotels prefer to hire someone with experience or someone that comes with a personal referral. According to the hotels interviewed, applicants come from four main sources: employee referrals, employee transfers, training programs such as BEST Corp., and the general public (though hiring from the general public is less desirable and done less frequently).

Hotels vary in where they post new positions, but the changing use of technology is a common theme. Job recruitment has shifted in the last five years as almost all hotels have ended in-person applications at the property in favor of an online application. Hotels affiliated with larger corporations can use the corporate website to advertise for a room attendant. Often, hotels will send the job posting to the union, to the employment training centers, or will post on Craigslist. On rare occasions, because a room attendant position is an entry-level job and because this option costs more, new room attendant openings are posted on HCareers, an online database of hospitality jobs. With the wider reach of online advertisements, hotels have traded convenience for volume. Job postings will often get a hundred responses for one open position, and human resource staff must spend time screening all the submissions.

As part of the room attendant hiring process, hotels require applicants to fill out an application, submit a work history and resume, and, at some properties, complete an online test that can take about 20 minutes. Hotels mention they are equal opportunity employers and are required to assess every application. After human resource staff review the applications, a subset of applicants is screened by telephone. On the call, human resource staff try to judge the applicant's communication skills and whether or not he or she meets the initial qualifications.

Acceptable candidates are then invited to visit the hotel for an in-person interview. Depending on how far they go in the process, there will likely be several prospective candidates who continue on and have a second and sometimes a third interview. On average, the total in-person interview time is one hour per candidate. After a position is offered and accepted, employers will conduct due diligence on the applicant, including (depending on the hotel) reference checks, criminal background checks, work history checks, and drug screenings.

Description of Staff Time Required ⁸	Total Time
Average interview time per candidate (phone screen + 2 in-person interviews)	64 minutes
Minimum interview time per candidate (phone screen + 2 in-person interviews)	35 minutes
Maximum interview time per candidate (phone screen + 2 in-person interviews)	2 hours
Average number of people applying for one position	91
Average number of people selected to interview in-person for one position	8
Approximate time to complete due diligence check on the candidate selected for hire	1.5 hours
Approximate total staff time to go through the entire hiring process for one position⁹	17.3 hours

Altogether, the time it can take hotel staff to consider all applicants and hire one room attendant from the beginning of the application process to the job offer is approximately 17 hours.

Key Room Attendant Attributes

More than prior experience or hospitality training, hotel employers consistently describe the right personality and the ability to communicate as the most importance qualities they seek when hiring room attendants.

Personality is so important to hotels that many have online assessments and use behavior-based interviewing to measure applicant characteristics. Characteristics that hotels name when describing what they look for in room attendants include good energy, tendency to smile, hardworking, consistent, a good work ethic, a good heart, caring, passionate, team players, pride in work, positivity, problem solving, not being too loud, not being too shy, and a willingness to learn.

All hotels also factor how a new employee will interact with the existing hospitality team into their hiring decision. This is particularly important in smaller hotels. One hotel stated that personality fit is so critical that the hotel deferred hiring any candidate, even after spending two months searching for two room attendants to fill vacancies during the fall, preferring instead to restart the process the following spring in the hopes of finding a good match.

⁸ These numbers are based on six hotel responses, though not all six hotels provided data in each category.
⁹ This total is calculated using the following averages based on hotel interviews: 91 applications for one position that take four minutes per application to screen; 13 phone interviews that last 14 minutes; eight in-person candidate interviews of 30 minutes with a department head and 20 minutes with another manager.

Communication is the other area of importance for hotels. Hotels emphasize that room attendants are often the staff with whom guests interact the most, so they represent the face of the hotel. While hotels do not require fluency in English, the better an applicant can communicate, the better his or her chances will be of getting hired as a room attendant. Hotels value a room attendant's ability to be helpful, to respond to questions, and to greet guests. Along the same lines, internal interactions are also an important component of a room attendant's work. Room attendants need to have the ability to understand training, receive feedback from a supervisor, and interact with colleagues from other cultures in order to perform their duties.

Training Process

Once an applicant is offered and accepts the room attendant job, he or she will then start training at the hotel. There will often be an initial orientation and training during which the employee will begin learning the skills and other information necessary to perform the duties of the position. Training at the hotels interviewed for this study varies from a set curriculum to less structured shadowing, but both methods instruct the new room attendant on the necessary tasks and techniques. Training generally lasts about two weeks. After training, new room attendants are given their own rooms to clean. They start with a lower number of rooms than what would be considered a full workload. A supervisor checks their work and gives feedback if there are areas that could use improvement. Gradually, the new room attendants will increase the number of rooms they clean. This progression happens at each employee's own pace, depending on how quickly and well he/she can finish cleaning and prepare the rooms. After 90 days, room attendants will go through a review to confirm they can do the job. Room attendants are subsequently reviewed annually, either on the anniversary of their hire date or on a property-wide schedule.

