



Case Study: The Sandbanks Hotel



The Project

Through the creation of a network of tourism destination stakeholders, Destination FeelGood aims to establish Bournemouth University as a central knowledge exchange partner and the National Coastal Tourism Academy as a knowledge broker, sharing tourism wellbeing expertise with the local public and private sector. Thus inspiring innovation in health and wellbeing focused products, enhancing business performance and ultimately the local tourism economy.

High labour turnover rates and how to retain good employees are issues often faced by the hotel sector. This case study is a useful example of how a local hotel employer emphasises developing and retaining staff across all departments within its hotels.

The Background

Destination FeelGood offers the opportunity for connecting different destination stakeholders. Through inter-stakeholder dialogue, tourism businesses are in a position to increase their market through developing new products and services that will provide an enhanced value-added experience for visitors and local people alike. This project can accelerate tourism business growth via an improved understanding and implementation of wellbeing as it can facilitate the exchange of knowledge between tourism businesses, policy makers (both public health and tourism), and tourism and public health focused academics.

Through the Destination FeelGood project Ideas Cafés were run and a network established to share examples of best practice and act as a catalyst to foster innovation in co-creating destination and wellbeing products.. In addition this case study focuses on tourism employee wellbeing enhancing and expanding the debate through considering those on whom tourism businesses and holiday makers depend in all types of destinations and in all sectors of the industry.



Case Study

The Sandbanks Hotel is one of a group of four hotels owned and run by FJB hotels. The hotel is situated on Sandbanks beach in Poole Dorset, and focuses on providing family seaside holidays, with a wide range of activities including water sports for children and families on and off the beach. The hotel also caters for weddings, conferences and short breaks throughout the year.

The Action

One of the most promising outcomes of the Ideas Cafes was the ability for the University and other stakeholders such as the Local Authority to connect with the business community to create and inspire innovative ideas focused on the wellbeing of both visitors and staff. Attending the Ideas Cafe Andy Woodland (HR Manager) took part in a discussion themed on tourism employee wellbeing and shared ideas which the hotel had implemented to both promote wellbeing and develop and retain their staff. An informal conversation took place between staff and members of the Destination FeelGood team to gain insight into the success of measure that the hotel had implemented from the employee point of view.

Results

The following areas were identified by staff as helpful in terms of motivating them at work and encouraging them to remain with this operator.

Moving across departments: *“I have worked in nearly all the teams here...I really understand how the hotel works for visitors”.*

Flexibility in terms of shift times and patterns, and supportive regarding personal issues: *“I appreciate being able to take a longer period of leave to go home (international employee)”, “I have had help with housing issues”, “You can always ask to leave for a doctor`s appointment, they care about us”, “the managers know everyone`s name...over 100 staff” and “I can talk about any problems I have at any time”.*

Socialising inside and outside work: *“ We get together to socialise, parties on the beach, bowling help us to get to know each other what we like what we don`t like”.*

Promotion opportunities: *“You see people go from porter to manager, I would like to be a duty manager in the future you need to aim high”, “it`s good to see other people get promoted it makes me feel I can do it”.*

Learning opportunities: *English courses, N.V.Q's, management courses, human resources courses, fire training, health and safety. "Learning encourages you to stay".*

Implementing an appraisal process: *"Builds confidence, build desire to work here" "I was scared but now I have a better feeling, I am improving... helps you enjoy your job we are a happy team".*



Conclusion

This project offered the opportunity to bring together different stakeholders across the business, local authority and academic sectors related to tourism. The case study presented here in particular highlights the positive effect a strategy emphasising employee wellbeing can have. Through the collaboration between commercial and academic partners the project has generated interest regarding research as well as generating additional commercial value. In addition, it is by identifying and disseminating examples of best practice developed through knowledge, innovation and creativity that the project can make its most significant impact. Through greater awareness and access to knowledge, improved skill sets, participation in events and opportunities to network and learn from peers, access to state-of-the-art podcast learning and access to students, impact across the local tourism economy has been developed.

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