WHITEPAPER

HOW TO DIGITISE EMPLOYEE TRAINING IN THE HOSPITALITY

flow learning
by mapal

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Introduction

High staff turnover and the heavy workload in restaurants are among the main challenges managers face when ensuring their team are well-trained. In recent years, the development of online learning systems has helped hospitality companies ensure that employees have access to simple, quick and user-friendly training. These new digital professional training and development programmes for the hospitality sector, or learning management systems, are not a thing of the future: they're happening now.

Why you need a solution to manage your employees' digital training?

Under normal circumstances, it helps you:

- ✓ Ensure that the team is aware of the company's food safety and hygiene and rules and regulations.
- ✓ Maintain a thorough record of courses completed to ensure legal compliance.
- ✓ Provide new recruits with a smooth and positive onboarding experience.
- ✓ Save on transport costs for trainers.
- ✓ Facilitate communication between team members.

In a pandemic like this, it also:

- Guarantees a higher level of safety than onsite training because it helps maintain social distancing.
- Means you can offer specialised content to keep both your team and clients safe with Covid-19 regulations.
- Ensures you comply with the highest cleaning hygiene standards to meet client expectations and avoid negative criticism.
- Helps the team to get up to date after having been furloughed.
- It helps employees understand any changes to directives and legislation and keeps a record of this communication.

These days, large multi-site hospitality companies already have online training systems to create and execute their employee strategies. They help you improve your operating standards, save on training costs and reduce staff turnover. In this e-guide, you can learn from several hospitality experts' experience and understand how they digitised their employee training.

Mowgli Street Food

This restaurant group serves homemade Indian food and was founded by a barrister turned entrepreneur and curry evangelist, Nisha Katona. She opened his first restaurant in Liverpool in 2014. The group now has 11 restaurants in nine different UK locations. The company was recognised as one of the most dynamic in the country for two years running. It recently received the Sunday Times Fast Track 100 award of Fastest Growing British Company.

When Mowgli hit the five-restaurant benchmark, they realised they needed to improve their HR processes. So, they decided on Flow Hospitality Training to help streamline their onboarding processes, comply with regulations and invest in their employees' professional development by providing quality training. Since then, the company has expanded to 11 restaurants, and 400 employees, all of whom use Flow's training programmes.

London Cocktail Club

The professional development and training revolution

London Cocktail Club (LCC) emerged in 2008 when it first opened in Covent Garden, London. Their goal was to create a cocktail paradise. Today, **it's renowned for the quality and variety of its cocktails and their emphasis on training their team**. The brand rocketed to success after winning a British television programme in 2009. London Cocktail Club has since then won over hospitality experts, Raymond Blanc and Sarah Willingham, as a result, who are now investors in the business.

London Cocktail Club, now with ten establishments all over London, has won prestigious awards including London Lifestyle, Time Out and Design My Night. But perhaps most importantly for the founders, they were recognised as one of the best places to work, through the awards for "Best Employer" and "Best Career Progression" received at the Springboard UK Hospitality Awards.

