

# “Poaching” A way of life - so they say

**Poaching is not recruitment. Recruitment is when a client searches globally for the most suitable candidate to fill their important role.**

**Poaching is targeting your competition and your next door neighbor for their staff.**

Poaching has a number of other meanings; it can designate any activity in which a person hunts or steals from another property without the property owner’s knowledge or permission.

Modern terminology has “poaching” as a verb now meaning the act of hiring employees who are already employed by another company (especially a competitor).

Poaching is a common Global Practice, but less common in areas where the majority of the staff are local and where their employees are members of a trade union.

Poaching really comes into play in countries where the majority of the staff are expatriates; especially on the lower levels; who normally accept roles for a short contracted period so every dollar counts for them. It is also more prevalent in countries where Governments allow movement from one hotel to another without a written release from the current employer.

In many countries, “Poaching” is not allowed or where less prevalent where the current employer must give a written release to the employee in order for them to leave and find another role in the same country. In some regions, an employee is prohibited from accepting a new role in the same country and must wait 12 months out of the country in order to reapply for a new work permit in that country.

Of course, “Poaching” is an every day occurrence and in its true form “a one time act” where an employer seeks out a specialist from a competitor and recruits or poaches that single unique individual.

In the UAE, the term now means what it did in the Middle Ages, in those days; poachers would go into the forest and ravage it for as many animals and birds they could poach at one time.

Years back the UAE prohibited poaching from any other company in the UAE. With the relaxation of this law, poaching is yesterday’s news. They don’t call it poaching they call it a “Career Day” where they open up the doors and interview everyone from anywhere in the UAE who is looking for financial improvement. This is especially helpful for the new hotel openings where they have larger budgets and can pay higher contract salaries than were offered a year or more ago.

Any new Hotel would prefer to hire from within the country and not have to worry about having to pay for travel expenses, visas, and health checks etc., just call a local reference and have these people start



the next day. This is why new hotels can offer more money. They don't have all the expenses of bringing new employees into the country.

**Poaching is not the answer to finding talent, it is just moving from Peter to Paul. To find talent is to search for "diamonds" and for that, you must look deep to find them and it is expensive.**

Companies cannot continue to poach from one to another and each pay a little bit more since the final outcome will be staff that is far too expensive to keep employed if revenues drop.

The story of poaching in the sports industry is well known ; footballers are poached from one team to another at the completion of their contracts for millions and millions of dollars. This activity is not always financially wise as the North American Hockey League found out in 2012. Salaries increased to a point where the owners couldn't make money any longer and so asked players to reduce their salaries. The players said no! "A contract is a contract". The owners then "locked them out" and the players also decided to strike. So, half the Hockey Season gone and everyone lost!

The only antidote for a company poaching your people is to retain them through competitive salaries and trainings as Walter Knight of City Max Bur Dubai said, "We appoint dedicated trainers to upgrade staff and our trainers of course encourage staff to stay and develop their talent within our group".

As a short term fix to "open" a hotel without the expense of global recruitment trips poaching is a smart avenue! But should occupancy slide and your revenues drop with staff salaries and expenses mountain top high, this can be a steep and dangerous cliff and any hotel could fall hard at any time.