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U.S. Department of Homeland Security
20 Mass. Ave., N.W., Rm. A3042
Washington, DC 20529



U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services



FILE: SRC 03 120 50816 Office: TEXAS SERVICE CENTER Date: NOV 08 2004

IN RE: Petitioner: [Redacted]
Beneficiary: [Redacted]

PETITION: Petition for a Nonimmigrant Worker Pursuant to Section 101(a)(15)(H)(i)(b) of the
Immigration and Nationality Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1101(a)(15)(H)(i)(b)

ON BEHALF OF PETITIONER:
[Redacted]

INSTRUCTIONS:

This is the decision of the Administrative Appeals Office in your case. All documents have been returned to the office that originally decided your case. Any further inquiry must be made to that office.

Robert P. Wiemann, Director
Administrative Appeals Office

Administrative Appeals Office
U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

DISCUSSION: The service center director denied the nonimmigrant visa petition and the matter is now before the Administrative Appeals Office (AAO) on appeal. The appeal will be dismissed. The petition will be denied.

The petitioner plans to open a chain of Quizno franchises. It seeks to employ the beneficiary as a master franchisee manager. The petitioner endeavors to classify the beneficiary as a nonimmigrant worker in a specialty occupation pursuant to § 101(a)(15)(H)(i)(b) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (the Act), 8 U.S.C. § 1101(a)(15)(H)(i)(b).

The director denied the petition because the proffered position is not a specialty occupation. On appeal, counsel submits a brief.

Section 214(i)(1) of the Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1184(i)(1), defines the term "specialty occupation" as an occupation that requires:

- (A) theoretical and practical application of a body of highly specialized knowledge, and
- (B) attainment of a bachelor's or higher degree in the specific specialty (or its equivalent) as a minimum for entry into the occupation in the United States.

Pursuant to 8 C.F.R. § 214.2(h)(4)(iii)(A), to qualify as a specialty occupation, the position must meet one of the following criteria:

- (1) A baccalaureate or higher degree or its equivalent is normally the minimum requirement for entry into the particular position;
- (2) The degree requirement is common to the industry in parallel positions among similar organizations or, in the alternative, an employer may show that its particular position is so complex or unique that it can be performed only by an individual with a degree;
- (3) The employer normally requires a degree or its equivalent for the position; or
- (4) The nature of the specific duties is so specialized and complex that knowledge required to perform the duties is usually associated with the attainment of a baccalaureate or higher degree.

Citizenship and Immigration Services (CIS) interprets the term "degree" in the criteria at 8 C.F.R. § 214.2(h)(4)(iii)(A) to mean not just any baccalaureate or higher degree, but one in a specific specialty that is directly related to the proffered position.

The record of proceeding before the AAO contains: (1) Form I-129 and supporting documentation; (2) the director's request for additional evidence; (3) the petitioner's response to the director's request; (4) the director's denial letter; and (5) Form I-290B and supporting documentation. The AAO reviewed the record in its entirety before issuing its decision.

The petitioner is seeking the beneficiary's services as a master franchisee manager. Evidence of the beneficiary's duties includes: the I-129 petition; counsel's March 20, 2003 letter in support of the petition;

and the petitioner's response to the director's request for evidence. According to this evidence, the beneficiary would perform duties that entail: providing monthly profit and loss statement to management committee; managing cash flow and expenditures; working with external accountants and auditors; negotiating lines of credit; working with realtors on new locations; developing feasibility studies on potential new locations; negotiating leases with landlords; recruiting, hiring and training employees; working with Quizno's vendors on procurement; managing inventory of all stores; and working with legal counsel on all compliance issues. The petitioner indicated that a qualified candidate for the job would possess a bachelor's degree in business management.

The director found that the proffered position was not a specialty occupation because the job is not so complex as to require a baccalaureate degree. The director found further that the petitioner failed to establish any of the criteria found at 8 C.F.R. § 214.2(h)(4)(iii)(A).

On appeal, counsel states, in part, that the proffered position, which requires the theoretical and practical application of a body of highly specialized knowledge of financial, personnel, procurement, and inventory management, requires a bachelor's degree in business management. Counsel states further that the record contains job advertisements as supporting documentation.

