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Standards

INVESTORS IN PEOPLE REVIEW REPORT

For

Las Iguanas Ltd

Bristol

ASSESSOR: Richard Sloane

DATE: 28 April 2008



INVESTORS IN PEOPLE

CONTENTS

1. Outcome
2. Strengths and Areas of Good Practice
3. Feedback against Agreed Objectives
4. Potential for Further Development
5. Continuous Improvement Plan

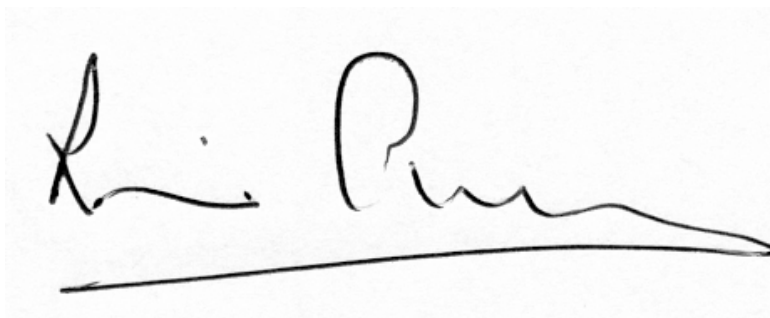
I. OUTCOME

Las Iguanas continues to meet the requirements of the Investors in People Standard. I am pleased to confirm that recognition is therefore maintained as from 28 April 2008.

The assessor would like to thank the 56 staff and managers who were kind enough to give their time for interview and to those who voluntarily came for interview in their own time.

This is truly a remarkable company and the best organisation the assessor has ever had the privilege to be associated with. The brilliant culture that was evident 3 years ago has been retained despite the fact that it has doubled in size across the country during that time. To have achieved this through a blend of good communication and shrewd promotion is evidence indeed of the supportive and single team spirit evident here. Time and again staff that were interviewed said that Las Iguanas management was so totally different from their previous experiences in the sector.

A number of staff and managers have confided in the assessor that they have been head hunted and offered significantly more money elsewhere but are loyal to Las Iguanas because of the opportunities for corporate growth which will inevitably mean better opportunities for them.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Richard Sloane', written over a horizontal line.

**Richard Sloane MIBC
Specialist Assessor and Adviser**

Quality South West

29 April 2008

2. STRENGTHS AND AREAS OF GOOD PRACTICE

One of the great strengths of this company is team working and mutual respect from the directors, operations managers and staff towards each other. The team spirit in the various restaurants visited was exceptional and the 'buzz' was evident everywhere.

The assessor interviewed some 56 staff and managers and out of that only 2 were negative – quite an achievement.

People spoke of the values of the company which can be encapsulated as follows:

- Reliability of service and food served
- Building relationships with customers by all staff in the business from bar tenders, waiters, chefs and of course office based staff and management. This ensures that customers return to restaurants.
- High level of competence and thoroughness of effort compared to competitors and 'going the extra mile'
- Experience of staff
- Value for money

There is an outstanding ethos within the company that encourages and supports initiative at all levels. It is welcoming and friendly, yet disciplined. The whole staff acts together as one team and supports each other in every aspect of business. The team spirit in all the restaurants is brilliant and those visited by the assessor were amazing. The 'buzzzzz' factor was truly remarkable – well done you guys!

'Eren – is like working with my uncle' was how one manager described relations in the company. When the Operations Director visits sites there is a rush to be the first employee to greet him!!

All staff interviewed were supportive of the management style of the Managing Director and supporting directors and operations managers. It was interesting to note that they have trained the managers to think of their restaurants as their businesses resulting in a higher level of commitment than competitors. They are regarded as valuable members of 'the team' and not as mere ciphers.

The main business strategy is to retain existing customers for the long term, provide an exceptional quality of service and attract new customers to restaurants through development of menus. This in turn will generate the profits to create an additional 21 restaurants by 2012. This is known by all staff and has given those looking for advancement in the company

exceptional hope for the future. The assessor was impressed that so many staff were able to articulate this.

A number of managers indicated that they had joined the company some years ago because they saw potential for their own advancement which had now come to fruition.

It was good to see that the company values input from all staff through contributions to the business. Staff at all levels often offer information on the activities of competitors. There is a newsletter El Republico to which all staff are encouraged to contribute articles. This is seen by staff as a major communication vehicle throughout the business.

All staff are aware that to retain customers it is incredibly important to meet standards set by the Health & Safety Executive, Food Standards Agency and other legal entities in addition to all the Training Manuals and inhouse training that takes place. The most striking feature of the interviews was the number of people who said customer satisfaction was more important than anything else.

