CREATING MAGNETIC EMPLOYEE CONNECTIONS THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA

LESSONS FROM THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY
“When businesses value people, experiences, and aspirations, they reap benefits measured in profitability, loyalty, and advocacy.”

– Brian Solis, Altimeter Group
## CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Powerhouse Recruiting Tool: Using Social Media In The Hospitality Sector</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Media Recruiting Trends</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Recruiting For Hospitality Jobs</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Targeted Social Media Recruiting</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gamification For The Hospitality Industry</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inbound Marketing For Social Media Recruiting</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generating Recruiting Leads</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Onboarding Plans For New Hospitality Employees: How To Build A Foundation For Lasting Relationships</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Onboarding With Social Media</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Competitive Edge: Entertaining Gamification, Accessible Training, And Motivating Incentives</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Virtual Training</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incentivize Through Gamification</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Show Them They Matter: Employees Love Social Recognition And Appreciation</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal Social Recognition</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External Social Recognition</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Onsite Employee Engagement At Hospitality Events: Gamification And Social Networking Event Apps</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Gamification At Hospitality Events</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Hub: A Resource For Education, News, Culture, Community, and Corporate Social Responsibility In Hospitality</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge Resource At Your Fingertips</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educating The Future Workforce</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promoting Community Efforts And CSR</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potential Cons Of Social Media In The Workplace</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Easy Ways To Channel Social Media To Increase Employee Engagement In The Hospitality Industry</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Lessons from the Hospitality Industry*
“Coming together is the beginning. Keeping together is progress. Staying together is success.”

– Henry Ford
After the Second World War, the hospitality industry was entirely reborn. Average Americans were able to buy vehicles, the Interstate Highway System and other infrastructure boomed around the country, and the economy grew stronger with the introduction of the first credit card — the Diner’s Club Card. According to technology blog StayNTouch¹, the Westin created the first computer-powered hotel reservation system, and the Sheraton was not far behind as they developed the first automated electronic reservation system in 1958. Before that, hotel guests made reservations through the mail, telegrams, or telephone, which often resulted in misplaced or erroneous reservations. Adapting in order to enhance the hotel guest experience brought forth an era of change for the hospitality industry, allowing the hotel brands we know and love today to stay at the forefront of technology and their guests’ needs.

Since the post-war years, the hospitality industry has continued to change and grow each decade to align their offerings and amenities with what their guests truly want and need. At the core of each of these evolving brands are the employees. Countless studies have shown that higher employee engagement yields three times the operating margin and a 240 percent improvement in business results. The strongest hotel brands — those that have matured and expanded along with the times — are those that dedicate time and resources to engaging their associates. Brian Solis, from Altimeter Group, performed a custom research report on relationship economics and stated:

“When businesses value people, experiences, and aspirations, they reap benefits measured in profitability, loyalty, and advocacy.”

J. Willard Marriott, the late founder of Marriott International, was known for how deeply he valued and respected his employees. At the very core of Marriott’s business philosophy was, and still is, his steadfast belief:

“Take good care of your employees, and they’ll take good care of your customers, and the customers will come back.”
Today, this timeless statement remains a core principle of Marriott’s business, helping catapult the brand to achieve worldwide growth and success. J.W. Marriott also knew that success is never final, and so the brand has continued to evolve over and over again, always embracing the needs and trends of the times. With over 6,000 properties in more than 122 countries, Marriott remains one of the leading powerhouses and most beloved brands in the hospitality industry.

Here at E Group we’ve also been evolving our work and expertise in order to support the hospitality industry for over thirty years. While we started as a traditional recognition and award company, we’ve matured and emerged as a leader in employee and customer engagement. To put it simply, we focus on creating connections with the people who make your business thrive.

So, what does hospitality and employee engagement have to do with social media? Actually, they’re all interwoven. Today, the social media forerunners — Facebook®, LinkedIn®, and Twitter® — have BILLIONS of monthly users, so it’s naive to assume that the hospitality industry wouldn’t be affected by a trend that billions of people have adopted around the world. Social media isn’t just a hobby; it’s a shift in society’s evolution of information consumption. It’s a platform that allows people to use images, videos, and messaging to share, inspire, create, and build networks. There are certainly pros and cons of social media in the workplace; it is volatile, its influence is far-reaching, and it will continue to change. And as we unearth both hazards and priceless opportunities in using social media, the hospitality industry nonetheless needs to harness this medium to capture their employees’ and guests’ attentions.
Think about your use of social media on a daily basis. Chances are, you use it to get news and entertainment, learn about other companies or competition, look for your next job, research a candidate, and keep up with trends and hot topics in your industry. Just a few short years ago, eMarketeter\(^2\) published data from Redshift Research indicating that 23 percent of international travelers used social media for inspiration when planning a trip. That number has likely ballooned since the 2012 study. BrightLocal\(^3\) performed a more recent study focused on consumer usage and attitudes towards online reviews, in which they found that nearly 90 percent of consumers have read online reviews to determine the quality of a local business, and 39 percent do so on a regular basis.

Whether you use blogs, photo sharing, news updates, forums, video sharing, or all of the above, using social media in the hospitality sector will allow your property or brand to communicate in enriching and innovative ways. There’s already quite a lot of intellectual capital focused on using social media for guest engagement. Instead, this eBook will focus on using social media to increase employee engagement in the hospitality industry. We’ll translate the ways you already use social media into real-world actions that will propel employee engagement, build culture, and establish lasting relationships between your employees and guests. We’ll cover:

- Attracting talent and recruiting proactively
- Welcoming and onboarding new hires
- Connecting remote workers and locations
- Going viral with gamification
- Promoting performance and achievement
- Spreading appreciation and recognition
- Spotlighting values in action
- Boosting employee engagement at events
- Capturing and sharing stories
- Creating communities
- Educating and promoting corporate social responsibility
- Celebrating successes
- Defining your brand through social media
“A full 94 percent of professional recruiters network on social media for talent acquisition and management. And 59 percent of employees say a company’s social media presence was part of the reason they chose their workplace.”

