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Hospitality and Personality Development: Technical and Human Excellence

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1   Introduction

Two women grace the page: one on the couch, painting her nails—the other vacuuming around her. The caption: "Do you want to be a madam or a house girl?" The cheeky Nigerian newspaper advertisement captures an unfortunate, but plausible attitude to service and hospitality. In some environments, those in the field are still rated low on the social scale. It is often seen as a profession one has to be apologetic about: from the homemaker who does not meet your eye when she tells you how she spends her day to those in the industry who see it only as a stepping-stone before their "real" job, or the only option for someone who cannot do better.

The answer to this view can be found in previous chapters, which have shed light on the intimate link between hospitality, personhood, and human dignity, as well as highlighted its potential as an arena for personal growth in virtues and unity of life. Hospitality was explored as a human activity that adequately responds to the worth of the other, and as work that is ultimately an expression of the dignity of the worker. A vision has been provided of how one can engage in the best human activity—*virtuous* activity—within the hospitality industry.[1] Hospitality turns out to be a whole aggregate of virtues with a very intense social dimension: working with and for others, taking care of their most basic needs so that they in turn can give the best of themselves. Hospitality jobs are definitely *real* jobs, and *worthwhile* ones. Working in hospitality requires both skills and virtues. After a consideration of these concepts, this chapter gives an overview of 5 selected skill groups and related virtues that aid the hospitality professional in working well.

2   The Symbiosis of Skills and Virtues

We might ask—are skills different from virtues? Understanding the distinction and relation between the two can help us plan and put into action our personal growth at work.

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[1] See Chapters 6 and 7 respectively.

2.1   What Are Skills?

Skills are described as capabilities, abilities, or proficiencies needed to fulfill a job; they are normally acquired through training and practice—that is, effort that is deliberate, systematic, and sustained (World Economic Forum, 2021; APA Dictionary of Psychology, 2020; Talent Align, 2012). Skills have an operative connotation, i.e., they are the capacity to *do something,* for they are often taken to be different from *knowledge* (body of facts, principles, or theories); *attitudes* (behaviors or "emotional intelligence traits" that influence our approach to people and situations); and sometimes even *abilities* (physical, psychomotor, cognitive, or sensory means) (World Economic Forum, 2021; Engelland, 2018, p. 175). They are clustered with these elements to make up the broader concept of *competency.*

A further distinction between hard skills and soft skills is widely accepted. Hard skills are oriented toward technical tasks, and so are usually tied to specific operations or jobs; soft skills are oriented toward working to achieve common objectives together with other people, and so useful across sectors (EHL Avrane-Chopard et al., 2019; Insights, 2021a). Thus, while both hard and soft skills are part of any single person's human capital—the "individual-level knowledge, skills, and abilities…related to one's profession"—soft skills are particularly crucial to social capital, or an individual's knowledge about linkages in a *particular* group he serves, facilitating cohesion and the pursuit of group goals (Engelland, 2018, p. 175).[2] Problem-solving, creativity, and ability to deal with complexity or ambiguity are considered soft skills (McKinsey Global Institute, 2020). Common examples of soft skills crucial to hospitality are empathy, emotional intelligence, kindness, integrity, optimism, resilience, good communication, cultural awareness, multitasking, and teamwork (EHL Insights, 2021a, 2021b). We might note that

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[2] Human capital pertains more to an individual's skill set, while social capital is that individual's relation to a *particular group:* "Human capital is transferable when an individual moves from one team to another; but social capital has limited transferability, and must mostly be acquired *after* joining a team" (Engelland, 2018, p. 175).

the concept of soft skills seems to blur the line between skills and attitudes—something that is not necessarily unreasonable.[3]

It might be stating the obvious, but everyone considers skills important. Recently, the McKinsey Global Institute released research that identifies "56 foundational skills that will benefit all citizens" and that are associated with higher likelihood of employment and job satisfaction, in the hopes of "future-proofing" citizen skills for the world of work (Dondi et al., 2021). They call these skills DELTAS, or *Distinct Elements of Talent.* Similarly, in 2020, the World Economic Forum launched the Reskilling Revolution, an initiative with the ambitious aim to upskill or reskill one billion people by 2030. Part of their effort was to promote a global taxonomy of skills, in the hopes that this can make skills the basis of the labor market (World Economic Forum, 2021, p. 2). Both organizations hold that the panorama of work will change drastically, and that there exists a staggering skills gap worldwide; both institutes aspire to equip companies and countries with the conceptual tools to close the gap by training and education. Inspiring aims aside, both taxonomies clearly reflect in their individual skill descriptions the close link between skills and concrete, identifiable tasks, processes, or actions. The inherent link between ability and specific task is our first hint that a skill is different from virtue.

