

Finding Ways to Motivate and Retain Staff

After 15 years at Place Louis Riel, Pat Bednarski still “loves the place.” In her role as Human Resources Manager at the hotel, Bednarski is just one of the many employees who have learned to appreciate the atmosphere as well as the advantages of working at the “PLR.” Among the advantages is the comprehensive array of benefits offered to the 100+ staff members.

“We have a very low employee turnover rate,” Bednarski says. “What we’re doing is working hard to address issues that create a cohesive workforce that stays connected.”

In addition to offering a comprehensive group benefits package that include extended health benefits, vision, and life insurance, the PLR also has a group RSP program. The Hotel contributes significantly to the different group benefits plans and maintains competitive wage rates to its competitors.

Recognizing individuals is another way Place Louis Riel helps inspire staff. In addition to hosting annual awards luncheons, employees who have been commended by clients are recognized in turn by the hotel with movie tickets and passes to other events. The PLR also celebrates employees’ birthdays. After one year on the job, all employees are feted with a free lunch and after that, full-time employees have their birthday off, with pay, and part-time employees continue to enjoy a birthday lunch.

“We also have an employee stay-over program,” Bednarski says. The stay over program allows staff to experience first hand all of the Hotels services at no cost to themselves. This benefit is a perk for the employee who enjoys dining, room service and a night in the oversized Hotel suites. With the valuable feedback program, which comes from the employee staying over, it really helps the Hotel operation improve in all service areas.

Employees also are offered a reduced rate to stay at the Hotel at other times. Even their family and friends receive a special rate when coming into Winnipeg for a visit. On the night of the “best staff Christmas party,” all employees can stay overnight for free. Those who choose to go home are given a free cab ride home. Christmas time also includes the annual free turkey or ham for every family.

The PLR encourages not only a sense of family, it likes to hire family members when possible or hire on referral from employees. In the latter case, if someone is hired on referral and remains after the three-month probation period, the referring employee receives a cash incentive for the referral. The Hotel used to have a difficult time finding staff willing to work on holidays but this incentive has staff now eager to work on stats.

Free parking is available for those who drive to work and those who bus are given a monthly bus pass discount.

While the Place Louis Riel is quick to celebrate its employees and create social opportunities for get-togethers, it also is supportive of any staff member in need. If a family is experiencing a medical emergency, for example, financial support is provided through an emergency staff association fund.

“We really are a PLR family,” Bednarski says. The tangible benefits may help motivate staff, but it’s the less tangible sense of belonging that keeps the employees connected for the long term. Something Bednarski is amply proud to be a part of.

The Place Louis Riel All Suite Hotel is an emerit certified property as well as a MANITOBA BEST Company.