

Importance of taking care of events, tourism and hospitality staff during peak season

By [Clinton Thom](#)

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It is said that a business's biggest asset is its people, and this is especially true of the service industry where staff are customer-facing and can make or break an experience for guests and visitors.



The busy season, and by extension the southern hemisphere's summer, is peak season for the local hospitality industry and a time when staff are required to give their utmost and their best. As leaders and business owners in the sector, we also need to give the same - and more - if we are all going to make it through the busiest time of the year.

This might be the most lucrative time of the year for hospitality businesses, but it also means that there is more stress among team members. Which should take priority? The needs of the staff? The needs of the guests? Or the needs of the bottom line? For me, it's the needs of the staff. It's not that guests do not matter - they absolutely do - and it's not that I don't care about the bottom line - of course that's important. But I have come to find that if I take care of my team, the rest will fall into place and guest expectations and bottom lines are exceeded.

Taking care of team morale, and ensuring that everyone is motivated to represent the brand as it should be, requires leadership skills and special attention.

How can you ensure your team's best performance during these times? **Here are some tips:**

1. First, **ensure that your team is at full strength**. This may require recruiting additional seasonal staff if you have the budget to do so. If you do take on short-term, temporary workers, they should be as familiar with your company, its values and its mission statement as your permanent teams. They must feel as invested in the brand as core team members and fully integrated.

This means proper orientation through all the operational departments and training, including cross-training where appropriate, so you can deploy staff into different areas of the business as demand requires.

2. **Rosters and shift allocation must be done as fairly and sensitively as possible**. Everyone must feel that they are being fairly treated with as much downtime to spend with their own family and friends as others. This is a time when teamwork is essential, when everyone needs to pitch in – including managers and team leaders - to support each other.

Anyone feeling resentment towards another team member will not give their best and may create an environment that is not conducive to good staff or guest relations.

3. **Reward your staff**. This does not always mean monetary reward – although once the season is over, bonuses are always motivational. Good managers give praise where praise is due. Acknowledgement of top performers in internal communications is another affirming tool that good business leaders have in their arsenal.

4. **Communication is key**. Give feedback to your staff on how the business is doing. This may include sharing both the positive and negative reviews from guests on Tripadvisor or other social media platforms or from surveys they complete on departure. At accommodation establishments, provide staff with occupancy levels and projections, to show you are all aligned and that reservations are strong.

5. **Show you care**. Staff need to feel seen and heard just as you want them to see and hear what is happening around them. Set goals for teams and individuals and reward milestones achieved with an extra perk or a gift voucher. Accommodating a request for a different shift is also a gesture of caring, as staff also have external family demands of their own.

6. **Be one of the team**. Being one of the team doesn't mean losing your status as a leader. It means being prepared and capable of doing yourself what you are expecting from your staff should the need arise. For myself, as a hotel general manager, this means ongoing skills training for all your heads of department, both job skills as well as management skills.

The bottom line is that happy staff create happy guests and this positively impacts the brand in the long run.

It is also said that we only have one chance to make a first impression. Staff attitudes and operational standards will be your guests' first impression of your brand and are part of your unique selling point, bringing repeat bookings or business by recommendation. Sales and marketing are not only done externally but internally - every day, at every touch point through the entire operation of your hospitality business.

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