



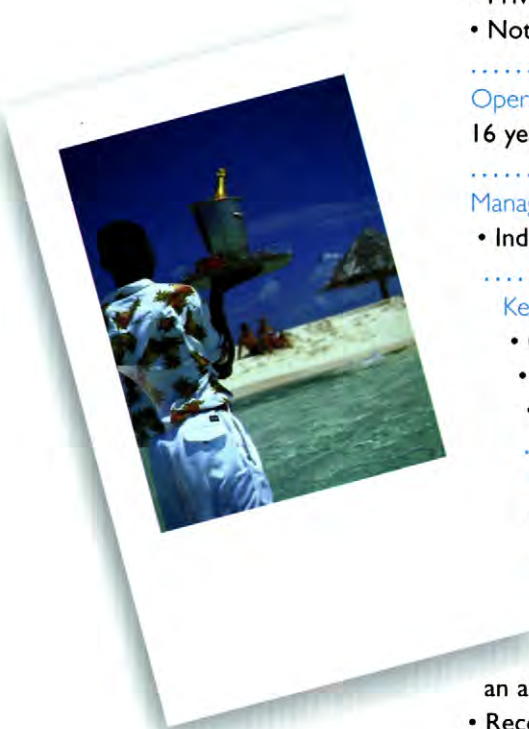
# Rewards, Recognition and Benefits

An organizational strategy focusing on rewards, recognition and benefits for staff can provide an effective, low-cost way of encouraging higher levels of performance. There are numerous approaches that can be used for any size of organization. This set of key HR practices does, however, need regular attention and fine-tuning to avoid staleness.

# Exceptional Service with *Bucuti's Best*

## Bucuti Beach Resort Aruba

This world-class resort developed *Bucuti's Best* – an employee recognition programme with monthly cash incentives that encourages staff members to provide service and actions above and beyond the call of duty.



### COMPANY SNAPSHOT

Where  
Aruba

Mission statement

- Where personal touch creates unforgettable memories and customers for life

Type of business

Beach resort

Size

- Number of rooms – 63
- Dining room capacity – 160 seats

Ownership

- Private sector
- Not unionized

Operating

16 years

Management structure

- Independent

Key products and services

- Quality lodging beach resort
- Food and beverage operations
- Complete concierge services

Workforce

- 58-63 full-time

In-house incentive programmes

- Monthly and yearly cash prize draws
- Bonus for additional work, e.g., filling in for an absent co-worker
- Recognition of good work and gift on 10-, 15- and 20-year anniversary

Awards received

- 2003 CHA Green Hotel of the Year
- 2002 CHA Hotelier of the Year
- Green Globe 21 – certified since 2000
- ISO14001 environmental certification

[www.bucuti.com](http://www.bucuti.com)

## The HR Challenge

Ewald Biemans created Bucuti Beach Resort Aruba as a home away from home. His challenge was how to develop a type of service that was as individual as his resort.

He came up with Bucuti's Best. This programme is able to motivate employees and get them to willingly contribute to a team environment, providing exceptional service beyond standard job requirements.

Bucuti Beach Resort Aruba is tucked away on one of the Caribbean's top nine beaches, according to Dream Beaches of the World magazine. This European-style resort offers world-class hospitality and charm for both leisure and business travellers. Wireless broadband connectivity throughout the resort, including in guest rooms, enables business travellers to remain connected to the world of work.

Excellent surroundings must be equalled with quality service. So, less than five years ago, the HR department, with the assistance of department heads, made some changes to the resort's employee manual.

These changes included:

- adding more employee benefits
- clarifying procedures and expectations
- adding the history, mission, vision and company values

Procedural changes were also needed if employees were to consistently achieve the resort's vision of providing the friendly, caring touch that distinguishes Bucuti service.

## Implementation Steps:

1. An incentive programme was developed to:

- improve teamwork
- help employees understand that they must work together to achieve excellent service and business results

Using cross-training, management also encouraged employees to help with tasks not necessarily in their job descriptions. When ability or potential is seen in an employee, that individual is given the opportunity to grow and move on.

2. Department heads developed programme criteria and procedures with input from line staff.

3. The programme was implemented over a period of just under two months. Employees were informed of the programme through department heads, meetings, updates in the employee manual and cards available in all hotel areas.

4. Monitoring is conducted by observation and continuous communication with staff to ensure that the programme is relevant and useful. The committee always welcomes employee feedback on the programme.

5. Any programme changes are made by committee and are then explained to staff through the department heads. These changes are then made on the Bucuti's Best nomination cards, and employee procedure

## What Was Done

Bucuti's Best was developed in 2001 to provide employees and guests with an opportunity to nominate employees who demonstrate outstanding levels of service to staff, management or guests. This recognition covers service delivered in their job duties or through suggesting and/or implementing new environmental practices at the hotel.

