

# Cross-Training Strategies Implementation in Food and Beverage Service Management During High Season at The Ritz-Carlton Jakarta

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**Abstract** - The surge in guest numbers during the high season often poses significant challenges for the Food and Beverage (F&B) department of a five-star hotel. This study aims to implement a cross-training strategy as a solution to improve service quality at The Ritz-Carlton Jakarta, Mega Kuningan. The research method used was a qualitative case study approach, involving in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation. The results showed that cross-training can improve employee synchronization, accelerate service times, and maintain service quality standards despite increased demand. Challenges faced include schedule adjustments, additional workloads, and the need for ongoing training. This study provides recommendations for hotel management to integrate cross-training as part of a long-term HR management strategy.

**Key words:** Cross-Training, Food and Beverage, High Season, Service Quality, Hotel.

## INTRODUCTION

The hospitality industry constitutes one of the most dynamic sectors within the broader service industry, as it is highly sensitive to fluctuations in consumer demand. Such fluctuations are influenced by various external factors, including seasonal travel patterns, cultural and religious festivities, as well as national holidays that stimulate significant increases in tourism activities. This cyclical nature of demand is particularly apparent during the so-called high season, which generally coincides with extended holiday periods, major religious celebrations, or year-end festivities. During these peak times, the operational challenges faced by hotels increase substantially, as they are required to maintain service quality while simultaneously accommodating a surge in guest volume.

Empirical data confirm this trend. According to statistics published by the Central Statistics Agency (Badan Pusat Statistik/BPS) of DKI Jakarta, the occupancy rate of star-rated hotels in the capital city reached 62.05% in December 2024. This figure not only highlights the seasonal surge in demand but also underscores the crucial role of hotels in absorbing the increasing flow of tourists. A higher occupancy rate signifies intensified hospitality operations, which in turn necessitates effective resource management strategies, particularly in human resources and service delivery, to ensure consistent guest satisfaction despite operational pressures.



**Picture 1.** Development of the number of tourists in the archipelago according to the goals of DKI Jakarta Province 2024 (BPS DKI Jakarta Province, 2025)

In addition, the development of domestic tourism throughout 2024 reveals notable shifts that align

with broader patterns of national and regional mobility. The graph presented in Figure 1 illustrates the fluctuation in the number of domestic tourists from early 2024 to the end of the year, reflecting both the resilience and volatility of Indonesia's tourism sector. These changes demonstrate the interdependence between tourism growth and hotel performance, as increases in visitor numbers directly translate into higher demand for accommodation, food and beverage services, and other hospitality-related facilities.

From an academic perspective, this context reinforces the argument that the hospitality industry operates within a highly dynamic environment, requiring adaptive strategies to balance supply and demand. Theories of service quality and human resource management emphasize the importance of flexibility and cross-functional competence in addressing peak season challenges. As such, the analysis of occupancy trends and tourism growth not only provides empirical evidence of demand fluctuations but also highlights the strategic importance of managerial interventions in sustaining competitiveness within the hospitality industry.

In practice, one of the departments that plays a crucial role in maintaining guest satisfaction is the Food and Beverage (F&B) department. This department is responsible for delivering food and beverage services with consistent quality standards. However, during the high season, the surge in guest numbers often creates operational pressures. This is reflected in the increased demand for services within a short period of time, which can result in delays, staff fatigue, and even a decline in service quality. The situation becomes even more complex when part of the workforce consists of interns or trainees who lack the experience to handle emergencies or guest complaints.

To address these challenges, hotels require effective human resource strategies. One widely adopted approach is cross-training, which refers to a system of training employees to perform multiple roles beyond their primary responsibilities. Through this method, a waiter, for example, may be assigned as a runner, barista, or cashier depending on operational needs. This strategy not only enhances flexibility in scheduling but also ensures smooth service delivery despite staff shortages. According to (Team 2023), cross-training transforms employees into versatile assets who strengthen organizational resilience and operational continuity.

