



Australian Hotels Association  
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Australian Hotels Association (WA)  
quick guide to

# HOSPITALITY retention

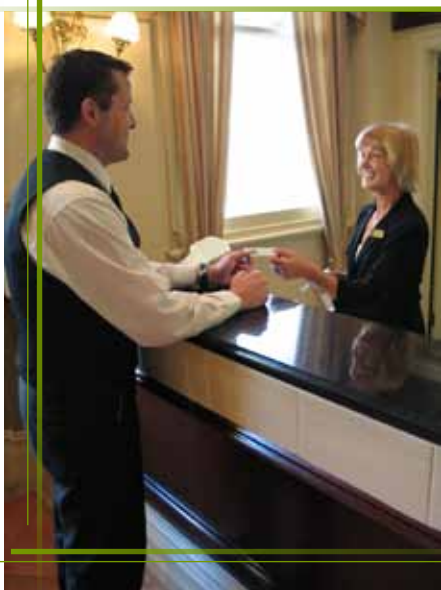
JUNE 2009



*In 12 short months, the West Australian labour market has undergone a significant transformation. The Global Financial Crisis has meant the severe employment and skills shortage that plagued WA last year has eased and people are looking to re-enter the hospitality sector.*

*This Quick Guide has been developed as a useful tool to assist you with realising important HR, training and employment outcomes in the current environment. The Quick Guide covers a range of topics from the importance of training staff through to employment strategies designed to assist hospitality businesses overcome the global downturn. It focuses on 'best practice' for recruitment, retention, developing a productive and successful workplace culture, flexible workplace practices and developing mentoring programmes. This easy to use reference provides information on how to be an 'employer of choice' and provides key contacts for many recruitment and training providers.*

*The Australian Hotels Association (WA) is committed to assisting Western Australian hospitality businesses meet these ongoing challenges to continue to deliver a quality product.*



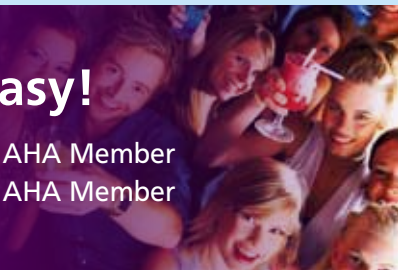
## Inside....

- Flexible work arrangements
- Internal and external training
- Workplace culture
- Strategies for dealing with a downturn
- Getting good people to stay
- Mentoring programmes

**Online RSA Training from \$50 It's quick and easy!**

AHA's online RSA is valid for front line staff in Western Australia only.  
Log onto [www.ahawa.asn.au](http://www.ahawa.asn.au) and click on the RSA online icon.

\$50 AHA Member  
\$60 Non AHA Member



## ■ Internal Training

### Keeping Key Staff

With unemployment on the increase and seemingly a sudden rush of applicants for jobs in hospitality it is easy to become complacent about keeping your key staff.

In current economic times it is essential that you concentrate on your most important staff. It is easy to fall into the trap that they need less attention because there are less opportunities elsewhere.

Staff training and development is generally the first to be axed when margins become a bit tighter, however it is generally the most effective time to concentrate on this area and it doesn't always have to be high cost.

### Getting good people to stay

Even though the financial purse strings may need to be tightened, in order to retain key staff employers still need to ensure the workplace is an enjoyable place to work.

The social aspect of workplaces is important to retain staff, and employers should continue with functions that bring staff together as a team on a regular basis.

### Simple Measures

It can be as simple as having regular staff meetings or an occasional information session on something new that has happened within the business. It is a common catchcry from staff "nobody told me" – there is no such thing as too much information!

Don't forget to take advantage of your suppliers and maybe do a tasting session on a new wine on the menu or a refresher on the coffee machine, these are simple to organise and extremely cost effective.

### In-tune with customers

In the current global financial crisis customers are more sensitive than they have been. Their moods are likely to be more down-beat, they can be more emotional and will be very sensitive to price change and or perceived value on a menu.

Perhaps now is a good time to get on the front foot and revisit your customer service strategies and enhance the abilities of your staff to deal with these potentially damaging situations.

### Accor System

Structured internal training programmes are an excellent drawcard for good staff who want to develop skills.

The Accor hotel group has implemented its new employee training system called the 'StartMe' programme. The programme is designed to develop the highest level of hospitality professionals in the business.

StartMe is a three month induction and training program that every front office, food & beverage and housekeeping staff member undertakes when they join one of Accor's 130 hotels in Australia.

"The unique approach of StartMe is that it takes the onus away from recruiting staff based on their level of training, allowing us to focus on criteria such as personality and attitude," says Christine Rumble, Head of Accor's in-house training department, Academie Accor.

"In a talent tight market we need to look at a different way of recruiting and take a different approach to training," says Christine "and StartMe is an investment in the future of both our employees and Accor, encouraging ongoing study and staff retention."

### Mentoring Programmes

The objective of mentoring programmes is to increase the effectiveness, professionalism and confidence of staff through the support of a more experienced employee.

