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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 is a vibrant Thai restaurant in the heart of South Shields. When Orangegrass first opened, it was the only Thai restaurant in South shields, (LardButty food reviews, 2014). Serving a unique and authentic Thai cuisine dining experience. It is a is a small family run business with a mission to serve high quality Thai cuisine. Their aim has always been to provide exceptional food, welcoming atmosphere and the best customer service. Orangegrass' customer base are the local residents, business professionals and tourists that seek a memorable dining experience.

Whilst on placement in the Orangegrass restaurant, it has been evident the manager goes above and beyond with customer service and with employee. He is very hands on with helping with, whether be the chef or front of house staff and always looking for work to do. This is excellent for staff morale, yet 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 exceptional, high quality, halal, authentic Thai cuisine. They offer an exciting choice of four different set menus, along with the A la carte menu. The last Sunday of each month they keep the business open in the afternoon for a buffet, (Orangegrassthai.co.uk, 2015). Orangegrass serves a complete halal menu, which creates an atmosphere that is warm and inviting for those that can only eat halal food. Including that target market, gives consumers that unique, exceptional experience and the feel of being included and part of the community that welcomes all, The business gets this group of customers coming through the doors as well as local regulars, professionals and tourists, (Team, 2024). 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). As the place gets busier through the night, there seems to be a struggle to keep up with tasks as retaining waiting staff is an issue here, which has been witnessed whilst working on placement. This will significantly negatively affect the business.

Main Body

Staff turnover

Staff turnover significantly affects the profitability of the business. This will increase costs in training and time. Reduce productivity and employee morale causing inefficiencies and lead to customer complaints which will affect the reputation of the business and loss of customers. Over 75% of customers are frustrated by poor customer services in Britain, (Tims, 2025).

At Orangegrass, staff turnover took place a lot. It has been apparent how the constant turnover affected the service of the business. At times, services will not flow smoothly as there would be disruptions when something goes wrong and no experienced members of staff available to reach out for help with new inexperienced staff. When understaffed in the front of house, the food servers are having to take on more work that can adequately handle. This has an impact on the servers' taking orders from one table to another which means, being unable to sell extras such as starters, beverages and desserts. The quality of customer service and guest experience drops which results in unhappy customers, (Campbell, 2024).

The trained, experienced staff are to give newcomers training on the job. The days when these staff members do not be work, the new staff would struggle.

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. This makes it extremely crucial to make job offers as attractive as possible, offering employee benefits with perks that go beyond the norm, (Bahoosh, 2024).

The right balance

Having the right number of staff, 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, boredom and decreased satisfaction for job, (Truein.com, 2025). 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

Inadequate training in workplace will cause poor performance, stressed and undervalued. Where there is no opportunity for development, employees will start looking for it elsewhere, therefore investing in training and prioritising their happiness will be a strategy to retain staff, (Hendy, 2023).

At Orangegrass, new staff would shadow experienced employees and learn as they go. They were learning on the job and made 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 they were unable to explain the dishes, the manager would be needed at this point. Even with or without experience, training is vital and should be immediate before mistakes are made and always ongoing, (Restaurant, 2019).

Low staff morale

Training is proven to make staff feel motivated and valued, and it elevates job satisfaction, (Haralson, 2025). Staff training benefits the business as it means all staff are 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 without any training the basic duties will feel

difficult which will lead to frustration. It causes financial business loss to no fault of employees but leaves them with work-related stress, (Cube HR, 2024).

When staff make mistakes with order taking, kitchen staff would be creating the wrong dishes that would go to waste. 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 and vice versa, getting a main when a starter was ordered. 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 in Orangegrass when staff make mistakes, the manager would take over, as flow of service needs to continue. This leaves the staff feeling inadequate, leading to low morale, (MyHub, 2021). They would not be fully communicated of what went wrong. Giving wrong dishes to customers would mean customers complaining and the disposal of food. This happens when staff are unfamiliar with the menu. Hiring experienced employee is necessary. Effective management guidance is vital to avoid this, (Indeed Career Guide, 2024). Orangegrass management should support staff with feedback that would help them. An example was when a member of staff served a Thai green lamb curry when it should have been a completely different Thai red vegetarian dish. Matters were not discussed assuming staff realised the mistakes. The manager would smile and nod as if the problem was solved and discussion would mean embarrassment and cause low morale. However, it could be argued that this style of learning would not be effective.

Staff recruitment

When recruiting new staff, they need training in customer service skills, food safety, empathy, knowledge in product and technology training. Guests should feel welcome at the door, shown to their table, through to help with menu, check if anything else is needed, to paying and when leaving. All that could depend on how well the staff are trained, so everything flows naturally (admin, 2024). During the recruitment process, personality and confidence is an important factor, 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

Attempting to pick up the ways of work by following and shadowing other staff member could be difficult when short staffed. When short staffed, it was evident, it took longer than expected for trainees to get used to taking orders on the computer and using the POS. It was evident it was caused by not getting any direct training. 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 run as smoothly as possible, with ease of transaction, inventory tracking etc, (Chinthaka, 2024), but without training will cause the opposite. Training and continuous practice throughout work is needed, (Team, 2023). Being able to successfully do the duties would give employee satisfaction and build confidence.

Management would put new staff on repetitive work as it does not require much training. Learning during work can get disruptive when the manager rushes the process or it gets busy. Staff will start feeling demotivated. This would cause more mistakes delaying other services. Investing in good quality training could be essential to the establishments and the success of a business, (Theforkmanager.com, 2024). Unreasonable workload given to new staff is a reason why staff decide to leave as it becomes a very stressful situation (Toe, 2022).

Workload

As seen at the Orangegrass, long-term, experienced employees are expected to work full time and with heavy workload. Their work life seems stressful, and the stress possibly continues outside of work. The World Health Organisation has concluded that, this is the reason for more deaths from strokes and heart attacks, (World Health Organization, 2021). Insufficient training and excessive work expectations could result in unhappiness and looking for better opportunities elsewhere. In this fast-paced industry, if employees have no support, 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 feeling of 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 there were inexperienced employees 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 employee burnout as they are having to work extra, (Waldmann, 2023). This causes a sense of frustration, low staff morale, feeling of underappreciation and no sense of future development, (West, 2024).

The method of retaining staff would be by giving positive feedback and rewards for staying loyal to the establishment. 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 and never returned, Post covid (Campbell, 2024).

Conclusion

When high staff turnover is occurring constantly, it makes it essential to understand the reason why it is happening and to be able to do something about it. Increasing wages, benefits and offering opportunities for growth would create a sense of worth and appreciation. Long, stressful working hours can cause unhappiness within and outside of work, therefore creating a positive work environment is important for employee well-being and key to retention.

Recommendations

This business will highly benefit and thrive with good training, offering employees benefits such as, professional development opportunities, and health insurance, to make staff feel appreciated and reduce staff turnover.

Professional development opportunities would add value and talented professionals to the team as well as proud and loyal employees, (Reed.com, 2025). Making courses available to gain industry insight will create a good reputation for the company and employees would appreciate 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). With the rise of living costs, 79% of employees worry about finances if they were to miss work. With company health insurance, it gives employees that peace of mind, knowing they are covered if that was the case, (www.spill.chat, n.d.).

Offering employee benefits keeps staff enthusiastic, appreciated and loyal to the company. 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 hours. 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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