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The Experiences of First-Time Managers at a Hawaii Tourist Destination

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Abstract

Hawaii is one of the most popular tourist destinations in the world. Serving the millions of annual tourists to Hawaii are managers and supervisors who operate the tourist destinations frequented by these visitors. For this qualitative study, 17 individuals serving as first-time managers (FTMs) in a prominent tourist destination in Hawaii were interviewed to identify the challenges they faced in their transition into management roles and how they have overcome these challenges. The study also identified factors that help individuals better prepare for the transition from employees to first-time managers.

Keywords: First-time Manager; Tourism; Hawaii; Manager Transition; Challenges

Hawaii has long been viewed as a desirable global tourist location. Statistical data (Hawaiian Tourism Authority, 2023) subsequent to the COVID-19 pandemic shows 4,858,170 visitors landed at Daniel K. Inouye International Airport on Hawaii's island of Oahu. Visitors have returned in large numbers since the pandemic. According to the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism for Hawaii (DBEDT, 2023), more than 870,000 visitors arrived in Hawaii in December 2022, a total that represents 91.5 percent of the visitors in the same month in 2019.

Visitors to Hawaii come from all corners of the globe. The Hawaii Tourism Authority (HTA, 2023) lists its eight Major Market Areas (MMA) as the U.S. West, the U.S. East, Japan, Canada, Europe, Oceania, Other Asia, and Latin America. In 2022, 4.5 million visitors arrived to Hawaii each year from the western United States; another 1.5 million arrived from Japan. As self-reported on in-flight surveys, the most common reason that visitors stay in Oahu, the most populous island of Hawaii, for more than two days is "vacation," with secondary purposes of "anniversary/birthday" and "honeymoon".

In general, the most popular activities for tourists to Hawaii include eating at luaus, watching dance performances, visiting historical sites, hiking, participating in outdoor recreational adventures (such as all-terrain vehicles or skydiving), surfing, and visiting world-famous beaches. Of these activities, the most popular are high-adventure trips, culture and history related activities, and romantic escapades (Go Hawaii, no date). Tourism management serves a fundamental role in the popularity of these activities and growth of the number of visitors. In this article, we explore factors that influence effective hospitality and tourism management focused on the perspective of first-time managers.

Purpose of the Study

This study analyzed the experiences of 17 individuals serving as first-time managers (FTMs) in a prominent tourist destination in Hawaii. The study sought to answer the following research questions related to their employment at the Hawaii tourist destination:

RQ1: What challenges did you face in your transition to a management role and how did you overcome them?

RQ2: What factors would have helped you better prepare for the transition to a management role?

This article will explore themes that developed from the data resulting from qualitative interviews with the 17 participants. Also, a set of recommendations will be provided to aid employees who make the transition to become first-time managers in the tourism industry.

Study Location and Participants

The location for this study was a popular tourist destination in Hawaii that provides visitors an inclusive experience about Oceania through cultural performances, food, and other cultural activities. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, this tourist destination welcomed approximately 1.3 million visitors per year and employed up to 1,100 people. About 75% of the employees are students at a nearby university. The site of this study is identified in this article as Tourist Destination to ensure anonymity.

All 17 participants for this study were serving in their first formal supervisory or management position of any type (not just their first supervisory position at the study site) during the time of data collection. The participants were selected for the study using quota sampling based on meeting the following criteria: a) they were currently employed as first-time managers or supervisors at the tourist site, b) they had been employed in their management positions for 24 months or fewer, and c) they were willing to submit to two interviews conducted in English. Each participant signed a consent letter agreeing to participate in the study. Participants were selected using the purposive sampling method.

Table 1 lists the participants in the study, their gender, job titles, and the number of months they had served as first-time managers at the time of data collection.

