



Keynote Speech

Building the Talent of the Future for Gastronomy Tourism

by Jean-Philippe ZAHM, Ducasse Paris

- Ladies and gentlemen good afternoon. My name is JPZ and I am the CEO of the AD Group in Japan. Our activities encompass fine dining restaurants, casual restaurants, as well as retail activities with handcraft chocolate, ice-cream and biscuits.
- Before occupying management positions I started by career in the kitchen up to becoming a chef. My first contact with Japan was more than 30 years ago as a teacher of French cuisine at the Tsuji Cooking School. So I guess I have a pretty comprehensive understanding of the challenges to attract and train recruits for the gastronomic scene.
- We will address 2 majors questions today which are maybe the most challenging point for our industry.



How as a company can you train, recruit and find
the right talent for our industry?

How to address the challenges post COVID-19 period?

- I would like to start with a motto wrote by Horst Schulze that many of you may know and could bring for me a lot of pride for our employees all over the world

“ *We are Ladies and Gentlemen
serving Ladies and Gentlemen.* ”

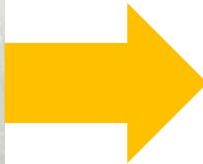
Horst SCHULZE
Ritz-Carlton Hotel Company
Co-Founder and Former COO





1. Passion

How we get from here to there ?



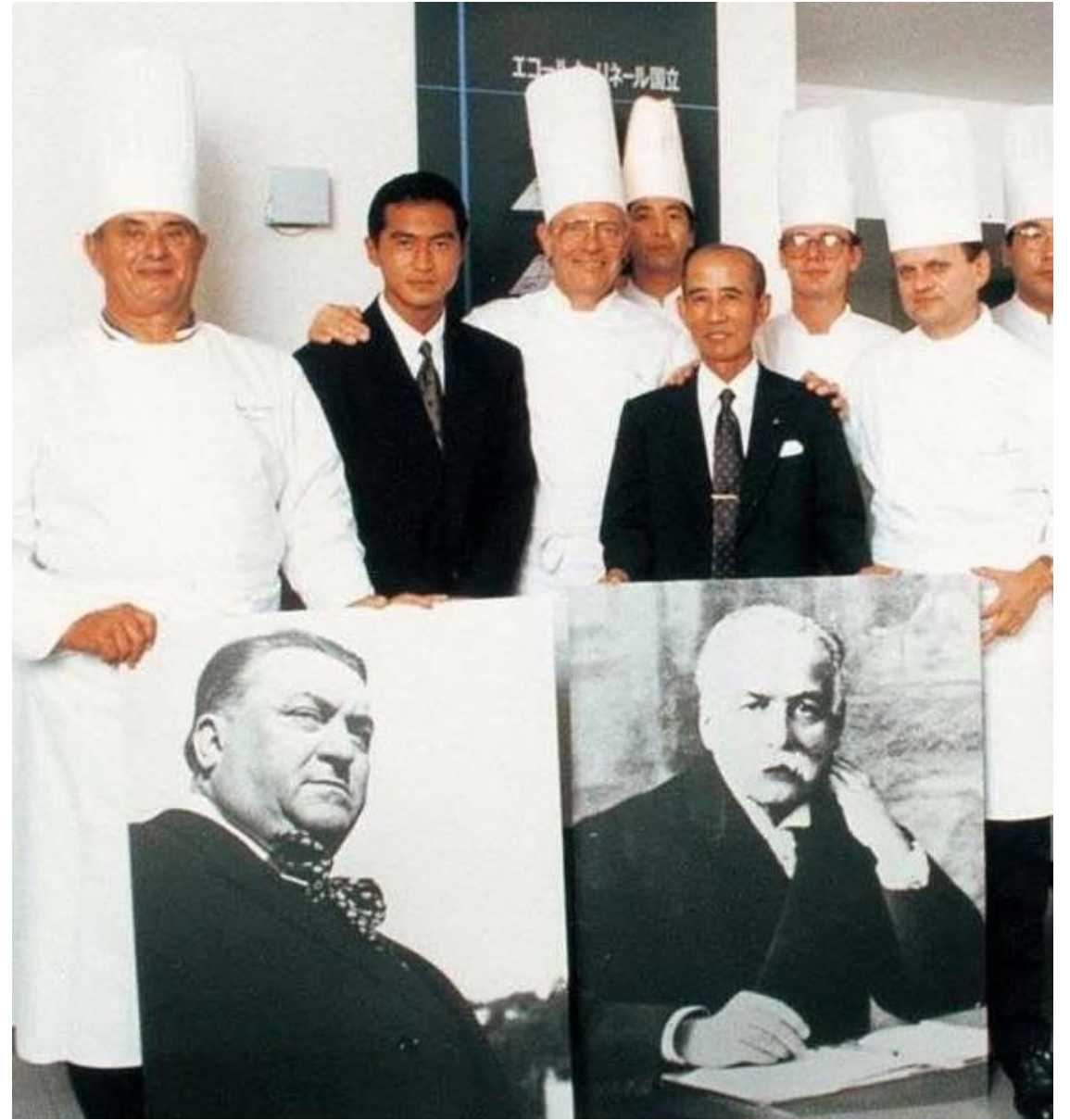
- 1 – PASSION (for serving and interacting with people)
- One should never underestimate the role of passion when people pick a job. Career opportunities matter (I will come back to that later) but the psychological element is key.
- It is therefore important to detect, when recruiting people, who has this element of passion. In particular the pleasure of serving. One say that some people get more pleasure at offering gift receiving them. This is a trait that you re looking for when recruiting talents.
- This element of passion is all the more important in our post covid era. One thing which has changed dramatically, is the rise of the Work From Home phenomenon. This has massively increased the discrepancy of working conditions between the jobs in the gastronomy field and the one in other fields such as finance, marketing or technology. Already people in the food industry had to deal with extended working hours such as late evening or weekends but the removal of the commuting constraints for many other jobs has made the difference even starker.

