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CASE STUDY: The Grosvenor Hotel

Date	08 October 2009
Location	Torquay, Devon
Sector	Hospitality
No. of Employees	40
Key Benefits	Since the training programme began, there has been a doubling of guest satisfaction scores based on feedback from comment cards.



Introduction

Tourism has played a crucial role in Torbay's economy since Victorian times with successive generations of visitors enjoying what is now marketed as the English Riviera.

As with other successful resorts, gaining repeat custom is in no small part down to the quality of hotel accommodation and service.

Just a beach ball's throw from the Torquay seafront, The Grosvenor Hotel has welcomed guests for more than a century.

Its facilities include 46 rooms, indoor and outdoor heated swimming pools and a charming garden restaurant.

Drivers for Commitment

'Making you sorry to leave' is the aim of General Manager Jason Parry (pictured) who has put training at the heart of business development since his arrival at the start of 2009.

After making the Skills Pledge, Jason worked with the Train to Gain service and South Devon College on a detailed training programme designed to raise customer service standards across all hotel activities.

After a rigorous review of strengths and weaknesses, two intensive on-site workshops were held involving all 40 staff.

The sessions prompted participants to put forward ideas on how to improve service. A shortlist was voted on and adopted for action.

The process was designed to enable staff to feel a sense of ownership in the hotel's refocused vision.

"I wanted to pull everything together and give people more of a sense of direction in what they were doing. When you do training en masse it engenders team building."
Jason Parry, General Manager



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Impacts and Benefits

Jason says: "I wanted to pull everything together and give people more of a sense of direction in what they were doing. When you do training en masse it engenders team building."

Following the workshops, three managers have begun NVQs on team leading while three other staff are studying customer service qualifications.

Denise Lake, Front of House Manager, says her team leading training has given her greater confidence with staff.

She says: "It has made me a little more assertive and it helps me to think more clearly about how to deal with things. The staff are now working better as a team and being more productive. They know the main thing is looking after the guests as well as we can and on that they are doing fine."

Since the training programme began, there has been a doubling of guest satisfaction scores based on feedback from comment cards.

The hotel has also steadily increased its rating on the travel website Trip Advisor which enables guests to post hotel reviews online.

A key element of improving the hotel's standing is acting on all feedback, so Jason always posts comments in response acknowledging what guests say and explaining where changes are being made.

"We've got quite obsessed about feedback," he says. "But by responding to what people say, we know we are receiving more bookings. People will come back because we are responsive and delivering fantastic customer service."

As well as customer praise, the hotel was short listed in the people development and customer service categories at the South Devon Business Excellence Awards 2009.

The team has also entered the Green Tourism Business Awards emphasising a new environmental policy which includes advising guests on sustainable transport options in Torbay.

In addition, The Grosvenor is now working toward Investors in People accreditation.

Jason says that making the Skills Pledge was an essential move in redefining the mission of the hotel. He has put the certificate on view in the foyer for all staff and guests to see.

He adds: "The Skills Pledge for me was about making sure that people knew we were serious about being an employer of choice. My message to other employers is to go for it and get a level of buy-in from your team.

"We know the staff here are key to our success and will give us the edge as we go forward. I want people to be inundating us with their CVs because they want to work here."