

I.A.R.E.
Regional Meeting Minutes –1st September 2004
Melbourne, Australia

Present: Kenn Sheather	Accor Hotels and Resorts
Christelle Zucotti	Accor Hotels and Resorts
Shannon Knapp	Carlson Hotels Asia Pacific
Christine Papadopoulos	Europcar
Martyn James	FlagChoice Hotels
Lucy Wallace	Hallis Consultants
Danelle Christophersen	Hilton Hotels and Resorts
LeAnne Crocker	Hyatt International Hotels and Resorts
Rochelle Stokes	Hyatt International Hotels and Resorts
Andre Diaz	Hyatt International Hotels and Resorts
Beth Parkin	IC Hotels Group
Stephen Fraser	Marriott Hotels and Resorts
Tony Kamitsis	Quest Apartments
Cara George	Voyages Hotels

Apolozies: Anne Wiggs Avis

LeAnne opened the meeting at 10.15am

Very successful meeting last year. A big thank you to Ken Sheather who hosted last years meeting.

We may need to cover any points that are not touched on today at a later date due to the tight agenda.

Today is about sharing your experiences in your reservations centres; however there is to be no discussion of salaries or monthly expenses.

Introductions of attendees.

Presentation by Hyatt – Training (Rochelle)

Training in a Central Environment

Working with the individual

Maintaining excellence through standards

How do we/you maintain quality

Rochelle - Coaching one on one is the most effective.

Performance training when it is needed.

Cara - Some agents can pick up on the ascents from our mystery shoppers, which usually reflects a good score. Some of our mystery shoppers have been known to prompt the agents with the required questions. Some of the trade calls that the agents were receiving were not true mystery calls. Consumer calls were a much better indicator.

Rochelle - Out sorted companies found that languages were easily identified.

Christelle -Random calls to agents were seen to be affective (bonuses granted as incentives).

Agents have been proven to compare scores

Kenn - Software program – ‘Witness’ seen as a very useful tool when call coaching.

LeAnne -Hyatt is a user of this program and has be seen to be a very Resourceful program.

Christelle - Accor use ‘Witness’ as a training tool. It enables the agents to have the ability to listen to each call. To take ownership and to evaluate each of there calls. 5 calls are rated each month. Each call is the n reviewed with agents.

Danelle -Hilton conducts 5 calls per month internal and 5 per month external, this has been proven to be very labor intensive. Agents listen to the tapes and training is done accordingly. Statistics are then posted in a common area so all staff to view results. This has been proven to be a very effective means of targeting problem areas.

Christelle - Making a difference to calls, coaching a call, listening to the call together and asking the agent ‘what they thought of the call’. This really assists in the coaching of our agents

Christine- believes the coaching gives ownership to the agents, increases productivity, conversion, pushes up selling, assists with agents identifying there own training needs. In valuable tools. Agents then begin to be very competitive with their colleagues.

Kenn- identified that this should not be used as a tool to trap the agents instead be used as a very useful training tool.

Martyn: uses a manual recording system for coaching. Team leaders were responsible for monitoring with the use of the double phone system. Seen to be effective however very labor intensive.

Kenn- suggested that there is another system, which is known as ‘remotely possible’ which has also been seen as a very successful software program.

Working with the individual

More time more effective

Helps builds trust when coaching

Taking responsibility for actions

Share coping techniques – Inflection problems, conversion difficulties related to a flat personality

Direct communication on performance

How do you work with consistent bad performance?

Rochelle – What do we reference?

Rochelle - Exceptional experience, phone answered in so many rings, 37 basic experiences, call coaching, check lists

Christine – Works on 57 attributes, not to have too many. Better to have yes or no questions.

Rochelle – who dictates standards?

Danelle – They are matched up against our competitors

Rochelle – Does anyone do client surveys?

Christine – Travel Agents give feedback this is where our feedback comes from.

Christelle – Currently talking to Customer Service people (IVR – who deal with Customer Surveys)

Rochelle – What do you believe to be important criteria for 2005?

Ken – Market changes, clients needs and wants.