Learning and development within the company is strong. New managers are required to operate for a few weeks with a mentor whilst their capabilities are assessed. Usually this is through membership of the Centre of Excellence in Leicester that has been established to provide new and aspiring managers with the tools to be successful in the company.

There are a number of trainers in Las Iguanas – some of whom are almost full time whilst others combine this role with operational duties. There is a substantial amount invested in ensuring people are fit and capable of driving the business forward to meet the objectives set above.

Everyone interviewed felt the company was compassionate and supportive in difficult domestic circumstances. Because of this staff go 'the extra mile' to support the company in times of need such as manager vacations. At one restaurant staff assisted a foreign national with expenses when he needed to support his sister in Canada.

'I always go to restaurant with a smile on my face' was how one employee described her experiences.

All staff feel communicated with either through emails, regular meetings or impromptu sessions in the restaurants. All those interviewed felt the appraisal process was a valuable tool in allowing them the opportunity to plan their futures. They also felt that managers make them feel valued through this process.

Managers generally cascade information to their staff from Operations Manager monthly meetings although this is slightly patchy. At these meetings they do try to share good practice which is cascaded to restaurant staff.

Staff can view vacancies that occur in the whole company from the bulletins displayed on notice boards.

The company employs staff representing many different nationalities and all those interviewed felt equally treated and part of a single team at restaurant level.

It is very interesting to note that some managers who have been coached in understanding P&L and tasked with managing budgets now feel empowered, decisive and valued because of it!!!

The culture is brilliant and encourages people to contribute to the development of the business at their level. The management ethos drives through the company. Everyone was able to describe the qualities of management and those descriptions were remarkably similar in the business – well done Las Iguanas. Some of those management competencies, behaviours and capabilities are reproduced here.

- Respect and understanding
- Knowledge of the business and individual competency
- Listening and all embracing
- Compassionate
- Supportive
- Approachable
- Give and take – recognising hard work
- Building a single teams at all levels
- Learning from mistakes – no blame culture
- Professional
- Leading by example – all managers assist in customer facing roles when required to do so.

Staff were quick to point out that managers were generally consistent in their approach to leading and managing the team.

All staff feel rewarded and valued as members of the team through

- general praise for a job well done,
- inviting comment on performance
- Whole staff Christmas party,
- Race to Rio
- Employee of the month.
- Many local manager initiatives

Part of the culture at Las Iguanas is the way staff are multiskilled which results in them being able to handle tasks when senior staff are incapacitated or on vacation. This is particularly relevant when promotion is in prospect either through natural wastage or expansion of the business.

All staff feel empowered and can contribute to the decision making process. As noted elsewhere in this report the management culture encourages contributions.

The induction process is excellent. As noted above staff are observed for a period before discussions are held to determine skill levels and what additional learning and development is required. There is a complete training schedule that staff must be competent in before being allowed to face the customer.

All staff interviewed confirmed that when training is identified it invariably occurs shortly afterwards. However, staff are also encouraged to identify their own learning requirements.

Succession planning is being practised in the company through grooming and promotion of promising staff. One senior manager began working with Las Iguanas as a bar tender and has progressed through the grades. The Operations Director usually attends the company induction process to describe the culture.

The evaluation of learning and development is carried out continually.

The key focus here is to measure whether Las Iguana's investment in people has been worthwhile and whether managers and their team's understand the impact it has had on the Company, their team and themselves. This is somewhat patchy as noted in section 4.

Las Iguanas has a budget for the training and development of its staff which runs at approximately 3.5% of turnover. This is huge and the largest percentage that the assessor has ever experienced for as mentioned previously in this report, people are all the Company has to set it apart from its competitors. Ensuring a return on investment is viewed as crucial to the continued success of the Company and to ensure this is the case, the training budget when set at the start of the year is split across the various learning priorities identified, most of which links to an objective contained in the Las Iguanas Business Plan.

The Learning and Development Strategy encourages individuals to discuss their training in advance of attending a development activity. Interviewees commented on how these discussions consider what they are expected to achieve as a result of the training course/shadowing or observation event.

Evaluation is for the most part an informal activity at individual and individual line management level often based on observation. However, this is not the case at senior management level (the wider management team) as training and development, its cost, activities that have taken place and the return on investment forms part of monthly review at Board meetings when consideration is given to the extensive and focused document People Report that is created by the HR Co-ordinator.