Retention

Room attendant turnover at partner union hotels is usually the result of retirements, relocations, or promotions. It is relatively rare for room attendants to leave their job or be terminated. Many hotels have room attendants who have been in their employ for 30 years. For unionized positions, working 24 hours or more a week qualifies for benefits. The more senior (measured by years worked in the hotel) an employee, the higher up the employee will be on the list of selecting shifts, which provides incentive for staying at one property. Most of the hotels relate the long tenure of room attendants to belonging to the union. When a room attendant leaves, whether because of a promotion or relocation, hotels report that it is not difficult to find replacements.

Appendix B: Methodology of Analysis

In February 2013, Mt. Auburn Associates identified the hotel employers who hired at least three BEST Corp. graduates since the beginning of the BEST Corp. program. In general, the hotels are luxury, high-end hotels, but have a range of sizes and may or may not be affiliated with a national chain. The hotels included in this study are:

Hotel Name	Number of BEST Corp. Participants Hired
Intercontinental Hotel	11
Omni Parker House	10
Copley Square Hotel	8
W Hotel	8
Westin Waterfront Hotel	8
Fairmont Copley Plaza Hotel	4
Back Bay Hotel	3

Mt. Auburn contacted the eight hotel employers by email to introduce the purpose of the study and request an in-person meeting to discuss BEST Corp. room attendants. In some cases, Mt. Auburn was then referred to another staff member. One hotel did not participate in the interviews. Park Plaza Hotel hired the greatest number of BEST Corp. participants, 19 as of February 2013. However, despite BEST Corp.'s assistance, no Park Plaza staff responded to multiple phone calls or emails over the research period.¹⁰

On-site, in-person employer interviews were conducted at each hotel to encourage hotel staff to share data and to look through their records, if possible, to respond to questions with exact numbers. Seven 45-minute interviews were conducted with hotel human resource managers or housekeeping directors. The interviews began by asking hotel partners to describe their general hiring process and to identify the points at which BEST Corp. room attendant graduates might have been treated differently or could have helped the hotels save money. The discussion also covered the training process, the costs involved with training, the difference between room attendants who trained at BEST Corp. and other room attendants, and any other benefits the employers found BEST Corp. offered to the hotel.

After compiling all the information collected and working to standardize it across the seven hotels, each hotel was asked to verify that the data listed for its hotel was correct and to fill in any gaps. While all but one hotel responded to the request to confirm the data collected, not

¹⁰ The recent sale of the hotel in May 2013 may have contributed to the difficulty in reaching Park Plaza staff. <http://www.bostonglobe.com/business/2013/05/07/sunstone-buy-park-plaza-hotel-for-million/CvFiyAu48P4NIWLNdLok3M/story.html>

every data point had responses from each employer. However, enough data were provided to estimate employer trends.

Challenges with Hotel Selection

The hotels were selected for this study because they hired a high number of BEST Corp. graduates. These hotels represent a range of sizes, corporate structures, BEST Corp.-trained room attendants, and participation in BEST Corp.

Profile of the 7 hotels in this study	
Average number of rooms at a hotel	353
Minimum number of rooms at a hotel	143
Maximum number of rooms at a hotel	793
Number of hotels that are part of national corporations	6
Number of independent hotels	1
Average number of room attendants at a hotel	33
Minimum number of room attendants at a hotel	19
Maximum number of room attendants at a hotel	70
Average percentage of room attendants hired from BEST	16%
Minimum percentage of room attendants hired from BEST	4%
Maximum percentage of room attendants hired from BEST	32%
Number of hotels that host BEST Corp. shadowing	10

The wide range of hotel characteristics and the small sample size mean that there was not enough information to generalize about whether hotel responses were representative of their size, corporate structure, or other factors.

Of the hotels interviewed, four hired less than 15 percent of their room attendants from BEST Corp., so the comments their representatives made could be subject to distortion based on their individual opinion or the small number of BEST Corp. graduates with whom the interviewee was familiar. In general, if a hotel had a large number of room attendants and only a small percentage was hired from BEST Corp., the hotel was less able to comment on how BEST Corp. graduates performed. Even still, when analyzing the responses from the three hotels with the highest percentage of BEST Corp. room attendants, which were among the three smallest hotels (in terms of number of rooms and number of room attendants), two of the interviewees did not find great differences between BEST Corp. room attendants and non-BEST Corp. room attendants.

This case study suggests smaller independent hotels had more opportunities to use BEST Corp. to save time (and costs) because they could be more flexible with how they hired and trained

new employees. It was also suggested during interviews that hotels in less densely populated neighborhoods have more trouble hiring well-qualified room attendants and might rely on BEST Corp. more than hotels that have deeper talent pools. However, having only talked to one small independent hotel and one hotel outside of downtown Boston, it is not possible to confirm those conclusions.

Challenges with Data Availability

Hotels were not able to share specific data such as employee review scores or individual retention rates. This limited the case study's ability to compare BEST Corp. graduates to other employees. As mentioned above, it was not possible to consistently document data points such as retention, room attendant performance, and costs since not all hotels were able to share the same information. As a result, it is difficult to specifically establish the differences in hiring, training, or other areas between BEST Corp.-trained room attendants and non-BEST Corp.-trained room attendants.