2.2   What Are Virtues?

Let us recall several key points about virtue from the previous chapters: primarily, it is a perfective, operational habit. Specifically, it makes our reason, sense appetite, and will aim for the good in every circumstance. In other words, it integrates and unites our powers such that they consistently work toward or reach the good of reason.[4]

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[3] Concretely, the WEF's *Reskilling Revolution* taxonomy seems to use "skills" to refer to hard skills, and "attitudes" to refer to soft skills. Contrast this to EHL Insights, which adapts the distinction between hard and soft skills, and the McKinsey Global Institute classification (also featured on WEF's website), which does not use the distinction but considers empathy, active listening, and self-management "foundational skills." See links in *Selected References.*

[4] For a more developed discussion of these points, see Chapter 7.

Virtue requires much reflection on what is good for the person *qua* human being, and a capacity to familiarize oneself with the particulars of the situation in order to discern the good here and now. It requires consciously choosing to act, or to channel one's reactions in a particular way, *for the simple reason that it is good.* It also requires reflection on our background and upbringing: every virtue must be incarnated in our particular history, with our temperament, strengths, and weaknesses. Virtue has an intrinsic and not just an instrumental value: they are the excellences of character that make one a good human being—and part of this ought to be that one *will* work well and efficiently.

A virtue can be identified by the passion or operation it perfects in relation to a good. This means that they are *not* limited to tasks as specific as skills are. The activity they perfect is broader in scope: it is the activity of a *human power*, i.e., reason, sense appetites, or will, which will vary in its concretization according to the good aimed for and according to the circumstance. This is why we say that virtue *creates a disposition* rather than *determines (i.e., limits) our activity.* A bellhop, sommelier, waiter or waitress, and a sales manager will need different sets of skills, but each can equally exercise temperance in their rest and emotional life, fortitude in facing up to their responsibilities, prudence in making decisions, and justice in delivering results. All minor, more specific virtues—say, humility, magnanimity, modesty, or perceptiveness (good insight)—can ultimately be traced back to one of these four cardinal virtues, precisely because of the underlying structure of our faculties. Contrast this to how skill categories can be rather arbitrarily multiplied: customer service skills, networking skills, job-related operational skills, creative problem-solving skills, leadership skills, multi-cultural and people-management skills, communication skills, active listening skills, etc., etc. (EHL Insights, 2021a).

2.3 How Are They Related?

Perhaps the fairest evaluation we can make in this brief space is to consider skills and virtues as overlapping notions. They bear some similarity, which may be why we intuitively associate them. Both

skills and virtues require learning—often learning-by-doing, by actually performing the relevant activities—repetition, deliberation, and knowledge (Annas, 2006, p. 518; Stichter, 2007, p. 190).[5] Just as intuitively, however, we speak of them as distinct, as if knowing that they refer to different qualities.

The Jubilee Center for Character and Virtues says something that might help clarify this distinction. In its *Framework for Character Education*, it equates soft skills to what they call *performance virtues*, traits that enable one to manage life and selves efficiently and that "derive their ultimate value from serving morally acceptable ends, in particular from being enablers and vehicles of the intellectual, moral and civic virtues" (Jubilee Center for Character and Virtues, 2017, p. 4). What we want to draw attention to is that these abilities have an instrumental value, and are good if they serve what is morally acceptable.

Can these skills be used to bring about something that is morally *un*acceptable? When we study skill taxonomies such as the ones mentioned above, we see that the descriptions do not have inherent moral qualities: they are valuable because they are oriented toward the efficient completion of a job or project.[6] When we think about it, both hard *and* soft skills can be used for bad ends—or at least, for morally gray ends. Consider heist movies. The standard plot is for a person, or a group of persons, to use all their technical expertise, interpersonal skills, and smarts to carry out a clever, daring, against-all-odds robbery. Sometimes the characters are charming, empathetic, persevering, and really good at teamwork to boot. In heist films you're usually cheering the thieves on—but, it doesn't change the fact that they're breaking in and stealing (that is, admittedly, part of the attraction of the genre). Add to this the popularity of crime films with intelligent, driven anti-heroes who are good at getting away with what they want, and you have the fairly clear idea that mastered skills can be used for something evil. This is perhaps where the distinction lies: "skills" do not necessarily make reference to the goodness

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[5] Note that while we cite both Annas and Stichter, the authors actually have opposing views of virtue-as-skill.