– Betterteam
THE POWERHOUSE RECRUITING TOOL: Using Social Media in the Hospitality Sector

SOCIAL MEDIA RECRUITING TRENDS

With the influx of social media and work-life blending, the world of recruiting has changed and matured over the past 10 years. Recruiting software company Betterteam notes that:

94% Of recruiters network on social media for talent acquisition and management

59% Of employees say a company’s social media presence was part of the reason they chose their workplace

With statistics like these, there’s no question that social media should be a part of your recruitment strategy. It’s especially urgent as properties continue to harvest and build their cultures, making the competition for good candidates more fierce than ever. To maintain a competitive edge and win over top candidates, the hospitality industry must step up their recruiting game or risk getting left in the dust. Voicing an authentic and unique brand via social media can be the key to setting yourself apart. These social platforms open doors between potential recruits, guests, and employees, thus fostering meaningful dialogue. By sharing updates on your brand, participating in conversations, and publishing employment opportunities, hospitality brands can move from merely broadcasting information to actively hosting and participating in important social communities.
Creating Magnetic Employee Connections Through Social Media

Nowadays, millions of companies utilize every social media site on the market in order to maximize their messaging. LinkedIn is over 15 years old and is synonymous with professional networking and recruiting. With over 450 million members and 24 languages available, there are sure to be one or two good candidates for your property or corporate headquarters poking around on this growing platform.

While candidates look for opportunities and company information on LinkedIn, companies review their prospects’ professional accomplishments and network recommendations. Therefore, be sure to optimize your brand’s profile to clearly state your messaging and what you look for in employees and culture. The age-old adage, “It’s who you know” continues to prevail, even in the digital age. Chances are, if you virtually connect to a qualified candidate through a colleague, business partner, or other relation, it often speeds up your selection process.

The examples on the right show how the hospitality industry regularly uses Facebook and Twitter to promote openings in specific areas, advertise job fairs, and share positive messaging for job searchers.

Tweet out career and job-related hashtags to amplify your posts. Starbucks uses #sbuxjobstalk and Disney uses #LifeatDisney. Concentrate on job-focused words like #jobhunt or #jobs, in addition to your brand’s name and career-specific words like #cook or #SoftwareEngineer

**SOCIAL RECRUITING FOR HOSPITALITY JOBS**

Employees at socially engaged companies are:

- +27% more likely to feel optimistic about their companies’ future
- +20% more likely to feel inspired
- +20% more likely to feel stay at their companies
- +15% more likely to feel connected to co-workers beyond their core teams

Source: Alimeter Group and LinkedIn
Lessons from the Hospitality Industry
Marriott uses Twitter to ask questions. Under the hashtag #WhatWouldYouDo?, the questions promote internal engagement, but they also give prospects a taste of the culture and how employee input is both respected and utilized by Marriott.

Marriott doesn’t stop there either; one of their most popular videos on YouTube, called *Go the Distance: Career Growth at Marriott*, has nearly 150,000 views. *The World Comes to You: Careers at Marriott* has almost 93,000 views. And their latest video, *How to Apply for a Job at Marriott: It’s Easy!*, has almost 14,000 views in just a few short months. They understand the potential questions and concerns their candidates have, and they address them upfront. It’s no surprise that other hospitality brands like Hilton, Hyatt, Best Western, Compass, and US Foods follow suit.

For example, Hyatt expresses a unique take on recruitment in their video, *Why We Love Working at Hyatt*. Hyatt used a low-budget, authentic approach to focus on employees who are spreading the notions of fun, family, unity, and innovation that Hyatt wants the world to see. The life and spirit of the company emanates from the video, which has almost 33,000 views.

Digital audiences continue to demand video content, and more specifically, live video content. *eMarker* notes that adults spend 5.5 hours consuming video content each day. While there is still a place for highly-edited and clean minutes-long videos, viewers (and your potential candidates) want to see short, relevant, and authentic content. Users want to experience events unfold in real time, which has morphed into a way
Lessons from the Hospitality Industry

for organizations to quickly market their brands, give an intimate look at company culture, and develop meaningful relationships through live feedback. Facebook Live, Meerkat®, and Periscope® are the leading platforms in this arena.

Surprisingly, only two percent of marketers currently use Snapchat to share visuals, yet the app has over 100 million daily users. Not many companies have started using SnapChat® as a recruiting tool. Businesses first have to understand how to harness appropriate timing and language with their messaging. For example, you might post open positions for “soon to be graduates” in the spring, shortly before graduation.

Like Twitter, Instagram® uses hashtags to categorize relevant content. Showcase fun events, socially conscious actions, and the latest organization news through creative and colorful imagery, using hashtags to help users discover the content. That way, potential candidates can engage in direct conversation with your brand.
TARGETED SOCIAL MEDIA RECRUITING

Certain brands, Hyatt for example, practice targeted social recruiting for hospitality jobs. Hyatt has a college brand ambassador program through which they recruit hotel management students before they graduate. Students who currently work as part-time employees or interns with Hyatt are fitted with promotional items and branded gear that they wear to networking events and career fairs. Hyatt makes a point to promote these events and highlight their student ambassadors via social media in order to maximize their targeted audience. Hyatt’s use of social recruiting for hospitality jobs is a great example of how brands can use social media in the workplace to their advantage. Take a look on the right at two targeted posts from Marriott.

