

A photograph of two baristas, a man and a woman, working in a cafe. They are both wearing white t-shirts and dark aprons. The man is on the left, wearing glasses and is focused on a task. The woman is on the right, looking towards him. They are standing behind a counter with various coffee-making equipment. In the background, there are shelves with many small wooden boxes, some of which have numbers and text on them. The lighting is warm and the overall atmosphere is professional and collaborative.

WHITEPAPER

EXCELLENCE IN HOSPITALITY ONBOARDING AND RETENTION





Introduction

Headlines over the past year have confirmed that recruitment in hospitality has never been harder.

Adding to the existing challenging perceptions around careers in hospitality, the pandemic has seen many professionals depart for other sectors and never return.

Never has it been more important to retain great talent and ensure that new talent joining your organisation stays for the long term, even while being proactively tempted by other employers.





ONBOARDING VS INDUCTION: WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

These two terms are often used interchangeably, although they are not quite the same thing.

Induction has been around for years, and onboarding is a newer concept. In any case, the more successful organisations will do both. So, what's the difference?

Investors in People give a descriptive list of what each of these terms mean, and how they differ from one another. In a nutshell:

INDUCTION

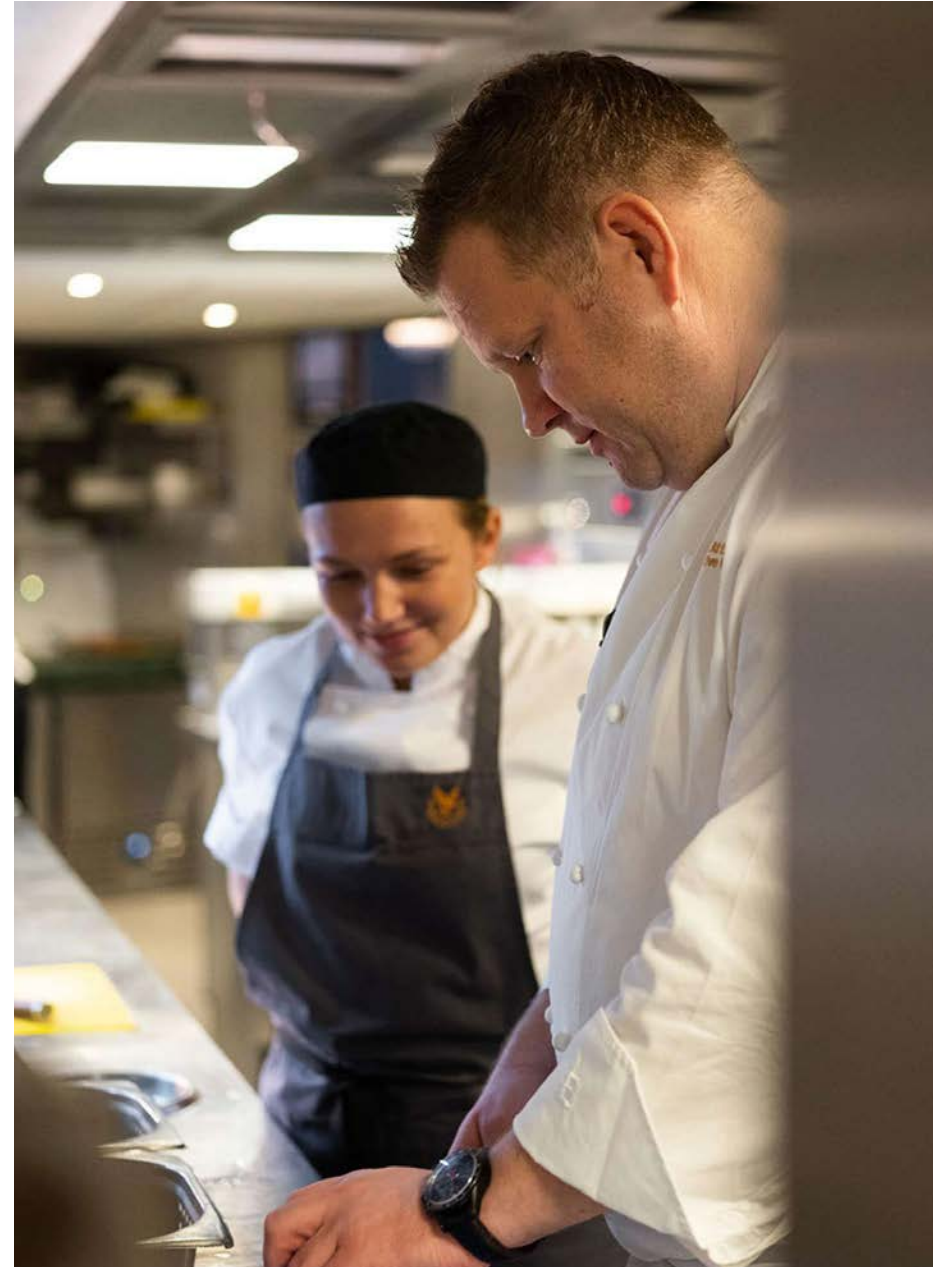
The practical and technical integration of a new employee with the bureaucratic, technical and hierarchical systems in the company. Forms are filled, employee details and information are gathered and practicalities like where the canteen, toilets, car park, etc are located.