The wider management team (top and restaurant level) were able to give quantifiable improvements as the result of the investment in training, support and ongoing development including:-

- Staff turnover for the company is running at 88% and this is budgeted to fall to 50% in the new financial year. For the benefit of the reader although the figures appear high the actual rates in the sector are between 150 – 200% per annum. Its investment in training and development will contribute to this as staff stay with the Company when they are given the opportunity to grow and develop.
- The budget set for the next financial year is robust and challenging as it is based largely on improved local marketing and expansion. Whilst figures must remain confidential in the Company the financial position of Las Iguanas is increasing with new business being acquired.
- Multi-skilling giving staff a wide range of skills to competently handle all tasks in restaurants and also to be used for gaining experience to move to higher grade positions.

Continuous improvement is at the heart of this excellent Company as to stand still is not an option considered to be acceptable. The staff provided many examples of how the evaluation of its investment has resulted in improvements in the organisation's strategy for leading, managing and developing people.

Examples include:-

- The creation of a clear, comprehensive policy on learning and development.
- Learning from courses attended.
- Communications are now more robust
- Staff are seen as equals by all groups
- Excellent induction
- Improved appraisal
- Learning from each other
- Formalisation of appraisal reviews

- Conducting of a wide ranging training needs analysis.
- Training managers in interviewing techniques is beginning to show a marked decline in attrition especially at manager level
- Interviewees commented on how they have been involved in the development and or piloting of many of the above processes, all of which are seen as significant strides forward for Las Iguanas.

3. FEEDBACK AGAINST AGREED OBJECTIVES

The company asked the assessor to review the following areas of the business:

Look at the management competency process now being established and offer advice

There is a matrix of competencies being created for the various management grades in the company. To this should be added the behaviours expected of managers at all levels in the business. Staff often quoted examples of leadership style and behaviours as being consistent throughout the company but because of the expected surge in expansion managers need to be fully aware of the behaviours expected of them to meet the ethos and culture of the company.

Investigate why managerial staff are attracted to the company

There is a well known fact within the sector that the company not only offers substantial training before taking up a substantive appointment – but actually carries it out. Many competitors give lip service to this vital part of the business. Succession planning opportunities, expansion of the foot print and the lack of uniformity were cited as other examples of why managers are attracted to the company. The low attrition rate amongst managers and staff compared against sector norms is achieved through supportive top management and a no blame culture.

Now that there has been a change in recruitment policy to encourage applications from branded companies, new managers are more comfortable with the brand role in Las Iguanas.

Effectiveness of communications in the company especially as it is expanding at a fast pace

The communications network is brilliant at all levels. This is partly because all meetings of GMs, DMs, MITs Head Chefs and Operation Manager meetings are diared twelve months in advance and actually take place. Information is cascaded from these meetings to restaurant staff. There is also a bimonthly newsletter that is give to all staff through the salary slip and staff are very positive of the information in El Republico.

Operations Managers realise the importance of their role in respect of communications as they are now beginning to take part of the Operations Director role in direct communication with restaurants. As much as the Managing Director and Operations Director want to visit individual restaurants this is becoming increasingly impossible due to the expansion of sites.

What makes managers in the company good managers

Managers were keen to describe their thoughts on the subject and concluded that success depended on

- Thorough understanding of the business and culture of the company,
- Being switched on,
- Motivational
- Leaders of their business and
- Consistent in their approach to staff.

The comment was also offered that in the past the company was unclear on the qualities required of candidates for positions. That has changed and managers are more likely to be recruited from branded companies for specific roles such as Back of House Manager, Front of House Manager etc. In short the recruitment process is much more focused and will inevitably result in fewer managers leaving the business – for whatever reason.

It was also felt by managers that they were now given responsibility for their business and given decision making opportunities leading to empowerment. In other company's managers often felt like 'glorified supervisors'.

The Batrus Hollweg testing has also been favourably commented on because it is focusing on people with the right attitude and should lead to a much reduced attrition rate amongst managers. It has also helped GMs to focus on weaknesses and support strengths in candidates. It might be helpful for those who have survived the test to be given the results at an early stage so they can also work on perceived weaknesses.

The result of the test helps to influence the personal training plan. In the case of one candidate it enabled him to focus on bar activity especially in auditing stock levels to see the impact his skills have on the P&L accounts.

It is also very clear that the training from the Centre of Excellence and induction is vital to managers being aware of their responsibilities and the ethos and culture of the company. 'I know who to go to for advice' was often voiced by managers during the review.

The impact that the Centre of Excellence has on the Leicester restaurant

Managers who have attended Leicester for the induction course have found it to be a superb place to learn because the pace of service does not need to be frenetic as in some other Las Iguanas restaurants. Training aids are placed in the recently acquired property for trainees and these have been found to be extremely useful. The actual provision of company accommodation is also seen as a real aid to learning and understanding of Las Iguanas culture.

