

Case Study: Hospitality



CELTIC MANOR
RESORT

Enhancing working systems to support 5 star service

Executive Summary

The exclusive Celtic Manor Resort and golf club in South Wales was used to dealing with the complexities of planning staffing rotas to fit in with fluctuating demands. However, the prolonged down turn in the economy combined with a changing guest profile and two high profile impending events made shift and workload planning a great challenge for the business.

Suffering from a general over reliance on seasonal or agency workers, and rising staffing costs the Celtic Manor management called on leading consultants, Working Time Solutions to help find alternative ways of working. The team was tasked with investigating and implementing options for improving the shift arrangements to deliver benefits for staff and management alike.

Following the implementation of annualised hours, the resort today boasts some of the best human resource practices in the industry. The new structure has saved the business thousands of pounds every year as well as boosted service and customer satisfaction levels across the board.

Key challenges

- Downturn in the economy
- Fluctuating demand
- Over-reliance on temporary staff in a business where service is key
- Changing guest profile from business to leisure

Key outcomes

- Significant cost savings
- Better and more consistent service for guests
- Scalable system to capitalise on when economy turns around
- Reduction in the use of temporary staff
- Better, more planned out, working hours for staff
- Option to work extra hours if required

Key learnings

- Involve staff and other key stakeholders from the beginning
- Prepare and plan for resistance from staff
- Listen to feedback and provide options where possible
- Involve experts from the start

Background

The Celtic Manor Resort, in the Usk Valley, South Wales, hosts two hotels including a 330 luxury bedroom hotel and a 70 bedroom 19th century Manor House Hotel. Other facilities include two championship golf courses, a state of the art golf academy, two spas, two health clubs, four restaurants, a 1,500 delegate convention centre and 31 function rooms.

Identifying the issues

The Celtic Manor set out on a programme of working time change not only to fight the recession, but also to maintain its high standards and ensure better work-life balance for its staff. Working Time Solutions was brought onboard to pinpoint and implement the changes through carrying out extensive research into the business and staff needs before proposing a solution.

The main challenge was the fluctuation in seasonal demand, which was exasperated by the ongoing recession. The resort was also hosting a number of high profile events, which they were hoping would drive additional business, especially from overseas.

Being a five star hotel, the high turnover of staff, which is inherent in the hotel industry, and the reliance on temporary and seasonal staff presented additional challenges to the business. Guest expected top-notch service and facilities, which were sometimes compromised by having to rely on inexperienced staff. The whole operation also caused mountains of paperwork, and additional administration costs.

To add to the complexity of the situation, the Celtic Manor found that its clientele was changing dramatically, shifting from corporate conference business to that of leisure. In 2006, conferences accounted for 50% of the revenue, but in 2011 this had been reduced to a third.

Naturally, this fundamentally affected how the resort was run and the kind of demands that were placed upon it. The leisure business is less predictable by nature as people tend to book later and guests behave differently.

The solution

The recommendations offered by Working Time Solutions were aimed at tackling these issues and included the introduction of squad-based rostering for both full and part-time staff and a committed days system, where staff knew which days they were working, though not necessarily their exact hours. It also included rostering in time for holidays and an increase in the notice period while retaining an overtime option for those who wanted it.

Central to the project was also a shift pattern generation system, designed by