

# MACAU LOSES ITS HOTEL PROFESSIONALS



Macau has serious problems with the lack of skilled hotel personnel. Five years ago casino magnate Stanley Ho Hung-sun's empire lost its gaming monopoly here and it has triggered a boom in this industry. World-renowned casino operators such as Las Vegas Sands, Wynn Resort and Malaysia's Genting Group have entered the Macau market and therefore the demand for skilled professionals has risen. Local businesses have lured senior Hong Kong hotel management personnel to work here. The main attraction was the money. Their salaries were often double of what they earned in Hong Kong. Nowadays, however, these professionals are going back to Hong Kong.

"Despite the attractive salaries offered, many of them found it hard to cope with the extremely heavy workload and some were forced to quit after being on the job for only a few months, while others resigned despite having signed long-term contracts with their employers," Federation of Hong Kong Hotel Owners deputy chairman Clarence Shun Wah said. The fact is that these professionals could not bear the long working hours and all the pressure. Although they usually have double of their Hong Kong income, they have to pay for their own accommodation.

The money is better in Macau but the quality of services is worse than in Hong Kong. "Macau hotels are hiring people from everywhere," Shun Wah said. "If you walk into a hotel, you don't know whether you should speak to the workers in Cantonese, English or Mandarin." Macau needs to deal with this problem. There exist some schools that offer programs in hotel management, but they need to be more practical rather than research intensive.

Another problem is that a hotel professional should start with frontline duties and work their way up. The graduates do not want to undergo this. They prefer to work in the marketing or sales departments.

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