

Speech by Jan Spooren  
Director People Development Carlson Rezidor Group

Good morning to you all.

Thank you for the very kind invitation to this partnership launch and for the invitation to speak about People Development in Africa - the Carlson Rezidor way.

Ever since our company started to really grow full force ahead as of 1994 we instantly took the approach of people development from within. And we have not let go of this extremely successful way to help build brand consistency, whilst at the same time building careers and inviting new talents to join due to our tremendous growth from 29 hotels in 1994 to over 350 today over a 1000 hotels globally because of the merge with Carlson.

The Rezidor 5 Step People Development Programme was already introduced in 1992 and has ever since been the foundation for all training and development within the company, for all levels: Employees, Supervisors, Heads of Department, General Managers and Executive Leadership roles. The purpose of our award winning 5 Step Programme is to ensure that all of our employees grow with the growth of our company, so they can reach their full potential.

When I joined the company 10 years ago, hired by Han Oldenburger, as Training Manager for the 2 hotels in Amsterdam (and look where I am today...) we only had one hotel in South Africa – our beautiful Radisson Blu Waterfront Hotel in Cape Town – today we have 6 with its own regional office!

As part of the 5 Step Programme the first thing that we had to secure is service delivery being up to our standards and this we do through our Yes I Can! service training. Every employee in each hotel is to be trained in this programme and in order to secure this we trained 6 Hotel Trainers in Cape Town in 2008 who then went on to train all employees and this continues until today.

Each employee must be trained in Yes I Can! within their first 30 days of hiring in order to be able to positively contribute towards our guaranteed service delivery in our hotels. We teach them our brand philosophy, how important it is for each and every one of them to do a quality job every day through service skills - while at the same time growing their confidence and skills when interacting and serving the guests.

Supervisors and up we train in an additional programme – ‘Leading Yes I Can! – to unleash and actively promote empowerment on all levels to leave no stone unturned to guarantee guest satisfaction.

Further to this we pride ourselves in being the market leader when it comes to training all staff in awareness and knowledge in Corporate Social Responsibility through our Responsible Business programmes. Through our Living and Leading Responsible Business training sessions we raise their awareness on taking care of social and environmental aspects that come with the job but also with their lives.

The third mandatory and highly appreciated training and development tool, which we introduced in 2005 is our ‘On Job Skills programme’. In a 2 and a half day train the trainer

workshop we train and certify departmental On Job Skills trainers who then on a daily basis train our standards and operational skills to staff members, which leads to skilled professionals and brand service consistency towards our guests.

On a yearly basis Rezidor has over 1,500 students on an internship offering workplace practical training in our network of hotels in all departments imaginable, increasing their chances to be employed and to help boost the image of the hospitality industry as an employer. Very often we are able to convert an internship into full time employment. We are very much looking forward to doing the same here now in South Africa through our collaboration with CATHSSETA.

Let's move it up one level. Since 1996 we have been training supervisors for them to be able to deal with the additional responsibilities and leadership aspects the job entails. For this we launched the Supervisory Training & Resources programme (STAR). In 2009 we trained 6 South African STAR Hotel Trainers who then went on to train many supervisors in our hotels in this 6 months, fast paced development programme. So far almost 50 supervisors in South Africa have experienced the STAR journey.

In 2009 we launched our 'Management Development Programme'. The aim of this management programme is to develop, train and prepare existing or newly recruited Supervisors to become Department Heads across all areas of our business over the course of 18-24 months. During the 2 years a supervisor is exposed to many different development initiatives including task forces, visits to our Centres of Excellence and cross training within their own hotels. Only last December at this very hotel we started with the first South African MDP batch consisting of 20 supervisors - now on their way to becoming a Department Head.

For many years we have had a very structured approach to doing our Business Planning process and in order to assist our South African properties to be able to produce their plans in a similar manner, while at the same time adding leadership skills as well as strategic planning competences, we have trained our 5-day Logical Thinking System course (LOTS). We have so far performed 3 sessions in South Africa, every year since 2009 – developing 70 department heads. The biggest LOTS training ever in our company's history was held in Johannesburg in 2010 with 27 delegates, trained by myself.