The implementation of cross-training is consistent with previous studies (Puspitasari & Paramitha, 2023), which emphasize the importance of role flexibility in hospitality services. Employees who are trained across functions are capable of delivering fast, friendly, and solution-oriented services, even under high-demand conditions. This directly contributes to creating a positive guest experience, increasing satisfaction, and fostering customer loyalty. As noted by (Suprina, Hendrayati, and Gaffar 2022), customer satisfaction and loyalty are key success factors in the hospitality and tourism industries.

Nevertheless, cross-training strategies also face challenges. If the training is not implemented effectively, there is a risk of employee fatigue and a potential decline in service quality. Therefore, cross-training programs must be managed carefully through structured planning, supervision, and evaluation.

Based on this background, this research focuses on analyzing the implementation of cross-training strategies in the Food and Beverage Department of The Ritz-Carlton Jakarta, Mega Kuningan during the high season. The study covers program planning, the execution of cross-training, and its impact on service quality and guest satisfaction. Thus, this research is expected to provide theoretical contributions to the development of human resource management in the hospitality industry as well as practical recommendations for hotel management in maintaining service quality amid high demand fluctuations.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **Human Resource Management in the Hospitality Industry**

Human Resources (HR) represent a fundamental element within organizations, as they directly influence the achievement of organizational goals. Several scholars define HR as the workforce that constitutes the core of the organization and simultaneously serves as a strategic asset that must be continuously developed (Setyoningrum & Abdullah, 2024). According to (Lubis and Maysarah, 2024), HR encompasses both physical and psychological capabilities that support the execution of tasks. In this regard, human resources are not merely regarded as a supporting element, but rather as a key driver of organizational performance and long-term sustainability.

In the hospitality industry, particularly within the Food and Beverage (F&B) department, the role of HR is highly strategic. The nature of hospitality services requires employees to interact directly with guests, where

service quality is determined not only by technical skills but also by interpersonal abilities, emotional intelligence, and adaptability. During the high season, Food and Beverage staff are not only required to deliver services at a high standard but also to demonstrate work flexibility in handling sudden increases in demand. This situation illustrates the essence of HR as both an operational resource and a strategic enabler in ensuring service excellence.

Therefore, human resource management must be strategically designed to respond to fluctuating operational demands. According to (Universitas Ciputra, 2025), HR management in the hospitality sector encompasses key processes such as recruitment, training, development, performance appraisal, and compensation. These processes collectively form a cycle of human resource development that enables organizations to optimize employee performance. In the context of hospitality, such practices require a responsive and adaptive approach. For example, the implementation of cross-training is considered an effective strategy to enhance multiskilling and employee adaptability, allowing staff to perform various roles beyond their primary responsibilities.

From a theoretical perspective, this approach aligns with the resource-based view (RBV) of strategic management, which emphasizes the importance of developing unique and versatile human resources as a source of sustained competitive advantage. By equipping employees with cross-functional skills, hotels can maintain operational continuity, reduce service bottlenecks, and improve responsiveness to guest needs during peak periods. In addition, theories of service quality such as SERVQUAL highlight the significance of reliability, responsiveness, and empathy-dimensions that can be strengthened through systematic HR practices and continuous training.

Thus, effective HR management in the hospitality industry is not limited to administrative functions but extends to strategic initiatives that directly influence service quality, customer satisfaction, and organizational resilience. Particularly in the Food and Beverage department, where guest interactions are highly intensive, well-structured HRM practices play a vital role in sustaining performance excellence, especially during high-demand seasons.

#### **Relevant Human Resource Management Theories**

Several theories provide a strong foundation for the implementation of cross-training strategies in the hospitality industry, particularly within the Food and Beverage (F&B) department:

1. Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM).

SHRM emphasizes the alignment of human resource policies with broader organizational strategies (Pesik, Pangemanan, & Tumewu, 2019). In the hospitality sector, especially in Food and Beverage operations, SHRM highlights the importance of integrating training and employee deployment with the fluctuating dynamics of guest demand. For instance, during the high season when guest volume significantly increases, SHRM ensures that staffing plans and training initiatives are strategically adjusted so that employees can perform multiple functions. Cross-training thus becomes a strategic tool for aligning HR capabilities with the organizational goal of maintaining service excellence under varying demand conditions.

