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CARIBBEAN
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ASSOCIATION

AI Workforce Transformation Guide for Caribbean Hospitality

SAMPLE EDITION

Selected excerpts from the complete guide



VERSION 3.0 - Practical Strategies for People Management, Learning and Leadership

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ABOUT THIS PUBLICATION

This publication is a project of the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association's People Development Initiative (PDI).

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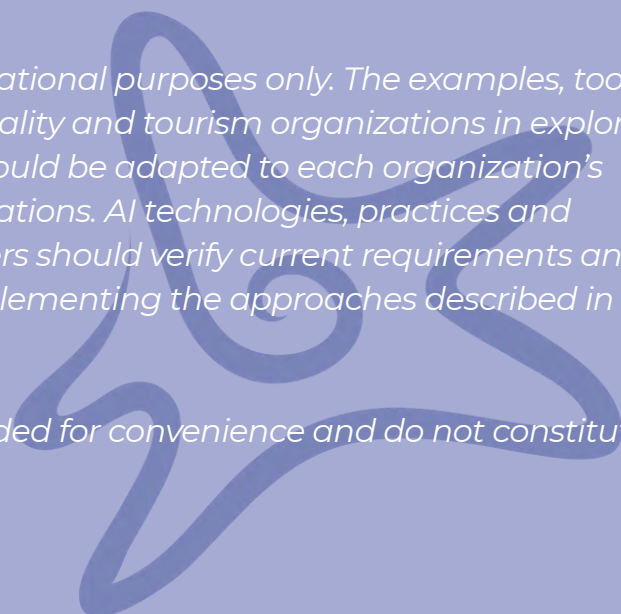
Disclaimer

This guidebook is provided for informational and educational purposes only. The examples, tools and recommendations are intended to support hospitality and tourism organizations in exploring the responsible use of artificial intelligence (AI) and should be adapted to each organization's circumstances, policies and applicable laws and regulations. AI technologies, practices and regulatory requirements continue to evolve, and readers should verify current requirements and exercise appropriate professional judgment when implementing the approaches described in this guide.

References and links to third-party resources are provided for convenience and do not constitute an endorsement by CHTA.

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Foreword

Brittany Brathwaite

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This is not a technical manual. It is not a vendor brochure. And it is not a prediction about some distant future. This is a practical resource for hoteliers and the people who make hospitality happen every day. If you are reading this, you may own or manage a hotel, lead a human resources team, manage a department, supervise a floor, design training programs, or be preparing yourself for the next step into leadership. Your day-to-day responsibilities differ, but you share a common reality: you are expected to deliver more and constantly improve on



your service, tighter margins, stronger teams with the same hours in a day and the same people-challenges everyone in Caribbean hospitality knows too well.

In your role, three questions continue to resurface:

- Are we genuinely investing our time, money, and people where they will make the greatest difference?
- Are we protecting our teams and our business against the pressures that are already building, not years away?
- Are we creating lasting, hard-to-copy strengths – or are we relying on reputation and hoping that will be enough?

Prior to the issuance of the **Artificial Intelligence Transformation Guide for Caribbean Tourism** in 2024, conversations about Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Caribbean hospitality had mostly happened somewhere else at technology conferences, in vendor demonstrations, or tucked inside HR department discussions.

Each has value, but none of those spaces is where the real decisions about people, budgets, and daily operations are made. This AI guide fortifies what we started in 2024 and brings the conversation directly to you.

Over the following pages, you will find no hype, no jargon, and no request to "trust the algorithm." What you will find is a clear-eyed, evidence-based look at how AI is already changing the economics of workforce management and what that means for the teams you lead, the guests you serve, and the businesses you are responsible for sustaining.

The Caribbean hospitality industry faces a quiet, persistent challenge. Turnover is quietly draining budgets. Skills gaps are chipping away at the guest experiences that justify our rates. Meanwhile, hospitality organizations and destinations around the world are increasingly exploring AI workforce tools to strengthen workforce capability and service delivery. Their experience reinforces an important lesson: successful adoption starts not with technology itself, but with leaders asking the right practical questions.

This guide exists because the CHTA's PDI believes that Caribbean hospitality professionals from the floor supervisor to the boardroom should never have to choose between financial responsibility and respect for the people who do the work. AI, deployed thoughtfully and ethically, strengthens both.

The question is no longer whether AI will reshape how we manage, train, and support our workforce. The question is whether you, in your role, will have the tools and the confidence to lead that change, influence it, or find yourself adapting after everyone else.

