

CASE STUDY



Claridges

BACKGROUND: Health and Wellbeing

Size: 496

Sector: Hospitality

Location: London

THE ORGANISATION

Claridge's Hotel (now part of the Maybourne Group) has a heritage and history second to none. Since 1812 Claridge's has been the preferred hotel in London for Kings and Queens, Princes, Heads of State and Prime Ministers from across the globe. Indeed, some Kings have even been born there. In more recent times, stars from the golden age of Hollywood and pop superstars continue to use Claridge's when visiting or touring in London.

Born from a glorious age where service excellence and attention to detail were the order of the day it is gratifying to learn that none of the qualities that gave Claridge's its world-wide reputation for excellence have been lost. Today, you don't have to be a Head of State to stay there but what guests will experience is the same legendary service levels and opulence that make Claridge's a global brand synonymous with exemplary customer service.

THE ORGANISATION

Working in the hospitality sector is both physically and mentally demanding. Working in a hotel can bring its own particular stresses and, in addition to this, staff work shifts and often unsociable hours.

This can therefore present a very real challenge to the hotel, in terms of attracting suitable staff, maintaining good levels of staff retention and ensuring sickness absence rates are acceptable.

THE STRATEGY

Claridge's Hotel is very aware of the challenges that it regularly faces in terms of attracting and retaining staff, in what can be a fairly transient industry. The organisation has therefore placed a strong emphasis on ensuring the health and wellbeing of all its staff, as it recognises the importance of both these aspects in retaining them.

The organisation has therefore introduced a number of different strategies to support health and wellbeing, which also contribute to demonstrating to staff how much the Hotel values their contribution to its on-going success. A range of personal benefits are central to the Maybourne Group, of which Claridge's Hotel is part. However, two years ago, feedback from the annual staff survey and interviews with groups of staff, indicated that staff were not sure about what they were entitled to.

Feedback also indicated that the high street vouchers were the most used of all the benefits offered, with discount holidays being the least utilised by staff. The Hotel therefore produced its own refined and customised version of the personal benefits booklet to ensure it met the needs of their own employees.

A few examples of these are...

- An Employee Assistance Programme (EAP), which provides confidential telephone counselling and legal advice, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.
- Emphasis on preventative health measures, such as ensuring staff has the correct footwear. The occupational health nurse visits departments to give them advice on this and other issues such as posture, particularly where areas such as those working in the concierge team are standing on marble floors for a considerable part of the day.

- Flexible working, where this can be accommodated within individual roles
- There is freshly prepared food in the staff restaurant. Staff have their own Head Chef who provides healthy food and vegetarian options.
- The Hotel is very aware of the importance of staff emotional wellbeing and therefore when there is a disaster anywhere in the world, it opens up a centre for those staff affected, with telephones and computers to enable them to contact their families.
- Many of the people who work in the Hotel are from a variety of backgrounds and cultures and Claridge's provide a comprehensive English teaching programme to ensure people are able to communicate effectively with guests and to enable them to integrate into the British Culture more effectively.
- There is an emphasis on ensuring night staff feel part of the Hotel by having quarterly night meetings, night time training and appraisals.
- There is an annual on-line staff survey to monitor staff satisfaction and obtain feedback from all staff.
- There is a personal grooming kit issued to all new staff and all new staff have a 4 hour workshop on health and safety issues.
- The Hotel also offers 'flu jabs for all staff and there is a visiting chiropody service available. Anti-smoking patches are available to staff who want to stop smoking, together with advice from the nurse.
- For those staff who become pregnant, there is a review of their working times and duties, so that a lighter schedule can be introduced, if necessary. At the time of the birth, Claridge's provides a "Baby Basket" to the mother.
- The Hotel also offers to collect money from staff pay to support the purchase of childcare vouchers. This method provides a real benefit to staff of up to £1000 per year tax savings.

THE RESULTS

By focusing on both the health and wellbeing of its staff, Claridge's Hotel has benefited from:

- A 28% turnover of staff, whereas the industry norm is 60%
- Long term sickness rates are low
- The ability to attract staff
- 88.3% staff satisfaction rate, which is much higher than the industry norm.
- Increased staff awareness of the benefits that are available to them.