2. Competency Theory.

According to (Dharmanegara, 2019), competency refers to the combination of knowledge, skills, and behaviors that are relevant to job performance. In the Food and Beverage context, employees are expected not only to master technical skills such as food handling, beverage preparation, and order taking but also interpersonal skills such as communication, teamwork, and problem-solving. Cross-training allows employees to build cross-functional competencies, enabling a waiter to function as a runner, cashier, or barista when needed. This multi-competency approach prepares employees to adapt quickly to urgent situations, reduces service bottlenecks, and enhances overall operational resilience.

3. SERVQUAL Theory.

(Parasuraman, 1988) identifies five dimensions of service quality: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. These dimensions are central to guest perceptions of service quality in the hospitality industry. Within the Food and Beverage department, cross-training directly enhances three critical dimensions: responsiveness, as employees can quickly adapt to sudden service demands; reliability, by ensuring consistent service delivery even during staff shortages; and empathy, as cross-trained employees are better equipped to understand and address diverse guest needs. In practice, this means that guests are more likely to experience timely, dependable, and personalized service, which strengthens satisfaction and loyalty.

By integrating SHRM, Competency Theory, and SERVQUAL, cross-training can be seen not only as an operational necessity but also as a strategic initiative that reinforces service quality and guest satisfaction in the hospitality industry.

### **Cross-Training in the Hospitality Industry**

Cross-training is a method of cross-functional training that equips employees with multiple skills, enabling them to perform more than one role (Lussier & Hendon, 2021). In the hospitality industry, this strategy allows Food and Beverage staff such as waiters, bartenders, and kitchen helpers to substitute for one another when workloads increase.

The benefits of cross-training include enhanced workforce flexibility, operational efficiency, and service continuity during high-demand periods such as the high season (Hoveyan & Shahbazyan, 2025). However, (Armstrong and Taylor, 2023) emphasize that its implementation also faces challenges, including employee resistance, the need for additional training costs, and the risk of work overload. The success of this strategy largely depends on managerial support, well-designed training programs, and effective communication with staff.

### **Operational Services and Service Standards**

Operational services are a series of activities that ensure service delivery is effective, efficient, and consistent. Their characteristics differ from manufacturing because they involve direct interaction with customers and are performed simultaneously (Wikipedia, 2025). In the hotel context, operational services include room service, restaurants, banquets, and housekeeping.

Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) serve as essential guidelines for maintaining consistency and reliability in service delivery. A study by (Farrah and Ekawati, 2023) at Harris Hotel demonstrates that SOPs can minimize operational errors, while (Sutjiadi, 2022) emphasizes the importance of staff awareness and compliance with SOPs as critical factors for successful service implementation. In this sense, SOPs not only function as technical manuals but also as behavioral frameworks that align employee actions with organizational service standards.

Nevertheless, common operational challenges in the hospitality industry include limited human resources and inadequate supporting facilities, particularly during the high season (Sulistiono & Sinastriyo, 2024). Such challenges often result in increased workloads, service delays, or reduced staff efficiency. To mitigate these risks, hotels must adopt a comprehensive approach to service quality improvement, which involves regular training, equipment upgrades, and periodic evaluation of SOPs to ensure their alignment with the evolving needs and expectations of guests.

Within this framework, cross-training plays a significant role as a complementary strategy to SOPs. While SOPs define the standards and processes for delivering consistent services, cross-training equips employees with the flexibility to assume multiple roles, thereby enhancing operational resilience. For example, in the Food and Beverage (F&B) department, cross-trained staff can adapt quickly by substituting for colleagues in roles such as waiter, bartender, or cashier when service demand peaks. This not only ensures the continuity of SOP-based service delivery but also prevents operational bottlenecks and maintains guest satisfaction during high-demand periods.