Table 1. Participants in the Study

Participant	Pseudonym	Participant Gender	Job Title	Months in Current Role
1	Adam	M	Food Services Lead	6
2	Ben	M	Entertainment Supervisor	4
3	Christina	F	Entertainment Supervisor	2
4	Dan	M	Tour Guide Lead	3
5	Emily	F	Luau Supervisor	10
6	Faye	F	Customer Service Lead	12
7	Gabby	F	Concessions Assistant Manager	12
8	Helen	F	Custodial Supervisor	2
9	Iris	F	Food Service Supervisor	18
10	James	M	Tour Guide Lead	12
11	Kai	M	Concessions Supervisor	3
12	Luke	M	Food Services Manager	12

13	Marcus	M	Restaurant Supervisor	6
14	Noah	M	Training and Development Manager	15
15	Oscar	M	Retail Operations Manager	5
16	Peter	M	HR Manager	14
17	Rose	F	Food Production Assistant Manager	5

Literature Review

Literature related to the research questions answered by this study will be addressed in this section. The literature falls into two streams: a) challenges that FTMs generally face in their new managerial positions, and b) management issues related to hospitality and tourism.

A number of articles have identified the challenges that FTMs face in their new positions. Among these are adjusting to people management, developing managerial and personal effectiveness, motivating others, conflict management, and communication (Gentry, Logan and Tonidandel, 2014). Unless FTMs are properly trained, they may be unprepared to face the responsibilities of their new roles (Schuler, Jackson and Tarique, 2011). FTMs in today's workforce face challenges not seen in previous generations including technological advances and globalization (Hershatter and Epstein, 2010). However, FTMs have more opportunities to improve companies' processes than did previous generations thanks to the improvement of information technology and quality control processes such as TQM, Lean, and Six Sigma (Harmon, 2010).

Other studies in the literature focus on the stressors brought upon by leading others. These stressors include meeting the expectations of others, especially supervisors and direct reports (Park and Faerman, 2019) and changes in the FTM's personal life such as work hours, sleep time, and family responsibilities (Watkins, 2012). Such challenges may increase the stress level of a FTM, causing emotional and even physical health to decline (Gentry, Logan and Tonidandel, 2014; Hay, 2014).

Companies can do much to help FTMs succeed in their new roles. One study indicates that FTMs have a better chance of succeeding in their new positions if they were given time to prepare for their responsibilities and gain some supervisory experience (Plakhotnik, 2017). The company's culture and the process of delivering feedback also plays a significant role in a FTM's successful transition into management. When the company's culture and feedback delivery encourage contribution from FTM, the common "sink or swim" approach is eliminated. (Plakhotnik, 2017).

Other articles have investigated management issues through the lens of hospitality and tourism. The hospitality and tourism industry revolves greatly around people. In this highly interactive industry, customers' perception of high-quality service is greatly dependent on the interactions between guests and employees (Kandampully, Zhang and Jaakkola, 2017). Adequate training and encouragement from the management are vital for employees to optimize the guest experience. According to Sürücü, Maşlakcı, and Şeşen (2021), transformational leadership positively impacts the creative and innovative behaviors of tourism employees.

Managers of hospitality and tourism face a number of challenges unique to the industry. A study conducted by Lohmann and von Bergner (2012) states that managers in global tourism find especially challenging the fields of globalization, tourism impact on nature, safeguarding destinations' core values, adaptation, and managing tourism assets. According to Lekaota (2015), the negative attitudes and responses of external stakeholders, such as the local government and

residents, are seen to be another challenge faced by managers in the industry. Tourism managers need not only to connect with the guests and their own team but also to the local community of the destination. Involving the community in tourism planning and design is viewed as a responsibility of tourism managers and developers (Lekaota, 2015).

Tourism managers must be trained to develop an awareness of complex situations and translate company policies into practice (McCool & Khumalo, 2015). In addition, researchers suggest that tourism managers must develop confidence in the abilities they hold as leaders (McCool and Khumalo, 2015; Weerakit and Beeton, 2018) and must encourage collaboration in the workplace (McCool and Khumalo, 2015). Sürücü, Maşlakcı, and Şeşen (2021) also emphasize the importance of building a team culture based on good relationships between leaders and members. In addition to requirements for successful management, developing a deeper and greater understanding of the customer attitude, demands, and experiences is vital (Lohmann and von Bergner, 2013).