Maintaining Excellence through standards

Training mission statement

Brand standards

Moments of magic

‘ I represent the quality of service’

‘ I am a service professional’

‘ The first concern is the guest’

Rochelle –standards effective coaching

LeAnne – There are 37 points to cover on each call. We need to focus on specific points and refer to examples. Hyatt for example has 4 different brands to focus on.

Christelle – focuses on certain questions but believes there is some that bare more weight than others. I.e.: Cancellation policy compared to that of closing the sale.

Christine – If the agent neglects to ask for the sale the call is scored a zero.

Christine – Asked if anyone uses a company to help agents close sales. The answer was no!

Cara – Uses work shop sessions to explore different options to closing sales.

Ken – Tries motivating his team, especially those that have been in the industry for a long time. Sometimes it just comes down to agents that may not fit the position any more.

Lucy – Discussed the idea of outside recruiting

Cara – Discussed how our competitors use different interviewing techniques i.e. Virgin Airlines: use role-plays in there interviews.

Christelle – Accor use a particular interview process where they ask the candidate to sell something that they are passionate about. How do they seem under pressure?

Lucy – Hallis interview procedure looks at role plays, reference checks and identify if the candidate is motivated to sell or not. People who are bubbly are not always the best candidates for a selling position.

Christine – Conducts group interviews with has proven to work well as it identifies the strengths and weaknesses of all the candidates.

Christelle – Believes that we need to reward our employees who are performing well!

Rochelle – We need to express the importance to our teams that we all need to feel proud of what we do and who we are!

How do you/ we maintain quality?

Monitoring/Shadowing

Call coaching

Incentives/reward programmes

Stephen – Advised that Marriott was opening a new Hotel today in Ryde and that all of his team were very excited about the new addition to the Marriott family.

Shannon – shared with us that when new staff start with Carlson Hotels they all have exposure to their three hotels in Sydney.

Cara - advised us that each new staff member gets to travel to the Red Centre to familiarize themselves with the products they are going to be selling.

Tony – shared with us that each month they organize a team building exercise at a Quest property. This has proven to be a valuable exercise when agents are referring to particular properties.

Ken – explains to us that due to the volume of ACCOR hotels have they often do follow up/ product presentations on particular hotels.

Rochelle – explained that Hyatt sends their agents on familiarization trips to Pacific Hyatt hotels. This gives the agents a sense of belonging.

Christelle – shared with us that, as ACCOR is so large they often receive newsletters and pictures from they are WWRC centers around the world. This really gives the office a sense of being one as a family.

Ken – explained that they have had ACCOR polo shirts designed to wear on a Friday (Casual Day). These polo shirts are worn in every WWRC office around the world. The employee incentive program is known as ‘Spirit of smiles’ and awards an employee each year for their service to the company.

Cara – shared with us that her incentive program is known as ‘Desert Dollars’. Staff are able to redeem points that they have earned throughout the

year for prizes. Some of which are flights, packages, day trips, bar tabs, bus tickets etc....

LeAnne – advised us that Hyatt use a very successful staff incentive program called ‘Hystar’. Points are deducted for sick days, punctuality of breaks and coding of calls. We offer a list of prizes that the staff are able to choose from. Some of which are dinner vouchers, bathrobes, movie tickets etc...

Christine - believes that the staff incentive programs help to monitor staff performances.

General business

KPI's

Staffing and rosters

Motivation/ Incentives

Successful advertising

Interview Techniques

Technology

Central v's onsite reservation challenges

Restructuring/amalgamating teams

Management Motivation

Ken – ACCOR has a system in place for its language department as it is so specialized that they turn a light when they need to leave their desk. This alerts the Team Leaders that there is a small group of agents actually logged in the phones.

Christine – has a strict 8-minute allotment for personal break time per day. Points are deducted if this is exceeded. Europcar is currently trialing a new system for its casual staff of 2-hour shifts with a break in the middle. This has so far been proven to be effective.

Rochelle – shared that agents often experience burn out after lunch, we need to encourage our staff to be taken afternoon breaks as it refreshes them.

LeAnne – asked how often rosters are compiled. They were mostly done on a monthly basis.

Christine – How does everyone manage the TV promotions?

LeAnne – advised that they divert their calls to Germany to maximize the TV promotion. We put on dinner for the staff, try and make it as fun as possible.

Beth – Shared that they decorate their office and bring in Pizzas.

