



Fellows Broadsheet

The Institute of Hospitality Fellows Broadsheet is a thought-leadership article written by a member of our esteemed College of Fellows. Celebrating the wealth of professionalism, knowledge and expertise within our diverse, worldwide hospitality family. The Fellows Broadsheet is published exclusively for members.

Engaging Colleagues through Learning and Development: A Pathway to Long-Term Careers

Dan Barnes FIH is the Founder and Managing Director of Flourish Hospitality, a UK-based, hospitality learning and development consultancy. Dan joined the Institute in August 2020 and gained his Fellowship in October 2020.

In the latest Fellows Broadsheet, Dan looks at **'Engaging Colleagues through Learning and Development: A Pathway to Long-Term Careers.'**





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The Retention Challenge in Hospitality

The hospitality industry, renowned for its dynamic environment and diverse opportunities, faces a persistent challenge: retaining talent.

Encouraging young people to consider and commit to long-term careers in hospitality remains a critical concern.

By leveraging learning and development (L&D) initiatives, the sector can not only engage current employees but also attract and retain new talent, ensuring a vibrant future for the industry.

According to the Office for National Statistics (ONS), the hospitality industry in the UK experiences an annual turnover rate of around 30%, significantly higher than the national average across all sectors, which hovers around 15%.

This high turnover rate underscores the need for robust strategies to retain talent and build career longevity within the industry.

So what does the future potential workforce feel about a career in hospitality?

In June 2021, People 1st International conducted a survey of hospitality students in their network of accredited colleges which revealed their commitment to the industry going forward. 86% of hospitality students who responded confirmed they planned to enter the industry once they completed their studies.

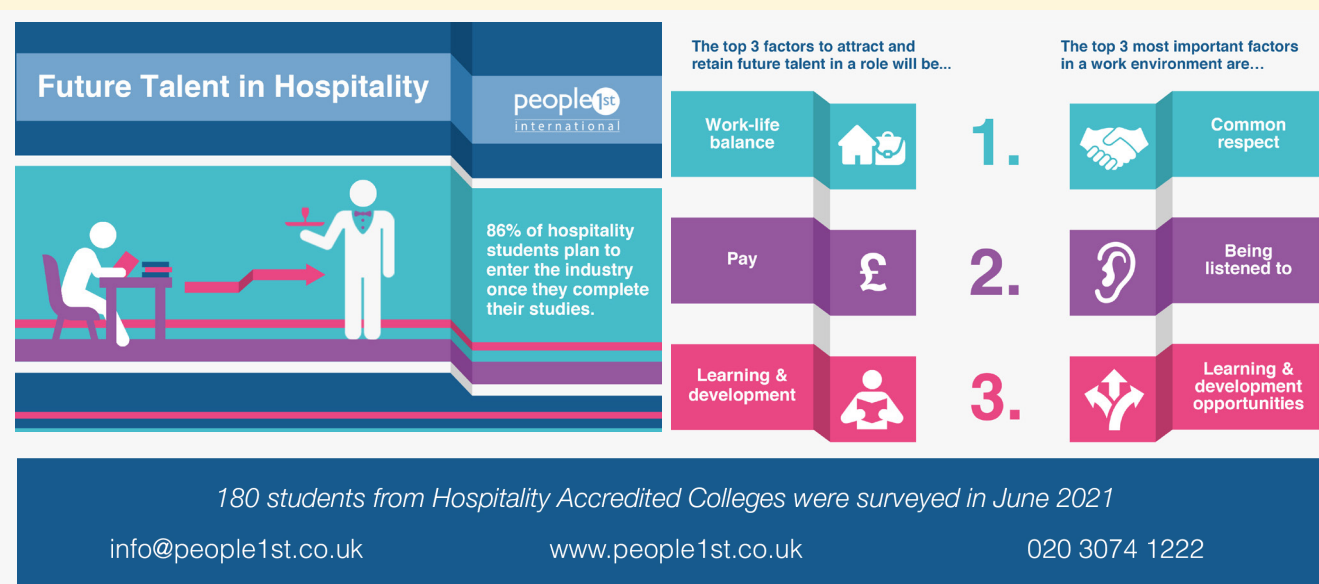
In the survey, the top three factors cited as attracting and retaining talent were:

- Work-life balance
- Pay
- Learning and Development

The top three most important factors in a work environment were:

- Common respect
- Being listened to
- Learning and development opportunities

The common thread in both is to keep young talent engaged in the workplace and instil a sense of value.