New team members may be taken on a quick meet and greet with others they may directly deal with. This is a two-way process but should be highly structured and communicated efficiently, such as forms through the company HR platform/intranet.

ONBOARDING

Is also a two-way process, but less structured. It lasts longer than induction and is more likely to begin before the employee begins their new role as forward-thinking companies will send information in advance.

Onboarding is about interpersonal processes such as socialising with colleagues and trust-building, both essential elements for teamwork and collaboration. It connects understanding with performance, and performance is difficult without a thorough understanding of the organisation. This process cannot be rushed without sacrificing quality.





ONBOARDING VS INDUCTION: WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

According to the CIPD, “the term ‘onboarding’ covers the whole process from an individual’s contact with the organisation before they finally join, through to understanding the business’ ways of working and getting up to speed in their role.”

Essentially, the employee onboarding experience for a potential job candidate starts as soon as they apply for the job and lasts well into the first few months after joining.

It should help new hires to:

- Understand their role and responsibilities
- Get comfortable in their new working environment
- Build a connection with their teammates
- Learn company policies and protocols

However, with the scenario that the hospitality industry faces today, onboarding processes need to go beyond this. Finding staff to replace leavers is a major challenge, so not only could it cost more than in pre-pandemic times, but it may also take much longer to fill vacancies.

We are currently seeing this scenario play out before our eyes, with businesses losing millions in lost sales or even closures due to staff shortages.



MEET OUR CONTRIBUTORS



Hannah Marsh, Ennismore



Leads the L&D division of the Ennismore group which includes the iconic Gleneagles Hotel in Scotland and The Hoxton, a global series of open-house hotels, among others in their growing portfolio of hotels, restaurants and bars. She oversees the learning and development needs of around 2,500 staff around the world.



Michalina Przybyla, Learning & Development Manager at Benugo

BENUGO

Michalina’s journey at Benugo started as a team member in 2013 and progressed through various roles before becoming the group’s L&D manager today. She is a prime example of their ethos of promoting from within, and their focus on quality onboarding and training programmes.



Gail Artell, Onboarding & Transitions HR Business Partner at Interstate Hotels & Resorts



An HR specialist with a rich background in hospitality, Gail leads all HR and L&D elements of new hotel openings and reopenings for this international hotel and resort management organisation. Interstate recently merged with Aimbridge Hospitality and the two companies now combine a total of over 10,000 employees.



WHY IS THE ONBOARDING PROCESS
A CRITICAL PART OF YOUR TEAM
MANAGEMENT STRATEGY?

HIGHER STAFF RETENTION AND FINANCIAL SAVINGS

The financial savings a company can gain through a strong onboarding process speak for itself.

Research estimates that losing an employee can cost from six to nine months of that professional's salary. If we consider that 740,000 US hospitality workers left their jobs in April 2021 alone, the need to retain new talent is startlingly clear.