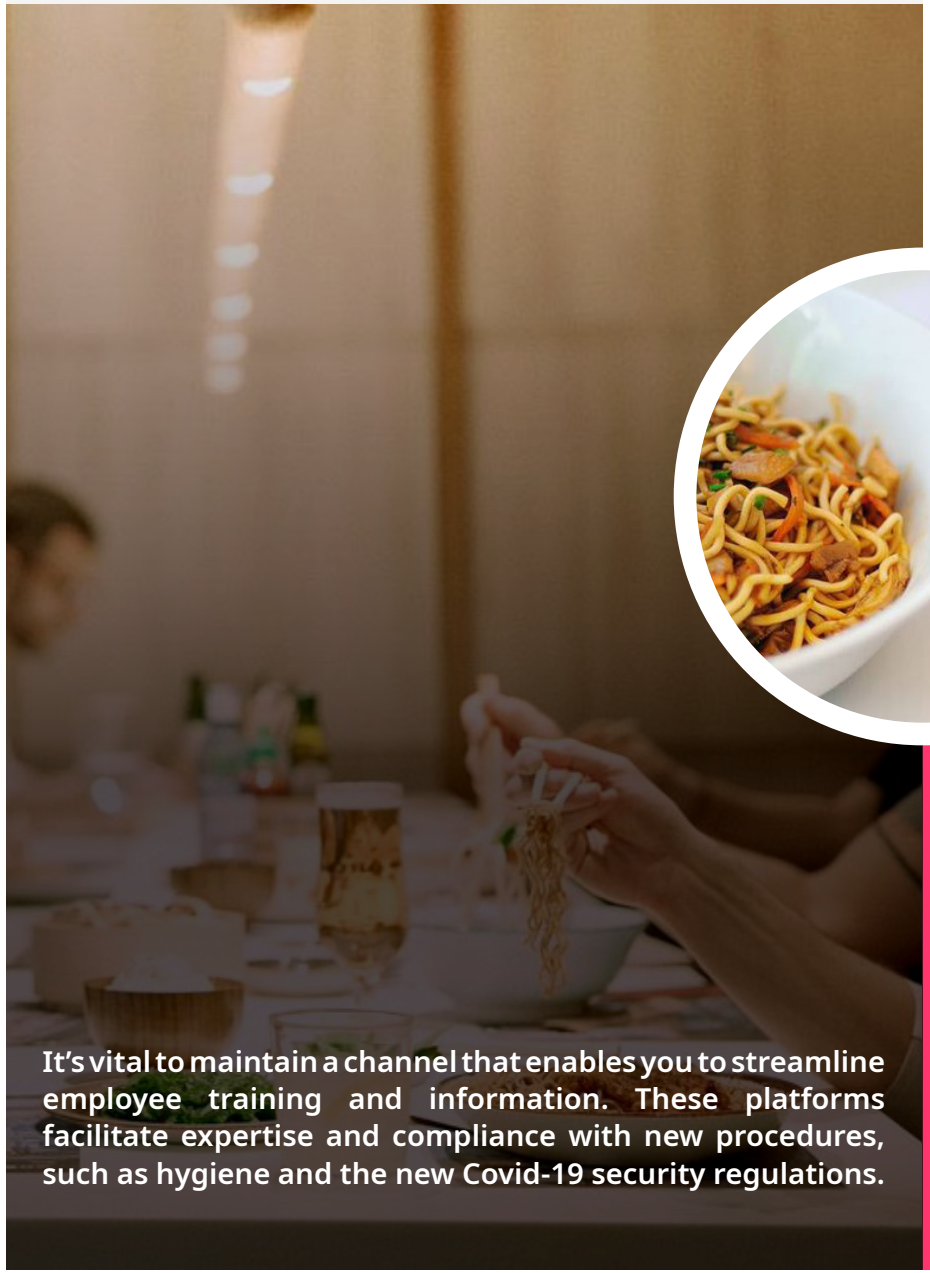
A culture that values learning and development

When you're operating ten cocktails bars under the same concept, offering the same service in all of them is crucial.
London Cocktail Club has always stood out for its exceptional training standards that prioritise the bar staff's technical skills and outstanding customer service.

LONDON COCKTAIL CLUB

And the talent search became more difficult as the company grew. The founders realised they couldn't be at all the different venues at the same time. As a result, they decided to start documenting all their processes in operations manuals.

They had high expectations of their bartenders, as you would expect with this kind of service excellence. New recruits started to become overwhelmed by the piles of printed training manuals to get through soon after joining the team. To make this process easier, **they got on board with Flow Hospitality, an LMS where new employees could access the right resources when they needed them.** This process became much more systematic, enabling them to align their knowledge with their skills and eagerness to learn.



It's vital to maintain a channel that enables you to streamline employee training and information. These platforms facilitate expertise and compliance with new procedures, such as hygiene and the new Covid-19 security regulations.

UDON

UDON's people management team has the mission of implementing a corporate culture based on its values. For this reason, they first define their values and then set up the rest of their procedures. This helps align their employees' professional development with the brand.

A well-managed employee life cycle contributes to smoother company growth. Some people join with previous experience and training, while others may not. Either way, you need to turn employees into fans of your brand.

How UDON digitised its employee training

"Our current circumstances have led to the reinvention of training through new technologies, which help companies stay connected with their workforce. In this sense, online training offers a higher level of flexibility and facilitates knowledge-sharing. It also strengthens the sense of belonging and helps both employees and the company stay connected. "

Brewhouse and Kitchen

Paperless learning and development

Brewhouse & Kitchen took inspiration from the craft beer movement in the United States and wanted to create a space where people could enjoy this beer culture. Since opening their first establishment in Portsmouth in 2013, they now have 23 brewhouses across the UK. In 2019, the company was listed in the London Stock Exchange's annual "1000 companies that inspire Britain."