Staff in the restaurant were initially unsure of how a number of trainees would affect morale. It was interesting to find that all those staff interviewed by the assessor really enjoy the training role. They feel they must keep up to the mark because they want trainees to return to their own restaurants enthusing about the quality and experience of staff in Leicester.

Senior staff that have a training role such as the Head Chef really enjoy the responsibility. It also provides them with additional experience to further their careers.

Effectiveness of the newsletter

As noted above this is a fine communication instrument and all staff could relate to it. Generally they felt it described the single team spirit in the company. A few staff went as far as to describe a 'family feel' to it. Managers see it as motivational and an ideal tool for staff to understand what is happening in the broader company context.

Evaluate whether departmental managers are good trainers

Staff feel more confident when they are trained by staff in-house. The trainers themselves feel a sense of achievement and contribute to the success of the businesses. They completely understand the business and are more able to train well because of this. They can also adapt their training material to reflect the different needs of the businesses.

To use the Investors in People Profile tool to probe management effectiveness and consistency at indicator 4 of the Standard.

See section 6

4. POTENTIAL FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

Management development process and competency framework

There have been several initiatives in this area and much good work carried out. It was pleasing to note that most managers were following a blame free culture but this is not stated anywhere as company policy. Almost all staff identified with this behaviour but there is a need to be more specific about management behaviours that are appropriate when either the management development programme is recommenced or when the matrix of competencies is finalised.

The Batrus Hollweg testing programme might be more useful in the early stages of manager development if those who have survived the test can be given the results at an early stage. They could work on perceived weaknesses with the line manager.

Sharing good practice

There are a number of excellent examples where staff have delivered either an idea or increased business through innovation, invention or sheer hard work. One such example related to a sales and marketing member of a team who increased sales over the Christmas period quite substantially. She has not been asked to share this initiative with other restaurants despite the fact that a number of them have similar objectives to achieve in their business. It seems a shame that the wheel has to be reinvented in such an excellent innovative company. It is suggested that the Operations Manager meeting have a standing agenda item for this. GMs would then submit brief details of the successful projects. These would then be taken back to restaurants and discussed with staff to determine whether they were appropriate initiatives to be introduced. The restaurant that submitted the project would be contacted and further details given. Ownership of projects would be established throughout the company leading to even higher levels of team spirit.

Costs versus Benefits:

Las Iguanas is clear in respect of its costs and benefits of learning and development and uses a series of audits to monitor this such as the Mystery Diner reports and customer satisfaction

cards. Added value will be found from encouraging managers to become more involved at their level in this process. Devise a simple formula that can be used by managers to more readily understand the ROI of time, energy and training costs of their own investment in their people and the benefits this is bringing.

Creating such a process will provide the opportunity for each manager to produce a report on a six monthly (or quarterly initially) basis of the return on investment in their restaurant and present this to the Board. This will provide the senior team with a mechanism to compare efficiency and will encourage more dialogue between managers and their teams in respect of the quantifiable performance improvements being observed.

Profile and Benchmarking:

As good is never good enough for the Las Iguanas team, it is suggested that benefit will be gained from eventually (i.e. not year one) entering into a full Profile and Benchmarking Review. Profile is a sophisticated mechanism for providing clients with a series of graded findings in respect of its good practice. Results of Profile will provide an overview of the shape of strengths within the Company, it will enable Las Iguanas to judge the shape of its future actions linked to areas in which it wishes to improve and will also provide the chance for the company to benchmark itself against others in the sector and indeed against any sector to search out further improvements. See section 6 for a mini profile on indicator 4.

Profile can be used simply as a framework and a tool to help drive continuous improvement; however you may also choose to be assessed against it. As well as providing detailed feedback this could offer you an opportunity to benchmark your performance across the range of people management and development activities by comparing your organisation's achievement to averages for other employers. www.investorsinpeople.co.uk provides guidance on working with Profile including case studies and a free Profile Self Check online tool.

Our Investors in People **Networking Club** provides the opportunity to meet other organisations in your area to share experiences and ideas and improve your business knowledge. Visit our website at www.qualitysouthwest.co.uk to find out more and book your place. These events are free.

Visit Quality South West's website to maintain a view of the developments around the Investors in People Standard and for details of our **workshops and events** across the region: www.qualitysouthwest.co.uk .

Check if any of the **Health & Safety** information available on the HSE website could be useful in maintaining both your compliance and staff awareness. Your Health & Safety Representative might consider if there are any issues that should be addressed: www.hse.gov.uk.

Consider interactive training packages to continue to develop the **IT skills and knowledge** of your staff. Try www.learndirect.co.uk for ideas, a good number of these courses are either free of charge or reasonably priced.