The benefits of mentoring training systems include, mistakes are identified quickly, employees learn to perform better, quicker, and increased motivation to go to the next level and themselves take on leadership positions in the hospitality industry.

Mentoring can take place in a number of ways which suit the requirements of your venue, that may include shadowing the mentor in the workplace to begin with and gradually developing more independence.

The one-to-one relationship between a more experienced and a less experienced employee should be carefully considered. The relationship needs to be based on encouragement, constructive comments, openness, mutual trust, respect and a willingness to learn and share.

*Mentoring – developing insight to turn hindsight into foresight!*



## ■ External Training

### HGT – Not Just Apprentice Chefs

Hospitality Group Training has been servicing the industry since 1984 and whilst it is best known for providing apprentice chefs it is now involved in many other exciting areas of training.

In recent years there has been amazing success with innovative programs such as school based apprentices and trainees. These programs provide the opportunity for young people still at school to start their hospitality careers one or two days a week and still achieve secondary graduation.

Even more exciting is the recently introduced special approval that young people in a traineeship from 16 years of age can be involved in the service of alcohol with a meal. This provides a much needed flexibility to allow more young people to learn the essential aspects of front of house, or in the case of school based apprentices, the ins and outs of kitchens.

HGT is customising courses that reflect the individual business and incorporate in house policies as well as the necessary elements of competency from the nationally recognised training package.

Unfortunately the chef skill shortage in hospitality is likely to continue into the foreseeable future, so the good work of bringing budding chefs into the industry will have to continue, however as you can see, it is not just about apprentice chefs.

### AHA(WA) Training

The AHA(WA) represents over 80% of licensed hotels, taverns, bars, suburban pubs and accommodation hotels and resorts throughout Western Australia.

Since 1897, the AHA(WA) has supported, protected and contributed to the viability of the hospitality industry's political and commercial interests through the provision of the highest quality government relations services and resources.

For 15 years, the AHA(WA) has offered a complete range of liquor training solutions for the hotel & hospitality industry. As the leaders of liquor training in Western Australia, the AHA has direct access to regulation and policy changes ensuring you learn only the latest up-to-date course material.

Customised training with the AHA(WA) allows you to train with the experts. Our fully qualified training consultants have years of extensive industry experience to ensure you receive answers to your questions and knowledge specific to your venue.



#### **Provide Responsible Service of Alcohol (SITHFAB009A)**

- 5 hour nationally accredited course for supervisory staff and all staff who serve or supply liquor

#### **Course in Liquor Licensing (52065)**

- One day course
- Mandatory for all Licensees and Principal Approved Managers

#### **Cocktail Course**

- Intensive and personalised course to create the perfect cocktails

#### **Beermasters Course**

- Discover the secret behind pouring the perfect beer

#### **HR Sessions**

- Overview of various topics relating to Workplace Relations

For course dates and more information visit [www.ahawa.asn.au](http://www.ahawa.asn.au)

### Online RSA Training – from \$50

Responsible Service of Alcohol training is mandatory in the hospitality industry for any person engaged in the sale or supply of liquor on licensed premises in Western Australia.

Front line staff in WA can save time and money by completing the AHA(WA)'s convenient RSA e-Briefing online.

Staff in supervisory or managerial positions need to complete the Course in Liquor Licensing or Provide Responsible Service of Alcohol training (see above).

[www.ahawa.asn.au](http://www.ahawa.asn.au)



## External Training Providers

### Challenger TAFE - Quinlan's Hospitality & Tourism Training Centre

P 08 9239 8277 W [www.challengertafe.wa.edu.au](http://www.challengertafe.wa.edu.au)

*Challenger TAFE has 13 industry training centres to provide quality training for our industry and community clients.*

*The Centres are closely aligned to the needs of industry. They are focused on targeting their training and employment services for the wider community including for diverse, and in some instances, disadvantaged groups.*

### Dynamic People Performance

P 08 9474 9888 E [peter@dstar.net.au](mailto:peter@dstar.net.au)

*Training and development specialising in communications, time and stress management and business writing*

### Edith Cowan University

P (08) 6304 5704 W [www.ecu.edu.au](http://www.ecu.edu.au)

*Tertiary hospitality management education.*

### International Communication Plaza

P 9226 0510 W [www.icplaza.com.au](http://www.icplaza.com.au)

*ICP is an employment & education agency*

### Perth Institute Western Australia

P 08 9322 1919 W [www.perthinstitute.com.au](http://www.perthinstitute.com.au)

*Private RTO for hospitality/tourism AQF courses from Cert II to Advanced Diploma. Current student population is over 500.*

## Positive Workplace Culture

Simple ways of developing a positive work environment can include supporting employees to stop and have a chat or share a coffee with colleagues. During the work day it is important to take time and recharge, it's impossible to be on task the entire day.

James Adonis, author of 'Employee Engragement: Why people hate working for you', suggests that you need to pay attention to employees' work needs to create a happy environment;

### Four easy steps

Here he offers four easy - and cheap - ways to make a difference.