An award-winning employee development programme

Brewhouse & Kitchen spend as much time looking after the team as they do making beer. In a sector with a high staff turnover rate, they aim to inspire their employees to see hospitality as an environment for developing a stable and long-term career.

They train employees to become experts in different areas through user-friendly, transparent and attractive training programmes. And this hasn't gone unnoticed in the industry: they've already won more than 30 prizes in the last five years, eight of which were for their professional development programmes.

How to train managers

Advanced training platforms can integrate with payroll systems so that new employees automatically receive all company documents, including training modules, right from the outset. They also make cumbersome tasks easier, such as getting to know the company organogram and the different teams, getting company policies signed off or ensuring that all new recruits have completed their training without spending hours in a classroom.

The system gives managers a complete overview of the business. **It optimises their working hours leaving them to focus on activities that add value.** Looking after their team is one of those, as well as providing the best training to suit both the company's and each employee's needs.

Providing the right training will give employees the resources and the confidence they need to offer high-quality customer service. Employees who get the training and professional development they need through coaching courses and hospitality software enable them to evolve into management positions.

And this is Mowgli's philosophy: they nurture their talent in-house to foster growth and reward culture. The main focus of the company leaders is to create an awesome place to work. Team members feel taken care for, important and fulfilled while achieving their goals during their time in the company.

Blended learning

Digital learning tools have come a long way since the time when learning modules consisted of pages of 2D text with pre-designed images. Today's technological capabilities mean that restauranteurs can now choose tools that reflect their style and help them reach their objectives. By this, **we mean fun, interactive and effective training that pushes boundaries and enables you to do everything from managing appraisals and communicating with your team through one single platform.**

It's an investment that will be rewarded with greater staff loyalty and commitment. These improved service levels lead to higher client satisfaction and, naturally, compliance records that give our management team peace of mind.

Technology will never entirely replace onsite training. But it is an effective way to get employees involved and encourage them to improve their skills, which we need now more than ever. As profit margins get tighter, a learning management system is extremely cost-effective because companies can save so much on transport expenses, organisation time and other related costs.

In reality, a combination of onsite and virtual training generates better results.

The growing need for cost-effective and robust digital learning tools to meet our daily challenges means that digitising hospitality training has never been more crucial.

Blended learning at Mowgli Street Food

Mowgli adopts a blended approach of face-to-face training with online modules, which guarantees the best learning outcomes. **The module generation feature facilitates this blended training approach.** The brand complements formal training by digitising and introducing self-paced workbooks within the Flow platform. Employees can, therefore monitor all their learning in one place.

This industry leading induction training is an excellent example of this style of learning. Four weeks in duration, it involves both face-to-face and online training with modules from Flow's content library, personalised modules and training plans. It also includes modules adapted to each establishment to ensure that the employee onboarding experience is as relevant and effective as possible.

Blended learning at Brewhouse and Kitchen

A paperless management philosophy

Brewhouse and Kitchen use hybrid or blended techniques that include classroom and online training modules, individualised workbooks and, naturally, lots of tasting. The company offers a robust training process focused on performance and professional development, with monthly and bi-annunal reviews.

B&K approached Flow Hospitality in 2016 when it had 10 pubs and **wanted to unify all of its employee training activities on single platform.** The end goal was to move towards paperless HR processes. Their head office struggled with printed manuals and workbooks that were lost under piles of paper in the pub back offices.

Blended learning at London Cocktail Club

The transition from the classroom to a blended approach with online learning

The Flow Hospitality team works closely with London Cocktail Club to help them define their future professional development training plan. Rather than limiting themselves to merely digitising the existing processes, they took the Flow training management system's optimisation capabilities into account. Face-to-face learning still plays an important role. And the program is designed to combine both formats which mutually support each other.

When shifting from fun and enjoyable training that's exclusively face-to-face to a new blended approach, the content must be appealing and fully adapted to the brand. The use of innovative gamification features created by Flow's experienced learning designers helped to fulfil these needs. London Cocktail Club's internal learning and development team also use the module builder tool to design custom content with company branding.

"Evolving from a purely classroom-based training process to a blended approach through digitising courses, assets, and resources was key to meeting our teams' expectations and the high standards we expect of our bartenders. Flow has helped us transform bartender education, guaranteeing that we provide our team with the best training solutions so they can consistently offer our clients incredible experiences across our ten establishments."

