

FEEDBACK IS A GIFT

Getting feedback from your team members is just as important as getting it from your guests, says Adam Rowledge FIH



Guest feedback is everywhere. You can't escape it. From TripAdvisor to in-house email surveys, mystery guest visits and much more. The topic of guest feedback is frequently the subject of conversation amongst hospitality professionals. But how often do we have the same conversation about the feedback that our teams are giving us about their experience?

The biggest obstacle to knowing what people really think about us is fear. We fear they'll tell us our business is terrible, that we're horrible people and we should never have set foot on earth. Yet most companies never hear that type of painful feedback. Companies with strong word-of-mouth and employee devotion behave like high-performance athletes when it comes to focusing on employee feedback. In effect, they are feedback machines. Employee feedback drives their recruitment strategies, training and development and experience expectations.

Here are my top tips on embracing employee feedback:

1. Believe that employees possess good ideas

How often does someone in your organisation respond to an innovative idea by saying: 'Our team don't want that?' But you have already had people indicate otherwise. Asking team members to participate in your problem-solving is smart business.

2. Gather feedback at every opportunity

Every interaction with a colleague is an opportunity for feedback. Team members are usually more than happy to share their opinions. People want to be heard but might not offer their perspectives if not asked. It's the most direct way to learn what they're thinking and to build connections with them.

3. Focus on continual improvement

Enlist the aid of your most passionate team members to help you improve an aspect of your business every week so that it builds momentum. Word will spread quickly when what you're doing starts improving, especially if you thank specific team members for their assistance.

4. Actively solicit good and bad feedback

The first part is relatively easy. The second question is



ADAM ROWLEDGE FIH IS
GENERAL MANAGER OF
GEORGIAN HOUSE AND CHAIR
OF OUR SUSSEX BRANCH

usually the source of feedback fear. Finesse the situation by asking: 'What is the one thing you would change or improve about your experience of working here?'

5. Don't write War and Peace doing it

Long surveys may be outdated by the time the data arrives. Short, fast surveys or facilitating focus groups deliver better response rates and allow you to react rapidly to issues raised. Solve one or two problems at a time, not everything at once.

6. Seek real-time feedback

Make obtaining feedback part of your daily schedule. Ensure you're not the last to know about problems. If you're the first to find out about a problem and you deal with it quickly, word will spread fast and action taken will be appreciated.

7. Make it easy for your team to provide feedback

It's about what's easy for them, not what's convenient for you. For every employee that provides feedback on something that they feel should be improved, many more will say nothing and you can't afford to not get that feedback.

8. Leverage technology to aid your efforts

Online survey tools make it very easy to gather feedback and are typically fast, efficient, and inexpensive. They automatically collate all of the data. You don't need a degree in computer science to run them and the more you share what you're doing as a result of the feedback, the better completion and quality of feedback you'll receive.

9. Share employee feedback throughout the organisation

Responsibility for employee feedback extends beyond the HR department. Ensure that everyone in the company knows what others are thinking by sharing the feedback.

10. Use feedback to make changes quickly

Teams love a responsive organisation, especially ones that keep them in the loop of how their feedback was used (or wasn't), especially if it's done in a timely fashion.

Remember, when a colleague gives you their feedback, if it's not as positive as you'd like it to be, just remind yourself that they're not just sharing their pain points, they're actually helping you to make your employee experience better for the good of the business.