A study by Glassdoor revealed that organisations with a strong onboarding process improve new hire retention by **82%** and productivity by **70%**.



“Organisations with a strong onboarding process improve new hire retention by 82% and productivity by 70%.”

This process is equally important for bringing employees back to work after hotel closures caused by the pandemic.

Staff may feel apprehensive, may have a different perspective of what they want out of work, and will need to refresh many of the skills and regulations again. Ennismore has introduced a “back to work check-in” to see how their team members are feeling, how they can help them feel safe and what aspirations they have.

Hannah Marsh explained that “my focus has always been on people, not just employees, and I think this process has helped convince managers that we really need to understand how individuals are feeling. I definitely think this has helped us retain staff after the pandemic, especially as individuals are asked for their own feedback, which makes them feel valued.”



ENGAGED EMPLOYEES ARE HAPPIER EMPLOYEES

Engaging your employees involves creating the right physical, social, and psychological environment to enable them to perform their best.

This could mean the best customer service, preparing drinks or dishes to the highest standard or being more productive and efficient.

Your people are what make you thrive and stand out from the competition. To get the best out of them, organisations need to engage their employees in their specific job roles and make them feel a sense of belonging from the start. Your team needs to feel aligned with your company goals and a part of its overall success.



ENGAGED EMPLOYEES ACHIEVE HIGHER CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

Employees who are engaged are happier, which in turn is linked to customer satisfaction.

Internationally admired restaurateur, **Danny Meyer**, founded **New York's Union Square Café** when he was just 27 years old, as well as Shake Shack and Gramercy Tavern sometime later. He has built his success on his philosophy of "enlightened hospitality," based on strong in-house relationships and customer satisfaction.

Author of several books, including **Setting the Table: The Transforming Power of Hospitality in Business**, Danny believes that "With every new hire, we should always ask ourselves 'Have I selected someone with the emotional skills to be happier themselves when they're making the customers feel better? Do they have a hospitality heart and a good work ethic?'" And this is a philosophy that he applies to anyone working in his organisations, be they waiters, cooks or in management.

This more holistic approach is now more relevant than ever, considering the stiff competition for hospitality talent caused by the cocktail of Brexit and the pandemic. Experienced employees are scarce and with approximately 530,000 young people aged between 16-24 currently unemployed in the UK, the sector needs to attract and welcome the new generation into the workforce.



BENUGO

As Michalina Przybala from Benugo points out:

"Recruitment is very challenging at the moment, but we are seeing younger, more local people joining the company. They may not have much experience, but in this case, we hire people for their personalities and attitude, and less for their qualifications. Enthusiasm and being service-minded are more important to us as we can train people to do things the Benugo way."



INDUSTRY INSIGHT

PAL'S SUDDEN SERVICE

Pal's Sudden Service is an American drive-thru dog and burger chain with an annual turnover rate of 1.4% for assistant managers, rising to 32% for front line staff.

Jobs at the company are in high demand. Managers train and mentor employees daily and only seven managers have voluntarily left in the last seven years.

"Hire for attitude, train for skill" is one of their secrets. In the first round of interviews, candidates have to take a 60-second psychometric test online, to analyse their personality and attitude.

Training and continuous retraining are also among the company's mottos. Once hired, new employees undergo 120 hours of rigorous training and are quizzed three times a month. Pal's are serious about ongoing learning and require their leaders to spend around 10% of their time teaching an employee a topic they need to learn.

They believe that anyone serious about leading should also be serious about teaching. All of Pal's managers are required to read from the company's "Master Reading List", and once every month, five managers are asked to talk about one book from the list.





WHAT GEN Z EXPECTS FROM FUTURE EMPLOYERS

Gen Z was born into a different world than their predecessors. When hiring younger people, it's vital to remember that these digital natives are highly adaptable.

They have been streaming content and been able to speak to anyone in the world in a click all their lives. Online platforms and social media give them a platform to voice their opinions, influence distant people and institutions, question authority like never before.

Gen Z has grown up in a world faced with difficulties and insecurity – and now the pandemic. They are deeply concerned about climate and sustainability, social equality, racism, and sexism and will call out employers whose actions conflict with their personal beliefs, according to a study by Deloitte Global.