JJ Goodman, founder of The London Cocktail Club

Transparent processes and lifelong learning

All these resources give managers the ability to keep track of employees who are standing out from the rest and acknowledge their work. Rewarding them with a range of accredited hospitality management certificates gives them a sense of achievement, from the moment they're hired to becoming a team leader.

Visualise your employees' professional development in hospitality training programs

A good hospitality training programme needs a learning management system that enables you to provide a blended learning approach. It should include both the follow-up and recording of classroom-based sessions as well as online courses. For example, you are be able to use the platform to plan online video training sessions which also draw on other online resources. It can also help you record attendance and to submit assignments before and after the course.

This is not only crucial for compliance records, which must always be available for auditors, but they also become invaluable for conducting performance reviews, identifying knowledge gaps and creating development plans for your teams.

Employees can visualise their training and professional development and this increases their motivation. They know what it is expected of them on the first day and can follow their progress over time. Anyone working towards a career in hospitality can access extra online and in-person courses. They can also take their learning one step further through extra training materials and engage employees through the various communication channels.

Ongoing learning, higher knowledge retention.

Many studies today suggest that, for certain topics, e-learning can be more effective than classroom-based training. According to an IBM study, self-paced learning and the growing use of gamification and micro-learning techniques help students retain up to five than times more information than in traditional learning settings.

According to Forbes, the Research Institute of America found that e-learning increases retention rates by 25% to 60%. In comparison, classroom-based learning only retains around 8-10%. This is partly down to the ability to access content on a mobile tablet from anywhere, at any time, instead of having to look at handwritten notes.

London Cocktail Club

Industry-leading training content

London Cocktail Club are a real leader in the content they develop for their workforce, going way beyond many of their competitors. They were the first to develop training resources on employee well-being.

They wanted to ensure their staff had the knowledge and tools they needed to maintain a healthy lifestyle and stay resilient given the hard work hospitality entails. Since then, Flow's learning experience designers have created a similar well-being module as part of the core resources suite.

Ensures compliance with regulations and quality standards

When operating 10 cocktail clubs under one brand, consistently great service across all the venues is the key. With Flow, the LCC can be sure that their staff has completed their training on time and are ready to give the best experience to their guests but also stay compliant and follow the rules - which is particularly important for the company having such a high profile and a big team to manage.

Customise training programmes to your brand image

Online training and professional development platforms in the hospitality industry should reflect the organisation's spirit and standards. It's vital to choose a supplier that can help you make a difference by building the platform the team needs. Every hospitality business has its own way of doing things and should also be integrated into their training programmes. This ensures that employees are truly committed to the brand's development.

Giving employees visibility of their learning and development also motivates them. It helps them understand what's expected of them from the outset and track their own progress over time.

Get employees involved in training with fun and user-friendly content

When it comes to developing training programmes, increasing employee commitment, brand loyalty, and well-being, is just as important as improving their expertise and complying with regulations. In this context, it's crucial to strike a balance between the content and training processes. For example, try to include activities that make them feel good and reinforce their sense of belonging, such as tasting sessions or leisure activities.

