

# AUSTRALIAN Hotelier

AUSTRALIA'S NATIONAL HOTEL INDUSTRY MAGAZINE

Vol. 40 No. 8 - September 2023



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# The **secret** to staffing success

*As publicans continue to face the pressing issue of staff shortages, Molly Nicholas explores the strategies being employed across the sector to fill managerial roles.*

**TALENT SHORTAGES** continue to impact the recovering hospitality industry, and venue manager and assistant venue manager roles have been identified as some of the toughest jobs to fill.

With publicans facing difficulties finding candidates for more experienced positions, hotel owner and company director Lucinda Dowling Black spoke about the ways in which the Full Moon Hotel is tackling the issue, starting with getting the job advertisement right.

"Being realistic, clear and concise when describing the role attracts willing candidates and avoids unwanted surprises after commencement. Hospitality can be messy work, and we need to be prepared to work as a team beyond our job descriptions."

Writing a strong job description starts with a clear understanding of two factors; what you're looking for and what your candidates are looking for. Black explains that while experience is valuable, there are many transferrable qualities that should encourage publicans to hire based on potential.

"Flexibility and adaptability are paramount qualities in hospitality leadership roles due to the dynamic and ever-changing nature of the industry, often on a day-to-day basis. Customer preferences, staffing issues and external factors can shift rapidly,

and leaders who possess these qualities are better equipped to navigate challenges, remain positive, lead by example and seek out opportunities.

"Hire based on merit and potential rather than against a checklist of experience and lengthy criteria. A candidate's experience doesn't tell their whole story, nor what they are capable of in the future under a supportive development pathway."

Beyond your own expectations, understanding what your candidates are looking for will also ensure that your advertisement attracts the right talent. While it is important to get the financial aspect right at a managerial level, Dowling Black explores which other perks are driving workers in today's job market.

"Purpose is the currency of the new workforce - the pandemic has created a shift in priorities and values of modern employees. Boundaries between work and personal life are blurring as a result; people are looking for careers that provide a sense of fulfilment and meaning beyond the typical nine-to-five grind."

With this in mind, Anna Hurley, chief executive officer and former venue manager at the Marion Hotel, says that it is crucial to understand the perks that

motivate your workforce and use them as selling points for potential hires.

"When advertising these roles, what we really put emphasis on is that we are a family-owned, locally operated hotel group and our credentials as an employer confirm that we are a really good place to work.

"The emphasis is on the benefits of working for us as an employer... [In the food and beverages industry], staff like to know that we use good produce and offer the opportunity to be creative with their service and menus."

## Unlocking potential within

Treating professional development as a priority goes a long way in easing the staffing crisis and ensuring retention is high. Dowling Black acknowledged that maximising staff development has allowed the Full Moon Hotel to build talent and move lower-level staff into much-needed managerial roles.

"A key factor for our success has been promoting internally and offering supported training pathways for our emerging managers. This has worked great for employee retention by offering employees opportunities for career growth, recognition, and advancement within the organisation.

“These practices contribute to increased job satisfaction, motivation and engagement while also retaining knowledge and reducing turnover costs. A strategic focus on developing and promoting internally leads to a more loyal, skilled and effective workforce,” she states.

“Furthermore, we strive to embed strong values such as respect, trust, compassion and effective communication, which we believe are essential elements in retaining management due to their profound impact on workplace culture, job satisfaction and overall organisational success.”

Hurley also emphasised how the Hurley Hotel Group has reduced the need for external recruitment by fostering the development of passionate individuals at lower levels to become the next generation of managers.

“We have developed a really strong team of managers, and we have been pretty fortunate to keep them around. We hire people into roles, because they fit in with our work culture and enjoy working for our group.

“Our staff like to know that they are really well supported by our head office, as well as giving them the autonomy to do what they think works within their venues, to hire the best staff and get the right team together.

“We are heavily invested in training and mentorship programs for our younger staff, to show them that there is a career path in the hospitality industry and within the Hurley Hotel Group. The most important thing for us is maintaining a pathway for new venue managers to come through.”

The staff shortage in the hospitality sector may have seen an improvement on recent years, but many venues still face the difficulties of attracting talent. Despite these challenges, pub operators who are evolving their internal recruitment tactics to identify rising stars within their business and offer training opportunities have been able to maximise their in-house capabilities.

Smaller venues without the staff or infrastructure for internal promotions can still benefit greatly from showcasing the other ways in which they are creating a positive workplace culture, be it financial perks or reputation.

### Recruitment realities

In the 2023 Annual Salary and Employment Report, people2people Recruitment found some key considerations for employers when hiring:

- Diversity, equity and inclusion saw a 30 per cent increase in importance over the last three years, as well as mental health
- If employees have clarity on their work priorities, they are seven times less likely to search for a new job
- If it was easier to change jobs internally, 66 per cent of employees would stay longer
- 76 per cent of Gen Z and Millennials aspire to pursue side hustles



Anna Hurley



Full Moon Hotel operations manager Jenny Briggs (left), and owner & director Lucinda Dowling Black