The Deloitte study revealed that the employer characteristics most highly valued by Millennial/Gen Z respondents worldwide were flexibility/adaptability (46 and 46 per cent respectively). These were followed by creativity (28/29%) and “technologically savvy” (28/25% respectively).

Two-thirds of Gen Z respondents “felt worried or stressed most of the time,” and concerns for their long-term financial future topped the list of reasons.

Consequently, how you handle your potential Gen Z candidates and recruits during the onboarding process is crucial to retaining them. The new generation wants to feel aligned with their employer’s purpose. They will expect companies to stay up to date with workplace technology and seamless collaboration.

Also, companies that offer professional development and tangible career progression are more likely to nurture loyalty and commitment among new hires.



THE FIRST 90 DAYS: MAKE OR BREAK

The first 90 days of a new role can determine your success or failure and have implications for the rest of your career.

Initial impressions are crucial since perceptions are formed quickly and, although they may be based on limited information, once formed they typically stick.

Onboarding is important because it **acclimates employees to their role**, the company's philosophies, and what the company has to offer. It also engages employees, creating workers that are committed to the company's success and helps retain new hires by making them feel like a member of the team.



THE 6 CS OF ONBOARDING

"Research and conventional wisdom both suggest that employees get about 90 days to prove themselves in a new job," said Talya Bauer, PhD, author of *Onboarding New Employees: Maximizing Success*, part of the SHRM Foundation's Effective Practice Guidelines Series. "The faster new hires feel welcome and prepared for their jobs, the faster they will be able to successfully contribute to the firm's mission."

In this report published around a decade ago, Bauer identified **four distinct levels of onboarding**, named the 4 C's and stated that "Organisations that focus on the 4 Cs demonstrate more successful onboarding and business outcomes than those that do not."

Fast-forward to 2021, and Tayla has now developed these into 6 Cs:

- **Compliance:** At this level, HR teaches new employees about legal and policy-related issues.
- **Clarification:** HR makes sure that new employees understand their new role along with the related expectations.
- **Culture:** HR focuses on exposing new hires to organisational values and norms.
- **Connection:** HR connects new hires to personal relationships and information networks.
- **Confidence:** HR designs employee experiences to build up employees, helping them feel better about themselves and their ability to do their job.
- **Check-back:** HR schedules a time with new employees to ask them about their experience and use feedback to improve your process in the future.

"Research and conventional wisdom both suggest that employees get about 90 days to prove themselves in a new job. The faster new hires feel welcome and prepared for their jobs, the faster they will be able to successfully contribute to the firm's mission." – Tayla Bauer



TACTICS FOR A SUCCESSFUL ONBOARDING PROCESS



The onboarding process involves similar steps in any sector. However, welcoming new talent into a people-centred industry such as hospitality requires a special touch to retain and engage employees from the start.

Turn your new hires into loyal team members with the onboarding tactics below:

ONLINE ONBOARDING

Endless forms and paperwork are not conducive to a smooth onboarding process, so digitising it makes perfect sense:

- **Immediacy:** onboarding can begin as soon as your new hire has accepted the position. This means you can get most of the paperwork out of the way before their first day.
- **Engagement:** by starting your process early, your new hire will feel part of the team before day one. As mentioned previously, this will also ensure Gen Z hires that your company is technologically up to date. Being presented with reams of paper on their first might just send them running.
- **Consistency:** digitising your onboarding process enables you to standardise it for all recruits, and your hard work is done. It also helps you ensure the same quality welcome for each new arrival.
- **Accuracy:** Hosting your online learning modules and tests online provide you with accurate records of each employee's progress from day one. This is invaluable for future performance reviews.

Interstate Hotels & Resorts are an excellent example of how technology can transform onsite training into a more effective and engaging experience. Head of Learning and Development international, Helen Buckler, turned their onsite duty manager training into an award-winning virtual blended course. The training now involves a six-hour virtual workshop, a familiarisation exercise in the hotel and the completion of a workbook the company created in conjunction with Flow Learning.



CONSTELLATION AT LEVY UK

Part of the Compass Group, Levy is the official food and drink partner at legendary sporting stadiums, historic venues, conference centres and arenas.

