Customer satisfaction drives STHM alumna at Hotel Monaco

In hospitality, guest service is everything. For Carol Watson, BS ’02, assistant general manager for Philadelphia’s Hotel Monaco, earning the satisfaction of her customers is non-negotiable.

“We say, ‘If it can fit in the room, let’s do it,’” said Watson. “It’s all part of that extra touch.”

Watson has made her mark in hospitality with her attention to those extra touches. The 36-year-old STHM alumna worked her way from the front desk to her current managerial position with Hotel Monaco.

Part of bringing the city to each guest, she said, is paying attention to each aspect of their stay. It’s Watson’s job to see that the necessary accommodations are made within the Hotel Monaco, a pet-friendly hotel. The hotel’s ballroom is often a staple for weddings and business conferences. Watson’s touch can be seen in ensuring a company’s logo is displayed, or that the bride’s and groom’s rooms are filled with love balloons.

Upon graduation, she worked at Philadelphia’s Hyatt at the Bellevue, working closely with patrons who clamored for top-notch accommodations at the hotel, which is located on the city’s iconic Avenue of the Arts. Watson went from the Hyatt’s front desk to marketing and sales for the Hotel Palomar—the Kimpton Hotels cornerstone that would lead her to the Hotel Monaco.

A Pittsburgh native, Watson followed her brother to Philadelphia where he was attending medical student. She initially enrolled at Temple as a chemistry major. Peering down her projected career paths, Watson decided to detour from becoming a chemist, doctor, or nurse.

“I looked up and was left wondering, ‘What’s next?’” said Watson, from the lobby of the boutique hotel at which she works.

STHM helped answer that question. Satisfying Watson’s nascent interest in business administration — particularly in hospitality — STHM afforded her a seamless transition between majors. Working closely with STHM Associate Vice Dean Jeffrey Montague, Watson was intrigued by the scope of the industry. Far beyond hotels, she discovered that tourism and hospitality could be the basis of a country’s entire economy. Working through the curriculum, Watson interned in the fields of both destination management and event planning before finding her niche in hotels.

“This position at the Hotel Monaco brought me back to where I started — in operations,” Watson said. “Having the freedom to use the talents of a team and its collective ideas is very rewarding.”

—Lora Strum