

2009 Case Study

EXCELLENCE IN CUSTOMER SERVICE - INDEPENDENT

Finalist: Crown Spa Hotel, Scarborough

One recent business challenge or opportunity which the organisation faced, and which has been successfully addressed

Yorkshire Tourist Board insisted that as part of our strive to become 4*, we had to train our staff in Welcome Host, a Hospitality Customer Service Course. In October 2007, we put 15 staff through the course, using a local college. In January 2008, we learnt that we could put 10 managers on a 'train the trainer' course and then they would all be skilled to train the Welcome Host Plus award internally.

Through the summer months we ran the Welcome Host Plus course approx every 6-8 weeks to train all the staff in this customer service award.

How best practice was implemented to address these challenges and opportunities in an innovative way

When we realised that we could train 10 managers to deliver the Welcome Host Plus course, instead of using an outside institute, we were delighted. It is part of our Investors in People that we invest and develop our staff, so 10 managers acquired new training skills and they can now deliver the Welcome Host Plus course throughout the hotel.

Whenever we put a course on, we ensure that there is a cross selection of staff from across the hotel, which creates a better training atmosphere.

Each manager has a folder to follow, but each has developed their own style of delivery. It has given managers motivation and confidence in their skills. The course highlights many different aspects of customer care.

There are several group and individual exercises to do throughout the sessions, so it is not theory driven, it's a practical course, full of discussion and involvement.

Due to the success of using our internal trainers in the hotel to deliver a nationally recognised customer service qualification, we have continued on with this and are currently enrolling 3 managers to do the NVQ A1 assessors qualification. We will then be able to assess all our NVQ's internally in the hotel.

All the new A1 assessors are going to initially assess staff on an NVQ in Customer Care and then when they are qualified, they'll be able to assess a range of courses within the hotel.

The measurable business benefits, both financial and non-financial, which were achieved as a result of these actions

We currently have 81 of our staff trained in Welcome Host Plus.

Initially, it cost us £85 per person to train in Welcome Host, (15x85=£1275) so if we had trained all 81 staff, it would have cost us £6885, so far.

Instead it cost us £150 per person to train the trainers in Welcome Host Plus, (10x150=£1500), but only costs us £20 per person for us to train our staff. So, internally it has cost us £2820 to train the remainder of our staff, this year.

This figure will be lower for following years due to the trainers already been qualified and the bulk of our team have now attended the course. Completing the training internally, 85% of our permanent staff are trained in Welcome Host Plus.

Customer feedback has increased by 47% showing a positive response to our improved customer service.