[6] In the DELTA classification, there is one exception: integrity.

or badness of the end: they are oriented principally at its achievement. Virtues, on the other hand, are *always* for the good.

This being said, what we would like to aim for is the unity of skills and virtues toward the goal of being good hospitality professionals *and* good human beings. We can see that a virtue can be cultivated through several skills—might even *require* them—but that they also perfect these skills. For instance, to grow in prudence one would plausibly need to learn and practice the skills of solving problems in a structured way, seeking relevant information, setting priorities, and adapting different perspectives. To grow in fortitude, one needs exercise in coping with uncertainty, persisting in goals, and meeting deadlines. Justice can be practiced in managing personnel, building trust, and empowering. In other words, the relationship between skills and virtues can be *symbiotic*. Identifying the link between skills and certain virtues can be useful, because it "breaks down" the process of virtue cultivation, allowing us to identify concrete behaviors where we can make directed, deliberate, consistent choices. And, as already mentioned, acquiring a virtue means infusing the hard or soft skill with what is *humanly* good.

3   A Job Well Done: 5 Essentials for Your Skill Set

There are many ways to classify skills; our own presentation is loosely based off several sources. Recall Danny Meyer's insight that success in the field depends on both good service *and* genuine hospitality. In other words, it is not only important to have a warm and pleasant personality in the hospitality industry: it is important to seek technical excellence, meeting the highest standard in products, services, facilities, cleanliness, and efficiency that your profession and the character of your company requires. We would evaluate a fast-food eatery, a walking city tour, and a luxury hotel with different criteria, but we would expect all of them to do their jobs well.

Below are what we consider to be 5 skill groups crucial to doing one's work well, along with some related virtues. To make our classification, we identified the most common operations across the wide

spectrum of hospitality professions: working and communicating in teams, planning resources of time and space beforehand, managing said resources on-field, ensuring quality services, and improving services. We use the DELTA (Dondi et al., 2021) and Reskilling Revolution (World Economic Forum, 2021) taxonomies to break down the groups, identifying specific behaviors that can be learned and practiced. Our discussion is not exhaustive, and we assume that the reader can look up specific abilities that are of interest, finding courses, tips, and the like online or through his/her institution. Similarly, although we sometimes mention the four moral virtues, we also indicate minor virtues that have not been discussed, leaving in-depth exploration to personal study.[7]

When we begin our formation as hospitality professionals, none of us are a blank slate. There are good skills we have learned, and bad habits we have to *un*learn, from our upbringing. Given this crucial role of the home environment, the practical suggestions in this chapter are designed such that they can be exercised both in the workplace and at home. Practicing the relevant skills and virtues at home is highly encouraged to truly grow in them.

3.1   Communication and Teamwork

The importance of these skills cannot be underestimated: for any hospitality business to flourish, cohesion and efficiency are necessary both within and across departments. Teamwork is essential; yet it is far too easy for a team to be dysfunctional. Staff members may not have a clear understanding of what is expected from them, leading them to becoming frustrated or overwhelmed. A disconnect between managers and staff (or team leaders and participants) could possibly lead to lack of motivation, disengagement, and ultimately turnover (Hayton, 2019).

The essence of teamwork is individuals collaborating toward a collective goal. Engelland points out the challenges of such an endeavor: in

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[7] The virtues mentioned in this chapter have been drawn from authoritative classical sources: the *Secunda Secundae* of Thomas Aquinas's *Summa Theologica* and Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*. The reader is encouraged to look up contemporary virtue ethics literature, as many authors and philosophers have "updated" these virtues to fit twenty first century contexts.

an athletic team, teamwork requires executing well-scripted plays and coordinating physical effort. In a company team it requires complex decision-making, *writing* the script as you go along. It also requires a lot of trust, discernment of the right move, and a commitment to both goals *and* results (Engelland, 2018, p. 173). We can see how this dynamic is required at any level, not just the managerial one—a waiter captain and her team need it, as does the maintenance crew of an eco-resort. From Engelland's breakdown of key elements, we can see that uniting a team by cultivating a habitual sensitivity to co-members and to the good of the whole builds on efficient communication. To be on the same wavelength, working toward the same goal, people need to understand each other. Communication and teamwork form the bulwark of any other group of skills required in hospitality—or for life, for that matter.