1. Praise staff: "Praise and recognition go beyond any monetary incentive. In one study of what employees hate most about their jobs, not receiving recognition for work came in at No.2."
2. Provide development opportunities: "Anything that makes employees feel like they're growing will stimulate them at work."
3. Create informal leadership roles: "One of the biggest motivators is influence. People like to feel important and to have responsibilities and to have a say in what happens."
4. Communication: "Studies of American organisations showed that those that communicated well were 400% more likely to have high employee engagement." Engaging leaders don't just give feedback. They mentor.



# ■ Employment strategies in a downturn

## Re-consider redundancy

Implementing redundancies can be costly and stressful for both parties and is only a short term way to cut costs. Apart from the direct costs of redundancy, employers should consider the cost of hiring and training replacement employees with important skills and experience. It may be more cost-effective to keep valuable employees on the payroll in times of downturn than to implement redundancies. This is particularly the case if a business downturn is considered likely to be temporary.

## Alternatives to redundancy

### 1. Taking leave

Leave liability is one of the first areas employers should look at to reduce their costs.

Directing employees to take annual leave or long service leave can be a useful way in which to reduce accrued liabilities and ensure that staffing levels better match business activity. *For information on current provisions, please contact the AHA(WA) on (08) 9321 7701 or [iradmin@ahawa.asn.au](mailto:iradmin@ahawa.asn.au).*

Encouraging employees to take other leave may also be an option, e.g. advise staff the company is willing to accept unpaid leave applications for travel/study etc.

### 2. Shorter working hours / Job sharing

Some employees may be happy to reduce their hours in the short term until business picks up (e.g. introducing a nine-day fortnight). Alternatively a job sharing arrangement would be implemented. Typically, this involves two employees performing the same job with each working on a part-time basis.

### 3. Reduced overtime

Shorter working hours may also be implemented in the form of reduced overtime. There are fewer legal issues involved in reducing overtime, because of the penalty rates that apply to overtime for Award covered employees, the reduction in pay may be more substantial than for a reduction in ordinary hours.

### 4. Use of accrued RDOs

If the employee's contract of employment or industrial instrument allows for the accrual of Rostered Days Off, an employer could direct an employee (in accordance with such instrument) to take their bank of accrued RDOs over a specific time.

### 5. Redeployment

Redeployment may involve relocation, transfer to another job and/or retraining.

If considering redeployment, extensive consultation should be held with the employees affected and this process should be implemented in accordance with the employment contract.

Redeployment requires compliance with the terms of the employment contract, genuine consultation with the employee and no significant disadvantage to the employee (unless the employee genuinely consents to it).

### 6. Reduced levels of casual staffing

Due to the nature of the hospitality industry, many businesses rely on casual employees to smooth out the fluctuations in business. Generally, it is easier to cease using such people when employment needs decrease.

If the casual employment relationship is a long-term one, the employee may be deemed as either full-time or part-time and become entitled to other benefits upon termination of employment, such as payment of pro-rata long service leave, annual leave etc.

### 7. Natural attrition

Where a downturn is gradual, the organisation could consider allowing employees to leave over time and not replace them rather than implementing redundancies immediately.



## Don't forget

As always good communication is the key in introducing any types of change. If redundancies have to be made, employers should consider providing outplacement services to affected staff. Outplacement services create a sense of goodwill and respect for the organisation, and can make a significant difference to an employee who has not had to embark on a job search for some time.

**AHA(WA) strongly recommends that businesses seek advice when considering the implementation of any changes that affect employees including those outlined above.**

# Flexible Work Arrangements - Employee's right to request from 2010

*Applicable only to Constitutional Corporations*

## Did you know?

From 1 January 2010, as part of the Federal Government's National Employment Standards, certain employees will have the right to request flexible work arrangements from their employer.

Under the Fair Work Act, an employer can only refuse such requests on reasonable business grounds.

## BENEFITS of flexible work arrangements

- Improving the ability to attract skilled and motivated staff
- Higher staff retention with a more energetic, committed, happy and focused workforce
- The ability to attract staff that might have otherwise been unable to work (e.g. due to parenting, studies etc.)
- Savings on recruitment and retraining costs
- Creating greater staff loyalty and higher return on training investment
- Increased trust and respect
- Reduced stress levels and improved morale and commitment
- Reduced absenteeism and staff turnover
- Improved productivity

## EXAMPLES of flexible work arrangements

- Gradual Retirement
- Part-time work
- Job-sharing
- Working from home
- Flexible working hours
- Flexible leave options
- Creating a flexible work practices policy



## Negotiating Flexible Work Arrangements

1. When meeting to discuss the flexible work proposal ensure that you and the staff member have an understanding of the company's flexible work options.
2. If the proposal cannot be reasonably accommodated, consider alternative flexible work options and leave entitlements.
3. Consider whether the grounds upon which you have rejected the proposal are fair and objective.
4. Prior to making the agreement, discuss the arrangement openly and honestly with other staff that may be affected by the work arrangement.

*AHA(WA) recommends you seek advice before entering into any flexible work arrangements to ensure relevant legislation has been complied with.*



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