They focus on providing delicious food and excellent service, providing uniqueness to each of its clients, including Wimbledon, The O2 and Twickenham.



The company onboards thousands of new starters at a time, who will later be assigned to different venues in different settings. As one can imagine, a huge onboarding effort is required to ensure they can deliver on their promises to clients.

They made the most of the pandemic downtime by implementing a project to take their face-to-face training programme onto an online training platform. Together with Flow Learning, they streamlined their processes and moved everything online to prepare for a new, more efficient future.

This highly streamlined and automated process meant that all candidates are now contacted within 48 hours of application, with a reduction in the average onboarding process from five days to one. With Flow, Levy also created shorter, more engaging online and mobile-friendly courses that their team could fit around their schedules.



KNOW THE ARRIVAL DAY
AND PREPARE IN ADVANCE

PREBOARDING

A lot can be achieved before the employee's first day, and it's a perfect time to engage them and get them excited about their new role.

An online onboarding system enables you to get the paperwork and formalities out of the way, making their first day far more interesting. Other information that can help engage the employee before they start including company information, organisational chart, HR policies and procedures, and employee perks and benefits, for example. You can also send them a welcome message from their manager or team, and any other helpful information such as where to park or leave their bike.

Some companies even introduce their new employees via their social media pages before day one, to put people in touch with each other before they start.

FIRST DAY

What happens in the early days of a new job will have a lasting impact on how they view your organisation. The most important objective of a new employee's first day is to learn about the company and their role.

Plan ahead to ensure that the new hire gets a positive message in line with the employer brand, values and culture. They need to feel they've made the right decision.

While pre-onboarding documentation may cover much of the compliance information a recruit needs to know for their job, remembering it all in practice takes time. Ensuring health and food safety procedures are adhered to is paramount, and this can be achieved far more securely through specific hospitality technology.

Streamlining your day-to-day checklists in an easy-to-use app like Compliance by MAPAL not only guarantees that your venue stays compliant, it also speeds up your onboarding process significantly. In addition, new hires gain confidence from the start without the added worry of committing errors during such important procedures.



Gail Artell relates:

"At Interstate, we've amalgamated three different HR systems - our ATS with Flow Learning and a payroll system and we can now guarantee that smooth onboarding gets underway before day one. Now, onboarding is seamless, consistent, and engaging and it's fantastic to see them motivated and enthusiastic on their first day: it's come in, grab a uniform and let's get hands-on straight away"





KNOW THE ARRIVAL DAY
AND PREPARE IN ADVANCE

CLARITY AND TRANSPARENCY

Starting a new job can raise many uncertainties, but ensuring new hires know their schedule for at least the first week is crucial if we want them to arrive with the motivation and enthusiasm we desire.

It's no secret that preparing staff schedules in advance isn't always easy. However, this time-consuming and often complicated task can be radically simplified through team management software. MAPAL Workforce, for example, uses powerful algorithms that produce optimal schedules in minutes, enabling managers to optimise productivity and costs.

Keep your new hires fully in the picture by giving them their access details in advance of their first day. They will be able to see their schedule and even chat with their new team members via its messaging feature.



SENIOR-LEVEL WELCOME

While managers are always busy, they should set time aside for the employees. Gaining a manager's support may directly improve or undermine a new hire's chances of succeeding.

They could show the employee their career and development plan and when future progress check-in meetings will take place. Introduce them to your online training platform and the first modules they need to complete. This will instil confidence in the new employee and boost their motivation to perform.

If possible, a message or brief encounter with the company CEO or owner will provide a major boost to any new hire, making them feel valued and part of the team from the beginning.

All new employees at Benugo, for example, are greeted by the CEO via an online video.



BENUGO

Michalina assures:

"Our founder, Ben Warner, felt it was important to welcome new employees to Benugo and we created a video which they can see online before they start. He explains a bit about the company, our values and goals and tells new hires how important they are for the company. This is fantastic as it makes every new team member feel valued and inspired to do their best."