Let us choose to lead – together.

A Message from our President

Sanovnik Destang

President, Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA)

Executive Director, Bay Gardens Resorts

The Caribbean hospitality industry has always thrived because of its people. As technology continues to evolve, our challenge is not whether to embrace artificial intelligence (AI), but how to do so in a way that enhances, not replaces, the warmth, authenticity, and personal connections that make our destinations truly unique.



As the leading voice of Caribbean hospitality and tourism, the CHTA is committed to ensuring that our members have the knowledge and tools needed to remain competitive in an increasingly digital world.

Two years ago, the CHTA launched its first AI guidebook to educate and equip Caribbean hospitality leaders with a practical understanding of AI and its potential for our industry. This marked the beginning of the CHTA AI Guidebook Series, launched in 2024 with the objective of providing timely insights and practical resources to help hospitality professionals navigate one of the most significant transformations facing our industry.

The first publication, **Artificial Intelligence Transformation Guide for Caribbean Tourism**, was a significant milestone, becoming the first AI guide of its kind produced by a regional hotel and tourism association. The response from the industry was overwhelmingly positive, generating tremendous interest and serving as the foundation for what has since become one of CHTA's signature annual initiatives.

In 2025, we released **Artificial Intelligence Transformation Guide for Caribbean Tourism – Version 2.0**, an expanded and updated edition that explored the foundations of AI and emerging technologies, responsible AI adoption, and the latest trends shaping the hospitality industry.

This year, we are proud to present **AI Workforce Transformation Guide for Caribbean Hospitality: Practical Strategies for People Management, Learning and Leadership**. This new edition shifts the conversation from understanding AI to implementing it. It focuses on how hospitality companies can prepare their workforce, strengthen leadership, and adopt AI responsibly and effectively.

Structured in two parts, this guidebook provides hoteliers and hospitality professionals with a practical understanding of the legal, ethical, and operational considerations surrounding AI in the workplace. It also explores the unique nuances of applying AI to people management and training within the Caribbean context and includes practical tools, examples, and implementation strategies that organizations of every size can use to improve efficiency, develop their workforce, and enhance guest experiences. This guidebook also serves as the foundation for a companion AI Workforce Transformation Toolkit, which will be released later this year to provide additional templates, checklists, and practical resources to support implementation.

We are extremely proud of this latest volume and encourage hospitality stakeholders throughout the Caribbean to read it, share it with their teams, and use it as a practical resource as they begin or continue their AI journey. We are confident that the knowledge and strategies contained in this guide will help organizations strengthen their operations while preserving the exceptional human touch that defines Caribbean hospitality.

Finally, I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to everyone who contributed to the development of this guidebook. In particular, I wish to recognize Brittany Brathwaite, Chair of CHTA's People Development Initiative, whose leadership, commitment, and expertise were instrumental in bringing this publication to fruition.

The CHTA AI Guidebook Series

Welcome to the **AI Workforce Transformation Guide for Caribbean Hospitality: Practical Strategies for People Management, Learning and Leadership**.

Artificial intelligence (AI) is no longer a future consideration; it is already transforming how hospitality organizations recruit, develop, engage, and support their people. For Caribbean hospitality businesses, the opportunity is not simply to adopt AI, but to use it strategically to strengthen operations, empower employees, enhance the guest experience, and remain competitive in an increasingly digital world.

Recognizing that organizations are at different stages of their AI journey, CHTA has designed this guide as a practical resource for hospitality leaders who want to move from awareness to implementation. Whether you are just beginning to explore AI or looking to expand existing initiatives, this guide provides practical recommendations that can be adapted to organizations of all sizes.

To make the content easier to navigate, this guidebook is divided into **two complementary parts**:

Part I – Understanding AI in Workforce Transformation provides the foundation. It explores the role of AI in hospitality, workforce transformation, ethical considerations, governance, and the opportunities and challenges of applying AI to people management, learning, and leadership.

Part II – An Implementation Guide: Turning Strategy into Action focuses on implementation. It offers practical frameworks, business-case models, workforce transformation guidance, implementation considerations and best practices to help hospitality organizations successfully introduce AI into their workforce strategies and day-to-day operations.

This guide has been developed for hotel owners, general managers, executives, department heads, HR professionals, training managers, IT leaders, and anyone responsible for leading organizational change. Regardless of your role, you will find practical tools and actionable guidance to help your organization improve decision-making, strengthen employee engagement and productivity, optimize operations, and deliver exceptional guest experiences.