For some useful information on the whole area of **employee consultation**, try looking at either www.dti.gov.uk/er/consultation/proposal.htm or www.acas.org.uk

For general **business advice and employment legislation**, incorporating DTI 'best practice', the following website might be useful: www.businesslink.gov.uk/.

With regard to **Leadership and Management**, visit the Institute of Leadership and Management at <http://i-l-m.com>. www.ashridge.org.uk/ includes access to some interesting reports as well as E-Learning resources, whilst www.leadershipsouthwest.com/ will provide you with lots of information from a more local source.

You may find it beneficial to contact your local **Train to Gain** team for a review of your skills training requirements in the context of your business needs. It is a free and impartial assessment that will give you access to a wide range of training provision, some of which may be funded. Please ring 08456 047047 or visit www.traintogain.gov.uk.

If you would like further advice tailored to your own particular circumstances and needs to assist you in line with the findings of this report, **Quality South West's Advisory Service** will be more than happy to assist. For further information please visit www.qualitysouthwest.co.uk/Advice.asp or ring the Customer Services Manager on 01452 420913 for details of our service packages.

5. CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The first column of this Plan has been completed for you as a basis for moving your organisation forward.

Suggestions for further development	Action Agreed	Responsibility	Date
<p>Management development process and competency framework</p> <p>There have been several initiatives in this area and much good work carried out It was pleasing to note that most managers were following a blame free culture but this is not stated anywhere s company policy. Almost all staff identified with this behaviour</p> <p>The Batrus Hollweg testing programme might be more useful in the early stages of manager development if those who have survived the test can be given the results at an early stage. They could work on perceived weaknesses with the line manager.</p>	<p>There is a need to be more specific about management behaviours that are appropriate when either the management development programme is recommenced or when the matrix of competencies is finalised.</p>		

Suggestions for further development	Action Agreed	Responsibility	Date
<p>Sharing good practice</p> <p>There are a number of excellent examples where staff have delivered either an idea or increased business through innovation, invention or sheer hard work. One such example related to a sales and marketing member of a team who increased sales over the Christmas period quite substantially. She has not been asked to share this initiative with other restaurants despite the fact that a number of them have similar objectives to achieve in their business. It seems a shame that the wheel has to be reinvented in such an excellent innovative company.</p>	<p>It is suggested that the Operations Manager meeting have a standing agenda item for this. GMs would then submit brief details of the successful projects. These would then be taken back to restaurants and discussed with staff to determine whether they were appropriate initiatives to be introduced. The restaurant that submitted the project would be contacted and further details given. Ownership of projects would be established throughout the company leading to even higher levels of team spirit.</p>		
<p>Safety of staff and shift end</p> <p>Female staff are not provided with transport home at the end of a shift which could go on until 1.30am at weekends.</p>	<p>It is suggested that the new Financial Director review this situation and cost the payment of a proportion of taxi fares to those staff who are not close to a bus or tube route.</p>		
<p>Costs versus Benefits:</p> <p>Las Iguanas is clear in respect of its costs and benefits of</p>	<p>Devise a simple formula that can be used by</p>		

Suggestions for further development	Action Agreed	Responsibility	Date
<p>learning and development and uses a series of audits to monitor this such as the Mystery Diner reports and customer satisfaction cards. Added value will be found from encouraging managers to become more involved at their level in this process.</p>	<p>managers to more readily understand the ROI of time, energy and training costs of their own investment in their people and the benefits this is bringing.</p> <p>Creating such a process will provide the opportunity for each manager to create a report on a six monthly (or quarterly initially) basis of the return on investment in their restaurant and present this to the Board. This will provide growth, will provide the senior team with a mechanism to compare efficiency and will encourage more dialogue between managers and their teams in respect of the quantifiable performance improvements being observed.</p>		

Date for your next Investors in People Review: April 2011

6. FINDINGS AGAINST EACH PRINCIPLE OF THE STANDARD

An Investor in People develops effective strategies to improve the performance of the organisation through its people.

The four year plan is designed to grow the business to 40 restaurants by 2012. In order to achieve this there is a succession plan to enable staff at all levels to gain promotion to move into a commissioning phase at the new developments. Managers at Board and senior level have an away day to consider the plan for the coming period. This ensures that the plan is owned by this senior group.

In one restaurant consideration is being given to extending the number of exterior tables available and is discussing the initiative with the landlords. All departments are aware of the objective and have been consulted in terms of feasibility of service and volume of business that could be handled in the kitchens.