Assess Yourself: Components of Skillful Communication

The McKinsey Global Institute's DELTA classification marks off *Communication* as a group of cognitive skills. Four distinct elements of talent prove foundational to communication: *asking the right questions, active listening, synthesizing messages,* and *storytelling and public speaking*. The Reskilling Revolution taxonomy, on the other hand, categorizes communication as an *attitude* (soft skill), highlighting the social behavior and emotional disposition to the other necessary to communicate well. Like McKinsey, the Reskilling Revolution pinpoints asking questions as an important communication skill and adds *teaching and training* and *receiving feedback.*

The classifications do not necessarily contradict each other: communication arguably requires both strategic cognitive activity and certain emotional and behavioral dispositions. Moreover, the acquisition of these skills needs study: knowing types of questions (open-ended and closed, for example), choosing one's words, studying one's own behavior, and adjusting expressions or gestures to really express (and actually pay) attention—and so on and so forth.

While identifying these concrete components can help us target which skill we need to practice to improve in communication, we must not

lose sight of something fundamental: good communication is how we respect and empower the other *qua* person, above all. Team members need to be listened to actively so that they know they are understood, welcomed, and appreciated. If we get to the root of this, we realize that effective communication means taking care of relaying the right information in the right way, because we value the time, intelligence, and talents the other is investing in work, whether he is my subordinate or my equal. Thus, communication involves "Understanding *who* needs to know *what*, *when* people need to know it, and *why*, and then presenting that information in an entirely comprehensible way" (Meyer, 2006, pp. 192–193). People cannot be left in the dark and then expected to give their best.

Assess Yourself: Components of Cohesive Teamwork

Like communication, *Teamwork Effectiveness* is listed in the DELTA taxonomy as an umbrella concept encompassing other skills—it marks off a set of interpersonal abilities. Teamwork is concretized into *fostering inclusiveness, motivating different personalities, resolving conflicts, collaboration, coaching,* and *empowering.* The Reskilling Revolution adds to this list *assisting and supporting coworkers.*

   These lists remind us that a team is necessarily made up of myself, and persons who are not like me. In this respect, it is important to remember that *difference is good*. It is crucial in a team to hire people who have different strengths and weaknesses, because it ensures that all fronts are covered in the workspace. A second reminder is to practice *self-knowledge:* Danny Meyer calls it a "personal weather report" (Meyer, 2006, p. 145). This means knowing what mood one comes into work with and being aware of how it affects one's attitude to work or to the others. Clearly, if our personal weather report is gloomy or stormy, we have to learn how to master ourselves so that our subjective state (which may or may not be justified) does not make teamwork more difficult. The famous steps of emotional intelligence can be helpful here: *self-awareness, self-management, social awareness,* and *managing relationships.* At the same time, we observe that even conflict, if it is well-processed and managed,

can lead to better decision-making, growth, and openness; it is part of a healthy organization (Engelland, 2018, pp. 175–177).

A Step Beyond: Related Virtues

Engelland makes the acute observation that in the current state of affairs, business graduates are taught to maximize self-interest (and hospitality is, among other things, a business). Thus, they fail to develop into good team members (Engelland, 2018, p. 172). Implicitly, this means that we could have all the skills of good communication and a perfectly execute emotional intelligence, but still ultimately be looking out for ourselves. We have to have a real concern for other human beings, and a real eye for the good of the whole—not just profitably, but humanly speaking. This is why we must be more than skilled: we must be virtuous. Engelland illustrates how the four moral virtues of wisdom, courage, temperance, and justice make one into a trustworthy person, who makes good and fair decisions and negotiations. Trust between managers and staff, and between coworkers, is crucial for communication and teamwork. The case for personal virtue as team asset is strong (Engelland, 2018, pp. 180–181).

