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MODULE CODE: BMGM6005
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INTRODUCTION

Orangegrass is an authentic Thai restaurant in South Shields, that serves Thai cuisine. It is a small family run business that is committed to providing their customers the highest level of service and quality of food. The rich, vibrant flavours of Thailand can be experienced in the traditional dishes that are made from the freshest Thai ingredients.



HIGH STAFF TURNOVER AT ORANGEGRASS TH AI RESTAURANT

This report analyses the challenges of staff retention at the Oranegrass Thai restaurant and proposes strategies to improve retention rates.

This report looks at the main causes for employee turnover and recommends interventions to reduce turnover.

High staff turnover. It is the rate at which staff are replaced at an organization.

- Very high turnover rate would usually suggest there is an issue somewhere causing this.
- Toxic work environment, (Thakur, 2024).
- High turnover can result in high costs for the business in training, (Bengfort, 2024).
- High staff turnover is a problem in the food and beverage industry, (Team, 2023).

ORANGEGRASS RESTAURANT

The décor and the atmosphere of the restaurant is as welcoming as is the presentation of each of the dishes. As it is said in culinary chef training that food is not just eaten by mouth but also with the eye, (The Bottom Line by Square, 2024).

There are cosy booths around the restaurant for families to sit together and there are also tables that can be put together to accommodate for bigger parties.

Image – Trip advisor, (accessed 20.10.25)



Even though the restaurant and the food are of good quality, when customers walk in through the doors and see that the staff are either rushed off their feet as they have a lot to do. Or it seems that others are not too sure in what to do then that could affect customer experience negatively, (Keanu Ribs, 2025).



Image- Trip advisor, accessed 20.10.25.

CAUSES OF STAFF TURNOVER

- Employee being treat poorly
- Feeling unappreciated
- Poor management support
- Career growth opportunities are limited
- Low wages and benefits
- Toxic work environment
- Excessive work could cause burnout
- Lack of work/life balance, (Marialena Kanaki, 2024)



STAFF RETENTION CHALLENGES IN RESTAURANTS

Frequent staff changes disrupt the quality of the service and increases training costs.

Lack of motivation and recognition leads to dissatisfaction and turnover.

Inadequate benefits

Limited career development opportunities

Poor management and stressful work

It became apparent that staff turnover was an issue whilst on placement at the Thai restaurant. There were a lot of new faces, and they had different staff in on different days as most of them worked part time.

STAFF TRAINING ON THE JOB

- It was quite apparent that the new staff needed training as they did not have prior experience of working in the hospitality industry.
- At Orangegrass, the staff did not get external training, instead they had to watch others work to understand what their roles and duties were and to join in.
- This technique of shadowing staff members was used to keep costs low and it was believed new staff would learn quickly on the job rather than bringing in external costly training programmes.

Image (Stock, 2021).



- Training is costly, and to avoid these costs, the technique of trial shifts and learning by shadowing has been used here. In some places it does work when there are experienced full-time workers, and they know they are able to make the time to train up staff. However, in small places like Orangegrass where it gets busy and staff do not get spare time to explain or answer questions during the shadowing process, it can get difficult and demotivating for the new starters, (Cross, 2022). Many of their staff are new and need training.
- It was witnessed clearly this was not working, and staff turnover was quite frequent. This affected the customer experience as staff changed often therefore guests did not witness familiar faces and there were no consistencies, (Orangegrassthai.co.uk, 2015).
- Acquiring a new customer is significantly more expensive than retaining an existing one, (Amaresan, 2023).

COST OF TURNOVER



The costs of turnover adds up. Every employee that leaves, takes the knowledge and skills that they acquired from the training at the company. The recruitment and onboarding cycle starts again, shifts become harder to fill, and the smooth service gets interrupted and tougher to deliver, that the guests expect, (Zellis, 2025).

Job shadowing is a good way to see how work is done in the life of the employee or set of staff in the business. However, it has been witnessed by myself that this style of shadowing staff and learning was not helpful for the employees at the Orangegrass as the experienced employees had too much workload to patiently work so others can learn from it, (Kaplan, 2024).

STAFF RETENTION

30% of workers leave within the first 90 days because the job doesn't match their initial expectations.

Underlying causes:

- **Public perception** – 20% of UK adults consider it to not be an unappealing sector.
- **Working environment** – can be poor.
- **Unsocial hours.**
- **Bullying within the work.**
- **Limited career prospects.**
- **Poor training.**
- **Low pay** – the Low Pay Commission estimates that 46% of hospitality workers are on the National Minimum Wage, (Mitchell, 2024).

Why Restaurant Employees Are Searching for Other Opportunities



28%

to receive
higher pay



23%

want a more reliable
schedule & income



17%

want more promotion
opportunities

(Office.com, 2019).

RECENTLY

- Those statistics were from 2019.
- The UK's hospitality industry is still facing the same crisis now, (Employment Hero (UK), 2025).
- Increased pressure on businesses due to staff shortage and expectation of high wage is affecting the profitability of the restaurants.

IMPROVING RETENTION

- Concentrating on an environment that is positive
- Offering benefits
- Offering development and opportunities for growth
- Rewarding staff efforts
- Flexibility in work/life
- Good communication between manager and employee, (People and Bartram, 2021).

CONCLUSION

STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVING LONG TERM STAFF RETENTION

- Respect
- Trust between employees and management
- Job security
- Opportunities for employees to use their skills and abilities

Employees fall under significant stress when the expectations of service is too high and not receiving sufficient support from managers. This makes it extremely important to make the shift to better working conditions and supporting management, (Giousmpasoglou et al., 2025).

Employees will want to remain with a company when they are treated with respect, and paid well, have good management, feel valued and secure, challenged and feel useful and appreciated, (bristolassoc, 2023).

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