One of the company objectives is to make sure the operations managers have greater control of the business in a consistent and transparent way

Individuals gave evidence of their own objectives directly linked to restaurant and company plans such as multiskilling to add experience for promotion and/or moving to other sites. One such objective is for a member of staff to learn Latin American desserts regardless of whether they are on the menu to understand the charisma of Latin food.

As noted elsewhere there is a Centre of Excellence in Leicester which is combined with the restaurant and provides experience for aspiring managers. This is incredibly costly but enables the company to grow from within and ensure that those that are recruited externally can benefit from understanding the culture of Las Iguanas before they assume their new roles.

There is also a plan to create a similar centre in Brighton to provide a service in the south. The management at Brighton are extremely excited at the prospect.

Top management recently held a people meeting to consider management development, attraction project and centre of excellence issues. The result was a Board report that recommended a raft of actions .A flavour of these are:

- A management development wheel for FOH managers allowing completion of the competency framework
- Launch new fantastic website

- Finalise a certificate for all COE trainees as fit for purpose.

Staff interviewed could give examples of individual objectives such as:

- Marketing the restaurant to 4 key businesses in the immediate vicinity.
- Development of local training skills
- Identifying large local events such as London marathon, Harbourside Regatta
- Creating flyers to encourage new business from local businesses

Annual appraisal provides an opportunity to capture any individual learning and development needs. These are then collated into the restaurant training plans which are posted in the staff areas for all to see. There are also individual training plans and personal training records.

There are training plans for each department for the commissioning period and subsequent operation of new restaurants. Trainers have developed these which are kept under review to change as required by the circumstances of new restaurants coming on board. The Centre of Excellence also plays a significant part here. Any changes to the Tool Boxes would be agreed centrally.

Currently, the investment in learning & development is £1m. This figure includes the substantial amount of in-house activity comprising meetings, appraisal, and the Centre of Excellence. The HR Co-ordinator manages the whole of the learning and development which is largely in-house.

There are a significant number of trainers in the company with briefs on bar, restaurant, menu and service. All of this helps to provide additional job satisfaction for those members of the teams. It also ensures that the commissioning process of new restaurants is much more focussed.

Nearly everyone in the organisation has an appraisal or job chat where they are given the opportunity to contribute ideas and suggestions.

The company has strived to maintain contact and communication at all levels in the business despite the continued expansion. Meetings of all managers are diaried by Head Office for a year in advance.

All staff feel they are equally treated and includes staff of all parts of the company – restaurants and Head Office.

The assessor interviewed people of many nationalities. Chinese, Venezuelan, Indian, Colombian, Portuguese, Spanish, Polish, Slovakian and many more. Everyone felt equally treated and were very happy with their employment at Las Iguanas.

They also described how managers involve everyone in meetings. All staff thought management was fair and well liked. Most restaurants hold meetings for all staff on Tuesday and/or Saturdays for 1-2 hours. The meeting covers retraining, coaching, team working, reviewing missed opportunities and new ideas. Staff are compensated for this and enjoy the opportunity to discuss Mystery Diner reports.

Indicator 4 Profile

3. The capabilities managers need to lead, manage and develop people effectively, are clearly defined and understood													Level achieved 3		
													Indicator Met		
Level 1															
1	2	3													
√	√	√													
Level 2/3															
1	2	3	4	5	6										
√	√	√	√	√	√										
Level 4															
1	2	3	4												
√															

Level 1

Top managers can describe the knowledge, skills and behaviours managers need to lead, manage and develop people effectively and the plans they have in place to make sure managers have these capabilities.

Managers can describe the knowledge, skills and behaviours they need to manage and develop people effectively.

People can describe what their manager should be doing to lead, manage and develop them effectively.

Level 2 & 3

Top managers can describe how they define the current and future capabilities managers need in line with the organisation’s purpose, vision and values.

Top managers make sure managers are regularly reviewed against the capabilities and receive constructive feedback on their performance.

Top managers make sure managers are provided with the help they need to develop the capabilities.

Managers can describe how they are involved in defining the current and future capabilities all managers need.

Managers can confirm that they are regularly reviewed against the capabilities and receive constructive feedback on their performance

Managers can confirm that they are provided with the help they need to develop the capabilities.

Level 4

Top managers can describe how the organisation's leadership and management strategy is linked to its business strategy and takes account of external good practice.

Top managers can describe how they create an environment where everyone is encouraged to develop leadership qualities.

Managers can describe how they encourage everyone to develop leadership capabilities.

People can give examples of how they have been encouraged to develop leadership capabilities.

The company has recently held external consultant sessions for managers and supervisors to discuss their needs for the future. A set of competencies is being produced from this in the near future.