To these, we add several virtues that can perfect how we communicate and work with others. Honesty, study, and perceptiveness/correct understanding (classically, *synesis*)—virtues that have been identified by both Aristotle and Aquinas—can help us while we gather information on what happened or what should happen in a particular situation. That is, a fundamental step in communication is to get the facts straight, or at least get both sides of a story. In teamwork, especially in tense moments or problematic situation, we could use some meekness—that is, the perfection of our anger or assertiveness such that we know when and how to express it well, and when *not* to. Finally, it is worth considering the social virtues of wittiness, affability, and truthfulness of dealing with others. Tasteful good humor can save many a bad day.

Action Prompts
- We recommend starting with *active listening*. Research on how to cultivate active listening, and apply it not just at conversations at work, but conversations at home.
- Review the action prompts under the virtue of prudence (see Chapter 7). These can help gather the right information which needs to be communicated in a particularly difficult situation.
- Gather impressions from your team: does everyone feel committed to the department or company goal? Are they motivated to fulfill it?

3.2   Time Management and Optimization of Processes

Each profession in hospitality has a multitude of tasks to fit into a day. A housekeeper routinely has to load a supply cart, provide clean linens and towels, make beds, ensure bathrooms are clean, take away the trash, room service items, and dirty linen—adjust furniture, desk items, and appliances if needed, vacuum floors, hallways and stairs, look for any items left behind by guests, keep all common areas clean and appealing to guests *and* perhaps assist in the laundry department. Time management and optimization of processes are skills that come into play *before* you start work: they require making plans before engaging in the battlefield, although they can also be employed on the battlefield itself.

The capacity to list down tasks and arrange them according to priority is fundamental, whether one has to manage one's own work or an entire department. Moreover, part of using time wisely and well is punctuality. Meyer highlights how chronic lateness is hurtful to the team. He also adds that it is possibly a sign of arrogance, as one takes for granted that others will wait for him or her, when in reality one makes things difficult for the others (Meyer, 2006, pp. 158–159).

Optimization of process means studying your tasks and the space you must carry them out in beforehand, to be able to do the most work in the least amount of time possible. This could mean learning to come up with a workflow chart or learning how to use technological developments such

as equipment and artificial intelligence to save time and energy. It could also mean studying how often you move from one end of a workstation or area of responsibility to the other and seeing how you can reduce movements to save time and multiply tasks.

Assess Yourself: Component Skills of Managing Your Day

In the DELTA taxonomy, *time management and prioritization* make up a concrete cognitive skill within a broader concept of "Planning and ways of working." It is associated with *work plan development* and *agile thinking.* The Reskilling Revolution taxonomy again classifies time management under attitude, linking it to *initiative*. The skills of *resource management and operations, management of personnel,* and *financial and material coordination* are plausibly related to making priorities.

It is important to note that exercising these skills demands constant reevaluation: plans will not result perfectly the first time but can be improved upon every time they are carried out. It is also important to note that sometimes we do not have much time to plan out what we are going to do, because we discover tasks upon arriving at work—the challenge there is to be able to plan quickly, but with more practice it can get easier.

A Step Beyond: Related Virtues

As this skill group has much to do with planning, the related virtues are minor virtues of prudence: foresight, circumspection (administering powers or resources carefully), order. Diligence, which is linked to fortitude and could also involve temperance, is also required to stop and start tasks and breaks on time, to work intensely within a given timeframe, *and* not to overwork oneself.

Action Prompts
- Practice making a list of the tasks and allotting specific timeframes to them.
- Use charts and diagrams to direct workflow and assign roles in a team.
- When planning, visualize yourself carrying out your job, to realistically plot your time and course.

3.3   Multitasking and Flexibility

If the previous skill group largely comes into play prior to a day of work, multitasking and flexibility make up the skill group necessary for the battlefield. Whatever the hospitality profession, from line cook to catering manager, every day is different in intensity, and the unexpected is a frequent guest. Multitasking and flexibility help us deal with the daily ebb and flow of challenges at work, cover each other's backs when each reaches his or her limit, and calmly face uncertainty with optimism. Meyer gives us another nugget of wisdom: a successful business doesn't eliminate all problems, but finds imaginative solutions to address them, using all mistakes or tricky situations as opportunities to learn and grow (Meyer, 2006, p. 192).