While previous research mentioned has extensively looked into the challenges and critical success elements of FTMs, very little research focused on FTMs in the hospitality and tourism industry has been conducted. Despite the increasing volume of literature on tourism management, there is limited research examining the transition tourism managers experienced in their first supervisory role. Furthermore, few studies have investigated the impact of multiculturalism in the challenges and successes faced by FTMs. Addressing these gaps are essential for developing a more inclusive understanding of the experiences of FTMs in the tourism industry.

Method

Each participant in the study was interviewed twice using a standard list of questions (see Appendix 1). The first interview consisted of a more specific list of questions that sought to understand the background, transition to management, challenges experienced, successes, and preparation in moving into management of the participants. The second interview consisted of follow-up questions based on the participants' responses from the initial interview. This ensured the validity and accuracy of the data coded. The interviews were recorded, transcribed, and then coded using first- and second-coding methods described by Saldaña (2013) to identify relevant themes from the data. Some interviews were conducted in person; others were conducted through video technology. All interviews were conducted between January 2020 and May 2021.

Findings and Discussion

The first and second research questions of this study address the challenges of moving into management and the potential solutions to overcoming these challenges. Each of the 17 participants shared at least one challenge in becoming a first-time manager. These challenges can be grouped into two categories: a) general challenges of moving into management, and b) challenges for a first-time manager that are unique to the Hawaii tourist destination where all were employed at the time of data collection. These findings specific to the Hawaii tourist location may be particularly relevant for FTMs in other tourist destinations around the world.

This section will conclude with details from the participants about what factors would have helped them transition more effectively into management. Anecdotes and direct quotations from the participants interviewed will be shared throughout this section. Pseudonyms are used to maintain participant anonymity.

General Challenges. A person moving from line employee to a management or supervisory role typically faces similar challenges in the transition, irrespective of the industry. Some of these challenges are discussed in studies mentioned in the literature review (see for example, Hershatter

and Epstein, 2010; Harmon, 2010; Watkins, 2012; Gentry, Logan and Tonidandel, 2014; Hay 2014; and Park and Faerman, 2019). The participants of this study shared additional challenges they have faced in their transitions to management roles. The challenges most frequently mentioned by participants in this study were as follows: a) insufficient managerial training, b) a lack of respect from peers due to youthfulness, c) supervising peers and friends, and d) learning to involve team members in decision making. These four themes are summarized into Table 2.

Table 2. General Challenges of FTMs

	Themes	Supporting Data
General Challenges	Lack of Training	Received no training in managing a team
		"I needed help, but I was not given any—I was just thrown out there with, 'OK, go figure it out,' and I didn't know A from B."
		Boss told them to "Just do it," instead of providing training.
	Youthfulness	Most significant challenge was "being underestimated by older managers who judge you for who you are and what you did in the past instead of what you can become."
		Peers not respecting her due to age
		Struggled "being a young manager in a division in which there are so many great senior managers."
	Supervising Peers	Experienced difficulty in supervising friends and former peers
		"They didn't really take me seriously."
		"Before I was a lead, I liked being friends with [my employees]. So this has been hard for me to handle the people that I supervise."
		Encountered problems with managing his team when his promotion caused him to skip over other management positions.
	Relationships with Employees	Establishing meaningful relationships with employees was challenging
		Improved relationships with employees through regularly conducted one-on-one meetings

		"I am so connected to the employees and making sure they are successful." Focusing on leadership development has strengthened her relationship with her team members.

Lack of Training. A prominent challenge mentioned by the FTM participants in the study was a lack of training in management responsibilities before supervising others. Prior to becoming a tour guide lead, James had no experience in creating a team dynamic, developing team goals, and dealing with relationship issues that arise in team management, and he received no training in these areas when he started his job. He has learned to handle these challenges by learning from others. His strategy is simple: "Never be afraid to ask people questions," he shared. Helen had served in other non-supervisory roles at the study site but had no experience or expertise in the responsibilities of serving as custodial supervisor. "I needed help," she said. "But I was not given any—I was just thrown out there with, 'OK, go figure it out,' and I didn't know A from B." Dan, a tour guide lead in his first three months supervising others, also did not receive training in management. Instead of providing training, Dan's boss led by telling others, "Just do it." This lack of direction drove Dan to improve. "At the end of the day, I can tell people that I survived. … This is good motivation for me."