The directors and operations managers continually describe the ethos of management style they want to employ to support staff. The Operation Director creates Action Plans with aspiring managers of all grades. He regularly visits them in their restaurants to monitor progress and discuss future plans. This is really brilliant for a Board member who has many demands on his work load.

Some managers identified their styles as being similar to that of the Managing Director and Operations Director whilst others felt they complemented those styles.

The Centre of Excellence helps to equip managers with the tools to manage within the company ethos - this is remarkable. This investment is supplemented by the acquisition of a 5 bedroom house in Leicester to provide managers in training with home comforts that also encourages team building between attendees.

An assessment day for M.I.T. candidates was held recently to determine the quality and experience of candidates from across the company. A psychometric test was included in the day long schedule. This ensures that succession planning is working well and will produce the managers of the future. Whilst internal promotion is highly encouraged there is also a strategy to recruit externally to import current technology from the industry.

There have been a number of management development sessions at Swallet Farm in Cheddar. Teams from the same restaurants have attended which has resulted in improved team working across the company. This is absolutely brilliant but as noted in section 4 perhaps a stronger emphasis on management behaviours could be introduced into future sessions.

Generally, managers apply the maxim that making staff happy improves productivity, reduces absenteeism and creates an excellent atmosphere.

Staff at all levels in the company were crystal clear on what their managers were doing to support and encourage them. The assessor was told time and again of how managers are looking to provide experience for staff to gain promotion. Although there are many management development courses and the Centre of Excellence to demonstrate management competency, there are so many enthusiastic managers that they lead by example.

A waiter at one restaurant asked if he could interview the Managing Director as part of his course. Not only was this readily agreed to but the MD had to travel over 90 miles to be interviewed!

An Investor in People takes effective action to improve the performance of the organisation through its people.

Appraisals and job chats provide an opportunity to give people feedback on how they are doing.

- Employees feel that top management is:
- Approachable, Honest, Decision makers, Flexible
- Supportive, Communicative, Compassionate for those with adversity/illness
- Relaxed, consistent, rewarding, understanding the different needs of staff
- Transparent and open.

A number of managers feel that 'there's doing a job' attitude in some companies whilst at Las Iguanas it is 'doing a job and doing it well'.

Many staff made comments such as:

'Everyone has a specific responsibility given to them at the service meeting prior to shift opening'

'Delegation gives me job satisfaction'

'If a mistake is made it is seen as an opportunity to improve'

There is a Training Manual for all new managers that is added to and amended in the light of experience.

Vacancies are published on all restaurants notice boards.

The culture of the company is to thank staff for doing a good job and is always striving to find ways to recognise people's worth.

Recognition is given to people during their appraisals, at the end of shifts and during walkabouts by managers. There are a huge number of examples of staff being valued for their work and includes:

- Whole company Christmas party in Birmingham including coaches, meal, drinks and disco. There has also been a function at Royal Festival Hall - 'boom boom' was how one member of staff described it.
- Employee of the Month – this is greatly valued by staff
- Race to Rio for 2 restaurants gaining highest Mystery Diner points
- Bonuses for managers based on performance
- Bonuses to certain staff for increasing local business.
- Emails to staff. One from a director said 'Wow that is magic' recording the effort of the individual
- Celebration party when a restaurant gains 5 Stars from the kitchen audit.

- High Touch email initiative that highlights staff devotion to duty.
- Best fajita chef award and reported in El Republico
- The weekly financials are published on notice boards and managers will highlight good performance using marker pens and a note of thanks
- Party to celebrate hitting the £1m of sales in a short time
- Some restaurants take the opportunity to close early on Monday evenings and have a team building session.
- Quiz nights for staff
- Drayton Castle fun day
- Karaoke evening

The fact that almost everyone believes they are valued can throw up some interesting responses of staff. At one restaurant the management are entering a 10k race to provide funds for another member of staff to purchase much needed medical equipment for a member of the family – again absolutely brilliant. In restaurants across the company staff are thinking about collections for this employee.

All staff feel they are recognised for the work they do and have indicated 'it's a nice place to work'.

There were a number of examples of giving responsibility to young staff and being rewarded with excellent work. One such example relates to a waitress who was given a sales and marketing role for the Christmas season. Her initiative increased sales by a considerable amount. The operations managers are beginning to share good practice amongst restaurants and, as managers travel the sites they are imparting their knowledge to others. The silo effect was not in evidence in the company although more could be done in this area.

Those promoted are cared for to ensure they succeed in the role. Where this is not possible there is an understanding that the employee can return to the previous role – again, a no blame culture.

