



## EXPERTISE IN TWO

The Microtel North Luzon hotel executive is no stranger to doing operations and sales at the same time. Roy Martin tells Paolo Abellanosa how such a career investment has been making his job easier.

Roy Martin knew the value of work even before he stepped into his last year of college. At 19 years old and while still enrolled, he began to work as a houseman for **Manila Hotel** to finance his education. He was studying commerce at the **Manuel L. Quezon University**.

Thirty years since, he traced the success of his current position as the area general manager of **Microtel North Luzon**, handling Cabanatuan, Tarlac, and Baguio, to starting and investing early on a career that he never left. But a lot of that success also comes from what he did immediately after entering the hotel industry. First and foremost, he sang and cleaned.

During the interview with *HNM*, the general manager couldn't help but volunteer how joining

the hotel's choir honed his skill in facing people. This would turn out to be an advantage initially in his job at the housekeeping and, eventually, in sales. Rotated in the front office and housekeeping during his first 10 years in the hotel, Martin took an internal job opportunity in sales and made sales calls every day for the next decade.

His experiences in getting clients and operating the business allowed him to juggle the demands of being group director of sales of **Paramount Hotels and Facilities Management Company, Inc.** and **Microtel Inn and Suites Philippines**, which are sister companies, and handling a property at the same time.

In 2005, while group director of sales, he was appointed resident manager of

**Lima Hotel**. This was his second time as resident manager. In 2008, he became GM of **Atrium Hotel** in Pasay City. "It's a preparation to carry a bigger responsibility in the hotel business," described Martin of his reasons why he opted to initially try a horizontal career growth. It paved the road to his incumbent post at Microtel, a mid-scale international chain under **Wyndham Hotel Group**.

Martin has doubts whether he can be classified as purely a micro- or a macro-manager, since certain times require that he looks at either perspective. As chief in Northern Luzon, he said he often works in synergy with the properties for marketing strategies and developing the area's direction. Meanwhile, his mastery in two areas fits right in a mid-scale property like Microtel whose room count per property ranges between 50 to 150 and employees number about 14 per 50 rooms. He repeatedly mentioned being hands-on in Baguio's operations and sales.

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### Fresh graduate woes

That is why his first question to new graduate applicants is homespun experience. "What is your experience in housekeeping?" he asked as he did his mock interview with this writer. Counterintuitive as it may be, this interrogation later makes sense as Martin said he always roots for an applicant's foundation. He will then ask what kind of bed-sheet folding you have done at home or how your green thumb is.

Martin is a believer of leveling out the playing field in the recruitment process, removing the biases of educational background. The harsh truth in the hospitality labor, he said, is that fresh graduates are immediately segregated based on their educational background. But once at work, the entry-level position has always been an effective equalizer, he added.

Today, he is more hopeful than ever that this problem will be resolved. He currently participates in the parallel review workshop of the **Commission on Higher Education (CHED)**'s policies, standards, and guidelines (more known as PSGs in the academia) of tourism and hospitality management curricula, with partners the **Tourism Congress of the Philippines** and **Philippine Business for Education**, a non-profit. A goal of CHED's efforts is to fill in the imbalance of quality education among schools by mandating a revitalized curriculum that meets today's industry demands.

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### Did you know?

Wyndham is the largest hotel group in the world in terms of the number of operating hotels. It had 7,205 hotels as of November 2012, and the fourth in operating rooms, 613,126 last year, according to hotel data source TOPHOTELPROJECTS.