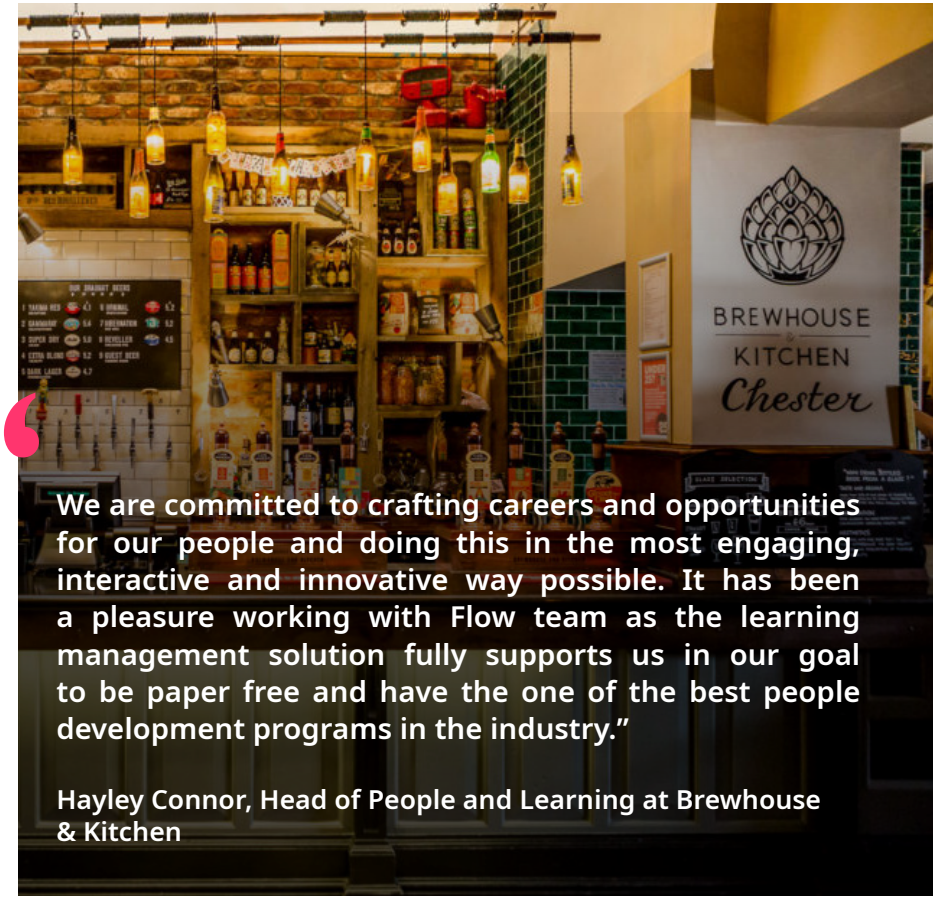
Training modules can be a lead-in to the course, as a foundation for all aspects of the compliance or service in question. That way, the user can focus on most enjoyable parts of the training, which provide added value. Why not send a module on wine to your floor staff to cover the basics on vocabulary, tasting notes and pairing before organising a tasting session with questions and answers.

Encourage healthy competition

Gamification systems and blended learning approaches are excellent ways of stimulating employee growth and professional development, creating healthy competition. The Flow platform incorporates dashboards and module completion rankings for each branch, which create a certain level of competition between employees, teams or establishments. This encourages continual improvement both on an individual and collective level.

Brewhouse & Kitchen

B&K also strived for better visibility of their employees' training progress. Flow's customer success team worked alongside the Brewhouse & Kitchen's HR managers to find the best solution for creating a customised and blended learning programme. Today 23 locations and all 467 employees are using the platform, making learning transparent, trackable – and saving the company over £10k a year in printing costs!



"We are committed to crafting careers and opportunities for our people and doing this in the most engaging, interactive and innovative way possible. It has been a pleasure working with Flow team as the learning management solution fully supports us in our goal to be paper free and have the one of the best people development programs in the industry."

Hayley Connor, Head of People and Learning at Brewhouse & Kitchen

Mowgli Street Food

Teams need to be well-trained and feel valued to deliver excellent service

Professional development is vital to maintain market leadership. This requires a proactive approach that encourages employees to take responsibility for their own development. It motivates them to seek new courses to develop skills that boost their confidence. That way, they bring out the best in themselves and shine.

Always keep employees up to date

As mentioned before, transparency and refresher training are two indispensable factors at the best of times, but especially now with the uncertainty that surrounds us. Internal communication and training play an important role here. For example, internal newsletters are a good way of updating employees on the company's situation and potential changes to their work routines. This transmits assurance and confidence, both in their work and in the company.

Compliance with regulations and safety during the Covid-19 pandemic

Ensuring the safety of your staff and clients is a growing challenge. But having a robust online platform that provides training and enables you to communicate with them will make this so much easier. While most companies have already introduced cashless payment and contactless delivery systems, technology can also benefit other areas like training and professional development.

Since the outbreak of Covid-19, restrictions on gatherings in internal spaces has made classroom-based training extremely difficult.

In a world where social distance has become obligatory to ensure that employees and clients are protected, specific online courses about legal compliance and hospitality training have become essential allies.

Online training platforms also help you keep a communication channel open between the different team members. This way, they can express their opinion, how they're feeling and any comments they have through questionnaires or reviews. They also guarantee that staff are aware of new policies, even in an unpredictable environment.

