



MASTER STAFF

Steven Brown, Inn-Formation, offers advice about motivating your staff

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If you want to get the best out of your food and beverage operation, then you must motivate your staff. According to Steven Brown, that's easier than you might think

Do I have your attention? Please allow me to substantiate my opening comment.

Many of you, having read my previous articles, will fully endorse my view that F&B managers must maintain viable levels of staff wage costs in line with industry norms.

I have previously illustrated what those norms are and, I'm sure, I need not further expand upon their importance here. I do have a concern though, that F&B managers, in the achievement of playing the wage analysis numbers game, lose a great deal in maximising the contribution that their staff members can make to the bottom line.

Try my little teaser test to see where you stand on this issue:

1. What value do you put on your staff's individual contribution?
2. How do you measure that contribution? Objectively, (they generated more sales this week), subjectively (they are good team players) or both. Note: objective measurement offers empirical evidence of achievement whilst subjective is a more commonly held belief.
3. How well do you, in your management role, support the staff in the achievement of your objectives?
4. Do you know what motivates your individuals to achieve your objectives for your F&B operation?
5. How do you recognise and reward successes within the team?

Well, how did you do? Did you have specific, supportable evidence for each question? Before I offer any recommendations or solutions on the subject, let me first of all return to my opening statement.

How do we abuse staff?

1. The F&B industry, in cases of both part- and full-time positions, will simply employ people who are merely “warm to the touch” and currently available!
2. The F&B industry employs people from the neck down and not the neck up!
3. Driven as we are by the need to keep wage payments under control, we try to find the cheapest pair of hands available, not the best pair of hands.
4. As bosses, we spend too much time looking for what’s wrong in their behaviour and not what’s right!
5. We provide no career structure or support for them to develop and show us their real value!
6. We communicate our values, objectives, aims, goals and targets very badly whilst imposing them, not discussing them.
7. We do not, by and large, celebrate their success, recognise their achievements and contributions or listen to their ideas on how we could be even more successful.

Oh dear! I do hope I haven’t offended anyone, and in your defence, I’m sure that most of you are not guilty of most of the above.

However, as a guest in many clubs (either as a golfing visitor or when employed by clubs to review their F&B performance) I am constantly disappointed, but not surprised, by the quality of below-average service I receive at the bar or when dining.

My first response used to be that these people needed to get a grip! I am after all paying their salary! But that was before I fully appreciated who employed them in the first place!

I am a champion of excellent staff! I will ask to speak to F&B managers to compliment them on their staff’s work ethic, positivity and efficiency wherever and whenever I encounter it. Sadly, however, it is all too rare an occurrence and believe me I get about a lot!

So how would you rate the value of your staff’s contribution on a scale of one to 10?

You need to measure a number of factors before you decide. Consider the following in making your assessment:

1. Attitude to customers
2. Appearance and personal standards
3. Job knowledge

4. Efficiency
5. Productivity
6. Willingness to do more than the minimum
7. Contribution (of ideas)
8. Ability to learn
9. Positivity
10. Support of, and loyalty to, their colleagues and your operation.

So how do your staff measure up? How much of the above is down to them alone to achieve or do they need help, advice, empowerment and motivation.

Motivation is a key factor for managers to consider in getting the best out of your staff.

All of us have different drivers and different motivators that excite us enough to do the jobs we do.

So, what motivates you? Could it be any of the following:

- ⌘ Security
- ⌘ Pay and benefits
- ⌘ Thirst for knowledge
- ⌘ The challenge
- ⌘ Self actualisation
- ⌘ Power
- ⌘ Job title
- ⌘ The golf club environment?

There are no right and wrong answers for you but, following extensive research, I can reveal the three big motivators for F&B staff:

- ⌘ Pay and benefits
- ⌘ Sociability / job satisfaction
- ⌘ Training support given

Some of the other factors include convenience of hours offered, location, responsibility and being a team member.

If then pay comes out top of the list (and it does), then do you match their aspirations? Most F&B staff above the age of 21 are still paid the minimum wage of £5.73 per hour rate, or very close to it. How then does this motivate staff?

I am not, in my defence, advocating all of you to put wage payments up. But I am advocating that, through a series of recognitions and rewards that you motivate your staff, to improve their performance and your bottom line.

Remember this – what gets rewarded gets repeated!

If you reward staff by:

- ✎ Not paying the right level of remuneration for their contribution;
- ✎ Not allowing any degree of job satisfaction to occur;
- ✎ Not providing any training support – then you may well end up with a level of service which does not match your, and your members', expectations.

I have been very fortunate to visit some clubs who have invested heavily in their staff by recognising both their value and their contribution.

The net result is that those staff members pay the club back for their far sighted approach with enthusiasm, commitment, innovation, positivity, passion, initiative, dedication, honesty and above all, loyalty.

I am not for a moment suggesting that you cannot get all of the above at the minimum wage, but I do believe that you improve your chances of success by making, and assessing properly, the right appointments in the first place.

Naturally, not all of you will be making sweeping changes to your personnel and starting afresh. Most of you will be working with a well-established team but that in its self can present an interesting challenge.

How do you remotivate those staff who are listed on the “fixtures and fittings inventory” and are locked into “we have always done things this way” or “you can’t teach an old dog new tricks,” and the absolute classic when referring to new ideas “that won’t work”?

Clever managers achieve this (with no degree of difficulty) by doing the following:

1. Setting out clear and unambiguous guidelines for levels of performance (they must be measurable)
2. Communicating them to everyone involved

3. Monitoring performance (ongoing)
4. Rewarding success
5. Celebrating failures! (Nobody's perfect)
6. Praising excellence
7. Re-training when needed (with a buddy)
8. Encouraging 'free thinking'
9. Championing staff's good results loudly
10. Pressing the right motivational buttons for each individual.

Remember – your job as an F&B manager is to fire staff with enthusiasm – if that doesn't work your job as manager is, to fire staff with – enthusiasm!

You can increase productivity by investing in people and by understanding what their key motivators are.

But please do remember that the rewards they might receive do not have to be all about money. Here are some great ideas currently being used by the industry as rewards:

- ⌘ Additional training
- ⌘ Use of club facilities
- ⌘ Promotional prospects
- ⌘ Submission for training awards
- ⌘ Extra (paid) days off
- ⌘ Team parties
- ⌘ Additional responsibilities
- ⌘ A hero's board (a notice board where staff and customers get to say nice things about other members of staff's performance very publicly).

For those motivators that can be measured you can consider incentivising staff on a quid pro quo basis. Self-funding incentives can be set up to assist you in areas such as:

1. Increased profitability
2. Reductions in waste and inefficiency.

In this way everyone involved benefits; the staff, through increased pay, which in turn is 'paid for' by the increase in profit.

Staff can be a burden or a boon. Get the best out of your key personnel by maximising their true potential. Motivate them to achieve what you want them to, at a time when you want them to, and in the way you want them to, because they want to.

We spend much of our consultancy time developing and motivating golf club staff through tailor made training programmes. Watching staff grow, realise their potential and recognise their own self esteem is a rewarding process – for everyone.

So when reflecting on your staff's contribution don't consider them to be a drain on your resources, better still consider how they can improve your resources by re-motivating them to exceed your, and their, own expectations.

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