Upon review of the record, the petitioner has established none of the four criteria outlined in 8 C.F.R. § 214.2(h)(4)(iii)(A). Therefore, the proffered position is not a specialty occupation.

The AAO turns first to the criteria at 8 C.F.R. § 214.2(h)(4)(iii)(A)(1) and (2): a baccalaureate or higher degree or its equivalent is the normal minimum requirement for entry into the particular position; a degree requirement is common to the industry in parallel positions among similar organizations; or a particular position is so complex or unique that it can be performed only by an individual with a degree.

Factors often considered by CIS when determining these criteria include: whether the Department of Labor's *Occupational Outlook Handbook (Handbook)* reports that the industry requires a degree; whether the industry's professional association has made a degree a minimum entry requirement; and whether letters or affidavits from firms or individuals in the industry attest that such firms "routinely employ and recruit only degreed individuals." See *Shanti, Inc. v. Reno*, 36 F. Supp. 2d 1151, 1165 (D.Min. 1999)(quoting *Hird/Blaker Corp. v. Slattery*, 764 F. Supp. 872, 1102 (S.D.N.Y. 1991)).

The AAO routinely consults the *Handbook* for its information about the duties and educational requirements of particular occupations. The AAO does not concur with counsel that the proffered position is a specialty occupation. Although the title of the proffered position is that of "Master Franchisee Manager," the record reflects that the petitioner currently has one Quizno fast-food franchise. As such, the proffered position is primarily that of a food service manager. No evidence in the *Handbook*, 2004-2005 edition, indicates that a baccalaureate or higher degree, or its equivalent, is required for a food service manager position.

Regarding parallel positions in the petitioner's industry, the petitioner submitted Internet job postings for three fast-food restaurants. There is no evidence, however, to show that the advertised positions are parallel to the instant position or that a degree in a specific specialty is required in all of these positions. One of the positions is that of an area manager for a Subway restaurant, whose duties include overseeing a group of two to four restaurants. Although a four-year degree is required, a business specialty is "preferred" rather than required. Another position is that of a corporate marketing director for McDonald's, who would be

responsible for all consumer communications, branding and promotions aimed at generating trial and awareness for a new retail concept. The third position is that of a franchise sales manager for Burger King, whose duties include executing all aspects of [REDACTED]'s new franchisee recruitment and re-franchising functions, providing input to franchising strategies and policies, and serving as initial point of contact for prospective franchisees. In addition to the proffered position not being a corporate marketing director or a franchise sales manager, the petitioner additionally has not demonstrated that the proffered position is as complex as any of the advertised positions. Thus, the advertisements have no relevance.

The record also does not include any evidence from professional associations regarding an industry standard, or documentation to support the complexity or uniqueness of the proffered position. The petitioner, therefore, has not established the criteria set forth at 8 C.F.R. § 214.2(h)(4)(iii)(A)(1) or (2).

The AAO now turns to the criterion at 8 C.F.R. § 214.2(h)(4)(iii)(A)(3) – the employer normally requires a degree or its equivalent for the position. As counsel does not address this issue on appeal, it will not be discussed further.

Finally, the AAO turns to the criterion at 8 C.F.R. § 214.2(h)(4)(iii)(A)(4) – the nature of the specific duties is so specialized and complex that knowledge required to perform the duties is usually associated with the attainment of a baccalaureate or higher degree.

To the extent that they are depicted in the record, the duties do not appear so specialized and complex as to require the highly specialized knowledge associated with a baccalaureate or higher degree, or its equivalent, in a specific specialty. Therefore, the evidence does not establish that the proffered position is a specialty occupation under 8 C.F.R. § 214.2(h)(4)(iii)(A)(4).

As related in the discussion above, the petitioner has failed to establish that the proffered position is a specialty occupation. Accordingly, the AAO shall not disturb the director's denial of the petition.

The burden of proof in these proceedings rests solely with the petitioner. Section 291 of the Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1361. The petitioner has not sustained that burden.

ORDER: The appeal is dismissed. The petition is denied.