

## **ALBA DE LAYOS HOTEL SPA, TOLEDO, SPAIN**

### **Staff Development and Motivation**

#### **Introduction**

The five-star Alba de Layos Hotel Spa lies just a few kilometres from the city of Toledo and as of a few months ago, became part of the Barceló Hotels chain. This hotel has 86 rooms and 26 suites and offers a wide range of leisure activities including hunting, riding, table-tennis, tennis and outdoor management development activities. The Spa zone of the hotel is set up as a medical centre for aesthetic treatments with aquatic installations, and offers beauty treatments as well as spas, a medical area and gym.

The Loyos golf course is an 18-hole course and was designed by Stirling y Martin (Global Golf) and comprises all the necessary requirements for playing golf. Conceived as a sophisticated hotel, the Alba de Layos hotel offers its clientele the chance to savour local gastronomy and enjoy cultural activities in the city of Toledo. Due to the young age of the hotel, management are still forming work groups and putting into place the strategies that will guide the hotel through its development. The reputation and experience of the hotel chain that it has now joined will be a great boost to the organisation in providing top quality services to its clients across all hotel departments, as well as developing staff to the highest professional standards.

#### **Human Resource Management Practices at Alba de Layos**

The human resource management strategy of the hotel is closely supported by the experience of the hotel chain which it has recently become part of - and the close proximity to the provincial capital (Toledo) means that staff recruitment is not a major obstacle for the hotel management.

The key role for the HR manager at the Alba de Loyos hotel is to promote a desire amongst employees for self-development and provide hotel staff with continuous professional development opportunities. Since the hotel only opened its doors eight months ago, the objective has also been to create a stable and coordinated team of workers in order to optimize the quality of services offered.

In order to reach these objectives, those responsible for human resources proposed carrying out personal development plans for new employees, along with establishing a training evaluation system. In order to put this into practice, Hotel Alba de Layos designed a very detailed and standardized career programme for employees which is based upon support from other hotels in the company, as well as relying on professional specialists in the evaluation of employee development initiatives. These specialists are also in charge of designing, structuring and putting into motion career development programmes for those employees of the company showing talent and potential, whatever level they may have started at with the company. This talent programme includes the following:

- Evaluation of the employee's performance, which includes suggestions for performance and an assessment of employee satisfaction;
- An analysis of employee strengths and weaknesses and an assessment of professional training required. All the information collected will give the HR director valuable insights when developing succession plans for the company;
- Mentoring and Coaching Support. Once the training and professional programme is put into motion the employee is supervised in order to evaluate levels of personal effectiveness.

In parallel with the career development programme, the hotel management has also established "Employee of the Month" awards to encourage the development of workers as well as motivating them towards self-improvement. This creates competitive cooperation amongst the work team which in turn yields tremendous benefits to the quality of customer services. For the employees, apart from the innate sense of pride derived from being nominated as employee of the month, they also receive a weekend stay at any of the hotels owned by the Barceló chain in Spain with all expenses paid.

### **Conclusion**

Belonging to a large hotel chain is, without a doubt, a very relevant and positive factor when it comes to recruiting staff. However, it is important that hotel management always retain a personalized approach in dealing with employees. In establishments where levels of quality expected by the clientele are extremely high, staff must be trained, motivated but, above all, be dedicated to their work. The training, professionalism and the desire for self-improvement are aspects that must stem from management and management themselves must take on the task of instilling the desire for improvement amongst staff.

The personalised treatment and involvement of each of the members of the organisation is considered a key factor towards delivering the firm's mission and the activities embarked upon to date are showing to be effective:

- The growth expectations of employees joining the company are being met and, in many cases, exceeded;
- The desire amongst employees for self-improvement is a reality;
- Motivation levels are high;
- Management and staff work in a happy positive environment.

As such, the strategies introduced have been successful, although the management must bear in mind that these strategies have only been in force for a brief period of time and that a wider time frame is needed to be able to make a more definite evaluation. That said, management are already considering new ways of motivating staff and fostering greater levels of creativity and innovation.