



# Cadbury House Hotel

## Congresbury

Imagine walking into a luxury hotel, enjoying the best service you've ever experienced, and then discovering you don't have to pay a penny for it.

You'd scarcely believe your luck. And you'd be almost as pleased as the manager of such a hotel would be if someone offered his organisation an equally impeccable service, delivered where and when he wanted it, and entirely free of charge.

That's how Mark Hands, Group General Manager of the four star Cadbury House Hotel near Bristol, feels about the training and support his staff have received from Weston College.

Not only does the college train his staff on the hotel premises at any time that suits him, but it has even found sources of Government funding to pick up the tab.

**“The college was extremely proactive in helping us find the right people to work here”**

“We can't recommend the college highly enough,” he says. “Our relationship with Weston College is vital to our success and what we would like to achieve. They are almost stakeholders in our business, asking us what we need and how can they help us. Equally, we listen to what they say.”

The 72-bedroomed hotel has put 60 of its 214 staff through apprenticeships and training so far in food, beverages, and all aspects of hotel work – a move that Mr Hands says has paid dividends in staff motivation and retention.

“The training has made a massive difference to us because when people are on a course they usually want to stay to complete it. Staff do want to progress and develop. And because we treat them like stakeholders, we have very few leavers. The word is out on the street that we look after our people and provide them with training and development. They wear our uniform with pride.”

The college also helps the hotel find potential recruits who meet its exacting standards.

“The college was extremely proactive in helping us find the right people to work here,” says Mr Hands. “We were eager to employ people with the right personalities for our business.”

“Gill, Head of Marketing and Communications at the college, is my main contact, and we are always firing emails at each other. She's also a customer here and has her NVQ assessors on site, which is perfect because we're a privately-owned company and couldn't justify having our own training manager.

“I came here a year ago to further the relationship with the college because I could see the benefits of working together and putting a succession plan in place. It's a win-win situation and it's fantastic for us. The training achieves exactly what we want, and we're even hoping to offer a Foundation degree in the workplace that staff can top up to an Honours degree later if they want to.”

The hotel's hand-in-glove relationship with Weston College is so successful that college chefs regularly spend time in the hotel's kitchens to keep their skills up-to-date, while the hotel's chefs offer cookery courses and demos for the college.

“We're also looking at setting up a regular meeting between ourselves, Weston College and a nearby garden centre so we can look together at sales and marketing operations that might benefit all of us,” says Mr Hands. “And our group is building a hotel in Winchester with 70 staff. We're hoping Weston College can be involved in the development and training for that.”



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