This lack of training prompted some participants in the study to develop the skills of seeking guidance from others. James of the guest services department emphasized the importance of accepting help from his employees. It is critical, he said, that he learned to "let them help me out, because this is not my department, it is our department." Peter, a HR manager, believes the involvement of every worker is necessary for making group decisions. Seeking the honest input of employees often generates conflicting opinions about the matter. To resolve this conflict, he said,

> *that usually involves getting somebody else into the conversation. We may call our director and say, "Hey, let's get you in on this and see what you think." Or, I try to get my supervisor involved. So you really kind of bring people into the conversation. This really helps us deal with situations.*

Youthfulness. Another challenge related to youthfulness, both in age and in experience level. Many of the participants of the study were in their 20s and worked with managers and directors much older than them. This youthfulness sometimes caused problems and frustrations. For example, Noah, a training and development manager in the HR department, shared his most significant challenge in his first 15 months as a manager was "being underestimated by older managers who judge you for who you are and what you did in the past instead of what you can become." His solution to overcoming this challenge is to "try to understand their point of view, their perspective, and how they are seeing the changes." Gabby, a concessions assistant manager with one year in the role, shared similar frustrations with peers not respecting her due to her age. This may be a consequence of working in a high-functioning department. She said she has struggled "being a young manager in a division in which there are so many great senior managers."

Supervising Peers. A common challenge shared by participants was that of supervising peers. This challenge was heightened by the fact that the majority of employees at Tourist Destination are university students of a similar age; thus, many FTMs interviewed for the study were previously friends and colleagues with their direct reports. Adam, a food services lead with six

months in the role, was one who supervised friends and former peers. This made it difficult to give instructions and directions to his team. For example, he tried unsuccessfully in his first several weeks to have his team members move quickly to close up the food establishment so everyone could go home together. "They didn't really take me seriously," he said. As he started to "be firm, to be serious" with his team members, they began to respect his authority and respond to his directions more positively. Marcus faced similar problems supervising peers in his six months as a restaurant supervisor. He shared, "Before I was a lead, I liked being friends with [my employees]. So this has been hard for me to handle the people that I supervise." His problems were alleviated, at least in part, by applying the motto to "always be friends with them and never regard [the management position] as power." Kai, a marketing supervisor, stated that he encountered problems with managing his team when his promotion caused him to skip over other management positions. He said, "The leader right now that we have is my lead. She was my lead when I was a regular employee, and now that I'm supervisor, she's still the lead."

  Relationships with Employees. A final challenge that emerged frequently from the data is that of learning to establish meaningful relationships with employees. Several participants (Emily, Helen, Iris, & Luke) shared that they have learned to do this through one-on-one meetings and interviews. According to Iris, a supervisor in the custodial department, the regularly conducted individual meetings with employees provided managers with a way through which they can seek feedback and ideas from their front-line employees. In addition, Emily, a luau supervisor of 10 months, stated that these meetings allowed her to establish personal goals with her team members. Gabby said she considered her biggest area of success in being a manager as "training the workers on how to become leaders." She told how her previous manager instilled in her the importance of leadership development, which is "why I am so connected to the employees and making sure they are successful." She reported that this focus on leadership development has strengthened her relationship with her team members.

  Challenges Specific to Tourism. Many of the challenges shared by the participants were unique to the tourist destination in Hawaii where the study took place. These challenges may be similar to those faced by FTMs at other tourist locations. They include the following challenges: a) addressing problems arising from guests and visitors, b) collaborating with upper management, c) dealing with language and cultural difficulties, and d) working with limited resources. These four themes are summarized into Table 3.

