

Hire the spirit. *Train the skill.*

> *We hire friendly and train technical. — Marriott*

Marriott's philosophy is simple: care for your associates, and they will care for your guests. That belief shapes how it recruits, and it offers every leader a test: does your hiring reflect what you say you value?

Marriott attracts employees the way it attracts customers. Consumers buy experiences, not just products, and candidates shop for work the same way. Your employment brand is the experience a candidate expects to have working for you. It is built by how people are treated, long before a posting goes live.

Marriott also "hires friendly" and "trains technical." Teaching the work to someone with the spirit to serve is easier than teaching a skilled person to enjoy serving, so it hires cooks who love to cook. Kristof-Brown and colleagues' meta-analysis links person-organization fit to satisfaction, commitment and lower turnover intent.

Pay still matters. Total compensation is the top concern of Marriott associates, and no brand promise offsets an uncompetitive offer. But money is rarely the whole story. Leadership, opportunities to advance, and the daily work environment weigh heavily too, and their importance tends to grow with tenure.

Before your next hire, ask two questions. First, what do we most need this person to be, and what can we teach them? Second, does the experience we advertise match the experience they will have?

When the answers are honest, hiring stops being a gamble. It becomes the first act of leadership, and the start of a team that is cared for and well placed to care for others.

Hire for the spirit your culture runs on. Then invest in the skill.

Sources: Snell et al., Managing Human Resources; J. W. Marriott Jr., Detroit Economic Club (2000); Kristof-Brown et al. (2005)