We encourage you to use this guide as both a reference and a working resource. Highlight key ideas, discuss them with your leadership team, adapt the tools to your organization, and begin implementing the recommendations that best fit your current needs and future goals.

The future of Caribbean hospitality will continue to be shaped by people. By embracing AI thoughtfully and responsibly, we can ensure that technology enhances rather than replaces the warmth, authenticity, and personal service that define our region and set us apart from the rest of the world.

Caribbean hospitality has a workforce problem that technology did not create and cannot, by itself, solve.

Employee turnover remains a persistent workforce challenge across hospitality, with rates varying considerably by property, role and market. Recruitment costs have climbed as agency fees have risen. Schedules are still built by hand, in spreadsheets, by managers who should be coaching. Skills gaps quietly erode the guest experience that justifies our rates. We have, over many years, learned to treat these as the cost of doing business on small islands with mobile labour markets. They are not. They are solvable problems, and our competitors have started to solve them.

This guide exists because the Caribbean's greatest competitive assets—the warmth, creativity, and resilience of its people—are being asked to compete against destinations that are systematically removing friction from the visitor experience.

AI will not make our hospitality more human. It cannot. What it can do is take the routine, the repetitive and the administrative off our people's hands, so that the human work, the welcome, the story, and the recovery of a bad day gets the attention it deserves.

That is the opportunity. But it is not automatic, and it is not free. If deployed carelessly, these same tools can entrench bias in hiring, enable excessive workplace surveillance, hollow-out roles without a strategy for supporting the people affected, and ultimately cost organizations more than the value they deliver. The difference between the two outcomes is not the technology. It is leadership.

This guide is written for the people who will make that difference.

A note on scope. This is the people and workforce dimension of AI transformation: recruitment, learning, scheduling, performance, well-being and the governance that must sit around them. It is not the whole of the subject. AI is also reshaping how guests discover, book, pay and communicate with our properties — distribution, revenue management, guest messaging and cybersecurity. Those are addressed in separate CHTA work and should be read alongside this volume.

A note on Part II. Part II of this guidebook is designed for the leaders and teams responsible for implementation. It translates the strategic context established in Part I into practical guidance for planning, piloting and managing AI across the workforce.

Who This Guide is for

Role	How to Use It
Hotel Owner GM	Read Part I first. In Part I: Chapter 1 (readiness), Chapter 3 (governance and pilot design), Chapter 5 (what is coming next)
HR Director	Read all chapters. You own the ethical charter, the bias audit and discipline and the development of internal AI champions set out in Chapters 3 and 4.
Training Manager	Focus on Chapter 2 (learning and development) and Chapter 5. You will lead the re-skilling response.
Department Head Food & Beverage, Housekeeping, Front Office	Use Chapter 2 to identify the applications relevant to your department and Chapter 3 to design a 12-week pilot.
IT Operations	Read Chapter 3 (integration, vendor due diligence, agent governance) and Chapter 4 (data privacy and security).
Line Staff Team Members	Chapter 1 will tell you what AI is and is not. Chapter 4 sets out your rights. Ask your AI Champion for help.

What this Guide will not do

- We will not pretend that AI is magic. It is mathematics applied to data. It has limits, and we name them.
- We will not suggest you replace your people with software. The human warmth of Caribbean hospitality is your competitive advantage. AI exists to amplify it.
- We will not ignore the risks. Algorithmic bias, data privacy failures, surveillance and employee mistrust are real. Chapters 3 and 4 are devoted to governing them.
- We will not ask for a seven-figure investment. We advocate starting with a single twelve-week pilot in a single department.
- Throughout this guide, you will find practical inserts including Templates and Real Examples. A wider template set will be included in the forthcoming CHTA AI Workforce Toolkit.

Later this year, CHTA will launch an AI Workforce Toolkit, a separate downloadable resource pack which will be shared with our members.

A framework from the complete guide

The seven-stage AI Adoption Journey provides a practical path from understanding AI to measuring its impact.

The AI Adoption Journey

A continuous journey from understanding AI to driving lasting impact.



Source: Developed with AI assistance



EXCERPT FROM PART I

AI in Practice

What could AI look like in the day-to-day reality of Caribbean hospitality?

From recruitment and learning to scheduling and employee support, Part I explores where AI can reduce administrative friction while allowing people to focus on the work that requires judgment, connection and the human touch.