The Role of L&D

L&D has the potential to bridge the gap between current staff turnover and turnover rates of the future.

Effective L&D programs can transform the hospitality experience from transient employment to a rewarding career path.

Here's how:

1. On-the-Job Learning

On-the-job learning is essential in the hospitality sector, where practical skills and customer interaction are paramount. Training on the job allows employees to immediately apply new skills, enhancing their expertise and confidence. For instance, Marriott International's Voyage Global Leadership Development Program offers new graduates real-world management experience, combining hands-on learning with mentoring and classroom instruction.

In adult learning, where 70% of learning takes place on the job, this model equips employees with the necessary skills and fosters a sense of accomplishment and progress.

By embedding learning within daily tasks, employees see immediate benefits, reinforcing their commitment to their roles, reducing turnover and being engaged on a daily basis.

2. Career Pathways and Progression

Clear career pathways are crucial in demonstrating to young professionals that hospitality offers viable long-term prospects.

Structured L&D programs can outline potential career trajectories, from entry-level positions to senior management roles. Many of the industry's top companies deploy Management Training Schemes that provide a defined pathway for career advancement, encompassing a range of skills and competencies.

Employers must communicate these pathways effectively, showing that progression is attainable and supported.

Mentorship programs and regular performance reviews can further guide employees, helping them navigate their career journeys within the industry.

3. Skill Diversification

The hospitality industry offers a unique opportunity for skill diversification. Employees can develop a broad range of skills, from customer service and culinary arts to marketing and event management. Encouraging employees to diversify their skills not only keeps them engaged but also makes them more valuable to the organisation.

Companies like Hilton Worldwide have embraced this approach with their "Elevator to Tomorrow" program, which allows employees to explore different roles and departments.

This holistic development strategy keeps employees motivated and enhances operational flexibility within the business, showing achievable career advancement in a manageable timeframe.

L&D success

My own career pathway began as a waiter in a fine dining restaurant, then onto a graduate management scheme with Marriot and, as my food and beverage career developed, I had the opportunity to become a departmental trainer.

This kickstarted my love of training and developing people, opening the door to a future hospitality career in People and Culture focusing on learning and development. Without the opportunities offered to try something new, I wouldn't have found my hospitality calling.





Conclusion

The future of the hospitality industry hinges on its ability to attract, engage, and retain young talent. By investing in comprehensive learning and development programs, the sector can offer clear career pathways, diverse skill development, and real-time learning opportunities. This not only enhances employee retention but also builds a more skilled and committed workforce.

For young talent, the hospitality industry offers a dynamic and rewarding career path, one that promises growth, development, and the opportunity to make a significant impact.

Through focused efforts on L&D, we can ensure the hospitality industry remains vibrant and sustainable for generations to come.





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About the author

With almost 25 years of hospitality experience, Dan Barnes FIH is the Founder and Managing Director of Flourish Hospitality, a hospitality learning and development consultancy.

After operational and leadership experience in hotels in the UK, Dan turned his passion for hospitality and developing people into a career in learning and development, working with hospitality apprentices for a range of businesses, eventually transitioning into Head of Learning and Development roles for luxury hotels, restaurants and private members' clubs.

Dan works with hospitality businesses, focusing on meaningful guest connections, management and leadership training and creating a culture of learning and development to engage and retain hospitality talent. He is also a member of the People 1st Accreditation Panel. A body that recognises colleges and training providers offering exceptional hospitality training, preparing students for a career in the hospitality industry.

Training and developing hospitality professionals at all levels, he has most recently spearheaded openings for luxury hospitality brands such as Annabel's and, The Peninsula London.

Dan is passionate about the industry and inspiring and developing professionals to build their careers in hospitality.



Dan Barnes FIH



CONNECT WITH
DAN BARNES



References

ONS Statistic: Hospitality businesses are most likely to be struggling to fill vacancies - Office for National Statistics

People 1st: Future talent in hospitality - People 1st International

Marriot Voyage Programme: My Marriott Voyage EMEA

Hilton Elevator Programme: ELEVATOR EMEA

Institute of Hospitality Mentoring programmes (free to members)

Mentoring for Success Bullet Guide by Steve Bavister and Amanda Vickers

Mentoring at the Institute of Hospitality - webinar on demand

Institute of Hospitality Online Learning Academy