Table 3. Challenges Specific to Tourism Faced by FTMs.

	Themes	Supporting Data
Challenges Specific to Tourism	Guests and Visitors.	Staff shortage during periods of high visitors. "I have to distribute everyone so we have enough workers in the areas and places we need," Inventory shortage during high visitors counts Entertaining guests while food is cooking as "one of the biggest challenges" encountered

		"A lot of movement in food and labor" to feed up to 2000 guests
	Collaborating with Upper Management	Inconsistent implementation of policy changes that are not well-communicated
		Struggled to align "with what upper management wants to see and have happen with what we are able to do with the performers we have."
		Felt underappreciated and overworked by the demands of upper management
	Culture and Language	"In the beginning, I had a lot to learn about these cultures. Embracing the cultures has really helped me have an open mind to everything."
		Diverse cultural backgrounds impacting different methods employees are motivated
		"Choose the right words to say so they aren't going to be offensive."
	Limited Resources	Complained of a small department budget, an undersized staff, and outdated technology
		Staffing shortage and equipment issues as the top most challenging aspects of new managerial post

Guests and Visitors. A common theme faced by the FTMs in the study was the challenge of solving issues that involve the guests and visitors to the tourist location. While guest-facing issues are always present in tourism, the responsibility of problem solving these issues often falls upon those line managers such as the FTMs in this study.

Despite welcoming more than 1 million visitors per year, the study site experiences the usual highs and lows common in the tourism industry. During periods of high visitors, the study site occasionally runs short of workers, a problem that Iris, a food services supervisor, deals with first hand. "I have to distribute everyone so we have enough workers in the areas and places we need," she shared. Iris's team frequently runs out of food, too, during high visitor counts. Guests still need to be entertained while the food is cooking. "This is one of the biggest challenges that I have encountered." Throughout her 18 months in a managerial role, Iris has successfully lobbied her manager to hire workers during the peak seasons (such as summer) to offset the staffing shortages. And with "proper coordination with the kitchen, we don't run out of food," she said.

Handling large volumes of food was the biggest challenge Luke faced as food services manager in his first year supervising others. Prior to working at the study site, Luke felt comfortable serving crowds of guests, having managed small buffets for several restaurants. But feeding up to 2,000 guests per day at the study site represented " a lot of movement in food and labor," he said.

"Getting people to understand that movement is a bit of a challenge." Relying on his coworkers helped him juggle the stressful and demanding responsibilities. His coworkers, whom he described as "people that were committed to the restaurant and to high standards," knew what was expected of them, they lived up to these expectations, "and they did it from the heart."

Collaborating with Upper Management. Serving hundreds or thousands of guests per day requires extensive and effective communication between upper management and line supervisors and managers. If policy changes are not well communicated down the organization, for example, those responsible for implementing these new practices will not implement them consistently. This is especially demanding on the supervisors who oversee this work. Emily expressed that she felt frustrated that negative customer reviews would trace back to her team members, and, as a result, reflect poorly on her work as their supervisor. Any negative reviews are concerning, of course, but the lack of direct control over the situations causing the negative experiences weighed heavily on her as a FTM. "I am not the one interacting with the guests. I am supervising people," she lamented. She reported that holding more regular one-on-one meetings with her team members helped close this gap and bring her closer to solving the issues that may have triggered the negative reviews.

Ben's most significant managerial challenge as an entertainment supervisor also related to upper management. He shared that he struggled to align "with what upper management wants to see and have happen with what we are able to do with the performers we have." Taxing him further, Ben's team members often waned in energy and motivation "because we do the same show each night and it can be tiresome and repetitive sometimes." Feeling underappreciated and overworked by the demands of upper management worsened this situation for Ben as their supervisor. He reported that his tactic was to "look out for the dancers" as best he could. "I want them to know that I am there to advocate for them to upper management so there is greater understanding."