Enhancing HR Operational Efficiency

AI dramatically reduces the administrative burdens that consume a disproportionate amount of HR professionals' time, a pain point acutely felt in the Caribbean hospitality sector where HR teams are often lean and wear multiple hats. Routine, high-volume tasks that once required manual intervention: screening stacks of resumes, answering repetitive employee policy questions, managing complex leave and shift-swap requests, and processing tedious onboarding paperwork can now be intelligently automated. This is not about replacing the human heart of Human Resources; it is about liberating it. By offloading these transactional processes to AI, HR professionals are freed to refocus their expertise on strategic initiatives that directly impact the bottom line and the employee experience: strategic workforce planning for seasonal peaks, intentional culture building and values alignment, proactive employee well-being and retention programs, and high-touch talent development conversations.

For Caribbean hospitality businesses, the transformative potential of this shift is magnified by the technology's ability to bridge linguistic and accessibility gaps. Consider the chaos of managing shift-swaps during a sudden family emergency or a peak season crunch. Traditionally, this involves a flurry of WhatsApp messages, a paper form, or a conversation with a supervisor who then emails an HR manager who might be off-site. An AI-powered HR chatbot, accessible 24/7 via a familiar interface like WhatsApp or a mobile-friendly web portal, can handle this entire transaction autonomously. An employee can simply message "Swap my Thursday close shift with Saturday open" and the AI instantly checks that week's schedule for eligible colleagues with matching skills, sends a request to the first available match, and upon acceptance, updates the master roster, records the change for payroll, and notifies both the supervisor and the requesting employee all in under a minute.

The linguistic dimension is a particularly profound advantage for our region. An AI chatbot that can fluently explain complex benefit policies, such as National Insurance Scheme contributions, health insurance co-pays, or vacation accrual rules, in Jamaican Patois, Haitian Creole, Spanish, or English, as the employee prefers, democratizes access to critical information. This eliminates the unintentional gatekeeping that occurs when a junior staff member feels intimidated to ask a senior manager to clarify a confusing policy in their second language, or when a critical safety document is only available in English.

This single capability builds trust, ensures policy compliance through clarity, and signals deep respect for the employee's identity. Similarly, AI-augmented resume screening can be calibrated to focus on verified skills and competencies rather than pedigree, helping to surface hidden talent from non-traditional backgrounds and reduce unconscious bias in the first stage of hiring.

Implementation Tip: The path to successful automation begins with a rigorous process audit, not a technology purchase. Before deploying any AI tool, map the exact employee journey for administrative requests. Identify the top five "frequently asked friction points": common queries or processes that consume disproportionate HR time, such as "How many vacation days do I have left?" or "What is the uniform policy for my department?" Phase the AI chatbot launch by focusing on these high-volume, low-complexity tasks first to build user confidence and demonstrate immediate value. Crucially, the implementation must include a "warm hand-off" protocol. The AI must be programmed with a clear and seamless escalation trigger; if the chatbot detects an employee's frustration through repeated phrasing or sentiment, or when it encounters a query involving legal rights or disciplinary matters, it must instantly connect the employee to a live, named HR professional with full context of the conversation so far. Never leave an employee stranded in an automated loop during a sensitive moment.

For resume screening automation, the golden rule is to run a rigorous bias audit on the AI model with a data set that reflects the local applicant pool before going live. The AI must be trained to recognize and value equivalent regional qualifications, such as Caribbean Vocational Qualifications (CVQs) or National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs), and to not penalize candidates with career gaps common to the seasonal nature of our industry. Transparency is key; state clearly in job postings that AI is used for initial screening and offer a simple channel for candidates to request a manual human review of their application. Finally, treat the "time reclaimed" from automation as a strategic asset to be formally reallocated on HR team schedules. Don't let it dissipate into more emails; deliberately calendar the newly freed hours for high-value work like conducting stay interviews with top talent, walking the property to check in with night-shift workers, or designing a new peer-recognition program. This deliberate reinvestment of human time is what truly transforms operational efficiency into a strategic competitive advantage.



EXCERPT FROM PART II

From Workforce Challenge to Business Case

What is a workforce problem really
costing your business?

Part II moves from possibility to business impact, examining four persistent workforce challenges — turnover, manual scheduling, skills gaps and recruitment — and showing how leaders can evaluate where AI may deliver measurable value.