- Furthermore, anyone being frustrated with the close human contacts of working on a floor can now appreciate the comfort of his own home office, something that is obviously not possible in the field of gastronomy.
- That's why, rather than trying to "compensate" employees for this characteristic, we should actually strive to identify those who like human contacts. In the Myers-Briggs matrix it is calling in particular for profile who are more extravert than introvert, more focused on sensing than intuition, more focused on feeling than thinking and value perception over judgement.
- This psychological element is far too often overlooked in our age of process handbooks. Many companies think that employees should adjust to their procedures whereas I strongly believe that it is also key to allocate people to environment that suits their personality.



2. Proper Holistic Training

Cooking to service, theoretical to practical





- 2 – PROPER HOLISTIC TRAINING (cooking to service, theoretical to practical)
- Having said that it's important to let people's personality express itself, I also want to balance it with the need for a strict training. Whether you are more talented and have a stronger inclination for fine dining, regional cooking, vegetarian dishes,...you always need to start with a solid training. A bit like you can't be a good contemporary dancer without learning the base of ballet dancing. Same thing in cuisine : you can't avoid the training of the French brigade system...
- One area where Asia could inspire from Europe is the Ecoles Hotelieres that train you not just in cooking but also in service. Service is something that require the same learning and dedication as cooking.
- Now trade is learned not just in schools but also in the ground. There is an element of learning that can only be achieved by being immersed in an experienced team. As such, our responsibility as managers is to design development plans that are commensurate with our capacity to train new talents. We can actually waste those by not taking the necessary time to let them reach their maturity. We can even create some stressed and messed up working environments which will ultimately put off people.

A chef in a black apron is washing white plates in a stainless steel sink. The chef's hands are visible, holding a plate under a running faucet. Several other plates are stacked in the sink. The background is dark and out of focus, showing more kitchen equipment.

3. Consideration

Pride and Remuneration

- 3- CONSIDERATION (pride and remuneration)
- Ultimately the issue of building the talent of the future for gastronomy tourism relies on the order of priority set up by companies. It is now well understood that tourism goes well beyond the sight seeing activities of the previous century and that what tourists are now looking for is “experiences”.
- Among those experiences, gastronomy is a crucial one. Still one wonder if companies always set their priorities straight. Even in Japan, the land of omotenashi -the perfect service, some new hotels focus more on the architectural statements than on the quality of service. Service being less instagramable is often not the priority of new touristic developments. Restaurants design might be superb but the service consideration is often coming last.
- Future employees often pick an employer if they can be proud of the place they work in. If the quality is missing clients will be frustrated. And if clients are frustrated the employees won't be happy. A negative feedback loop can then materialise. Investing on the intangibles element of the gastronomic experience such as having enough staff in the kitchen and for service, and not just on having designer cutlery and truffle and caviar with your dish is key.

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- Finally I will conclude by saying that our industry can be inspiring enjoyable and fun. Gastronomy is such fantastic field to work in. You just need to feel consideration on top of that to grow and develop your talents.
- To attract future talents, nothing better than showing what we do and how we do it. This is why in France and in Japan the Alain Ducasse Group is proud to support the College Culinaire associations to help the transmission of knowhow to the younger generations.
- Thank you very much for your listening.

