

SUCCESS STORY

EMBASSY SUITES

EARN Provides Talent

Everyone just put their heads together and said, 'Let's make this thing work.' The hiring process went smoothly, the accommodations were very simple and low cost, and the individual is doing a great job.

– Veronica Villanova, Director of Human Resources, Embassy Suites

Key Lessons Learned



Maximize the available applicant pool by casting a wide net among potential recruitment resources.

Take advantage of job accommodation resources available to you, such as the Job Accommodation Network (JAN).

Company Background

Embassy Suites Hotel in Crystal City, Virginia, is located near Washington, DC's National Airport and within five miles of the United States Capitol, the Smithsonian Institution, the White House, the Washington Monument, and the Jefferson and Lincoln Memorials. The hotel has 11 floors, with 267 suites, and employs 121 employees. Five other Embassy Suites Hotels serve the Washington, DC and Baltimore areas.

Part of the Hilton family, Embassy Suites Hotels was created in 1983 as a pioneer in the all-suite concept and today is a market share leader with more than 170 locations in the United States, Canada and Latin America.

Embassy Suites is seen by its employees as an inviting place to work. Veronica Villanova, Director of Human Resources at the Embassy Suites in Crystal City, Virginia, relates this story:

An employee came to me one day and said he had noticed Embassy had hired an individual with a disability in the laundry department and commented that he had a sister with a disability and wondered if they planned on hiring more individuals with a disability... When you do the right thing, you start to see people noticing it. It was nice to see that other employees feel comfortable enough to inquire on behalf of another person they know who has a disability.

The employee who made such an impression on his co-workers is Mohamed. Villanova relates her first experience in meeting him in April, 2004, when he applied for the position in the laundry department.

Mohamed came in for the interview, and he spoke very little English ... we started

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in French, and I explained to him that the interview needed to be in English, and he was comfortable with that. We called him for a second interview with the manager ...and we hired him about a week later.

Ray Cribbs, Embassy Suites' Director of Housekeeping, notes that Mohamed is an excellent employee. Cribbs admits that he was initially concerned about Mohamed fitting in with his co-workers. "But there were no problems at all", he says.

Villanova agrees:

It has only been a positive experience. He is always on time, never sick, willing to do more beyond his regular duties. The public image internal as well as externally has been positive for Embassy Suites. The accommodations were minimal.

Villanova claims that everyone just put their heads together and said, "Lets make this thing work."

Villanova explains that Embassy Suites seeks to attract the best people they can, without regard to an individual's race, sex, religion, sexual orientation, national origin, or disability:

From an organizational standpoint, we hire people from any background as long as they meet the requested requirements. Besides this, it's just good business and the right thing to do ... keeping that in mind makes us more flexible than any other employer when it comes to recruiting.



*Mohamed (left) with Ray Cribbs,
Director of Housekeeping*

Job Accommodation Network Helps with Low-Cost Accommodations

Though Mohamed's adjustment to the workplace was smooth, Villanova notes that some accommodations were needed:

Since he is a little person, we needed to find the right equipment, a stool for him to be able to reach the table so he would be able to fold the linens and so forth.

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[EARN] referred me to JAN (Job Accommodation Network).

We were able to call them and share our situation with Mohamed, and they were able to provide information on stools we could use, where we could locate the stools, and the cost which was very, very affordable. Mohamed also realized we had made an effort of making an accommodation without regret of hiring this person who needed some assistance. There was no frustration throughout the entire process.

Then when it came to uniform adjustment, the service was very accommodating as well. They came and measured him and had no problems with our request for his uniform which obviously required accommodating due to his small size. He also had to add a handle to the kitchen door at his level. We wanted him to be comfortable, and we didn't want him to think we were doing things differently just because he has a disability. He is treated just like any other employee.

Accommodating Current Employees is Good for Business, Too

The Embassy Suites Hotel regards the cost of providing reasonable accommodations as minimal and part of the normal

business of recruiting and hiring qualified candidates. According to Villanova,



Accommodations for Mohamed include a stool and a tailored uniform

We have made recommendations for accommodations for interviewees as well as new hires. When it comes to current employees we have made accommodations. Most are for females who are pregnant, and, due to the physical nature of their job, have requested an accommodation. We are also open to light duty and look to other departments to locate work that meets the physical restrictions. That has turned into a degree of loyalty to us [and] definitely high morale. They are well aware of the policies — that if they suffer from a medical condition or have a disability, they are more than welcome to bring in a medical slip from

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their physician and they can go from there in determining alternate work.

EARN and Other Agencies Provide Access to a Diverse Workforce

Embassy Suites distributes faxes and emails of job openings to EARN, as well as other organizations such as JobLink and WORC (Workforce Opportunity Resource Centers). Embassy Suites distributes vacancy announcements to more than 100 agencies, including diversity-related organizations.

By expanding its recruiting into diversity-related organizations, Embassy Suites has had a greater response.

It's such a nice feeling to know that the company is open to diversity and open to adjusting to the role in the changing diversity group. It also makes our job much easier, as there are no quotas, no tight figures to meet which makes my job easier.

We haven't really changed anything in our established recruiting methods. If we

find a new agency, we add them to our list and forward the position openings to them as well with no hesitation. Our goal is to keep doing the same thing, but keep doing it better. [Sometimes] it is hard to pin point who actually was responsible for the job match since EARN and many others are on Embassy's recruiting list. [Oftentimes] there is no way to track who was responsible, but we do know that by covering multiple bases, the process [is] more effective"



Share Your Story

If you have a success story you would like to share, please email us at:
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