GAMIFICATION FOR THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY

Later in this eBook we’ll dive deeper into gamification and its use in incentives and event engagement. For now, let’s take a quick look at how Marriott revitalized its recruiting efforts through the use of social media gamification.

A few years ago Marriott noticed insufficient talent in kitchen and restaurant staff. As a result, they searched for a more creative approach to their recruitment. At the time, Marriott’s Facebook page was already a robust recruiting tool, so they took it one step further. They created a
virtual game on Facebook called “MyMarriott” that simulated an average day in a hotel kitchen. Similar to popular Facebook games like Farmville, MyMarriott allowed users to mimic the everyday duties of hotel kitchen staff, such as training chefs, purchasing ingredients, and filling meal orders. The game gave potential recruits a glimpse of what a job with Marriott might look like, and it helped Marriott stand out from its competitors. The game was memorable and transparent, whereas another company’s approach was average at best. In the end, Marriott’s game attracted 50,000 users from 120 countries allowing Marriott to recruit from a diverse pool of qualified and well-informed applicants. As the Marriott example shows, using gamification to bolster social recruiting for hospitality jobs is a powerful way to grow your applicant pool and build brand affinity among potential recruits.

Lessons from the Hospitality Industry
“take action... use authentic storytelling... build trust...”
INBOUND MARKETING FOR SOCIAL MEDIA RECRUITING

Take a moment to think of an advertisement or video that made you feel something, whether it tugged at your heartstrings or motivated you to make a change or take action. Chances are, the campaign you’re thinking of drew inspiration from Inbound Marketing: a movement that teaches us to use authentic storytelling and highly focused digital content to build trust with your target audience, often before you even meet.

Social media is a vital facet of inbound marketing, serving as the platform by which a brand’s digital identity grows and gains its reputation. On Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, and other social platforms, companies can showcase achievements, events, research, photos, videos—you name it. We could write an entire book on the benefits of social media in the workplace, but we’ll focus this conversation specifically on using Inbound Marketing to enhance the way companies take part in social recruiting for hospitality jobs.

GENERATING RECRUITING LEADS

1. Develop new recruit personas. A crucial step in the Inbound Marketing process is building buyer “personas,” which are idealistic representations of your target customers. Companies often personify these characters with names and pictures. For example, a sportswear store might have “Swimmer Sam” as one of its buyer personas.

Similarly, recruiters can create candidate personas to identify ideal candidates and map out strategies to scope out hires who fit those personas. First, your recruitment team should agree on who these personas are and what traits they should have: education level, industry experience, certifications, recommendations, etc. Define and finely tune your personas by interviewing existing top performers at your company, since they’re the best model for future hires.

2. Choose a Content Marketing System (CMS) or Content Optimization System (COS). Once you’ve defined your candidate personas, your team can begin tying recruitment to a content marketing system. Whether you use a platform like HubSpot® or Wordpress®, it’s important to review
and understand what information the system captures. Who is looking at your site, how many pages have they reviewed, and how long did they spend on each page? All of this information aids in defining the candidates who are serious about working with your hospitality company. Just getting started with a CMS or COS? Read this in-depth article, HubSpot vs WordPress Review: Choosing the Best Platform for Your Website, from our friends at The Sales Lion.

3. **Generate content to attract potential employees.** Create content specifically catered to the personas you’ve created. Think of the industry-specific questions your ideal candidates might have asked before or will ask in the future, and create content based on that. For example, Marriott uses their blog to write articles geared towards educating motivated candidates on their company culture and sought-after employee characteristics. They build trust and relationships with candidates before ever having a conversation with them. Exercise your creative flair, and build a diverse range of content including blogs, videos, podcasts, and infographics, just to name a few.

4. **Cross-promote posts on social media platforms.** Ideally, your website’s search engine optimization (SEO) organically draws suitable candidates to your brand’s website, but you can’t count on that alone. Your recruiting efforts also need to be promoted via popular social media accounts. Don’t stop at Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, though, as social marketing is quickly ramping up on other platforms like Snapchat, Pinterest®, and YouTube®, especially among younger generations.
Finding creative and innovative ways to capture your candidates’ attentions is a crucial part of your recruiting strategy. That doesn’t mean simply asking a Millennial in your office to post content because they’re young and understand social media. These channels thrive on immediate interaction and genuine responses, so they deserve genuine attention. A dedicated social media resource, such as a content or social media manager, can help mold your brand’s digital voice and garner the continuous attention needed to attract qualified talent. As they say in the classic movie *Field of Dreams*, “If you build it, they will come.”

5. Collect data and analyze. The great part about filtering this content through a CMS is that you can also gather information about the candidate and gauge their interest level, again before your initial conversation. Once you receive an inquiry, you can add the candidate into the system and track their activity and engagement. If you find that a potential candidate spent several hours on your site and visited 50 pages, there’s a good chance that this candidate has genuine interest in working for your organization. Even if you choose not to go this far, you can track activity of certain personas to learn for which you need to dedicate more time recruiting.

You might also consider allowing candidates to upload resumes directly to your website. This helps in collecting candidate analytics and further honing in your search among the hundreds of applicants who might have responded to your post on a job board.
Many companies put all of their effort into hiring—without considering what happens after the new hire officially joins the team. Focus on what happens after the first day on the new job: How do we make employees feel welcome? How can we help employees engage with their coworkers? How do we counter the fact that “new job euphoria” wears off? How can we connect?