Assess Yourself: Component Skills to Grapple with Work

Mental flexibility is a DELTA cognitive skill group, comprising the more specific elements of *creativity and imagination, translating knowledge to different contexts, adopting different perspectives*, *adaptability,* and *ability to learn.* The Reskilling Revolution details the ability of *adaptation to change* precisely under the attitude of *active learning*. Furthermore, it connects innovation and creativity to *problem-solving*, which can be broken down into *analytical thinking, creative thinking*, *critical thinking,* and *systems thinking*. In other words, one definitely needs to think on his feet in the face of the unexpected.

A Step Beyond: Related Virtues

Prudence is necessary here, as it helps us decide what to do *in the moment*, gauging according to the relevant features of the situation. Because it helps us evaluate particulars, it helps us escape rigid preconceptions or behavioral patterns. Patience and serenity also play their part: change is easier and more helpful if it is done willingly and not stormily.

Action Prompts
- Mindfulness techniques could be of help in planning the day and in preparing yourself for the unexpected.
- Get to know yourself and your reactions, so that you can also find a strategy to clear your head under stress.

3.4 Quality Control and Attention to Detail

Consistency in the quality of services, products, and experiences is what wins customer loyalty and referrals. As can be expected, it is also the effect a worker's determination to do his job well. Quality does depend on creativity and innovation, but at the same time the skills we want to highlight are those that enable us to follow-through, carrying out a task steadily until the final, finishing touch. It is easy to do good work when one is in a good mood, but moods don't promise stability. It is fantastic when we have strokes of genius, but inspiration is sometimes hard to come by. What wins the game are habits of keeping to a high technical standard, and the cultivation of a careful and attentive eye. This does not mean reducing work to mindless routine: while dependability is key here, working with heart and a desire for excellence—combining perseverance with creativity and innovation—infuses quality into our work.

Assess Yourself: Component Skills to Excellent Quality

For both the DELTA skill taxonomy and the Reskilling Revolution, this group of skills has less to do with our cognition and more to do with our emotional and behavioral dispositions. The DELTA skill taxonomy features the section of *Goals achievement* in the category of self-leadership skills, expressing the spirit of quality control and attention to detail. To be master of oneself and fulfill set objectives, the distinct elements of talent needed are *ownership and decisiveness, achievement orientation, grit and persistence, coping with uncertainty* and *self-development*. In the Reskilling Revolution classification, we find under the attitude of *service orientation* the indication to *follow instructions and procedures. Attention to detail* is also an important attitude, linked to *trustworthiness, meeting commitments and deadlines*, *assuming responsibility*, and *managing quality*.

A Step Beyond: Related Virtues

Overlapping nicely with the skills identified by McKinsey and the World Economic Forum are the virtues of *perseverance* and *patience,* which classically perfect the desire that gives us the (emotional) energy to pursue the good in the face of difficulties. It might help us to remember that these virtues are cultivated in their exercise over time; there is no other way to be persevering and patient than to wait and to work hard. Justice plays its part in quality control and attention to detail as well: as we have often mentioned, part of justice is working well.

Aristotle identified an intellectual virtue called *technê,* which is usually translated as art and can also be conceived as good craftsmanship (NE 1141aff). It enables us to make something, to bring something into existence, by way of true reasoning (Parry, 2020)—i.e., by knowing the standards of that art or craft and being able to execute our work according to it.

> **Action Prompts**
> - Know, study, and reason out the standards and operational procedures related to your profession. In finding value in each procedure, you will be more motivated to keep to it.
> - Acquire the habit of reviewing your work when you finish.
> - It could be easier to commit to standards with a coworker: make an agreement with a team member to spot each other's work.

3.5   Industry Awareness

Danny Meyer's experience has taught him that it's the "51 percenters"—51% emotional skills and 49% technical skills—who flourish in the hospitality profession. This is why he higher them. Among the six soft skills he looks for are *intelligence*, understood as curiosity for the sake of learning, and *work ethic*, or desiring to work in the best way possible (Meyer, 2006, p. 143). This is what we call *industry awareness:* the set of skills that mean knowing standards and trends that ensure hygiene, safety, quality, and beauty, and seeking to constantly make them better.

We can see that this skill group goes hand-in-hand with the previous one: we could distinguish them by saying that *quality control and attention to detail* are the skills that enable you to fulfill a standard consistently, while *industry awareness* is what enables you to raise the bar, because you know what's going on in your field (and not just in your company). A quest for self-improvement is what leads to daily excitement at work. It drives away any possibility of boredom because one is constantly looking at the beautiful things done by others and applying the same creativity in one's own work.

