

HALL & WOODHOUSE

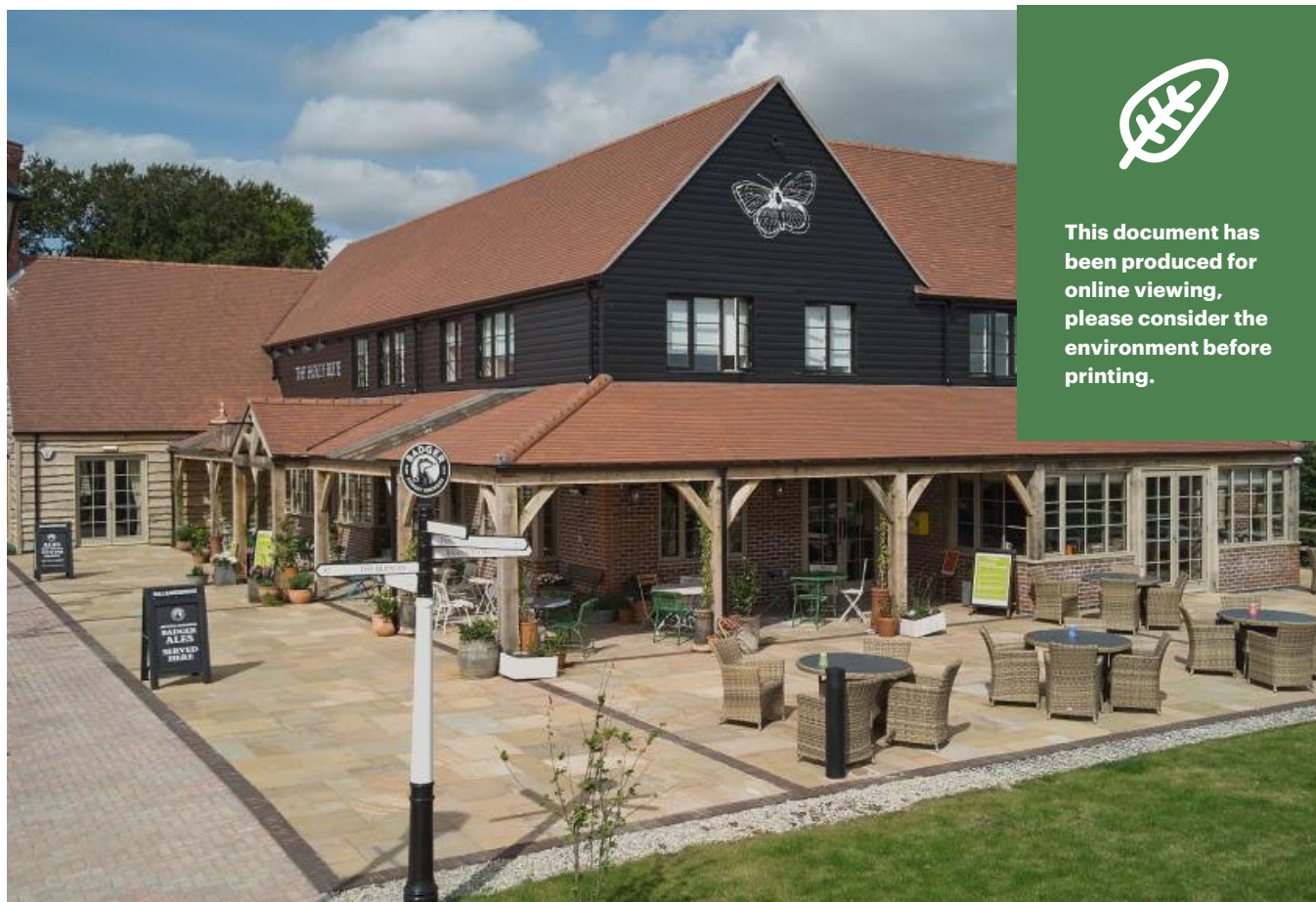
Hall & Woodhouse, based in Dorset, is committed to identifying, developing and promoting leaders internally. It has established a unique leadership development programme which has successfully improved employee engagement and raised the company's profile within local communities.

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Hall & Woodhouse, based in Dorset, is committed to identifying, developing and promoting leaders internally. The Ways of Woodhouse programme has triggered a gear-change in the company's approach to skills and training benefitting both its team and the business.

This best practice guide has been commissioned as a series as part of the "Coastal Sustainability through careers and business skills in Greater Lincolnshire" Coastal Communities Fund project.





SETTING THE SCENE

Founded in 1777, Hall & Woodhouse is a family-owned business which runs over 170 pubs across the south of England and a brewery in Dorset, selling its own brand beer in its establishments and supermarkets.