— Wisdom from Joey Coleman
Whether your new hire is fresh out of college or boasts years of hospitality experience, the first day at a new job is both exciting and overwhelming. It’s also the perfect time to make a positive and lasting first impression with that employee, which happens through an inviting and informative employee onboarding program.

Not surprisingly, 22 percent of turnover takes place within the first 45 days of employment, and studies show that getting the first 100 days “right” is critical to lasting retention. Joey Coleman, an expert on customer retention, focuses his work on building unique, attention-grabbing experiences early in the relationship. He pokes fun at the similarities between work relationships and romantic relationships. The same can be said for candidate and employee retention: employers might spend time, money, and effort “wooing” and courting candidates, but then they drop the ball after they’re “wed” (hired) because they’ve already won the candidate over. Although Joey focuses primarily on retaining customers, he notes that customer retention starts at the core of your organization, with your employees. In other words, if your associates don’t have strong onboarding experiences, their engagement drops from the moment they walk through the door.

In fact, Market Wired highlighted a study by Glint, an employee engagement software company, showing that new hires with a poor onboarding experience are eight times more likely to be disengaged at work. Instead, you should build an official onboarding plan for both new hires and...
new hire trainers to ensure their first moments with the company are memorable (in a great way). Onboarding plans for new hospitality employees should include information on your brand or property, operating structure, internal processes, HR guidelines, IT support, job expectations, and training, at the very least.

ONBOARDING WITH SOCIAL MEDIA

In the past, common practice may have been to provide employees with a 100-page onboarding binder, but that was neither inviting nor engaging. Today, onboarding plans for new hospitality employees has shifted to more modern approaches as brands increasingly turn to onboarding platforms that provide this information in an easily accessible and digestible format. Choosing a platform that also invites social interaction makes learning about and connecting with other associates seamless. For example, building an online social platform is a great way to make employees feel welcome, teach them important company information, and help them plant roots in their teams and the greater company.
Using social platforms for hospitality onboarding is even more critical for companies that hire a remote or geographically diverse workforce. In these cases, you can set up remote workers for success with technology and social tools that help them avoid workplace isolation and a lack of visibility. When done right, it won’t matter that your employees have miles or oceans between them because they’ll be able to interact with one another anyway. If your budget doesn’t allow for a custom onboarding social site, connecting teams via a robust instant messaging platform, like Slack®, can work wonders for their engagement and work relationships. With real-time messaging, file sharing, and the availability of smartphone apps, there’s no excuse for employees to feel disconnected or unengaged.

Also, you might consider promoting new hires on your external social media accounts. On their first day, post a message on LinkedIn, Instagram, or Facebook with their pictures, short but thoughtful biographies, and a mention of how excited your organization is to welcome them aboard. This simple gesture leaves a lasting impression with new hires, as it shows that you appreciate their talents, you’re happy they joined the team, and your company has a strong culture of appreciation, all in one move.

In a larger organization, using social platforms for hospitality onboarding probably wouldn’t be preferred over in-person onboarding programs. However, in-person programs can and should still include a social aspect. At a previous employer, I participated in an onsite onboarding program during which we created our internal social media accounts on Yammer®. We also learned how to use the platform to network, answer job-related inquiries, find creative solutions, and have leadership hear our voices.
In the same in-person onboarding session we learned how to harness the company’s external social media accounts to boost brand recognition, market the business, and create a richer customer experience. Simultaneously, these accounts provided employees with a vehicle by which they could become positive brand ambassadors and engage with existing and potential clients.

We also learned about the pros and cons of social media in the workplace, along with usage guidelines for posting on the company’s social media platforms. My employer mapped out clear policies regarding appropriate social media use to ensure that employees had clarity and reference as needed.

Both large and small companies, with frequent or sporadic onboarding alike, should ensure that regular in-person, virtual, and social touchpoints happen throughout a hire’s first year. If your onboarding program ends after the first day or week, it’s unlikely to fully integrate new employees into the culture. Instead, systematic, long-term onboarding processes make employees feel welcome and supported, which significantly impacts their engagement and retention. In fact, The Corporate Executive Board Corporate Leadership Council\textsuperscript{14} found that an increase in employee engagement can potentially improve performance by 20 percent and reduce employee departure by about 87 percent.
THE COMPETITIVE EDGE: Entertaining Gamification, Accessible Training, and Motivating Incentives

SOCIAL VIRTUAL TRAINING

When training a remote or geographically separated workforce, it’s worthwhile to create a virtual training environment. In this scenario, your onboarding team would upload content to a shared virtual environment. Trainees can log in at their convenience, review the content, watch videos, and take quizzes. What’s unique about these environments, however, is that you can connect and talk to other employees who are also training within the software. Chat functions allow employees to engage in conversation and connect through training and team alignment.

INCENTIVIZE THROUGH GAMIFICATION

Repeatedly, it’s been proven that incentives help motivate and engage employees. It’s also been proven that happy employees yield increased productivity, retention, recruitment, and innovation, thus boosting your bottom line.

One way to boost employee engagement at your company is through gamification, a practice
“You can discover more about a person in an hour of play than you can in a year of conversation.”

– Plato
that draws on the innate human motivation to connect and compete with others. Gamification adds game elements to something that is otherwise not a game, such as safety and sales. It encourages certain behaviors and values, rewarding or incentivizing employees who fulfill those traits, and creates a recipe for increased employee engagement.

