

Consistent Training Key to Mitigating Risk

by Alicia Hoisington
May 2023

Employee turnover is a significant challenge when it comes to risk management in the hotel industry. That's because training consistency is in jeopardy when a hotel faces high attrition rates.



Gary Gobin

“Often, training sessions are rushed or even deferred to get an employee on the front line due to lack of coverage,” said Gary Gobin, director of operations, hihotels by Hospitality International. “As a result of poor to little training, staff may be unfamiliar with safety protocols or procedures, which can result in an increased risk of accidents or injury.”

Travis Murray, president, McNeill Hotel Co., said there are key steps hoteliers can take to ensure new team members are adequately trained and integrated into the organization's risk-management policies and procedures. Some of those steps include providing a comprehensive orientation to cover risk-management basics. That includes things such as identifying hazards, reporting incidents and following emergency protocols. Management can also assign new hires a mentor or “buddy” to help guide them through daily tasks and have a resource to answer questions.

Then, Murray said leadership should conduct regular training sessions and refresher courses on risk-management topics such as fire safety, food hygiene, data protection and customer service. From there, the management team should evaluate the performance and progress of new team members, making sure to provide feedback and recognition.

“Encourage a culture of risk awareness and communication among all staff members and foster a sense of teamwork and collaboration,” Murray said.

However, the hotel industry is undoubtedly facing strain from one of the biggest labor shortages to date, which also poses a threat to risk management. “Our industry is facing more challenges when trying to hire more employees, leading us to bring on inexperienced staff,” Gobin said. “This alone leads to challenges that pose a greater risk to guests and employees. Lack of training and inexperience may lead to panic or confusion in situations, causing uninformed decisions that could put the safety of guests and co-workers at risk.”

Again, this is why proper training is essential, Gobin added. It's important that new employees receive consistent and constructive feedback from supervisors. Doing so will create a positive relationship and foster an environment where employees feel comfortable to ask questions without being judged.

“There is no magic spell to avoiding proper training. Though staff coverage may create an initial challenge, ensuring that you take the time to properly train staff will pay off tenfold in the end,” Gobin said. “Staff that has been provided adequate training performs better at their jobs because they are more confident in the tasks that they have to complete and feel better prepared to help guests. Staff members who receive proper training will often be happier in their position and will have a longer tenure than those who are just thrown to the wolves.”

Moreover, high employee turnover can eat away at the culture of a hotel, Murray said. “A strong culture can foster trust, loyalty and commitment among staff, enhancing their performance and reducing risks.”

“Reducing staff turnover is a key strategy for improving risk management in the hotel industry,” he added.

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