The company operates two types of pubs, around 55 'managed pubs,' for which Hall & Woodhouse employs a team and directly manages food and beverages and 120 'business partnerships,' tenanted pubs which are leased to entrepreneurs to run as their own business.

Hall & Woodhouse employs up to 1,600 team members during peak summer months, with approximately 180 based at head office and its brewery and the remainder at its managed pubs. The organisation strives to attract and retain talented people who live by its values, providing them with opportunities and support to fulfil their potential. Team members progress based on talent, dedication and performance.

Identifying a gap in its ability to recognise and promote individuals to managerial positions, Hall & Woodhouse embarked on a leadership development programme that would ultimately shape its approach to learning and skills across the organisation and improve employee engagement and business performance.

APPROACH

EMBEDDING COMPANY CULTURE & VALUES

Establishing its culture and values and recognising the type of talent it wants to attract into the business has been instrumental in Hall & Woodhouse's success. The organisation developed "The Ways of Woodhouse" (WoW) in which it addresses its values, core behaviours and specific language, such as 'team' not staff, 'houses' rather than pubs and 'on stage' and 'backstage' as opposed to front and back-of-house. Every new team member attends a WoW induction, which is regularly run by the senior team and introduces company culture and key sentiment to 'make people's day,' an empowering statement which guides everyday business decisions.

"More than a decade ago we worked really hard to establish our culture and values and understand the types of people we want to attract into the business"

When recruiting, developing and promoting managers, the company ensures they are not only technical experts, but also a good cultural fit. This can be challenging, but is fundamental to embedding company culture across its network of pubs. In addition, Hall & Woodhouse uses 'cultural architects,' team members from all levels who live the company values and are role models. Individuals are rewarded through a WoW recognition scheme which acknowledges when they have 'made someone's day' and awards prizes.



IMPROVING LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

The company identified its priority to improve the quality and consistency of leadership and develop and promote talent by looking at success rates for promoting general managers, results from an employee engagement survey and listening sessions with its teams.

In response, it removed its traditional appraisal process and replaced it with 'Partnering for Performance,' regular, quality conversations between managers and their team about performance, behaviours and development.

"Your role as a leader is to help people be successful"

Once this framework was established, the business recognised that it must develop its managers to deliver its ambition; it established an in-house leadership programme which has been completed by 200 of its leaders. The programme evolved from a two-day course to an eight-week development programme, incorporating a two-day workshop, a mid-point review and learning session and concluded with presentations demonstrating how participants have made a difference to their business.

IDENTIFYING GREAT LEADERS

Hall & Woodhouse spent time researching and defining what it meant by 'great leadership', establishing the traits and skills of a leader, which ultimately amounted to emotional intelligence. Once it could identify individuals who were behaving as great leaders, the company interviewed them for managerial positions. Recognising that it must also understand leadership potential, it worked with Talent Innovations, to establish early signposts that an individual could develop into a great leader. Using these predictive indicators, the organisation identified deputy managers with leadership potential and invited them to an assessment to understand their needs and establish training requirements.

"We realised we needed to identify leadership potential not just leadership experience"



ESTABLISHING A COMMUNITY OF COACHES

Recognising a need to bring its learning to life, Hall & Woodhouse introduced coaches who supported leadership programme participants. In doing so, the business acknowledged that coaching formed an important part of its leadership philosophy and was an essential skill for its managers. The company enrolled 30 leaders in Institute for Leadership and Management coaching and mentoring programmes and created an internal community of coaches, involving senior leaders and general managers who support individuals on their journey to becoming a manager.

“We have shaped a culture where coaching is more prevalent as part of the day-to-day leadership style”

DEVELOPING A BLENDED APPROACH TO LEARNING

Initially, Hall & Woodhouse ran its development programme in cohorts, however this was ultimately not the most successful and cost-effective way of operating when the number of dropouts and differences in the way individuals accessed and progressed their learning was analysed. The company updated, pivoting towards a more blended approach to development, which brings people together for key priorities, but critically makes learning available digitally for individuals to access at the right time for them. The organisation continues to ensure that everyone on the programme has a consistent personal development plan, which is reviewed regularly to monitor progress. Hall & Woodhouse is committed to a holistic approach to team development with exposure and experience playing a key role alongside education. It looks for opportunities for individuals to gain practical knowledge within the business, for example by covering for managers.



SUPPORTING CARE LEAVERS

In collaboration with Dorset Council, Hall & Woodhouse is creating valuable career and training opportunities for young adults who are leaving the care of the council. Building on its positive reputation within local communities and its commitment to educating and developing its team, the organisation spent time understanding the challenges faced by people leaving care and transitioning to independent living.

