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AI acknowledgement

I confirm that I have not used any AI tools in the research and creation of this assignment. I confirm that I have not presented any AI generated materials as my own work. I confirm I have copies of my drafts, notes, and other resources I used, which I may be asked to provide in evidence.

Executive summary

The Orangegrass restaurant in South Shields, which is my current placement, was the only Thai restaurant in South shields when it first opened, (LardButty food reviews, 2014). They serve Thai cuisine, and it is a small family run business. Staff turnover and retention is a problem here and it affects the running of the business.

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Introduction

Orangegrass is a small family run business that serves halal, Thai cuisine. They offer a choice of four different set menus, along with the A la carte menu. The last Sunday of each month they keep the business open for a few hours in the afternoon for a buffet, (Orangegrass thai.co.uk, 2015). Orangegrass is doing well for a small business, it serves a full menu of halal food. It is difficult to find a place that does all halal. Most Thai places are not halal, so this place is great for those who require a halal only diet. The business gets this group of customers coming through the doors as well as regular, and new customers. It can get busy quickly or some days may already be fully booked up as it is a popular place to eat, (mw-admin, 2022).

Main Body

Staff turnover

At the Orangegrass restaurant, staff turnover took place a lot. It has been apparent how the constant turnover affected the service of the business. At times, due to not having regular staff it would seem like service would not flow smoothly as there were disruptions when something went wrong and there would be uncertainty as to who to go to for help. The fully trained, permanent and experienced staff would give the newcomers training on the job. The days when these staff members would not be at work the atmosphere could become a little uncomfortable. This made me wonder what the reason behind it could be.

The right balance

Having the right number of staff, not too many or too little could be the key ingredient. This keeps the operations run smoothly, and influences employee morale, customer satisfaction, and profitability, (Force, 2024). Although it is important to have enough staff during the busy hours and days, overstaffing during quiet times will leave staff feeling less motivated and having to compete for work will disrupt the flow of work. This will lead to lower staff morale and slower service, which will result in low quality customer service. On the other hand, handing fewer hours to employees each day to cover just the business period might be good for profitability, but could cause staff having to make the decision to leave the job as the income is not sufficient for their needs.

Importance of staff training

At Orangegrass, new staff would have an experienced member of staff assigned to them to ask questions or reach out to if they needed help. It was rather shadowing that staff and trying to see what duties they were doing and to learn from it, than explaining what the duties were. Whilst on the placement, there were new staff that joined quite recently before me. They were learning on the job therefore made some mistakes as they learnt. It was noticed they would sometimes take food orders before asking to take orders of drinks. Customers

wanted to know more about the dishes and the newer staff were unable to explain the dishes, the manager would be needed at this point.

Low staff morale

Staff training would benefit the business as it would mean all the staff were aware of the roles and duties and how to carry them out. It is inevitable for things to go wrong, and mistakes would happen even after training but at least the basics of how to take orders and the order taking process would seem simpler. The kitchen staff would find it easier to work in the back if the front of house were confident and communicating the orders correctly. If simple order taking started with writing down the starters first, then main, and sides and Rices at the end in the correct order then it would avoid the confusion of some dishes that are smaller in sizes that are starters, and same dishes larger in size as the main dishes getting mixed up. This would cause customer dissatisfaction and frustration of maybe getting a smaller portion instead of the larger main dish. The opposite might be the case, and they could get main dishes when ordering starters. This would be a costly mistake on the business due to staff not getting training on how to take simple orders.

It has been witnessed at the Orangegrass when staff make mistakes, the manager took over, as flow of service needs to continue. They would not be fully communicated of what went wrong. Giving wrong dishes to customers would mean customers complaining and the would be disposed. This would happen if staff did not know the menu. In my opinion the management should hire staff that know the cuisine they serve therefore effective management guidance is vital to avoid this, (Indeed Career Guide, 2024). Management should support staff with some feedback that would help them but at Orangegrass, they did not bring up the matter assuming the staff had realised what went wrong and did not want to embarrass them. However, it could be argued that this style of learning would not be effective.

Staff recruitment

When recruiting new staff, they need to be trained up. Guests should feel comfortable with the greeting at the door or table, through to help with menu, to placing order, paying the bill and when leaving. All that could depend on how well the staff are trained up, so everything goes smoothly and with ease, (admin, 2024). During the recruitment process, personally in my opinion if the candidate shows confidence and has a warm personality, they would be more likely to naturally engage with customers.

