



#MyHospitalityLife

Name: Ryan Davidson

Age: 34

Current Workplace: Gather & Gather, Sky Watermark Site

Job Title: General Manager

Number of years in the industry: 16

Starting at the bottom

I completed my first ever shift within the industry on my 18th birthday and have never looked back!

I began working part-time across a number of positions within bars and restaurants within my hometown in Sterling, Glasgow. During this time, I also worked part-time in a contact centre for a bank, comparing the two; the contact centre was pretty boring, whilst the bar and restaurant work was so much fun! Its these feelings proved to be the decider when looking at which career path to take.

I was sure I'd found an industry I loved, but tired of being asked, 'when are you going to get a real job!', I acted and in 2007, I signed up at my local college to complete a HND in Hospitality Management. This was a 2-year course of which I saw as a great opportunity to get an 'Industry Qualification' on paper.

Opportunities are everywhere

Skip ahead to 2009, my parents take a holiday to St. Lucia, being their 2nd stay at a Sandals Resort they were invited to a returning dinner. Sat next to the resorts General Manager, they got talking, telling them all about me and my love for the industry. The General Manager informed my parents of an Internship Programme they were running, encouraging me to send my CV in. I did just that.

I went on to spend an amazing year working at the resort. Making the most of the incredible benefits that came with the job, opportunity to travel, free onsite accommodation & food, cleaned uniforms, new worldwide

friends, and major discounts on excursions – which gave me the once in a lifetime opportunity to learn how to scuba dive.

I spent 6 months working in F&B on the resort, before spending my final 6 months at the resort as a Butler Co-Ordinator. Two very different roles/aspects of the resort, but both allowing me to learn a range of skills, including logistics, people management, working under pressure and time management.

Once back home I moved into the Hotel world, working for a Hotel Management company, ICMI up in the Scottish Highlands. Starting as a Duty Manager, then moving up into the Assistant Manager role. **Top tip: don't wait for that promotion, start doing the tasks and responsibilities for the role you want, and the promotion will naturally be yours!**

2 years later, moving to Central Scotland I started a new position as Assistant General Manager at the Cromlix Hotel, for those that don't know, this is Andy Murrays hotel, 11 days into my new role I amazingly found myself working Andy's wedding!

Skip 10 months and another great opportunity came my way at a new hotel property just outside of Glasgow. Initially an event only venue, I worked as the General Manager fully overseeing the whole set-up, including the build, procurement, and recruitment, it was all on my shoulders.

My hard work paid off, gaining my biggest achievement, winning my site a 5* AA + 1 Rosette and a 5* Visit Scotland. I had some great times at this venue, including completing a staggering 30 weddings during a 6-month period and often dining with Albert Ruiz during the creation of tasting menus. Not to mention the number of new friends and social aspects of the role.

Moving on

Wanting to slow down slightly, my next move saw me working as 'Interim Restaurant Manager' at Kimpton Charlotte Square Hotel, Edinburgh. I have always been aware that one of the massive positives of working in the industry was the ability to network. With that in mind, my General Manager at the Kimpton had a brother who was Regional Manager for Gather & Gather. I had been seeking an opportunity for some time within contact catering and this was my way in. In Feb 2017, I secured the position as Assistant Manager with Gather & Gather. Now a family man, this position allowed me to stay within the industry, whilst creating a much more suited work/life balance. I then went on to gain my now position as General Manager at the Sky Watermark site in Glasgow.

Wrapping it up

I can't express enough how the industry had completely shaped me. I have been lucky enough to work with a variety of people, now seeing the ability to manage people in and out of work as one of my best gained skills. I have proved this to be true throughout my career when team retention comes into play, something I am immensely proud of.

To this day, I very much base my career achievements on learning the basics. Top tip: don't be afraid to start at the bottom, it will allow you to appreciate and experience everything as you move up the ladder.

Never believe the bad press the industry gets. The industry changes constantly, is never boring, it offers an amazing starting point, with opportunity after opportunity for those who have the drive and ambition.

If I were to describe the industry in 3 x words: Rewarding, Energetic & Social.