PRNewswire highlighted recent gamification research\textsuperscript{15} by MarketsAndMarkets shows that gamification was a $421.3M industry in 2013, with projected growth to $5.5B by 2018. The study goes on to state that the mechanics of gamification, that is rewarding people with points and other incentives, have actually been around for ages. However, it’s the explosion of the digital world and social media that has recently driven marketers and managers to utilize it as a motivational tool.

Designing a gamification platform for hospitality employees calls for personalization and creativity. Your company’s platform might include features like avatars, leaderboards, and badges that denote achievements, thus introducing a fun competitive element without adding to your budget. You should provide participants with real-time insight about how they’re performing against others in the program, along with tips on how they can move up to a higher position. Also add a social stream, similar to that of a Facebook news feed, that allows associates to comment on or congratulate others’ achievements and activities.

Source: WorkStride
Creating Magnetic Employee Connections Through Social Media

Source: Workstride
Recently, the Harvard Business Review published a study stating that recognition is the most impactful driver\(^1\) of employee engagement. As you may already know, employee appreciation and recognition are multifaceted, but for now we’ll focus on why social recognition matters. For starters, this low-cost arena is a fantastic way to show sincere appreciation to employees in a highly visible way, both internally with other employees and externally with clients, customers, or potential recruits. It showcases your organization in a positive light, builds culture, and amplifies the positive impact of the accolade.

According to SocialCast\(^2\) there is no such thing as too much recognition, especially when 69 percent of employees say they would work harder if they felt their efforts were appreciated. 78 percent
of U.S. workers report that being recognized motivates them at their job. So, why not bolster your recognition efforts with avenues that your employees already use and love? If you’re part of a small team and have the luxury of tailoring your recognition system, consider how different personalities affect employee recognition.\(^\text{18}\)

**INTERNAL SOCIAL RECOGNITION**

Using an internal social media platform for recognition is a simple and accessible way to recognize the hard work and dedication that’s happening all around your property or corporate headquarters. Managers can’t always catch a top-down glimpse of the amazing things that every person or team does. So, it’s important to create an environment in which a leadership-to-employee and peer-to-peer recognition program empowers everyone, from HR, to housekeeping, to kitchen staff, to give and receive accolades and appreciation. Companies can also personalize their recognition programs. For example, they could align company values to recognition benchmarks or launch campaigns, like “Caught Being Exceptional,” during which employees highlight others who they see making a difference.
At E Group, we use a dynamic social recognition platform called Workstride®. Our employees love being able to empower one another through an easy-to-use peer-to-peer recognition program. There are many configurable facets to the platform, but for our purposes we’ve highlighted just the social aspect in particular.

E Group’s program is structured around our company values, and awards are given when employees exhibit these values. On the web-based platform employees and management can choose between monetary or non-monetary awards depending on the respective level of effort, contribution, time investment, or result. When someone receives an award, other E Groupers can see it on their social stream and “like,” comment, or congratulate the recipient. As our partner and founder of WorkStride notes:

“It's nice to say 'great job' to a colleague in person or via email. But if you make it social, then everyone gets to join in the act, and one message can echo for days throughout the entire company.”

Social recognition also reinforces the notion that your employees’ hard work has a tangible impact on the team, company, and overall brand growth. This social gratification motivates associates to work even harder and continue setting goals, and it also supports a robust culture of appreciation.

E Group’s software as a service (SaaS) recognition tool is also populated with culture-motivating team images that change and update throughout the
Creating Magnetic Employee Connections Through Social Media

year to reflect the energy and gratitude around the office. Given that employees can access our SaaS platform anywhere and at any time, there’s no excuse for forgetting to recognize someone in a formal and social manner.

It’s important to remember that every recognition program, whether conventional or high-tech and social, is an ever-evolving entity that must be consistently reviewed, adjusted, and supported by management, both in messaging and in practice. This dedication will help the culture of appreciation at your property or headquarters continue to grow and flourish.

See E Group’s recognition platform in even more detail in the article, “Office Buzz: Using Social Media to Increase Employee Engagement.”

EXTERNAL SOCIAL RECOGNITION

Recognizing an employee through social media can be as simple as saying “thank you” for a job well done, posting pictures of a successful initiative, or showcasing someone who recently won an award. Whatever you choose, these employees will be honored that their achievements are valued enough to earn a public display of appreciation.

By creating an opportunity for peers, guests, and the public to quickly and easily share, “like,” and comment on others’ achievements from anywhere in the world, you exponentially increase the impact of every “kudos” and intrinsically lower the cost-per-recognition. Social media recognition isn’t necessarily a structured program, but instead a more fun and natural way to communicate, publicly acknowledge, and appreciate one another in real-time and to a far wider audience. This opens the door for every level of achievement, whether grand or simple, to be recognized. A fellow employee doesn’t need to move mountains to earn a shout-out on social media. Instead, social media recognition encourages celebrating small victories, like a simple act of kindness to a hotel guest or an associate’s one-year anniversary at the property.

While researching for this eBook, I came across a great story from Mashable about a top-performing Best Western employee named Wallace. When Wallace was nominated for an annual industry award, his employer created a Facebook page inviting guests to share their stories about him. Soon enough, they received an outpouring of compliments about him going above and beyond to make their stays
Lessons from the Hospitality Industry

Hyatt Hotels Corporation: We've said it before, but it is truly the members of our Hyatt family that continue to set us apart and demonstrate why life is better #atHyattWorld. #AuthenticRelationshipMRMCAre

What it’s like to be hugged by a brand. Literally, business2grow.com - Technology is great but sometimes it moves us away from the human, vulnerable connection our customers crave. Sometimes you need to be hugged by a brand.

