

Hotel F&B

Four Tips to Make New Employees Feel Right at Home

Strategies from Shannon Colbert, VP of Sales and Marketing, Endeavor Hospitality Group.

As Vice President of Sales and Marketing at Endeavor Hospitality Group, Shannon is accountable for all areas of hotel sales, marketing, revenue generation and revenue management. Prior to joining Endeavor Hospitality Group in 2018, Shannon served as Director of Sales and Marketing for Hazens Group, Pyramid Hotels. During her time there, Shannon opened and repositioned the Four-diamond Luxe City Center Hotel in Downtown Los Angeles. Shannon also served in a senior management capacity for The Avalon Hotel in Beverly Hills and The Ambrose Collection in Santa Monica. Shannon graduated from University of Southern California with a degree in Communication and earned a master's degree in Psychology from Phillips Graduate University. In her spare time, Shannon can be found exploring New York's bustling culinary scene.

Shannon Colbert, VP of Sales and Marketing, Endeavor Hospitality Group.
October 10, 2018

Shannon Colbert

There's no place like home... and when your job is in hospitality, a top priority is to make guests feel as comfortable as they can while away from home. Having spent the last 20 years in this industry, I've had a front row seat to myriad hospitality jobs – from hotel operations and back-of-the-house staff, to management group executives and the like. One thing I've learned is the importance of taking care of our employees, just as we do with our guests. In fact, giving our guests the best possible experience starts with ensuring our team is treated as family.

Below are my four tips and best practices for on-boarding new team members and keeping them happy and engaged.



Look Beyond the Resume

While resumes serve as a great starting point when seeking out a new candidate, there's tremendous value in understanding each person's core values, attitude and ways they handle difficult situations. For instance, at Endeavor Hospitality Group, we are incredibly intentional in our hiring process and through our welcome ritual [more on that later...] we demonstrate how much we value an individual's personality, positive attitude when faced with challenging situations and the unique contributions only they can make. As a company, you can teach the skills needed to fulfill the requirements of a job, but what really makes the teams dynamic are the personalities, individual skill sets and unique vantage points that work together.

Create Your Own 'Welcome Ritual'

A good welcome ritual sets the tone for what hospitality looks like in action. The ritual is designed to invite new employees into the work family by giving them individual recognition and sharing in their excitement as they begin a new professional endeavor. We go as far as to give our new staff members a gift personalized with their initials, a bottle of bubbly to celebrate, handwritten welcome cards from senior management, and over-the-top 'welcome home' desk decorations. In addition to a celebratory lunch with leadership, we ensure to tailor internal work perks to the individual's personal interests, such as added healthy living and continuing education benefits and incentives. Once someone has experienced the welcome ritual personally, we find they are quick to pay it forward to both new team members and guests who walk through our doors.

Show Hospitality Inward and Expect to See It Outwards

For any great hospitality company, people matter more than any other asset, initiative or goal. You cannot expect the face of your brand to provide unparalleled hospitality toward guests if they do not know the joy that comes from experiencing it firsthand. Therefore, it's important to hold the company to exceptional standards and new employees to high expectations when it comes to practicing both internal and external hospitality.

Be Authentic and in the Moment

Genuine and consistent touch points with the team are essential. Regularly touching base with employees and connecting in authentic ways helps team members grow professionally and personally. In the hotel industry, we are ultimately establishing a



cycle of long-lasting, mutually-beneficial relationships with our employees and guests. By taking a few moments each week to speak with your team individually and really be in the moment with them, you are showing you value them as not only an employee, but as a person. Those kinds of connections make the difference between having long term, loyal employees and dissatisfied, disconnected employees, which cause high turnover. It's a small gesture that has a huge impact in the long run.

The takeaway? Always see the individual for who they are and not just what's on their resume, cultivate welcome rituals, pay kindness forward, and take the time to connect meaningfully. Life in today's hectic world can often make it easy to miss opportunities for authentic interactions, but implementing these simple tips can make all the difference in creating a positive company culture, which in turn, will be appreciated by your customers.

As Vice President of Sales and Marketing at Endeavor Hospitality Group, Shannon is accountable for all areas of hotel sales, marketing, revenue generation and revenue management. Prior to joining Endeavor Hospitality Group in 2018, Shannon served as Director of Sales and Marketing for Hazens Group, Pyramid Hotels. During her time there, Shannon opened and repositioned the Four-diamond Luxe City Center Hotel in Downtown Los Angeles. Shannon also served in a senior management capacity for The Avalon Hotel in Beverly Hills and The Ambrose Collection in Santa Monica. Shannon graduated from University of Southern California with a degree in Communication and earned a master's degree in Psychology from Phillips Graduate University. In her spare time, Shannon can be found exploring New York's bustling culinary scene.