Staff turnover could be due to lack of motivation

Some staff get the right number of trainings to start with basic taking orders and serving but some quickly decide to leave and get replaced by new staff with no prior experience. The process of trying to pick up the ways of work by following and shadowing other staff member begins again. During periods of being short staffed, it took longer than expected for trainees to get used to taking orders on the computer or using the computer to take orders over the

phone. It was evident it was caused by not getting any direct training, as staff would spend longer trying to work out how to use the system or navigate through it. The reason behind a point-of-sale system is to make the running of the business to go as smoothly as possible, with ease of transaction, inventory tracking etc, (Chinthaka, 2024), and 40 hours of training given to a staff member should be sufficient to get used to using the point-of-sale system, and they will continuously be practicing throughout work, (Team, 2023). Being able to successfully do the duties would give employee satisfaction and build confidence. However, some staff will take longer reaching 40 hours if they work part time. They forget what they learned. When they come to work a week later, they might be placed on a different job. Management put new staff on repetitive work as it does not require training. Learning during working hours could be disruptive if its busy as the trainer may rush the process or get busy. Staff will start feeling demotivated. This would cause making mistakes and if during the busy period then no one is free to help. When the manager does stop to help, it will be at the cost of delaying other service. Investing in good quality training could be essential to the establishments and the success of a business, (Theforkmanager.com, 2024). After some time of working, they decide to quit. Unreasonable workload given to new staff is a reason why staff decide to leave as it becomes a very stressful situation (Toe, 2022).

Workload

On the other hand, there will be the long-term staff, experienced, loyal workers that are expected to work full time and over time with heavy workload. Their work life becomes stressful, and the stress continues outside of work. The World Health Organisation has concluded that, this is the reason for increasing deaths from heart attack and strokes, (World Health Organization, 2021). There are various reasons for restaurant staff leaving. One could be insufficient training; another would be excessive work expectations to carry out work with ease. When the management is poor, it leads to poor communication. In this kind of fast paced industry, if the staff are not able to ask for help and they feel stuck, they will become frustrated, their morale will be down, and they will feel demotivated. Little mistakes can become costly, and this will also lead to staff feeling guilt, embarrassment and not appreciated although they might be working extremely hard throughout all the shifts, (Team, 2022).

Staff morale

It was noted, in my placement, there were periods when the business was understaffed and periods of business when there were inexperienced members of staff that were unable to work efficiently. This is clearly a problem as customers will need to wait longer for staff's attention and the staff need seeing to more guests than usual. This affects the customers dining experience and risks burning out the members of staff that are having to do extra work, (Waldmann, 2023). This causes a sense of frustration, low staff morale and feeling of underappreciated.

The method of retaining staff would be by giving all the advantages to the staff for staying on and being loyal to the establishment. Since 2013, on average the turnover rate in the restaurant industry has been almost 80%, (Biel, 2025). Staff retention leads to consistent growth and performances, (Inspirus, 2024).

There are three main reasons why restaurant employees are starting to look elsewhere for work. 28% are looking for opportunities for higher pay, 23% are looking for reliable income and schedule and 17% want promotion opportunities, (Notch, 2023). As it stands currently, there is a lot of staff turnover that is taking place at Orangegrass. Pre covid 19, some hospitality businesses experienced an annual staff turnover of 150%, Pre covid (Harver, 2019). It becomes extremely difficult to meet customer expectations in this industry where face to face interaction between staff and consumers are needed. The vicious cycle of hiring new employees and training them, eats into the businesses profit. Post Covid 19 pandemic, when staff lost jobs due to workplaces closing or decided the reduced hours were not working for them, many left the industry for different career opportunities, Post covid (Campbell, 2024).

Conclusion

When high staff turnover is occurring constantly, it makes it essential to understand the reason why the staff members are leaving for and to be able to do something about it. During the Covid 19 pandemic, many restaurants were forced to close, limit operations such as close the restaurant part of the business completely and make use of just the kitchen and limit to food deliveries. It could have been that, or the operating hours were limited. This meant a great number of staff layoffs or work hours reduced. This resulted in chefs, servers, managers and other restaurant staff started looking for work in alternative industries. Post pandemic, many of these restaurant workers decided to stick with their new careers and did not return to the hospitality industry. In just May 2024 alone, the industry has added over 24000 jobs, which is resulting in businesses fighting for potential worker's attention. Workers have the option to choose from the many jobs that are available in the restaurant business so the key would be to make the restaurant job offers more attractive than their competitor's jobs. This makes it extremely crucial to make job offers as attractive as possible, offering employee benefits with perks that go beyond the norm, and which they would like to stay on for (Bahoosh, 2024).

Recommendations

This business will highly benefit and thrive with the offering of great employee benefits such as, professional development opportunities, health insurance, and paid time off work to make staff feel appreciated and reduce staff turnover.

Health insurance, and paid time off will result in employee satisfaction and the feeling of being appreciated. Happy staff will always mean better customer service.

Professional development opportunities to work towards senior roles will add value and talented professionals to the business as well as proud and loyal employees, (Reed.com, 2025). Making courses available to employees will help them gain industry insight and will create a good reputation for your company and employees that are grateful for the opportunity.

Health insurance has been ranked in the UK as the most important employee perk. It encourages a happier, healthier and productive set of employees, (Newsdesk, 2024).

Offering a package of employee benefits keeps the staff enthusiastic, appreciated and loyal to the company. Being well organised and by advanced planning, it will be easier to work out the staffing rota where the right number of staff are placed at the right periods during the day, every day of the week. Having the right number of employees will greatly impact the morale of the staff as well as the profits. The food and beverage industry is known for very demanding hour. Scheduling flexible work and life balance is essential to avoid employees feeling the sense of feeling overburdened. When it comes to flexible scheduling it is crucial to consider childcare support benefits. These perks when offered to employees with families greatly contribute towards their quality of life.

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