Lessons from the Hospitality Industry

Compass Group

Happy New Year! Thank you for being part of Compass Group USA’s Facebook community which enables us to share the stories of our Altogether Great culture! This year, we’re going to focus on RECOGNITION; thanking and recognizing our great people who deliver great food and service every day.

Check back often to see what unloads, and in the meantime, here’s a video of how we celebrate …

http://www.altogethergreat.com/.../recognition/compass-group/...

Compass Group | Altogether Great

COMPASS NIGHT OF STARS
ALTOGETHERGREAT.COM

Marriott International

Everyone wants to feel like their work is meaningful and important. Improve your team’s engagement and productivity by sharing how their work contributes to the organization’s mission. http://bit.ly/2RidZmv

Four Ways To Help Your Employees Understand How They Contribute To The Company’s Bottom Line

forbes.com

AVENDRA added 9 new photos.

Today we celebrate the founding of Avendra 16 years ago. We also salute the associates that were there on that day and continue to be proud members of the Avendra team. Thank you to the 35 charter associates for your hard work and dedication. Some of our charter associates are pictured

Hyatt Hotels Corporation

Congratulations to Q2 Horizon Award Recipients

Hyatt is pleased to announce the Horizon Award Winners for the Second Quarter of 2018. The Horizon Awards program was created in 2001 to recognize our exceptional hotel departments. Thanks to the efforts of Community Managers, the Horizon Awards program has grown to include four separate categories:

Recognition of the most exceptional hotel, the Horizon Award. Congratulations to our Horizon Award winner for Q2 2018: The Hyatt Regency Cambridge, Cambridge, MA! In addition to receiving the Horizon Award, the hotel will receive a $10,000 donation to the charity of their choice.

Awards recognize the best hotel in each of the following categories:

The Horizon Award for Best In-Line performance.

The Horizon Award for Best On-Line performance.

The Horizon Award for Best New Hotel performance.

The Horizon Award for Best Non-Room revenue performance.

Awards go to hotels that have achieved 10% or higher in their respective category and have achieved 100% or higher in the Horizon Health Care Revenue.

Congratulate the hotels on Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn and share the news on your company’s blog or in your newsletter.

Click on each hotel page below to learn an an excerpt version.

Quality Inn and Suites, Sequim WA

Three cheers for Nancy and her team!

Sequim Quality Inn gets Morningside annual award | Sequim Gazette

A Sequim business earned big kudos for its employment practices.

SeatCrafter
memorable. Not only did it help sway the award
judges, but it also cleverly served as a bit of self-pro-
motion for the property and was undoubtedly a
phenomenal self-esteem boost for Wallace.

Recognition Stream

01/31/15
Johane Jean-Charles from Project Management
received a Thumbs Up Award

Jon Mejia:

Johane, you did an amazing job seeing the project through to completion. You always
have a great attention to detail and are responsive to the client needs. Great job!

20 Peers Congratulated Johane Jean-Charles
0 Peers Shared | View all comments

Miko Uduhiri:

Thanks again for working late last week to ensure all of the testing was completed.
Your hard work ensured everything was completed without issue and on time.

So, why not give social promotion for recognition a
ty at your property? Chances are even the most shy
employees would love getting a few extra cheers,
while those with a more competitive nature will see
their peers racking up sent and received recognitions
and want to become an active parts of the program
as well. Often, the non-monetary forms of praise carry
just as much weight as traditional monetary awards.
Recognition in this form takes only seconds and is
no additional cost to the company, but it carries a
tremendous impact. Simply put, employees love
social recognition, and more recognition equals
higher employee engagement. Higher employee
engagement means employees will be more
productive and innovative, they’ll be positive influ-
ences to others and champions of your brand, and
they’ll remain invested in staying with you for years to
come. Employees who exhibit these qualities will help
enhance the hotel guest experience and ultimately
increase the results and revenue for your brand.

In Gallup’s State of the American Workplace, researchers state that companies with engaged
employees and engaged customers enjoy a
240 percent jump in performance-related business
outcomes compared to those with neither
engaged workers nor engaged customers. This
sounds like wins all around for companies that
implement social recognition.
Lessons from the Hospitality Industry

ONSITE EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AT HOSPITALITY EVENTS:
Gamification and Social Networking Event Apps

On an annual basis, hospitality brands across the globe hold internal meetings and events that bring associates together for a variety of networking and collaborative reasons. Whether they’re general managers, directors of operations, F&B directors, executive chefs, brand experts, or guest engagement specialists, these team members come together to learn, get inspired, make connections, and have a little fun. For years, hospitality events have incorporated meeting planning apps to enhance the experience. Now, the latest development in hospitality events is robust mobile apps that build gamification and social networking right into the app.

There are many social networking event apps on the market, but only a handful focus on total event engagement. The mobile event app company MeetingPlay® is a great example of a custom designed, impactful event app. We talked to Frank Leonard, the Chief Sales and Marketing Officer of MeetingPlay. He explained that, nowadays, meetings and events are beginning to break free of traditional boundaries (and walls) thanks to new technologies, better locations, and upgraded services. Whereas large events used to be about catering to the masses, now they focus on intimate connections, memorable team building and gamification, and overall unique experiences. MeetingPlay’s ability to build custom solutions for each of their clients sets them apart and ensures a high customer return and satisfaction rate.
“Succeeding in business is all about making connections.”