Thus, the integration of SOPs and cross-training reflects a dual strategy: SOPs establish the foundation of service quality, while cross-training ensures adaptability in the face of fluctuating demand. Together, these approaches strengthen the operational capacity of hotels to deliver consistent, reliable, and guest-centered services even under the challenging conditions of the high season.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

This study employs a qualitative approach with a case study method, focusing on cross-training strategies in the Food and Beverage Department at The Ritz-Carlton Jakarta, Mega Kuningan during the high season period. The qualitative approach was chosen because the main objective of this research is to gain a deep understanding of operational dynamics, social interactions, and the direct experiences of staff in implementing cross-training strategies. As noted by (Wijayanti, Yulianto, and Yulianto 2021), qualitative research emphasizes the meaning behind social actions rather than relying solely on numerical data.

Data collection was conducted through multiple techniques to ensure triangulation and validity. First, “in depth interviews” were carried out with Food and Beverage managers and staff to capture their perspectives, challenges, and experiences. Second, “direct observations” were conducted during service operations in restaurants, banquets, and other F&B outlets to understand how cross-training

was applied in practice. Third, “document analysis” was performed by reviewing internal hotel guidelines, training materials, and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) related to staff management and service delivery.

This combination of methods provides a comprehensive understanding of how cross-training contributes to service quality and operational efficiency, while also highlighting the managerial and organizational implications of its implementation.

### **Research Design**

This research is descriptive in nature, meaning that the data collected are presented in depth without manipulation or experimentation. The study was conducted in a natural setting within the hotel’s work environment during the peak season, allowing the researcher to portray the implementation of cross-training in an authentic manner. The ultimate goal is to produce a comprehensive description of the impact of this strategy on service quality and guest satisfaction.

According to (Wijayanti, Yulianto, and Yulianto, 2021), qualitative research emphasizes the understanding of meaning behind social behavior rather than merely relying on statistical calculations. Therefore, this study adopts a descriptive qualitative design, which seeks to capture phenomena without manipulation or experimentation, but rather through direct observation of real-life situations. (Endrianto, 2023) further argues that qualitative research is particularly relevant for analyzing service-related phenomena because it involves interpreting social realities from the perspectives of participants.

### **Data Collection Techniques**

To address the research objectives, several data collection techniques were employed, namely:

1. In-depth Interviews

Interviews were conducted face-to-face with key informants, including one department manager and three Food and Beverage staff members. The questions were open-ended and flexible, allowing informants to provide detailed responses based on their experiences. According to Rusli (2018), interviews are an effective form of direct communication to explore perceptions, experiences, and adaptive strategies employed by staff in handling guest surges.

2. Observation

Observation was carried out during a three-month On the Job Training (OJT) period. The researcher was directly involved in operational activities, including serving guests during coffee breaks, lunches, and dinners, as well as setting up meeting rooms. As noted by Iryana and Kawasati (2019), field observation enables researchers to authentically understand the realities of work, including coordination challenges and the effectiveness of cross-training under increased workloads.

3. Documentation

Documents such as SOPs, training schedules, evaluation reports, and event photos were collected as supporting data. Nilamsari (2014) emphasizes that documentation provides both written and visual evidence that reinforces findings from interviews and observations. In this study, photographs of table setups, training activities, and operational notes formed an essential part of the analysis.

4. Literature Review

A literature review was conducted to strengthen the analysis by comparing the findings with previous studies. The sources used included academic journals, books, and research reports related to human resource management, cross-training, and operational services in the hospitality industry. This review helped identify research gaps while also providing a solid theoretical foundation.

## **RESEARCH RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **Overview of The Ritz-Carlton Jakarta, Mega Kuningan**

The Ritz-Carlton Jakarta, Mega Kuningan is one of the leading five-star hotels in Jakarta, offering premium services and strategically located in the city’s central business district. The hotel features 318 rooms of various types, along with facilities such as a spa, fitness center, restaurants, lounges, and a large-capacity ballroom. Its service excellence lies in the Gold Standards that represent the Ritz-Carlton brand globally attention to detail, personalized service, and a strong commitment to maintaining guest loyalty.