### *Bucuti's Best programme*

For a staff member to join the select ranks of Bucuti's Best, another staff member or a guest must select the employee for outstanding service in one of the four programme areas:

- Continually assists management and co-workers without being asked
- Bends the rules to benefit a guest without damage to the resort
- Exceeds job duties without complaint
- Suggests and implements new environmental practices

These four areas are clearly detailed on Bucuti's Best cards that are located throughout the resort.

A committee of four or five employees (the resort manager, a department head and two or three line staff) reviews card nominations every month to ensure that criteria have been met. If they have, the card is included in a monthly draw for cash prizes:

- First prize: US\$42
- Second prize: US\$28
- Third prize: US\$14

All valid nominations (including winners) received during the year are placed in a draw

at the end of the year for a grand prize totalling US\$560.

### *Selection and retention*

To attract qualified employees, the resort's job advertisements list the skills and qualifications that a candidate is required to perform or have. During the interview, the HR department provides the applicant with a detailed job description and the resort's mission and vision statements.

Candidates are informed of the requirements that the resort must meet to sustain its Green Globe 21 environmental certification, and what the individual's role is in resort processes and procedures.

Retaining staff is not a problem. The resort's positive working environment and good benefits (both monetary and non-monetary) encourage qualified employees to stay. The biggest challenge for the organization is finding food and beverage staff (line and management) who have the necessary experience and knowledge.

### *Learning opportunities provided*

Providing new learning opportunities from front-line through to senior management is important at the Bucuti Beach Resort Aruba. New hires receive a checklist that lists all the training that they need to receive. Their progress is tracked and noted, which is important for maintaining the resort's Green Globe 21 certification.

Each employee has a training plan that includes service standards, emergency procedures and current issues. Mandatory training is offered during working hours and delivered either in-house or by an external organization.

Professional development is flexible. If an employee provides proof that he/she has completed a relevant programme or seminar, the resort will reimburse the employee for the cost. Employees also attend the Aruba Hotel Association (AHA) professional development sessions, and senior managers frequently participate in AHA strategic planning sessions.

If possible, a retreat is organized each year for all department heads (supervisors and managers), led by a professional from outside the resort. This retreat is intended to review past performance and to strategize for the future.

### *Staying ahead of competitors*

The Bucuti Beach Resort Aruba has a reputation for remaining current due to the owner/manager's insistence on employing the latest HR methods. For example, this year all employees have an extra two days off in the year with pay. By employing current HR strategies, using good marketing and providing exceptional service to guests, the resort keeps ahead of its competitors.

The resort's priority is customer service, not only to its guests but also to the resort's employees, i.e., its internal customers. The best motivation has proven to be letting employees know that they make a difference and recognizing them for doing so.

## **Results:**

Management reports that there have been more positive guest comments on service and an increase in repeat business since Bucuti's Best was implemented. Approximately 40 per cent of business is from return guests, which management attributes to the quality guest service that

the resort provides. This business success has been sustained over the last two years with no changes being required to the Bucuti's Best programme.

The Bucuti's Best nomination cards have worked well as they are easy to fill out and conveniently located throughout the property. The yearly cost of the programme is approximately US\$1,500, which management views as a worthwhile cost considering their return on the investment.

### *Staff reactions*

Employees welcomed the new programme. This positive reaction can be credited to the resort's overall HR strategies and policies that reinforce the company's vision of providing good service.

Employees are reminded of the programme on a regular basis. The names of winners are posted monthly on the staff bulletin board and are noted in press releases. In quarterly meetings, there is also a recap of all winners for past months.

Employees know that they are as important as the guests. The Bucuti's Best programme is one more tool that motivates employees to achieve the resort's goals.

### *Monitoring*

Since implementing Bucuti's Best, there has been no formal system put in place to measure the programme's success. Management monitors the programme through observation and continuous communication with staff to ensure that it is still relevant and useful.

### *Challenges*

The only challenge encountered was deciding what service goals staff should meet, but this

was quickly resolved through discussion with department heads. It was decided that the programme's attributes should reflect the hotel's goals for good service as well as environmental, cultural and social responsibility, while reducing costs.

### *Future HR issues*

The balancing of work and home life among staff is an important issue for the Bucuti Beach Resort Aruba. Continuous improvement is needed in all areas. Currently, operations employees work 6 days a week and office employees work 5.5 days a week. By working with other organizations in Aruba, the resort aims to reduce staff hours so that operations employees work 5.5 days a week and office employees work 5 days a week, enabling all staff to spend more time at home with their families.

## Discussion Questions

1. Management and staff helped create the four key attributes on which this recognition programme is based. What are additional measures/criteria that could be included as programme attributes?
2. Monthly and annual monetary rewards are featured in this programme. What do you feel are the advantages/disadvantages of monetary rewards over other kinds of employee recognition?
3. *Bucuti's Best* was developed in 2001. What are ways you can suggest to keep a successful programme like this fresh and motivating for staff over time?