Challenge 1 — Turnover: The Silent Profit Killer Hiding in Plain Sight

Let us start with an illustrative scenario. Consider a Caribbean hospitality property with annual voluntary turnover of 40% to 60% in line-level roles. For a property experiencing particularly high turnover, that rate could be modeled at 80% or higher. These figures are illustrative assumptions for business-case modeling and are not presented as Caribbean industry benchmarks. Properties should substitute their own turnover data when calculating potential impact.

Now let us translate that percentage into money. When a single employee leaves, you do not simply stop paying them. You incur a cascade of hard and soft costs:

- Separation costs: Exit interviews, administrative processing, final paycheck reconciliation.
- Recruitment costs: Job advertising, agency fees (which vary by market, role and search model), interview time for multiple managers, background checks, assessments.
- Hiring costs: Onboarding paperwork, orientation, IT setup, uniform issuance.
- Training costs: Classroom time, shadowing hours, reduced productivity during the learning curve, mistakes made by inexperienced staff.
- Lost productivity costs: The vacant role creates overtime for others, reduces service levels, and can lower guest satisfaction scores.
- Cultural costs: High turnover damages team morale, increases stress on remaining staff, and erodes institutional knowledge.

Industry research across global hospitality consistently finds that the **full cost of replacing a frontline employee ranges from 50% to 100% of their annual salary**. For a housekeeper earning \$22,000 per year, that means \$11,000 to \$22,000 in hard and soft costs every time they walk out the door. Now do the math for your property.

Illustrative Scenario

The following figures are hypothetical and are provided to demonstrate the calculation methodology.

Consider a mid-sized resort with 720 employees. Average annual compensation (including benefits, meals, and housing where provided) is approximately \$25,000 per person. Annual turnover is 50% — meaning 360 departures per year.

- Cost per departure (conservative estimate at 80% of salary): \$20,000
- Annual turnover cost: $360 \times \$20,000 = \$7,200,000$

That is \$7.2 million dollars — every single year — walking out your door. For many properties, this exceeds annual net profit.

Where AI Changes the Equation

Predictive attrition analytics use patterns in attendance data, shift-swap frequency, manager feedback, and even anonymized sentiment to identify employees who are at risk of leaving — often early enough to support targeted retention efforts. This is not fortune-telling. It is mathematics. Employees who are about to leave exhibit predictable behavioural signals: increased absenteeism, decreased engagement in training, fewer shift swaps accepted, changes in punctuality.

Armed with this foresight, your managers can intervene with targeted retention actions: a stay interview, a schedule adjustment, a small recognition award, a cross-training opportunity, or simply a sincere conversation that addresses an unmet need.

The Financial Impact

A property that reduces turnover by just 15% — from 50% to 42.5% — has the potential to save **\$1,080,000** annually. A 25% reduction — from 50% to 37.5% — saves **\$1,800,000** annually. These savings go directly to your bottom line, with no increase in occupancy or average daily rate required.

And there is a second-order benefit: lower turnover means more experienced staff, which can support stronger guest satisfaction, reviews and revenue performance. The compound effect is substantial.



About CHTA

*We are the leading voice of the Caribbean
hospitality and tourism private sector.*

For more than 60 years, the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA) has brought together national hotel and tourism associations, hotels, resorts and other accommodations, and allied businesses across the region. Through the collective strength of this regional network, CHTA represents the industry's interests, connects businesses and partners, and delivers the insights, resources and opportunities members need to navigate challenges, make informed decisions and grow their businesses. From advocacy and business intelligence to people development, sustainability, emerging technologies and market opportunities, CHTA helps members address the issues that matter most to their businesses while strengthening the Caribbean hospitality and tourism industry.

Membership Questions?

Contact membership@caribbeanhotelandtourism.com

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ACCESS THE COMPLETE GUIDE



You've experienced just a sample of what's inside.

The complete AI Workforce Transformation Guide for Caribbean Hospitality provides practical strategies, frameworks and guidance to help hospitality businesses and professionals prepare their people, strengthen their capabilities and navigate AI-driven workforce transformation.

CHTA MEMBERS

Access the complete guide, along with industry intelligence, practical resources, learning opportunities and connections designed to strengthen your business and the people who power it.



[ACCESS THE COMPLETE GUIDE](#)

NOT YET A CHTA MEMBER?

CHTA membership connects your organization – and the people throughout it – to regional expertise, industry intelligence, practical resources and a network working together to strengthen the Caribbean hospitality and tourism.



[EXPLORE CHTA MEMBERSHIP](#)

Questions about accessing the guide or CHTA membership?
Contact membership@caribbeanhotelandtourism.com

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