The hotel has faced significant challenges, including the bombing incident in 2007. However, through strengthened security systems and effective crisis communication strategies, the hotel successfully restored its reputation and continues to be a top choice for both domestic and international guests.

Behind its luxurious image, the hotel encounters considerable challenges during the high season, particularly within the Food and Beverage (F&B) department. High room occupancy drives a surge in demand for culinary services across restaurants, banquet operations, and room service. This complexity requires effective and flexible human resource management.

In line with its global philosophy, The Ritz-Carlton upholds the vision of being the premier provider of luxury hospitality experiences. Its mission is grounded in creating genuine guest engagement through exceptional service, while its core values emphasize respect, integrity, teamwork, and a commitment to excellence. These principles are embedded within the Gold Standards and serve as the foundation for daily operations, influencing both guest interactions and employee development. In this regard, cross-training practices within the Food and Beverage department are not only a response to operational demands but also a reflection of the hotel's broader commitment to service excellence and guest loyalty.

### **Organizational Structure and Operations of Food and Beverage**

The Food and Beverage Banquet Department at The Ritz-Carlton Jakarta has a well-defined organizational structure, ranging from the Director of Banquets, Banquet Manager, Captain, Servers, and Bartenders, to the Audio-Visual team. Each position carries specific responsibilities, including event planning, staff supervision, equipment provision, and direct guest service. Coordination among these roles is a critical aspect in ensuring smooth and seamless service delivery.

In addition to room service and restaurant operations, the hotel is also renowned for its banquet facilities, which can accommodate up to 900 guests in a single event. These facilities make the hotel a premier choice for hosting business meetings and large-scale international events. This, in turn, places additional pressure on the Food and Beverage staff during the high season, as they are required to serve regular guests while simultaneously meeting the demands of major events.

### **Hotel Business Activities and Facilities**

As a luxury hotel, The Ritz-Carlton Jakarta, Mega Kuningan offers two main lines of business:

1. Room Services – A wide range of room types is available, from the Grand Room, Grand Club Room, Mayfair Suite, and Ritz-Carlton Suite to the Presidential Suite, each equipped with exclusive facilities including access to the Club Lounge.
2. Hotel Facilities – The hotel is equipped with a swimming pool, fitness center, spa, Ritz Kids, Golf Zone, and a variety of dining options such as Asia, Lobo Juno, and The Ritz-Carlton Club.

In addition, banquet operations serve as one of the hotel's main strengths, with a Grand Ballroom that can accommodate up to 900 guests.

Beyond their functional roles, these business activities and facilities contribute significantly to both the guest experience and the hotel's revenue streams. Room services, particularly premium categories such as the Ritz-Carlton Suite and the Presidential Suite, not only generate higher revenue per available room but also reinforce the hotel's positioning as a luxury brand. Meanwhile, recreational facilities such as the spa, fitness center, and Ritz Kids program enhance guest satisfaction by catering to diverse lifestyle needs, thereby increasing the likelihood of repeat visits and long-term loyalty.

Food and Beverage outlets, including Asia, Lobo Juno, and The Ritz-Carlton Club, serve not only as dining options but also as strategic revenue centers that attract both in-house and external guests. Similarly, banquet operations, with the Grand Ballroom as the flagship venue, contribute substantially to the hotel's financial performance by hosting corporate meetings, weddings, and international conferences. These large-scale events not only drive high-volume sales but also strengthen the hotel's reputation as a premier destination for luxury events in Jakarta.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Implementation of Cross-Training During the High Season**

The implementation of cross-training strategies at The Ritz-Carlton Jakarta, Mega Kuningan during the high season represents an adaptive managerial response to the sharp increase in operational complexity. High room occupancy during peak periods, such as Christmas and New Year, generates a surge in service demand, particularly within the Food and Beverage (F&B) department. Under these conditions, the need for flexible staff members with cross-functional competencies becomes highly

significant.