Beth – Asked how other centers receive a true reflection of how successful a TV promotion was.

Rochelle – shared that Hyatt conduct regular meetings to discuss the successes of particular promotions and current yield issues.

LeAnne – asked if any one had experienced a TV promotion that wasn't success. There were many responses of 'yes'.

Martyn – advised us that he communicates regularly with his marketing department to obtain statistics on what is working and not working.

LeAnne – Asked how your offices are broken up. Do you have particular teams that are designated to correspondence?

Cara – shared with us that all her agents are multi skilled in all areas. They receive around 800 emails a day.

Ken – advised that ACCOR has a designated team to handle all Customer Service related issues.

Beth – advised us the IC hotels also have a designated team that handles all Customer Service related issues.

Rochelle – shared with the team the Hyatt has a designated Customer Service team, groups department and are working on a Correspondence team.

Ken – strongly believes that you are able to see employee's strengths by asking them to participate in different areas of the office.

Martyn – spoke of a product that Flagchoice use, it is a queue system that takes an email inquiry or booking and places it in a queue for the agents to process. It reduces processing time and is much beneficial for productivity of agents.

Cara – advised us that Voyages Hotels have standard templates for every email or fax inquiry that come into their centre.

LeAnne – Asked what the standard turn around time is?

Cara - advised 24 hours, however realistically it was 48 hours.

Shannon – advised 24 hours, Customer service emails or faxes were high priority.

Ken – 30 minute turn around for Japanese wholesales, other correspondence is processed within 24 hours.

Tony- asked if anyone splits their floors from wholesale to general reservation agents?

LeAnne – Advised that Hyatt is not split into departments.

Cara – Advised that her centre was split into departments, which work very well. There are 5 departments with 4 trade lines and the general customer lines that come into the centre.

LeAnne - spoke of how Hyatt operates:
Centre has been open for 3 years
9 Hyatt Hotels in Pacific region

US has 82 hotels which are completely centralized
Germany all centralized
India centralized in 2003
The centre focuses a lot on product training and communicating with all hotels in the region

Cara – Reservation centre started 5 years ago. Communication has improved with all properties. Resorts enjoy being centralized.

LeAnne – Hyatt use standard greetings, which are consistency within the central reservation sales professionals

Cara – Uses a report, which captures all the no shows, lost calls etc.... KPI's error rate

LeAnne – explained how all 9 hotels were cutover to a centralized environment. There was a lot of preparation that needed to be done, each week a new hotel would cutover

Ken – asked if any staff were taken from our Melbourne hotels.

LeAnne – explained how each of the management team attends the weekly revenue meetings.

Restructuring / amalgamation teams

Cara- asked how do we face that?

Rochelle – advised that when we cutover we merged the existing Hyatt staff into groups with the new staff members.

Cara – advised us that Voyages has regular staff nights, this helps to bring each team together.

Shannon – advised that they often change desks which gives the agents a 'fresh' change

Martyn – has a buddy system in place, which has seen to work well with the crossing training as well!

Christine – shared with us that it is most important to talk with our agents and ask them to share with you any fears that they have. Try and involve them as much as possible with the amalgamation

Cara – shared with us the importance of conducting the employee survey in boosting staff morale. Kelly services are one company that is able to assist with these surveys.

LeAnne – advised the team that every 6 months, 5 people are randomly selected to take part in the employee surveys

Beth – shared with us that Carlson Hotels take part in a quarterly survey.

Christine – believes these surveys assist with the career development of the agents

Cara - Uses the services of Martin Conway at mconboy@callcentres.net on 61 2 9927 3399

Management Motivation

Christelle – A good resource to use when motivating managers is a book called 'Good To Great'. As been used at ACCOR and has been proven to be successful.

Cara – advised that her company conducts retreats, to motivate their managers.

Kenn- shared with us that the best thing was mixing more with industry colleagues.

Presentation by Lucy Wallace – Hallis

Thank you for the invitation today.

Overview – Staff turnover
Sick Leave results
Work/ Life Balances: Socio –economic changes
Finding a new balance

Recruitment - Best fit

Tour of Hyatt Centre

Danelle joined us for a tour of the Hyatt Centre.

The meeting closed at 3.00pm

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