Culture and Language. Hawaii is one of the most ethnically and culturally diverse states in the United States. According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2022), Hawaii has a population of more than 1.4 million people, of which 25.3 percent are White, 36.8 percent are Asian, 10.5 percent are Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander, and 25 percent are two or more races. This diversity also applies to the study site. Tourist Destination employs individuals from multiple Pacific Island and Asian countries, along with employees from Hawaii and the U.S. mainland. In addition to welcoming visitors from all over the world, hundreds of Tourist Destination's employees are originally from a variety of countries throughout the Asian Rim and Oceania. Several FTMs in the study reported that team communication, always important in the tourism industry, proved especially difficult in this multicultural environment. Gabby from California noted the multiculturalism in the management team as well as in her own staff. "In the beginning, I had a lot to learn about these cultures," she observed. "Embracing the cultures has really helped me have an open mind to everything."

Faye, working as a customer service lead at Tourist Destination, stated that leading individuals from diverse backgrounds posed challenges for her different personalities of employees resulting in different methods they are motivated. In addition to diverse personalities is the employees' culturally diverse backgrounds. Being aware and learning this plays a big part in the food and beverage department as they interact with guests from all over the world. Adam, a food services lead, expressed his lack of confidence in his communication ability because he is not a native English speaker. He said it was especially difficult as an FTM to "choose the right words to say so they aren't going to be offensive."

Limited Resources. Managing with limited resources is difficult for FTMs at any organization, including at one of the top tourist attractions in Hawaii where the study took place.

Peter, a human resources manager of 14 months, complained of a small department budget, an undersized staff, and outdated technology. Rose, an assistant manager in food production, identified staffing shortage and equipment issues as the top most challenging aspects of her new managerial post. These comments from Peter and Rose echoed those of other participants who shared that managing with limited resources increased the stress on already demanding jobs. Peter found the most useful strategy for overcoming resource issues was to consult with his team. "A lot of times I will get stuck on something and I will go ask them and say, 'Well, this is going on. What do you think? If you were in this situation, how would you handle it?'"

  Preparing for Management. Nearly all the participants of this study shared ideas on how they might have prepared more effectively for a management position. Three factors in particular emerged from the data: a) a need for more management training, b) a desire for practical experience in management, and c) the importance of developing certain personal characteristics suitable for management. Although the participants spoke specifically of their experiences at Tourist Destination, these lessons about preparing employees for management responsibilities may apply to other tourism locations, as well. These three factors are summarized into Table 4.

Table 4. Factors that Might Have Prepared FTMs for Management

	Factors	**Supporting Data**
Preparing for Management	Management Training	"More training on having faith in myself as a manager" Wished for training in "being more confident." Training in time management Needed training in "not being afraid of communication" Training in delegation and "how to approach [my employees], the way I tell them, and when I tell them."
	Practical Experience	Wished to start in a lower (related) position and gain the experience needed before promotion wanted direct exposure to the administrative side of the business before moving into management "If I had known how things run and what purpose they have then, it would have been easier for me to understand and learn it on my own now." Wanted to shadow other managers to "do what a leader does before becoming a leader." Desired to have been assigned a formal mentor

	Personal Characteristics	Wished he had learned better "how to take counsel."
		Learning humility in interacting with employees
		"If you don't trust yourself, you won't be able to see your potential."
		Recognizing your strengths as a leader

Management Training. The most commonly stated factor for a more successful transition to management at Tourist Destination was additional supervisory training. This desire for training correlates with earlier finding that a top challenge for Tourist Destination employees is insufficient managerial training.

Participants offered specific areas where training would have been helpful before they assumed their supervisory responsibilities. Noah wanted "more training on having faith in myself as a manager" while Gabby wished for training in "being more confident." Christina, an entertainment supervisor in her first two months in the position, could have used training in time management, and how to "treat everyone equally and not favor some people." Helen said she needed training in "not being afraid of communication" with her employees. Similarly, Faye desired training in delegation, specifically "how to approach [my employees], the way I tell them, and when I tell them." Oscar, a retail operations manager of 5 months, also wished he had received training in delegation. Only through personal experience did he learn that "sometimes you have to let your employees make mistakes and let them figure it out."