KNOW THE ARRIVAL DAY
AND PREPARE IN ADVANCE

PERSONAL CONTACT AND 1-2-1S

Socialisation is key to making recruits feel at home in their new job, critically so in the first few days.

An essential part of any induction programme is to pre-arrange contacts or meetings with teammates and other key people they will work with. This makes the whole process as engaging as possible and ensures a positive experience from the outset and allows them to ask any questions they may have.

This personal contact is something that should be maintained throughout the entire employee experience.



“At Ennismore”, adds Hannah Marsh

“Our regular check-in process makes sure the managers have time to sit down with the team and with the current issues we can see what we can do ensure they stay with us – adapt L&D offering for them.”



APPOINT A MENTOR OR BUDDY

Naturally, new hires may feel anxious or uncomfortable when starting a new job. Giving them a teammate to learn from and lean on is an excellent way to help them.

Their buddy can show them how everything works and easing them into the culture, making them feel welcome and supported will positively affect their productivity and retention.

The manager should plan carefully who they assign as a mentor or buddy, outlining what their responsibilities are clear to both parties, so they know what is expected of them.



Gail Artell tells us a little about Interstate's buddy system:

“On their first day, new employees are greeted by their manager. They meet their teammates and are assigned a buddy for the first week, who'll show them how to do the various tasks, and demonstrate how to handle different customer situations. It really helps them to blend in and get hands-on straight away.”



KNOW THE ARRIVAL DAY
AND PREPARE IN ADVANCE

DEMONSTRATE TANGIBLE CAREER PATHS

A solid learning management system is vital to be able to provide both new and existing employees with clear career paths.

Ennismore launched Flow Learning platform in 2019 for employee training and development, which supports HR departments with appraisal management, succession planning, and has a career mapping tool and also facilitates goal tracking, as well as their performance management process.



As Hannah Marsh told us,

“We are very much about internal promotion, very important especially with the current situation – and it means we can support them to get where they want to be.”

Not everyone is purely motivated by money and demonstrating tangible opportunities for professional development boost talent retention, as Benugo knows only too well:



BENUGO

“We check in with new employees after six weeks, and again at the 90-day mark, to see how they are doing and what aspirations they have. All of this is recorded on the Flow Learning platform, and this helps us track the employees’ progress and better support them in the future. We offer the manager’s learning path to all employees. Many won’t opt for it for various reasons, but we firmly believe in promoting from within and rarely recruit managers externally.”



“Not everyone is purely motivated by money and demonstrating tangible opportunities for professional development boost talent retention”



INDUSTRY INSIGHT

PREMIER INNS & RESTAURANTS, WHITBREAD

Premier Inn operate over 850 hotels throughout the UK and Germany with a 20,000-strong team. In the pre-COVID era, they would normally onboard around 9,500 new staff each year.

Through data analysis, they discovered that retention had a direct impact on the guest experience, reflected by lower or higher Net Promoter scores. Further analysis revealed that around 30% of new starters left within the first 30 days and that reducing retention by just 2% overall would represent savings of over 11 million pounds annually.



To reduce their turnover rate and, hence, improve their bottom line, Premier Inn began overhauling their onboarding and induction programme in 2017 to increase talent retention. They streamlined skills and learning paths for each role; they also introduced a proficiency indicator - a target for both managers and team members to reach proficiency, and an increasing pay scale as they progressed through a programme called 'Pay for Progression'.



The group also identified other factors with directly influenced how long new hires stayed: the Tiny Noticeable Things (TNTs). These extra touches that Premier Inns give during a new hire's first week include a welcome pack and uniform on the first day; a £20 gift voucher to enjoy the guest experience at breakfast; a tour, meeting the team and a two-week shift and buddy schedule.

All of these things increased employee confidence and happiness, but the most positive influence on staff retention was a coffee chat with the hotel manager. Feedback surveys revealed that removing this from the TNTs would have resulted in a staggering 26% of new hires leaving the company earlier than those who did.

