

JOIN THE CULTURE CLUB

— Hospitality managers are well aware of the challenges they face in attracting new talent and retaining existing team members. However, **Adam Rowledge FIH SJS** says there is not enough focus on business culture when considering how to remedy this —



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With unemployment at its lowest since 2008, and continuing positive forecasts for hospitality jobs growth, it really is a candidate's market. This begs the question, why aren't employers placing more focus on their culture and why aren't candidates placing this higher up the priority list when searching for a suitable opportunity?

The Financial Times Lexicon defines organisational culture as "a strong culture, in which members agree upon and care intensely about organisational values, can improve organisational performance by motivating employees and co-ordinating their behaviour. Organisational values can resonate with employees' higher ideals and rally them around a set of meaningful goals. They also focus employees' attention on organisational priorities, which then guide their behaviour and decision-making."

That's a bit wordy for me so I'd summarise by saying that 'culture' is the DNA of your organisation. It can be seen by everyone, in everyone, and in everything that you do. It's not a few fancy words on your website or something that the business owner or management team thinks sounds good. It is something that everyone in the organisation lives and breathes.

So, why aren't more businesses focusing

on their culture and their brand as part of their recruitment strategy? In all honesty, I don't know the answer!

At Georgian House, we centre everything we do around our Brand Image Map, from choosing suppliers, interior design and our communications strategy to recruitment, the training and development we give to our team, and our reward and recognition programme. I find this a really useful tool in ensuring that everything we do is reflective of our brand and ultimately the culture within our organisation.

With the power that social media and user-generated content now holds, employers must consider the effects that this can have on their brand. Websites such as Glassdoor (www.glassdoor.co.uk) now enable employees to share their views of their employer and give prospective employees the chance to vet companies before they have even applied. I have no doubt that such websites will become a more central part of the recruitment world in the same way that TripAdvisor has for travellers vetting accommodation.

I cannot profess to have always put culture at the forefront of my decision-making.

Previously I was unfortunate to work for a company that didn't have the culture I was looking for. Now, having found what I believe is the perfect cultural fit at Georgian House, I am more focused than ever in ensuring that what we offer as an employer fulfils the needs of our team and prospective candidates.

So, what are the key messages here? Firstly, this is important now and is only going to grow in significance in the years ahead. If you really care about attracting and retaining talent then devote time to evaluating your culture. Ensure that the things that motivate people to work hard are aligned with your values and are embedded in the business. Finally, for those looking for their next challenge, think about what motivates you and what environment is going to give you the best opportunity to succeed and develop. Make sure this fits with how you want your future to look. You spend more than a third of your life at work, so make sure it's a place you actually want to be! ■



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