A more proactive approach to training may also have helped some participants. Peter, the HR manager, admitted he could have been more proactive in his own training. He said he would have benefited from researching HR processes, laws, and regulations before leading his HR department. He added, "I wish I had taken more time to really research and find things on my own instead of just trying to wait for my manager to tell me."

Practical Experience. Several FTM participants said they wished they had been afforded opportunities to gain practical, hands-on experience in management and supervisory prior to assuming their leadership roles. Emily lamented that she didn't start in a lower (related) position and gain the experience needed before her promotion to luau supervisor. Rose, a food production assistant manager with 5 months in the role, wanted direct exposure to the administrative side of the business before moving into management because "if I had known how things run and what purpose they have then, it would have been easier for me to understand and learn it on my own now." Christina, an entertainment supervisor, shared similar sentiments:

> *"When I first starting working [before becoming a supervisor], I did not really pay attention to all the simple things because I thought, 'This is my role; I can just focus on one thing because other people are taking care of that part of the job.' But looking back and being in this position, those simple things I should have paid attention to."*

Kai, just 3 months into his job as concessions supervisor, said it would have helped him to shadow other managers so he could "do what a leader does before becoming a leader" himself. Ben wished he had been assigned a formal mentor because "if you have nobody to teach you what to do, there is no way you can figure it out."

Personal Characteristics. Preparation for management is also aided by the acquisition of certain personal characteristics suitable for supervisory responsibilities. The FTMs in the study identified several that would have especially benefited them in their transition to management. The food services manager Luke wished he had learned better "how to take counsel." Rose echoed this idea. After a negative interaction with one of her employees, Rose received advice from a senior manager to "eat humble pie and go speak with that employee." However, she admitted, "I struggle with this. I don't want to eat humble pie." Marcus commented that an important characteristic is learning to trust oneself because "if you don't trust yourself, you won't be able to see your potential." Ben, an entertainment supervisor, emphasized that his move to management would have gone more smoothly if he had learned to more quickly recognize his strengths as a leader. He added:

> *It's easy to get into the mentality that you are inadequate or unqualified. When you are suggested or asked to be a manager, though, it means that there is something that is seen in your something that you have to offer. So that helps with the preparation knowing that.*

Recommendations and Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to understand the challenges faced by FTMs at a Hawaii-based tourist attraction along with some of the factors that would have helped them prepare more effectively for their managerial roles. Findings suggest that transitioning into a management position for the first time inevitably brings several difficulties including a lack of training in the responsibilities as supervisors, building relationships with team members, and effective communication. This section contains three recommendations on how to better prepare FTMs for their positions in various areas of tourism.

The first recommendation is to develop a training program focused on industry knowledge and soft-skills development. It is evident that to better prepare managers, prospective or new supervisors must be aided with sufficient training, especially in the early stages of their transition. It has been acknowledged that tourism managers must be trained to translate company policies into practice, even in complex situations (McCool & Khumalo, 2015). When proper training is received by tourism managers, customers are not only more likely to revisit the destination but are also more likely to provide word of mouth marketing (Ozturk & Gogtas, 2015).
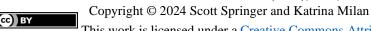
It is recommended that tourism organizations focus on the following main areas in curating training programs:

1. Industry knowledge training

Staffing shortages, inefficient movement of inventory, and dependence of the business on peak/off seasons are only a few of the industry challenges mentioned by the FTMs. A manager transitioning from being a front-line employee requires a clear understanding of these challenges in order to make suitable administrative decisions. In addition, hospitality and tourism companies have a standard of excellence that needs to be met. Learning and frequently reviewing the organization's standards of excellence as well as becoming familiar with the nature of the hospitality and tourism industry is crucial for a new manager's success.

2. Soft skills development

It has been acknowledged that successful hospitality managers need key soft skills such as self-confidence and self-awareness that influence their drive and behavior (Weber et al., 2020). Specific skills mentioned by FTM participants in this study include communication, confidence, trust and relationship building, taking criticism, decision-making, and delegating. Tourism

organizations might consider incorporating these components as they create or identify training programs that are most suitable for their departments.