Assess Yourself: Component Skills to Industry Awareness

In a nutshell, the quality we refer to here is that of setting standards in work output and constantly improving them. The DELTA taxonomy does not seem to identify skills that refer to this. We could link it to

Reskilling Revolution's skill of *innovation and creativity*, but also to its attitude of *active learning,* which covers *curiosity* and *willingness to learn.*

A Step Beyond: Related Virtues

The virtue of art or good craftsmanship mentioned above is also relevant to industry awareness. We may add a virtue Aquinas has identified: *studiositas* or studiousness, which perfects our desire for knowledge. One of its aspects is the keenness of interest in seeking knowledge (II-II Q. 166).

Action Prompts
- Check if your HR provides refresher courses or professional development sessions.
- Industry awareness also involves keeping yourself inspired. Look for material—art, books, websites, YouTube channels or Instagram accounts, Pinterest boards—that keep you finding your work beautiful.
- Give yourself goals to achieve or new ideas to try out.
- Be in touch with cultural changes, and cultivate global or cultural awareness. This enables us to welcome the different people we will encounter, whether as guest or coworker, in working in hospitality.

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4   Conclusion: Taught, Sought, Caught

At the close of this chapter, we can ask ourselves: is personality development purely a personal matter? Can we learn skills and virtues on our own? Even if they have studied a younger cohort, the Jubilee Center's triad of character education could shed some light: character and virtue are *caught*, *sought*, and *taught*. In their wide-ranging research, they find that virtue is largely *caught* "through role-modeling and emotional contagion," which is why the culture and ethos of a community—in our case, the workplace—is essential. However, such effort must be

supported by virtue being *taught*, as it "provides the rationale, language, and tools to use in developing character," wherever she may be. When young people are in a character formation program and begin to recognize opportunities to practice habits and form character commitments, then personal growth and development in virtue are sought, desired, and freely pursued for their own sake (Jubilee Center for Character and Virtues, 2017, pp. 3–9). Thus we find three crucial elements: *community, principles,* and *practice.* In other words, personality development requires personal effort, but it is not a purely personal matter.

If we translate this to the hospitality industry, this means having a culture dedicated to skills and virtues *and* an employee development program with the right methods and tools. That is, professionals need to see the *examples* of other people striving to cultivate skills and be virtuous; they need structured opportunities to *reflect* on principles and attain *self-knowledge* (about character and performance) through introspection and reflection, to be able to practice skills and virtues at work. A system of mentoring and coaching could also be useful, as coaches can deliver feedback, indicate strategies and resources to grow in skills, and provide motivation and support (EHL Insights, 2021c). Self-evaluation by staff is also necessary for maximum development to be able to learn from past mistakes. The challenge, then, is higher than simply self-improvement: if we are to grow in skills and virtues, we must grow together.

Study Questions

1. How would you differentiate and relate skills and virtues?
2. Think of your profession. How would you concretize the five skill groups in your daily operations?
3. What makes for a more effective team? What can you do to improve communication and teamwork in the team you currently work in?

Chapter Summary
Hospitality is more than a professional field: it has been called a virtue in itself by many. It can be seen as a whole aggregate of virtues with a very intense social dimension: working with and for others, taking care of their most basic needs so that they in turn can give the best of themselves. Working well in hospitality requires both skills and virtues, which are overlapping notions. Skills are described as capabilities, abilities, or proficiencies needed to fulfill a job: their link to specific tasks hint that they are different from virtues. Virtue perfects one's inner capacities—the powers that enable us to think, to feel, to choose and act. Virtues thus not only enable one to *do* things well, but to *be* a good person overall: they lead to interior and personal growth. Both virtues and skills are acquired by directed, deliberated, and consistent choices, i.e., practice. One could say that skillfulness in a certain area is sustained and informed by virtues, and at the same time that virtues are cultivated by and in the practice of certain skills.

   Five skill groups crucial to doing a job well are identified: communication and teamwork; time management and optimization of processes; multitasking and flexibility; quality control and attention to detail; and industry awareness. For each group, a number of related virtues are detailed. Moreover, concrete suggestions for developing these skills and virtues are made.

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