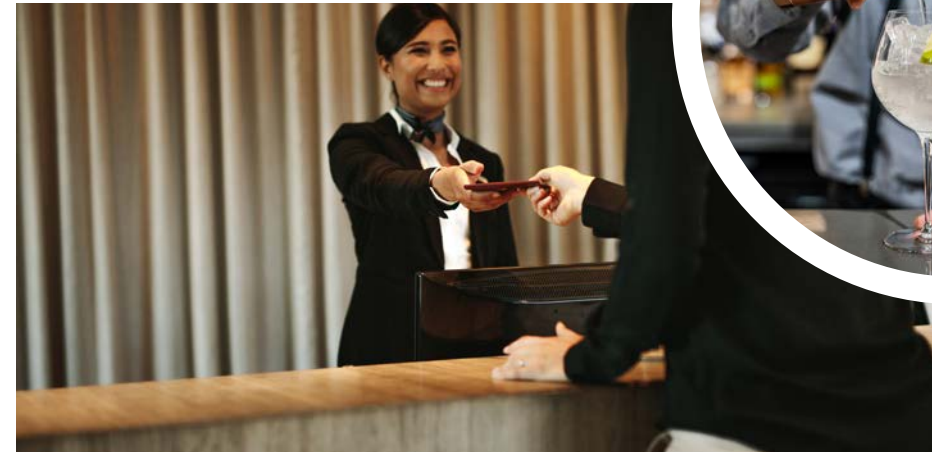


KNOW THE ARRIVAL DAY
AND PREPARE IN ADVANCE

WELCOME GIFTS AND UNIFORM

Employees should be informed in advance about whether they will be given a uniform, and how to go about it. If no uniform is provided, then make sure they know how to dress on their first day to avoid embarrassment.

Welcome gifts, even small, can be a nice surprise and enhance employee commitment. Gifts with logos help with brand loyalty and samples of your food or drink could convert them into product ambassadors from day one.



GIVE THEM AN EXPERIENCE OF YOUR BUSINESS

By their innate nature, hospitality companies all strive for excellent customer service..

There's no better way to demonstrate the service you expect of a new hire than to allow them to experience it for themselves. The experience will be far more useful and inspiring during the first few days than sifting through paperwork and regulations.

Other operators choose to hold periodic or specific practice sessions for all staff at once, depending on the circumstances.



INTERSTATE
HOTELS & RESORTS

Gail Artell outlines:

"Whenever we open a new venue at Interstate, we organise a pre-boarding event and invite a mix of staff, customers and suppliers. This gives the team some real practice of how the guest experience will be before the official opening comes around."



KNOW THE ARRIVAL DAY
AND PREPARE IN ADVANCE

CULTURE AND CONNECTION, NOT JUST RULES AND COMPLIANCE.

As mentioned previously, there are many ways that culture and connection can be encouraged and enhanced before and on day one. However, culture must be shown or demonstrated.

Culture is how your staff behave, how your team treats customers and each other in practice. Many organisations have a culture manifesto or code to outline their mission and values, which is made available to new hires through the onboarding process. Giving new employees clear goals and transparent information will help them find their “true north”, so they can hit the ground running with enthusiasm.

What is true is that employees are more likely to invest themselves personally in a company if they feel aligned with its culture. So, the sooner a company harnesses this, the less likely they are to lose new employees in the first few months.



ACHIEVING EXCELLENCE WITH FLOW LEARNING

Achieving excellence in hospitality onboarding and recruitment is at your fingertips.

Flow Learning by MAPAL has been the leading hospitality learning management solution for over a decade, evolving with technological changes, customer needs and industry developments.

Flow covers all your onboarding and team learning needs in one platform and integrates seamlessly with your other HR systems to give you to streamline your working processes and focus on your people. With Flow, you can customise your learning offering to suit your brand and values, adapt training to each job role, automatically assign career paths and modify others. Take advantage of its extensive learning library or create your own with Flow's authoring tool.

Guarantee your team has the training it needs when they need it. Flow delivers engaging, mobile-first learning content in bite-size modules that not only engage and motivate your learners but also enhance knowledge retention. Keep teams connected through social forums, news and noticeboards.

Managers can easily track their team's learning progress and get reports to ensure performance reviews are positive and productive with clear learning journeys.





DO YOU WANT TO KNOW MORE?

www.mapal-os.com