The hotel's management perceives human resources not merely as task executors but as strategic assets that must be continuously developed (Friscila, 2024). Consequently, cross-training is applied so that Food and Beverage staff can master multiple roles; for instance, a waiter is trained to perform the functions of a runner, bartender, or service bar attendant. This enables immediate role substitution in the event of staff shortages, without compromising service standards.

According to (Supriadi, 2017), employee competence consists of three core aspects: knowledge, skills, and attitudes. In this context, cross-training enhances all three simultaneously. Beyond technical capabilities, cross-training cultivates proactive, collaborative, and responsible work attitudes. This, in turn, strengthens internal efficiency while minimizing the risk of service disruption caused by staff absenteeism or labor shortages during peak seasons.

### **Handling Food and Beverage Services During Guest Surges**

The high season in the hospitality industry always demands enhanced operational readiness. At The Ritz-Carlton Jakarta, Mega Kuningan, the strategy for managing Food and Beverage services focuses not only on workforce quantity but also on quality, mental preparedness, and individual adaptability.

The management implements several strategies, including adjusting work schedules to prevent fatigue, recruiting part-time or daily workers, and reallocating staff across outlets based on operational needs. These measures are reinforced by cross-training prior to the peak season, emphasizing mastery of cross-functional roles. For instance, waiters are trained to serve as baristas, kitchen helpers are familiarized with restaurant service standards, and hostesses are equipped to manage reservation systems.

Within the framework of Operations Management for Services, service quality is heavily influenced by the speed and accuracy of staff coordination. At this hotel, such principles are applied through regular shift briefings, daily performance evaluations, and the use of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) as formal guidelines. Effective cross-functional coordination enables seamless synergy between the kitchen, restaurant, and banquet services, even under high operational pressure.

From the guest service perspective, these measures successfully minimize the risk of delays, maintain efficient workflows, and reduce guest complaints. Furthermore, employee motivation is enhanced through opportunities for skill development and recognition of newly acquired competencies, aligning with Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, which highlights the importance of motivators in fostering job satisfaction.

### **The Impact of Cross-Training on Service Quality**

Service quality is the primary benchmark for the success of a five-star hotel, particularly when operational demands intensify during the high season. The implementation of cross-training has been shown to significantly enhance both efficiency and guest experience at The Ritz-Carlton Jakarta, Mega Kuningan.

Through cross-training, staff members are able to shift roles flexibly according to operational needs. This creates a multi-skilled workforce, ensuring that services continue to run smoothly even in the event of labor shortages. For example, during breakfast peak hours when guest queues at the restaurant increase, bar staff may assist with clearing tables or delivering food, thereby accelerating table turnover. The impact is directly reflected in guest satisfaction, as they continue to feel professionally served despite the crowded environment.

Moreover, cross-training enhances staff resilience in dealing with emergency situations and reduces the risk of operational errors. This aligns with the principle that service delivery is simultaneous, where production and consumption occur at the same time, making speed and accuracy critical to maintaining service consistency.

Therefore, the cross-training strategy at The Ritz-Carlton Jakarta, Mega Kuningan can be regarded as an integration of strategic human resource management, individual competency development, and operational efficiency improvement. The hotel is not only able to maintain service quality during peak periods but also to build a solid, adaptive, and competitive workforce. Ultimately, this strengthens Ritz-Carlton's positioning as a consistent provider of premium services while creating a competitive advantage rooted in superior human resources within the hospitality industry.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study demonstrates that the implementation of cross-training strategies in the Food and Beverage (F&B) Department at The Ritz-Carlton Jakarta, Mega Kuningan serves both as a strategic initiative

and an effective work culture in addressing the challenges of the high season. Through cross-training, staff members are able to master multiple cross-functional roles such as waiter, barista, runner, and cashier, thereby enhancing operational flexibility. The impact is evident in streamlined service flows, reduced waiting times, and improved guest satisfaction. Overall, this strategy reflects the integration of human resource management, competency development, and operational service effectiveness, all of which contribute to sustaining the reputation of a five-star hotel.

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