— Richard Branson
SOCIAL GAMIFICATION AT HOSPITALITY EVENTS

By adding gamification to your meeting app, you can attract vendors and sponsors, increase app adoption and continued engagement, and encourage associates to post event-related hashtags on social media. The thrill of earning points and badges inspires all attendees to get in on the action and adds value to the experience that otherwise would not have existed.

The most dynamic and engaging hospitality event apps should incorporate a social networking aspect. Features such as conversation walls, photo galleries, direct messaging, robust attendee profiles, QR code connections, and direct links to the users’ social media accounts will exponentially increase the usage of the app. Ultimately, the goal is to invite attendees to connect with thousands of fellow industry professionals to whom they previously may not have had access.

Frank Leonard shared how MeetingPlay’s platform can facilitate professional networking at hospitality events (see Example 1, right inset).

EXAMPLE 1: James is a fictional event attendee and Director of Food and Beverage at his property. Using the custom-built event app, James can use built-in wayfinding to receive notifications whenever other directors of F&B are within earshot at the conference. Once notified, James can look at that person’s biography and headshot, thus encouraging James to introduce himself when they pass one another. This unique networking feature easily helps event attendees forge connections that may have otherwise been missed.

EXAMPLE 2: I attended a massive, 14,000 person marketing conference last fall, and within hours of its opening session, the conference hashtags went viral on Twitter and Instagram. Soon, the conference was a trending topic on social media, thus connecting thousands of attendees to one another while simultaneously promoting the events and excitement to people not in attendance. This enthusiasm garnered palpable energy and buzz around the conference and kept everyone continually posting, connecting, and promoting on social media.

Lessons from the Hospitality Industry
Custom event engagement apps like MeetingPlay don’t stop there, either. In addition, they might also include audience response systems, engagement analytics, indoor mapping systems, and so much more. Here’s another example of how this app works from a sponsor or vendor perspective.

**EXAMPLE 3: Ahead of the event, sponsors can search through the app to find attendees who are most likely to be interested in their offerings. Then, they can proactively reach out and schedule a time to meet during the event. This feature encourages an intimate one-to-one conversation rather than simply hoping the person might walk by. In the event that these meetings get canceled, sponsors can hop back onto the app, select a filter, and find a new target attendee. MeetingPlay’s technology also allows sponsors to review post-event metrics to determine whether attendees spent 30 seconds or five minutes at their respective booths. From a sponsor’s perspective, this is incredibly helpful when deciding with which attendees to follow up.**

The biggest names in hospitality know that dynamic, user-friendly social apps are critical to the success of their events. They create excitement in a whole new way and events that leave them going home inspired and motivated.

If you are only looking to incorporate social networking event apps, take a look at a few suggestions from Bizzabo.23

*Source: MeetingPlay*
One of the greatest benefits we’ve seen from using social media to increase employee engagement in the hospitality industry is having the ability engage with diverse audiences about a range of topics. Whether brands are looking to educate a group or promote corporate social responsibility in hospitality (CSR), using Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, or an internal social platform can substantially increase a message’s reach and solidify the relationship between employees and the brand.

KNOWLEDGE RESOURCE AT YOUR FINGERTIPS

According to Compensation Force, hospitality had substantially higher turnover rates (20.2 percent) in 2014 when compared to other industries. A 2015 Deloitte Hospitality study also found that industry turnover is as high as 31 percent. Hospitality employers can combat high turnover by encouraging internal social media and work-life blending with software like Yammer, Slack, or Chatter. These platforms strengthen engagement between colleagues and boost individual's commitment to your hospitality brand.

For example, many employees spend hours searching for answers and contacting colleagues through voicemail or email. On the other hand, employees who are connected to one another via a shared social platform, such as one used for gamification, know how to use their networks to find answers and make connections quickly. This efficiency and ability to find solutions in creative ways results in more confident and engaged employees.
When employees are actively involved in voicing news and thoughts about your brand via social media, they automatically become more invested in the outcomes. This investment contributes to a higher employee morale and leads to higher retention rates.

EDUCATING THE FUTURE WORKFORCE

You’ve probably heard of the STEM movement: an initiative that encourages younger generations to study and pursue careers in science, technology, engineering, and math. Recently, the movement has expanded to STEAM, which includes the arts. To remain competitive players in the industry, hospitality brands should embrace STEAM, since the innovative research, teachings, and discoveries of our youth today will shape the future of hospitality tomorrow. After all, many aspects of hospitality administration, management, operations, food services, and recreation facilities can be tied to STEAM exploration. For example, a lesson from a property chef on nutrition with middle school students can have a broader focus to include food lifecycle, environmental practices, recycling, and climate change.

Take a look at the examples to the right that show hotel chefs teaching students about food science and nutrition. Student outreach programs like these are a great way for hotels to embrace the STEAM movement and invest in the education of younger generations. Not only will your brand actively contribute to building a stronger future workforce, but you’ll also promote and build community trust in your brand. In turn, this also strengthens employee loyalty because people want to work for a company that practices CSR. Be sure to share stories of student outreach programs on social media so the world can see the good your brand is doing.

By 2025, Millennials are expected to make up 75 percent of the workforce, so the need to intertwine social media and STEAM practices will only continue to increase. Take the time now to focus engagements and social messaging directly to this market. Challenge your staff to brainstorm ways to connect and educate with youth in a STEAM/hospitality focused manner. Perhaps your brand can promote a local workshop with youth on your social media accounts. Or, create student-facing hashtags so they can follow your brand and continue to learn helpful information. One day soon, these STEAM students
could be your workforce, so developing relationships with them now will have lasting payoffs in the future.