Greater ability to respond to sudden changes

Now more than ever, we need to adapt as quickly as institutions require us to—something that's easier through online platforms. Has the government changed the rules again? Send a new document to your employees at the end of the day. We know that rules can change overnight in some regions. With online training, you can create and send a mini-module and questionnaire just for teams in a specific province.

As the learning framework has moved from the physical to the virtual space, it's now much easier to reach everyone, regardless of the staff rota or management time. It also enables you to create specific training for each team according to the changing needs that emerge.

Personalised training for individual employee development

If there's one thing that technology facilitates, it's mass personalisation. You can also do this with hospitality training. Flow's platform enables you to develop and offer individualised workbooks for personal development to introduce a particular service or cover knowledge gaps.

"With the help of Flow, we are able to combine our classroom trainings with the online modules to make the education stick. Furthermore, Flow helps us to make sure that our people have all the training they need to provide the best possible service to our loyal guests while constantly growing themselves to feel nourished, purposeful and fulfilled."

Louisa Rodriguez, Training Manager at Mowgli Street Food

Mowgli Street Food

A career in hospitality is now fun and satisfying

Most of Mowgli's management team have been nurtured from within, thanks to its commitment to internal development. They want to demonstrate that someone can go from a junior position to becoming a manager by following a clear professional path while having fun and boosting their career.

The company were amongst the first to make the wellbeing and mental health modules available to their teams which have proven to be very popular, alongside Mowgli Mental Health Manager training delivered directly by the Training Manager.

We've already seen that training helps your company guarantee legal compliance online and stay up to date with all food health and safety legislation. It's also a key factor in onboarding new recruits to the company, as well as increasing the loyalty of existing staff, not forgetting that it also enables us to maintain company standards.

Using Flow enables Mowgli to easily manage its employees' progression and professional development, and their managers' career path, ensuring they stay on track and achieve their ambitions.

The best training for the best service

The key to delivering first-class and homogenous service in a business with a high staff turnover is to gain employee commitment. It ensures that your clients are happy and safe when they come back and revisit you. **A pleasant working environment is crucial for employee retention as well, as they'll be more likely to stay with you longer.**

According to Big Hospitality, high staff turnover in the hospitality sector can reduce productivity and cause losses of up to 272 million euros a year. So, you could say that developing an employee loyalty strategy is vital. You need to offer attractive conditions to gain employee loyalty, ranging from a competitive salary to other benefits that are equally important today. For example, achieving a good work-life balance, offer real professional development opportunities, quality training or thriving team culture.

The importance of employee training

Evidence shows that investing in employees through training and professional development is more profitable than recruiting new team members. According to Harvard Business Review, the investment per employee (€775) is still four times more economical than the average recruitment cost (€3,100). Not to mention the time it takes to hire a new member of staff and reach maximum productivity in your restaurant and the chance of service errors, which increase with staff turnover.

Press Reader state that, beyond the salary itself, employees expect benefits such as training and professional development to be part of their package. So, offering opportunities like this will only increase the likelihood of greater loyalty.

A robust employee loyalty strategy will save you time, energy and money. This will also give you a strong competitive advantage in terms of a brand image that transmits employee well-being and professional development.

Opting for a hospitality training and professional development platform like Flow improves employee loyalty, the client experience, increases average ticket value and generates positive reviews. A combination of all these ingredients will power long-term business stability. Without a doubt, employees are a company's greatest assets. Look after them, and they'll look after your clients.

Online appraisal management for building learning pathways

Your employees learning needs may change depending on their career progression and other factors, such as new market trends or business goals. So, **employee appraisals are essential, not only for discussing their performance and training progress to date but also to align their future goals within the company.**

Employers can then guide them and offer the best training solutions and ensure that employees are engaged, motivated, and improving their performance.

Soho House

From a paper-based appraisal system to an online management platform

Soho House started its relationship with Flow Hospitality in 2019 when it implemented the learning management solution during the launch of its five-star London hotel, The Ned. The solution was so successful that they rolled it out to 96 sites and over 6,000 employees worldwide, all by the end of the same year.

Flow's appraisal management platform created a consolidated global view of people development and career progression. This **streamlined performance review process ensured that this important practice was being adhered to across all sites.** It enables senior management to make more robust decisions regarding skills development, placement, pay raises and promotions.

Soho House has now also developed multiple bespoke modules, tailored core content and learning pathways from different business positions. This helps them maintain consistent service levels, culture, and values and guide their rising stars along a structured learning pathway wherever they are in the world.

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