Staff have always been encouraged to take their own decisions. There is so much learning going on it is difficult to record all the good practice that results, but a number staff referred to managers wanting their staff to multiskill. There were examples of kitchen porters shadowing chefs in every part of the kitchen, waiters learning how to create drinks, food runners becoming waiters etc. At meetings in Birmingham and Trafford Centre discussions are regularly held with staff on how to increase business. In Manchester a breakfast service has been commenced mainly for shop workers.

All meeting agendas are posted on the staff room notice boards and staff can add subjects as they wish. These are discussed and where appropriate – implemented. Staff are paid for attendance although it is not always possible for staff to attend. Minutes are posted on the notice board for all to see. Where the agendas are not displayed the manager asks staff for items before the meeting during regular walkabouts.

Most of the learning happens on the job and the Company is very keen that this should continue.

The training plans are monitored and regularly updated.

The Company is keen to ensure that training takes place and this is regularly monitored by the HR Co-ordinator.

The induction process across the Company is excellent and at all restaurants many staff would say their induction has been comprehensive and enjoyable. A number of managers mentioned the fact that they spend up to 4 months understanding the ethos of the company before actually taking up responsibilities. Staff will also attend each of the 3 departments in restaurants before starting work to ensure they understand the impact their actions have on others.

Role play is evident in many if not all restaurants and supervisors and managers will act as customers and ask the waiting staff to serve them.

A member of staff said 'its' fantastic training here – every Monday morning and never gets boring'

There is a good initiative for kitchen porters to move round the various functions in the kitchen to learn the basics of cooking. This has proved valuable in giving kitchen porters the correct experience to move into a second chef role. The assessor was aware of this initiative in Brighton, London, Milton Keynes and Leicester.

An Investor in People can demonstrate the impact of its investment in people on the performance of the organisation.

Learning and development is followed up during the appraisal or job chat by managers.

The training plans are reviewed annually to assess the impact on performance by the top management team. Multi-skilling has resulted in staff learning new skills and being able to manage customers better. This has led to improved job satisfaction for a huge number of staff.

The restaurants are audited on a regular basis by operations managers and statutory agencies and of course the Mystery Diner. Most of the learning and development that takes place is geared to these standards. Whilst at one restaurant the assessor heard the GM whoop for joy as the restaurant had scores of 96 and 100 from the Mystery Diner visit.

Head Chefs routinely ask waiters to inform them when customers are not happy or where there is a substantial food left on the plate. An analysis will determine whether staff need further training or the composition of the dish does not meet local appeal. The Head Chef at Royal Festival Hall indicated that wastage on provisions was virtually nil because of the high turnover of goods.

Staff can and do evaluate their own and colleagues performance particularly in waiting skills and empathy with customers. One ethnic Chinese member of staff was adamant that Las Iguanas staff were streets ahead of Chinese restaurant waiters who merely take orders and deliver food!

Weekly performances on P&L are published on Sundays and these are pinned to staff notice boards in restaurants. Everyone is therefore aware of restaurant performance against 'friendly rivals'. This does lead to healthy competition. Where there are significant variances from that expected managers will phone each other to determine how a particular restaurant managed a starring performance and often introduce similar ideas in their own restaurant.

Other statutory agencies that inspect are: Health & Safety Executive, Fire Brigade and Environmental Health Officers. The evaluation of learning and development is measured by the rating given by these agencies. Top managers in the company also visit on a regular basis and sample the service. The assessor noted the Food and Beverage Director is tirelessly working his way round the restaurants to gauge quality of service.

The accreditation of Health & Safety stars is a good indicator of the benefits of learning and development. One restaurant went from 1 to 5 star in a short period because of the

development the GM gave to his employees and the delegation of responsibility to correct processes.

One of the most important parts of the Standard is to benefit from learning and development. An example here relates to the People Report to monitor all people related information and to be aware of changes that need to be made to development policy to meet the challenges of the business.

The Swallet Farm management development process has made managers more confident and improved internal communications. The Centre of Excellence has achieved much the same result for managers new to the company or moving from a supervisor to MIT role.

In the Harbourside restaurant the manager has designed a matrix of training undertaken by her staff. This provides an easy record for evaluation purposes.

A member of staff given responsibility for increasing sales at Christmas has now experienced the effect of that. She is now creating a set of guides to increase sales even further by looking at 3 sittings in the evening, discussing and agreeing with the Head Chef the maximum number of group and single bookings that can be taken in any one period.

The recruitment process has been revamped to attempt to reduce the number of employees who do not fit the ethos of the company. The application form has been restyled and slightly different questions asked at interview.

When new restaurants have been commissioned and staff trained, the restaurant invites families and friends to be the guinea pigs – usually on two nights prior to opening. This provides valuable information on quality of service. The teams review the activities and amend some processes to ensure the service is to Las Iguanas standards.