You might also be wondering how these youth-focused programs can impact your current employee engagement program. One additional way to embrace STEAM at your workplace is by encouraging your employees to take part in mentoring and apprentice programs, or you can create an annual award tied to youth outreach.

PROMOTING COMMUNITY EFFORTS AND CSR

According to the World Tourism Organization, the United Nations declared 2017 the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development. It’s an opportunity to advance the tourism sector in three areas of sustainability: economic, social, and environmental, although many notable advancements have been made already. The Sustainable Travel Report from Booking.com notes that guests expect eco-friendly accommodations on everything from light bulbs to toilet paper. The key word is expect. Not only are they willing to pay a little more for a brand that has these practices, but they are willing to spend time at a property with sustainable practices over one that isn’t doesn’t institute these practices.

Today, the greatest brands in the world understand the importance of giving back both to the community to which they are a part and to the world on a global scale. Whether it’s through caring initiatives, environmental practices, or community volunteer activities, hospitality brands should leverage the good work that they already do and promote it through social avenues. Doing so will
“We can make a living by what we get, but we can make a life by what we give.”

– Winston Churchill
build a network of employees and supporters who align with their company values, within their organization and their broader communities.

Mark Johnson, President of Loyalty 360, wrote a great article on how Social Responsibility is More Than Just Being Green. He noted a study from CondeNast Traveler that found that 73 percent of readers would be willing to pay more to stay in a hotel that helps support the local community through health and education initiatives:

- 20 percent would spend between one and five percent more
- 29 percent would spend between six and 10 percent more
- 24 percent would spend 10 percent more

Johnson went on to highlight some great programs that InterContinental Hotels Group, Kimpton Hotels & Resorts, and Marriott take part in for their CSR efforts. I recommend reading through their programs for inspiration and ideas.

Promoting philanthropy is not something to be shy about. Today, brands often build specific Facebook and Twitter pages devoted to spreading the word about their positive efforts and corporate social responsibility in hospitality. Your brand can follow suit by highlighting your long-term commitments to corporate social responsibility as well as any short term wins, like stories about donations you’ve collected or individuals you’ve helped.

At my previous position with a large corporate employer, the CSR team used our internal and external social media platforms to “advertise” upcoming community events that employees could volunteer for. Every month, I knew exactly where to look in order to find new ways to be involved. With so many volunteer opportunities each week, I could choose what fit my interests and worked with my schedule. I was proud to be a part of these opportunities to make an impact, and afterward I loved sharing updates on social media to show others that my organization had done something noteworthy to help others.

Properties don’t necessarily need to wait for opportunities on a corporate level, since small volunteer efforts can easily be organized and promoted through social media on a local scale. In either case, employees will feel empowered and excited to support a stronger bond both with their employers and their communities as a result of these altruistic efforts.
Creating Magnetic Employee Connections Through Social Media
I’m an optimist, and I’d love to believe that using social media in the hospitality sector will bring nothing but growth and prosperity. However, we’d be remiss not to mention the potential cons of social media in the workplace.

In a Business Insider interview, Elizabeth Pizzinato, the Global Luxury Consumer and Digital Marketing SVP at Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts, noted two areas where brands can make mistakes in regards to social media:

“It’s not just a question of establishing a Twitter feed or a Facebook page: social channels thrive on immediacy, engagement and authentic responses, so brands need to be prepared to manage the additional pressure that social places on key resources.”

“By building the right balance between agency support and internal resources to provide the “real” voice of the brand in its interactions with consumers, brands will go a long way towards getting social right. Which leads to the second potential downfall: embracing too many channels all at once. It’s better to be visible and highly engaged in fewer channels and fully understand both the resources needed and the level of engagement that those channels engender, rather than trying to be in all channels at once.”

So jump in and let your brand’s heart and soul lead to authentic social interactions. Just be mindful not to bite off more than you can chew.
“Treat employees like they make a difference and they will.”

– Jim Goodnight
1. Conduct a social media inventory through the employee engagement lens.
   – What platforms are you currently using?
   – Do you have a dedicated resource who posts regular and varied content?

2. Bolster your recruiting with Inbound Marketing.
   – Interview recent hires to see the online recruitment experience from their perspectives and develop recruiting personas.
   – Enlist employees to brainstorm new digital content from questions they continually receive from guests.
   – Encourage employees to contribute original content: great guest stories to share, solutions to common guest issues, community activism, etc.

3. Pose questions and post pulse surveys on internal engagement platforms.

4. Launch social media pages exclusively targeted to recruits/employees.

5. Create an internal social site that captures stories from across your organization and encourages employees to promote them on external social platforms.

6. Go social with “how I made a difference” or “caught being exceptional” stories.

7. Challenge associates to show appreciation for one another weekly on social platforms.

8. Create a welcome center on your intranet or engagement platform for onboarding new hires.

9. Promote community volunteer efforts and corporate CSR through social platforms.

10. Work with an engagement agency like E Group to develop unique and innovative employee engagement solutions.
REFERENCES


5 “Go the Distance: Career Growth at Marriott.” YouTube, uploaded by Marriott Careers, Jul. 20 2015, www.youtube.com/watch?v=94xb4MB5Mjl.

6 “Why We Love Working at Hyatt.” YouTube, uploaded by Hyatt, Apr. 3, 2013, www.youtube.com/watch?v=m_Uh_x7W6dQ.


**ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

Redshift Research: redshiftresearch.co.uk
The Sales Lion: www.thesaleslion.com
Joey Coleman: joeycoleman.com
Slack: www.slack.com

Yammer: www.yammer.com
Workstride: www.workstride.com
MeetingPlay: www.meetingplay.com