The second recommendation is to promote a culture of collaboration and inclusion in the workplace. This can be done through holding regular one-on-one meetings among FTMs and their team members and among FTMs and their superiors. Such meetings allow feedback to come to the surface. Because feedback is most advantageous to an organization when it is from someone with a high level of knowledge and expertise in the field (Lechermeier & Fassnacht, 2018), FTMs must meet with their front-line employees to communicate industry-specific challenges. After all, front-line employees interact most frequently with guests and are therefore more knowledgeable with guests' buying behavior. One-on-one meetings also increase employee engagement in and commitment to the organization, as the data from the interviews at Tourist Destination indicate. These meetings are excellent forums for allowing employees to participate in the decision-making process of policies that affect them (Amin et al., 2014). Furthermore, policy changes are better communicated and implemented through one-on-one meetings.

In addition, it is recommended that tourism organizations, including the chosen study site, continue to focus on training their managers to adapt to issues involving cultural diversity. This may be met through cultural workshops that emphasize appropriate ways of communicating and motivating employees in the context of culture. Such cultural workshops may be helpful in training FTMs to foster a culture of inclusion where both they and the people they are leading feel supported and appreciated.

The last recommendation is to create a mentorship program for prospective FTMs. Multiple participants interviewed expressed a desire for direct exposure to the management position or to be able to shadow a mentor prior to receiving the manager position. Findings of this study show that while FTMs often learn their duties and "figure it out" after some time, they would have preferred that they were supported by their superiors in the demands of their new role. This is consistent with a previous study by Tughra (2018) indicating that FTMs believe they could have been more efficient with handling their challenges if they had received sufficient support from their superiors. A carefully designed mentorship program can enable pre-selected FTMs to shadow a superior prior to moving into the role of manager, encouraging a smoother transition. The intention behind such a mentorship arrangement is to help FTMs feel more prepared or confident in their roles.

Overall, FTMs of Tourist Destination in Hawaii faced field-related and interpersonal struggles due to their lack of readiness for their first management positions. The recommendations above provide potential solutions applicable not only to tourism organizations in Hawaii, but also in other parts of the world. Talent, time, and resources are maximized when hospitality and tourism organizations invest in programs to support new managers.

Limitations & Further Research

The main limitation of this study is its singular study location. While the findings and recommendations presented have relevance to all FTMs in any industry, some variables such as language barriers and multiculturalism in the workforce in the study are unique to Tourist Destination. Extending the study to other locations would be helpful to determine how these recommendations translate to other industries and geographical destinations.

Because the data was collected through interviews, another limitation may be the data's subjectivity to respondent bias which could impact the accuracy of information. In future studies, this can be avoided by having each participant be interviewed by multiple interviewers. Using quantitative surveys on top of interviews can also help participants describe their experiences.

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Appendix 1: Standard List of Questions

The following questions were asked of all participants in the interviews:

Background Questions:
- What is your current title?
- How long have you served as a manager?
- How many employees report to you directly?
- To whom do you report? List the title of this person.
- Over which areas do you have direct control as a manager?
- Over which areas do you have no control as a manager?

Transition to Management:
- Describe the process that led to you becoming a manager.
- What motivated you to become a manager?
- What expectations did you have going into your management position?
- What were your concerns about transitioning into a management role?
- How would you describe your experience so far as a first-time manager?
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Challenges of Management
- Describe the challenges you have faced as a first-time manager.
- What has helped you address or resolve these challenges?
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Successes of Management
- Describe the areas in which you believe you have most succeeded as a first-time manager.
- To what do you credit these successes?
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Preparation for Management
- How useful has your education been in preparing you for a management position?
- How much support do you receive from your current manager and from the organization in your managerial position?
- Looking back, what would have helped you better prepare to become a manager?
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Conclusion
- What else would you like to mention about your experiences as a first-time manager that I have not asked in this interview?