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Answers

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Careering uphill: Opportunities for employment in the TTH sector

Most people, when they consider a career in tourism, hospitality or leisure, think of waiters and chefs, fitness instructors and travel agents. Obviously, these people don't really know the tourism industry very well. They see an industry that offers part-time, low-paid jobs in hotels or restaurants, jobs that people do until they find a 'real' career. Needless to say, that type of career is part of tourism, but there is so much more. Interior designers, marketing agents, event planners, museum curators and hiking guides are all part of the industry, too. In the same way, hospitality is not just about hotels. It affects us every day. We grab a sandwich for lunch, stop off for a coffee or drinks with friends, stay at a hotel, go to the cinema or theatre, eat in the canteen at work, catch a train, get fuel at a motorway service station. All this falls within the scope of hospitality.

Tourism-related employment is different from many other employment sectors. For one thing, tourism is a highly mobile industry. Also, the skills learnt in most tourism occupations are easily transferable to other sectors in the industry. What you learn in, say, accommodation, you can apply to transportation, F&B services, event and conference planning, attractions, tourism services, outdoor adventure and recreation. Fortunately, these skills transfer to just about anywhere in the world, which makes it one of the most flexible industries. If you are really dedicated, the industry also enables you to rise quickly on the career ladder. Moreover, there are a large number of people who take advantage of the flexibility offered by the tourism industry to work on a part-time basis. Finally, statistics do not always show the benefits offered to many tourism employees, such as clothing and footwear allowances, dry-cleaning services, free meals and staff discounts (such as cheap flights).

This makes working in the TTH sector sound appealing, but it may not be suitable for everybody. Certainly, it's an industry that is constantly expanding and opening up opportunities for interesting careers. It is actually one of the fastest growing industries in the UK. It is expected to be worth over £286 billion by 2025 – just over 10%

WTTC predictions for tourism and travel in 2033

Industry growth 2023–33	2.6% pa
Global GDP by 2033	US \$15.5 billion = 11.6% of global GDP
Employment by 2033	430 million = 11.8% of total global employment

Source: WTTC. (2023). *Economic Impact Research, 2023* [Fact sheet]. <https://wttc.org/research/economic-impact>

of UK GDP – supporting just over four million jobs, which is around 11% of the total UK number. But what sort of person do you need to be to work in hospitality, leisure and tourism? It's not an open door. You need to like people, and to enjoy the challenge of working in an environment focused on the customer. This means putting up with customers' dissatisfaction. You need to be flexible, to enjoy problem-solving, and to be able to think on your feet. It goes without saying that you need to be able to work as part of a team.

Not surprisingly, in such a varied field, there are many ways of entering the industry. So, what's the best way, and what qualifications do you need? You can simply get a job and benefit from company training and development, possibly alongside a part-time course. Many hotels and restaurants also offer apprenticeship or traineeship schemes, which combine training in the workplace with time to study. Alternatively, you can enrol in a full-time college or university course. Qualifications alone, however, are no guarantee of a job. Much depends on your personality, attitude, communication skills and common sense. The variety of responsibilities, the chance to work with people from around the world, the potential for quick growth, training opportunities and benefits: these are just some of the many reasons that attract hundreds of thousands of tourism employees across the world and keep them interested in this dynamic field.