

Fieldwork in Starbucks

INTRODUCTION

This fieldwork project is on Pearlridge Starbucks employees, located by Borders. The information gathered was done so by informal interviews and participant observation. The participant observation took place on March 20, 22 and 24 of 2006. Starbucks is a well-known coffee location to go to.

APPLICATION

Sebastian applied to work at the Starbucks in Kapolei, but was told there was no openings in Kapolei. There would be a new Starbucks opening at Pearlridge where JC Penny once stood. The manager at Kapolei asked Sebastian if he would like a job there, and he agreed. Kendall heard about the new Pearlridge branch opening and went to ward for an application and interview that same day.

TRAINING

Training includes going to four classes. These classes are four hours long and are given on certain days at the headquarters at Wardcenter. The classes include experience at Starbucks and the things one would see, an introduction to the coffee and where it comes from, a bar scale class, and finally an oven class. During these classes, most of the future employees of Starbucks Pearlridge are in training. Most of them would not see each other for another 2 months as they trained at different Starbucks locations. Employee's training would be over several month, getting use to the work environment of Starbucks.

Sebastian trained in Kapolei for 1 1/2 months along with Susan and Margrette, awaiting the October 17th opening of the new Borders Starbucks in Pearlridge. When Sebastian was first put "on bar" his first customer was a woman who wanted perfect foam. Sebastian said, "this was a very nerve racking experience, because I have never done this before. I attempted twice, with no success and gave it to someone else."

Both Kendall and Danny trained at the Millilani Town Center Starbucks before transferring over to the new Starbucks in Pearlridge. Kacey trained along side Kendall and Danny but later transferred while working at Starbucks Pearlridge. Kyle trained at the Pearl Center Starbucks for the job at Borders Pearlridge.

STARBUCKS BORDERS PEARLRIDGE

On its October 17th opening, Pearlridge Starbucks had 11 employees. Three of these employees left over the next few months. Others that give their story did stay at this branch of Starbucks.

Employees are not to give free products, though some do. During one experience, Kendall tried to give me a free Strawberry Smoothie. Kendall got nervous as Sabrina, the manager, walked in from the back and he asked her to ring me up. Giving out free drinks can result in an employee being fired. When giving out free drinks or discounted drinks an employee must also watch out for Sidney because she is a strict supervisor. Sebastian explained that everyone else does it, so most other employees allow for this. The only thing they can't give out for free are the food items on certain days, because those get counted. On other days, they are thrown out, at the end of the night, and that is when an

employee may give it out for free.

At the end of the week, any tips made from the tip jar are distributed to all the employees. Tips are separated by the number of hours and employee worked. When distributing the tip, the manager adds up all hours worked by employees and divides that by the number by the hour worked by the individual employee. This gives the manager the percentage of hours worked compared to the entire store. That percentage is then multiplied by the total amount of tip, yielding the individual's total tip.

When an employee goes on break, his or her break starts when he or she receives his or her free drink. From there, they carry around a timer with them that indicates how much time is remaining of their break. When an employee works 5 1/2 to 6 hours, the employee gets a both 10 and 30 minute break. When an employee works 6-8 hours, the employee gets a 10, 30, 10 minute break respectively.

Carol was the first to train at the Pearlridge Starbucks after its opening. She was just one of the six who got hired. Carol needed a job that would give her good medical insurance since she will be down in Hawaii for several months. Carol is taking a break from college as her boyfriend got surgery on his hand in Hawaii. Carol has two college degrees, and is a substitute elementary teacher. She graduated high school at 16 and went straight to college. Now at the age of 21 she will be finishing up her third and final degree.

Carol explains her first Starbucks experience as "very nerve racking. I wasn't sure if I would mess up then not be allowed to work at any Starbucks branch." Carol said her first customer was a young teen who had forgotten the name of the drink her mother wanted. By listening to the girl for the taste, color and texture Carol was able to figure out that what the drink was.

When an employee is experienced enough, he or she can be asked to train incoming employees. Sebastian once trained one of the new employees. She was still a teenager and a mother. Sebastian said while training her, she did not enjoy his company. One experience was how this girl swept the floor. Sebastian felt that she did not do an efficient job. Later on, she had to clean the Starbucks toilet like all other employees have. This girl told Sebastian that she did not clean toilets at home and that she shouldn't have to clean them at her job. Sebastian got the girl to continue cleaning the toilets. Sebastian explained that "she then called me a duechbag and went on her daily task.

FUTURE PLANS

Sebastian has decided that he would like to transfer to a new Starbucks. By talking to the manager at the upcoming Sand Island Starbucks, Sebastian found out that he could be a supervisor there since he has experience. Sebastian described working at Starbucks as one that "shouldn't be serious as long as they get the work done." When Sebastian sat down with Sabrina to discuss his possible promotion, Sebastian was told that he should be "more serious," but Sebastian did not feel the same way. As a supervisor, Sebastian would get a raise of \$2:30 to his current pay. If he becomes a supervisor at the Sand Island Starbucks when it opens, he would be making \$10.00 an hour.

Carol is leaving Starbucks in June because she will be moving to Las Vegas. She will like to continue her degree in pre-med and graduate from college.

Kendall is not planning on leaving Starbucks since he is still in high school. He will continue his high school job until he goes into college.

CONCLUSION

It is interesting to see how the work environment is different from those of social environments. Certain employees are friends but do not like the work ethics of the one they seek company outside of the work atmosphere. Having a job isn't cut out to what it seems. There is a lot of memorization going on in the workforce. There is much to learn to be able to conduct daily tasks.