

Developing the leadership and management skills of chefs in Scotland

Background

Improving management skills in hospitality and tourism to help reduce staff turnover is a priority for the industry. Many chefs have traditionally been promoted because of their culinary skills, without receiving the management and leadership development.

As businesses face intense competition to recruit and retain talent, there's a heightened need for head chefs and aspiring head chefs to become better people managers and to possess the skills and confidence needed to engage, support, develop and motivate their teams.

Our solutions

The key challenges that industry is facing can only be adequately dealt with by having in place strong leadership and management. To help address this, Skills Development Scotland funded People 1st International to develop the Chef Management & Leadership Training Programme.

The programme was designed to provide head chefs and aspiring head chefs across Scotland with the knowledge and skills needed to manage, motivate and retain staff effectively.

Delivered virtually over five 3-hour sessions, the programme covered the following topics:

- Leading a team
- HR practices
- Effective recruitment
- Retaining your staff
- Training and development

Outcomes

The programme trained over 60 chefs, and enabled them to understand:

- how to attract and retain a diverse workforce within the kitchen, including how to advertise vacancies and promote the sector

Client: Skills Development Scotland

“The quality of the chef management programme was fantastic. People 1st International developed the programme under extremely challenging timescales yet the standard of the content and training delivery was outstanding. The programme received really positive feedback and we know it will have had a measurable impact on the management and leadership skills of participants.

“We had a great experience of working with People 1st International – it was a true partnership, and we'd certainly recommend them as a skills partner. They have an unrivalled knowledge of the sector which is invaluable, and we look forward to working with them again in the future.”

- Lawrence Durden, Tourism Sector Manager, Skills Development Scotland

- what fair work looks like, and the benefits of implementing the principles of fair work within the kitchen environment
- understand good HR practices and be able to develop and implement strategies to improve chef job quality, retain staff and improve productivity in the kitchen
- equality and diversity issues across the sector and encourage them to actively address these by removing potential barriers and actively challenging stereotypes across the sector
- training and development opportunities for staff working in a professional kitchen and existing support available

The programme also provided participants with practical advice on how to engage with the education sector to engage with young people and promote opportunities and careers within the sector as well as linking to the hospitality commitment code of conduct.

Impact to local businesses

Piotr Zamojc -
Head Chef, Drift
Café



With nine years' experience in hospitality, Piotr joined his current employer in August 2021. With no formal training in management and leadership, he had tended to avoid any conflicts occurring within the team and neglected staff members' needs, prioritising businesses needs, rather than finding a healthy balance between both.

With the impact the industry is facing as a result of Brexit and the pandemic Piotr felt he need to adapt to the situation. He hoped the course would help him understand how to approach younger people wanting to join the industry. Additionally, he wanted to broaden his horizons and gain new knowledge to help the team and business.

Piotr found being able to engage with other people from the industry from across Scotland extremely beneficial. Helping him to understand the importance of staff training and individual needs of staff members, he plans to incorporate all the ideas he's been given to try to create a conflict free work environment where all the employees feel valued and important.

Piotr believes the skills and experience he's gained will make his work easier and reduce the stress related to the role significantly, allowing him to be more organised and look at things from a wider perspective.

Hayley Wilkes - Chef &
business owner,
WEECook



Hayley has worked in hospitality for over 16 years. Her passion for the industry began in her teens and after stepping away from hospitality for five years to follow a career in banking, Hayley returned, determined to retrain, and pursue her dream. As the owner and chef of the The WeeCook Kitchen she's now been successfully operating the cafe, restaurant and award-winning pie makers for over 11 years.

Whilst Hayley had completed management training in her previous roles within banking, she was inspired to join the Chef Management & Leadership Training Programme to perfect her approach to recruiting and retaining her team. Keen to delegate more, Hayley was looking to develop her confidence in managing staff development ahead of assigning more management responsibility.

After completing the programme, Hayley has built her knowledge in a number of areas and has generated a detailed action plan of the steps she's putting in place to address training and development, recognising the need to recruit and train better managers to improve staff retention. Determined to empower her employees, she's also put in place plans to train, coach, mentor, and review progress of all staff.

With attraction also proving challenging, Hayley plans to use the knowledge she's developed on equality, diversity, and inclusion to help her attract from a greater pool of talent.

Catherine Bull -
Senior sous chef,
Crieff Hydro



Catherine has worked in her current role as senior sous chef at Crieff Hydro for 5 years. With 22 years' experience in the industry, she's had leadership training via an internal company program but after experiencing recruitment and motivation challenges within the team as a result of Covid, Catherine was keen to explore approaches to attract and retain employees, and to find better ways to onboard new recruits.

The Chef Management & Leadership Training Programme provided Catherine with a wealth of useful information and ideas that she feels can often be forgotten about or overlooked especially when managing people. Covering a lot of the areas Catherine was keen to explore, she's walked away from the training with a greater level of knowledge and confidence on effective recruitment, retaining employees and better ways to manage different members of the team.

With a detailed action plan in place, Catherine's first objective is to revisit some of the job adverts they currently have advertised and amend the wording to non-gender specific, helping to ensure an inclusive approach to recruitment.



Adam Bawol - Sous
chef, Edinburgh
Marriott Hotel

Adam has over 17 years' experience in hospitality and has been in his current role at the Edinburgh Marriott Hotel for a year.

Keen to become a better team leader, Adam joined the programme and hoped to develop his skills to be able to better support and train people with little or no work experience.

Having already undertaken essential management skills courses, Adam has the core supervisory and management skills needed in his role but was eager to expand his knowledge.

He found that the programme touched upon all aspects of his current role and the opportunity to share experiences with industry peers has helped develop his confidence and knowledge. After completing the training, the first step Adam plans to take in implementing his learning into his role is to set clear team goals for the year ahead and provide more training opportunities for his team.

Daniele Patrizio -
Sous chef,
Cophthorne Hotel



Daniele has been in her role as sous chef at the Cophthorne Hotel since February this year and whilst she has 12 years' experience of working in the industry, with no previous management and leadership training, the Chef Management & Leadership Training Programme offered her a head start in her new role.

Daniele was keen to develop her skills to support her team, as well as to improve her CV and was eager to take advantage of the knowledge she could develop by attending the programme.

Having successfully completed all five modules, the learning is set to have a huge impact on her day-to-day role. Daniele believes that the course material was extremely beneficial and as a result she's aiming to be a good "lead by example" leader for the rest of her team and motivate and communicate as best as she can by using the knowledge she gained from the programme.

Conflict resolution is one of the most beneficial aspects she's taken away from the training and she feels the practical nature of the programme means its not just a certificate she'll add to her CV, she'll be applying the core principles to her role every day.

People 1st International is an industry-led skills expert. We're a trusted partner to employers, industry bodies, skills organisations, donor funders, NGOs investment banks and governments, with over 50 years' experience in skills development and technical vocational education and training.

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