In the aftermath of the World Cup we also moved in with different Sales skills and techniques for those working in that arena by offering our Sales Success, Sales Management Success and Maximising Account Potential and Profit courses – developing yet another 36 sales professionals.

Some of these courses fall under the overarching training umbrella that we call 'The Business School' – offering 20 different programmes in its curriculum and offered 4 times a year in one of our hotels. As we own each programme we can organise the course in any location at any time and hence some courses came to South Africa although we have seen many of our South African colleagues also joining us on campus, even last week during our first Business School of 2012 in Dubai.

The School is envied by many, copied by some and I wish that many more had copied it so that collectively the hospitality industry would have become known for developing its people just like we have done and will continue to do.

In 2010 we had over 850 delegates from all over Europe, the Middle East and Africa joining our Business School courses – with besides the learning opportunities a unique opportunity to network with their colleagues from all over the world.

Open now to all as well - as an extension of the Business School, but as a virtual campus - is our e-learning platform 'The Carlson Learning Network'. This 24/7 one stop development shop is open to any employee serving up all kinds of different skills or knowledge oriented trainings.

Now as a hotel business we're also a numbers business. Looking into the future, ours is very bright, and especially when looking on the African continent by continuing to grow by opening more hotels in South Africa, and beyond, whilst the rest of the hospitality sector is in economic difficulty.

We are renowned for internal General Manager development and 3 of our 5 South African properties currently have a General Manager that have been trained through our Mentee programme. 95% of our company's General Managers are – as we say – 'home grown', something we are very proud of.

We also have seen two South African Mentees become General Manager outside of South Africa – one of them even running the biggest hotel in our company – 1'200 rooms in St. Petersburg. We currently have one Mentee ready to be moved to his first GM's position and we have two in the middle of their Mentee programmes.

An internal person transferring is something else that we excel at on all levels. We have seen some of our South African colleagues move to the Middle East, Lusaka, Mozambique, Russia and within South Africa in the three cities where we operate.

Are our employees here happy with the training and development that they receive and are they willing to build a career with us? We ask them these very questions in our annual staff satisfaction survey and the results for both questions are very high.

Within our South African properties **80%** says they are very happy with the training that they receive and an amazing **85%** tell us that they would very much like to build a career with us.

Every year we have our 350 hotels nominate their top performer as the company's Employee of the Year and I am so proud to inform you that this year's winner of this award comes from South Africa.... As we are still to celebrate the winner on stage next week during our Annual Business Conference in London I will not reveal the name....

Our joint initiative now will only help to increase opportunities for people to use Carlson Rezidor as a ladder to build a career – be it horizontally or vertically – as any direction is growth in our eyes. With all that I have presented to you now I think you all agree that Carlson Rezidor offers career progression to the max and with this sets itself apart from many competitors. Even during the global financial crisis we have not ceased to invest in training and employing new people, here in South Africa and elsewhere where we operate.

Our relationship with CATHSSETA started in 2010 with development opportunities at the Radisson Blu Waterfront Hotel in Cape Town, where students were able to come from

other provinces and complete their qualifications and get exposure into the 5\* hospitality industry.

This relationship led to 16 individuals being given an opportunity that would have never been made possible without the support and commitment of CATHSSETA and they are now on a long-term career development path with the Carlson Rezidor Hotel Group.

The intention is therefore to further develop and enhance this relationship within all our hotels in South Africa by developing over 300 previously disadvantaged individuals and establish a sustainable career path for our future leaders, to achieve the objectives of the country, its government, CATHSSETA and all other stakeholders.

Let me close by thanking first Mr. Peter Thomas, HR manager in Cape Town, for being instrumental in bringing the two parties together by using our company's values; first by being a true host, who lives the second value that we call trust and then has a fighting z-pirit to get it done.

Nomfundo, Thuleka and Hannie, based here in Johannesburg, also a heart-felt thank you to you for assisting Peter!

I express the wish that the collaboration between CATHSSETA and Carlson Rezidor will prove to be a very fruitful one - positively adding value towards a constant supply of new talents to the fantastic sector we work in.

We look forward to our collaboration!

Thank you.