



**T&T CAREER PATHING – LISTENING TO  
THE FUTURE LEADERS**

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Twenty years of age. Seven languages. Six months of front desk internship with an award winning hotel brand. Three years of study at what is ranked as number two in terms of leading hotel management schools in the world.

One love: travel & tourism.

One goal: *“My goal is to grow and be something important.”*

She is engaging, endearing, professional, purposeful, impressive, inspiring.

Most importantly, she is reason we can be confident that the future of tourism is in good hands.

Meet Martina -

Meet the future leadership of the global travel & tourism industry.

### INVESTING IN THE FUTURE THROUGH PEOPLE

With annual travel & tourism sector growth maintaining a steady rate of 4%-5% per annum, 2012's milestone of 1 billion international travellers almost doubling to 1.8 billion in 2030, investing in tourism infrastructure is critical to the industry's development, enrichment and sustainability, especially for the over 260 million people and growing that work in the industry.

Across all regions, significant investment of time, funding and expertise is going towards planning for new airports, airlines, hotels, resorts, attractions, events, and other essential projects. Each and every programme for industry readiness is needed to meet not only growing organic demand, but also leverage unique opportunities coming from new markets and mindsets.

The hardware investment and prioritization is clear. The changes to the tourism landscape are visible. The wiring is making the critical connections.

However, even with the immense commitments coming through the building of the foundations for our future travel and tourism world, with careful consideration of underlying implications and required adjustments to enable true 'freedom to travel', 'policies for growth' and 'tourism for tomorrow' (as set by the WTTC and UNWTO as pillars for sustainable sector advancement), there is one area that still remains a concern: the software, the human software.

The project development pipeline is clear. What about the pipeline for people development to ensure we meet the demands on the people who bring the sector to life?

Is our industry doing what it takes to meet the needs of the jobs it will take to serve the sector?

Are we investing the expertise and funds with the same thoughtfulness as physical project planning?

And the time, knowing that it takes longer to create an award winning hotel manager than it does to create an award winning hotel.

Not to mention, the unique needs of the next generation of leaders. As the wishes, motivations and expectations of travel seekers are changing, demanding that the industry adjust and deliver or lose out, the same applies for the job seekers.

Understanding the next generation of T&T leadership is not about understanding the difference between labels – 'Millennial' and 'Gen Y' versus 'Boomers'.

It is, as with traveller segmentation, about understanding emerging habits, attitudes and aspirations of emerging leaders – how they are motivated to learn, participate, advance, stay.

As shared by Martina, a self-assured yet still gentle-mannered intern of Portuguese/German descent, she entered into the ‘hospitality’ industry for the chance to work in a business that mixes psychology, economics and travel into one even though not seen as a high-profile, glamorous career to her friends. Ready to return to studying in Switzerland, she sought after an intern post at the Starwood Hotel Group’s breathtaking Westin Snowmass property,:

*“I am here because I wanted to grow. I wanted to get the experience of working in the United States, with a good luxury hotel group, and then go study. I am always wanting to learn more. Some people are motivated by the money in a job. But that is not me. I want to grow as a person, and I want a job that gives me a lifestyle. The money does not matter as much.”*

Nor does the geography. Working anywhere, always moving, is part of the DNA of the next generation of T&T professionals. Routine is the start of ruin.

Martina continues:

*“When I am doing the same thing every day, I am not learning anymore. Now it’s a routine. I need changes in my work to make me work harder and do better.”*

Which leads to an innate challenge within the T&T industry – careerpathing.

As revealed by Martina, this is a shortfall seen across the industry. The next generation of tourism leaders do not want to be treated as young in the industry. They want to grow, gain exposure, and achieve higher positions, and they need clarity as to how to get there. If they cannot see it, they will simply go elsewhere. Which makes the industry’s current lack of clarity around career opportunities and pathways for advancement a concern. As expressed by Martina when thinking back on past jobs,:

*“I wouldn’t be able to tell you how I can progress. When I asked what else I can do, what else I need to learn, I wouldn’t get any answers. I want the more senior people I work with to explain how to do their job. Going to HR to see what jobs are available is the only way I know to be able to move to other departments.”*

The lack of visibility of a way forward is reinforced in the WTTC’s *Human Capital Report* conducted in 2013 (available on <http://www.wttc.org/focus/research-for-action/policy-research/human-capital-research/>). A valuable look into the challenges facing the T&T industry worldwide when it comes to attracting, developing and retaining the next generation of industry talent, the report calls out a number of key insights extracted from Millennials and Gen Ys in various regions across the globe. Central to the report – the issue of industry image and opportunity.

As revealed in the report’s conclusions:

*“Travel & Tourism is a potentially interesting industry to many of these young individuals, particularly those keener perhaps on experience, cultural exchanges, diversity and learning than instant financial rewards. Travel & Tourism holds up well against many other industry sectors that business undergraduates are considering careers in but there remain some challenges when it comes to the understanding of the sector and its subsectors, as well as its profile and awareness of what a career in the sector may offer.*

The report goes on to express concern that,:

*“Overall Travel & Tourism is an industry that appears to be still poorly understood by this generation of undergraduates. Scarce information and even some misconceptions still exist about skills, roles, career opportunities and working conditions in the industry.*

*While the industry is perceived as reasonably attractive - more so by the Chinese respondents, less so by the British - the reasons why the sector might be attractive include international opportunities, work life balance or the chance to speak languages which are*

*generally less important /decisive factors when choosing a job compared to job security, competitive starting salary and career progression.*

*Amongst those who are not interested in the sector lack of information, misjudgment and preconceptions are common. For example, respondents are only able to identify some very broad job roles ('travel', 'guide', 'management' are quoted) and only a career pathway in 'sales & marketing' is believed by all respondents to offer 'many opportunities'."*

### JUST ASK

For those willing to see the personal benefits of being part of the T&T industry, lack of definition around career development is not a problem. They will figure it out – an innate quality of this switched on, highly connected, community-based generation.

When reflecting on why, despite the image of the hospitality industry not being as high profile and high appeal as others pursued by her friends, the often tough hours, and the lack of career guidance, Martina is absolutely aware of what she is getting out of her chosen area of study and work:

*"I have become so much more open because of my being in the hotel industry. I have grown so much as a person. Yes, I am learning basic hospitality, but also psychology, economics, languages, and I get to travel the world, meet new people, see new cultures. I have so much more confidence in meeting new people, am so much better at problem solving, because I always have to put myself in the position of our guests."*

So, if the industry recognizes the value of the next generation of talent, yet has challenges regarding the image and understanding of career opportunities, what advice does Martina have for the older people in the industry?

As with all things Millennial and Gen Y,:

*"Just ask me. Ask me I want to become, and let me ask you what I need to do to get there. And share."*

- ENDS -