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Leslie Ng is interested in anything but a predictable day. Interstate Hotels & Resorts' preeminent dealmaker dishes on closing 'impossible' deals, building his team of investment professionals and the potential sale of Interstate, which manages more than 400 hotels worldwide.



ONLINE EXTRA: TO FIND OUT WHERE INTERSTATE IS BUYING NEXT, VISIT HOTELMANAGEMENT.NET

Having trouble finding good help? Try creative recruiting

BY DAVID W. HEATH
HM COLUMNIST

As I travel around the country discussing labor-related issues with hotel managers, the No. 1 challenge they report is finding and recruiting high-quality employees. With unemployment rates dipping

to 5 percent nationally, the situation can only be expected to worsen. Waiting for your hotel's human resources department to serve up the perfect candidate just won't do.

The best candidates already have a job. The dream applicant just isn't going to walk in and apply. There are a number of

pretty good websites where you can advertise. But these sites don't reach the best candidates—the ones who already have jobs. Looking for employees for your front desk? You may want to try a personal shopping excursion to your local mall to check out the sales associates. Trolling

for the friendliest servers and bartenders at local restaurants is a great way to scout for talent. Be sure to bring business cards.

Have a good story to tell. There are lots of great reasons to join the hotel business: an exciting work environment, upward mobility, a free meal, discounted room rates at affiliated hotels.

Don't forget to mention these perks when you're pitching your candidate.

Speaking of applicants who already have a job... The best candidate for the position you're trying to fill may already work at your hotel. When you promote from within, you send a positive message to all your employees. You're also getting an employee with a track record you can verify in terms of performance, punctuality and positive attitude.

Incentive referral programs work! Happy with the employees you have now? Ask them to refer friends and relatives to join your hotel. Some hotels pay a bonus to employees for referring a friend or relative who successfully completes their probationary period.

Fill those hard-to-find entry-level service positions. One creative recruiting manager we know did a zip code analysis to identify the neighborhoods where the hotel's existing housekeeping and stewarding employees lived. Then they contacted churches in those neighborhoods to post ads. They got dozens of candidates.

Maybe temp agencies are the answer. A few of our clients have completely outsourced departments like housekeeping, laundry and stewarding to third-party agencies. This may be a workable solution for your hotel. However, we've found the quality of temporary staff can vary from market to market and from company to company. Check references carefully and proceed slowly at first.

Don't forget the school connections. College students often make great part-time employees and recent graduates can be excellent for entry-level positions. Connecting with the faculty at the nearest hospitality management program can yield excellent applicants. **HM**

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Who What Why Dow

With over 30 years in hospitality, our President's philosophy has always been to ask good questions and know which answers are meaningful. Through an aggressive and proactive management style, The Dow Hotel Company leadership has maximized returns and forged strong relationships with everyone from housekeeping to investors. Our belief in commitment and integrity has resulted in a hotel management style that is both business and art.



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