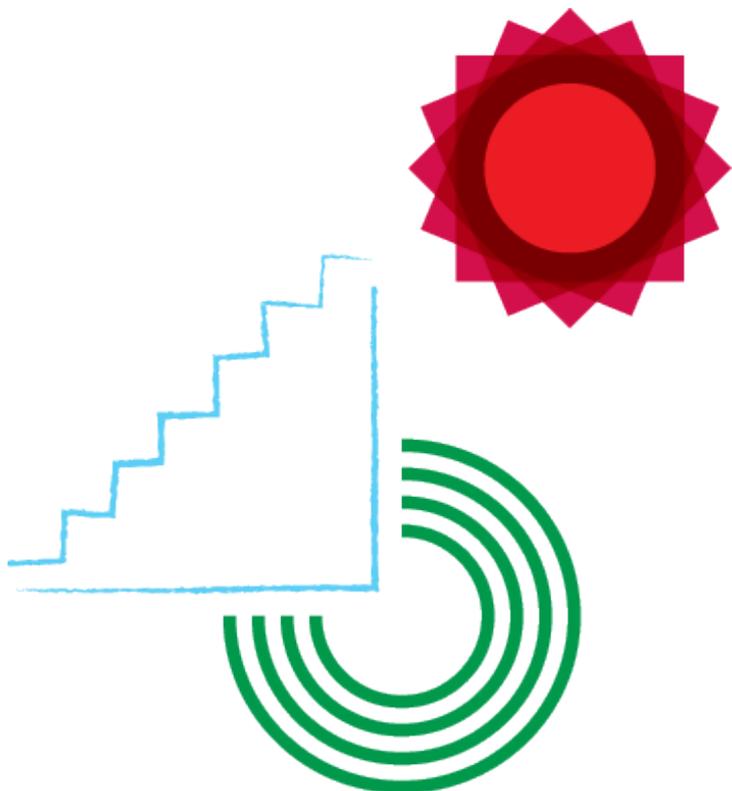




EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AT PSL

Story



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Background

Founded in 1993 PSL are food procurement and margin improvement management experts, specialising in the foodservice market. We work with the Hospitality Industry. We are a people business as much as anything else; we see good relationships as central to our business model. This applies to our people and clients. Currently we have around 60 employees based throughout the U.K., Eire and Dubai. However, it was not always like this.

The Challenge

So let's start at the beginning. When I joined PSL 11 years ago, the business had been going for 9 years. Yet tales still abounded of the excitement of how it had started. A small group of people around a table, all had nicknames for each other and a family feel which lead each of them to go the extra mile. In fact most of the people who were around in the early days are still employed today. Ian Shaw, Director of Key Accounts who is one of PSL's first employees says:

"Working with PSL is like having an extended family. Everyone pulls in the same direction and is self-motivated in achieving a joint goal. From our MD down we work hard in ensuring our clients receive the best for their business".



As the organisation grew, we needed to not only retain talent but most importantly, ensure newer employees caught the vision. As we have geographically diverse workforce, many of whom work independently on a day to day basis there were many obstacles to overcome to keep the vision strong and retain and improve the passion and family feel of the early days.

Improving Engagement

There has been no magic wand, nor one single factor which has ensured improved engagement. Employee engagement requires consistency; however, some key factors have assisted this process.

A key factor occurred in 2006 when the Board brought the whole company together and clearly set out the company's Vision, Mission and Values at a special day which we called Red October Day. The Mission and values are consistently reinforced through induction, handbook, the Newsletter and training. We plan a further 'Red October' update as our ambitions for the future are getting more 'outrageous' as Best Companies would term it. Setting these out clearly gave a focus to Training and Development, Succession Planning etc.

We also recognised that engagement and retention was linked. This helped us focus on a good Rewards programme and employee recognition. Issues of welfare provision and work life balance were all part of this. We aim to be professional and serve our clients well while retaining a passionate belief that work should be enjoyed.

Starting the Best Companies process 3 years ago was significant. This gave us a benchmark for good practice. Each year we complete an Action Plan and work towards improving our Employee Performance. We started the journey as a 1 Star Company and have improved the score year on year. In the second year of the process, we were included on the Sunday Times Top 100 Small Companies List. The Action Plan is not dictated by the Board

but is a team effort as we gain feedback and opinions from all areas of the business.

Throughout the period of growth we have tried to keep the 'fun' element and family feel which was there at the beginning. We tell New Starters about the PSL journey and organise lunches for the new members of the team to meet the Board. As I write we are planning a 'Speed Dating style' event with our M.D. Every year we have a 'Company Day' at a luxury Hotel venue with team games, Spa treatments, quality food and ending in a party and overnight stay. We also get everyone together for a Christmas lunch. These times of bonding should not be underestimated.

What are the impacts and benefits?

Recently, I was writing an article for our Newsletter and in doing so calculated how many people had been promoted over the years. A staggering 50% of employees had been promoted including 3 to Board level. Last year our employee turnover was 12%. We have retained an amazing 36% of people for 10 years plus and 60 % have been retained for 5 years +. This does not mean we carry passengers, performance issues are dealt with, but it does mean we retain talent. An added Bonus is that we are now a 3 Star Accredited Company with Best Companies, we retained our Sunday Times Top 100 Status for a second year and we came 10th in the Best Employers in Hospitality Awards this year. Furthermore as a business we are rapidly expanding. Good engagement makes good financial and business success - it is worth it!!