Recognising these unique needs, Hall & Woodhouse carefully matched individuals to pubs with managers and leadership teams who were experienced and best equipped to assist them. This supportive culture enabled the delivery of a very different induction and onboarding experience centred around pastoral care. The initiative has already triggered the recruitment of around 12 care leavers into the business and continues to evolve to understand better the unique experiences of each participant.

“We took it slowly and spent time understanding the challenges and opportunities from the care leavers’ perspective, each individual was very different in terms of their needs”



RESULTS

- During the peak months of June, July and August, the Hall & Woodhouse team increases by approximately 300, bringing the total workforce to 1,600
- 200 leaders have completed its in-house leadership programme
- Improvement in how the team rates the quality of leadership following the introduction of the programme
- Approximately 30% increase in response to the question, "I have discussed my development with my manager in the last 6 months"
- Increase in individuals promoted from deputy to general managers
- Two years ago, the top 6 performing managed houses had an average employee engagement score of 91%, those houses in turn averaged an 8% sales growth in 12 months. In contrast, the bottom 6 houses had an average engagement score of 51% and an average sales decline of 3%. This eleven-point differential in sales performance was therefore directly correlated to employee engagement score and equated to just over £1 million in sales
- Hall & Woodhouse is launching development opportunities and career pathways for all roles in its managed houses in early 2023
- Recruited up to 12 care leavers from the local community in the last 8 months

CHALLENGES & LESSONS LEARNT

CHANGING PERCEPTIONS OF HOSPITALITY ROLES

Recruiting individuals into hospitality roles is challenging due to long-standing negative perceptions associated with working long, unsocial hours at a low rate of pay. Hall & Woodhouse acknowledged that it must improve its quality of leadership hours and pay to provide greater career opportunities. Through its training and development programme, the organisation is now able to elevate team members with an aptitude for learning from entry level roles into financially rewarding general manager positions in a relatively short period of time.

“If we can attract the right people into the industry, our skills and training programme can help them develop a rewarding career”

The organisation is committed to reducing its working hours, split shifts and weekends, by recruiting enough people at the right level to cover its requirements and ensuring everyone has regular time off including weekends. To help communicate these changes, the company’s recruitment advertising now focuses on work/life balance and maximum working hours, with an emphasis on diversity and attracting individuals in search of career opportunities. It also attends careers fairs locally and across the country, engages with job centres and is starting to make connections with colleges and universities, with the aim of partnering on hospitality degree programmes and offering opportunities to graduates.

“We are working on lots of different angles to try to get the message out, but recognise it is a long journey to change decades of perceptions”

MAKING TIME TO UNDERSTAND DEVELOPMENT ASPIRATIONS

Initially, Hall & Woodhouse began identifying potential leaders to involve in its development programme, without first understanding their motivation and desire to take part. This subsequently resulted in some individuals dropping out, as there was a mismatch between their potential and their interest to participate. Learning from this, Hall & Woodhouse now takes the time to understand individuals’ motivations for upskilling as well as assessing their potential. Having these career conversations up-front in an open and honest way ensures the business acknowledges why team members want to get involved and what they are looking to gain, as well as ensuring they understand the commitment.



INVOLVING SENIOR TEAM IN PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION

Hall & Woodhouse now acknowledges the importance of involving its senior operations team in the creation and implementation of its training and development programmes, a factor not previously addressed from the outset. With the support of its regional and general managers, the organisation is creating an environment in which it is safe for team members to fail, recognising that this is part of the learning process. Managers are now better equipped to identify when individuals require help and understand better their role in assisting them. Engaging and involving managers in development discussions early increases buy-in and a willingness to release team members for training, as well as creating exposure and experience opportunities within their business area.

SHARING SUCCESS STORIES TO ENCOURAGE FURTHER UPTAKE

Although there were some trailblazers, Hall & Woodhouse faced the challenge of recruiting further participants for its development programme. In response, the organisation began to share its success stories far and wide, for example via its internal Facebook group and as a result, other team members were motivated to be involved.

“When we started the public celebration of success, we turned participation in our training programme from a pull to a push exercise”



TOP TIPS

1. **Align learning and development with your organisational strategy. Be clear about what business problem(s) you are trying to fix and how learning and development can support this.**
2. **Ensure your senior team are invested in learning and development and they understand the monetary value it can bring to the business.**
3. **Identify key individuals within your organisation who will drive forward skills and training. Ensure they are fully engaged in helping to develop and deliver the programme from the outset.**
4. **Set measurable targets at the start of the programme so that success can be reviewed regularly and changes made where necessary.**
5. **Tailor learning and development to your business incorporating your language, culture and values. Encourage engagement by sharing success stories from across your organisation.**

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