Crabshell Inn: Family Business With Scheduling At Heart

We spoke to Simon Harrow, the owner of Crabshell Inn in Devon, about juggling a full day’s worth of service at a busy all-year round family destination. We also got Simon’s best tips on how to best approach retaining staff outside of the big cities and fostering that all-important community feel.

Turning a profit

When we took over Crabshell Inn in May 2010, our aim was to significantly increase the yearly turnover and make an impact on the local community. We are lucky in that we are located in the gorgeous Dorset countryside by the quayside with the sun coming in all-day around, which means that we can be open for service all day and enjoy the weather.

We have a main kitchen, pizza kitchen, a deli, bar, front of house and all the runners and other staff in between. From when we open for breakfast at 7.30am, we have employees across numerous stations that need to be well organized. To keep this ticking along, we employ 50+ staff all year round, plus of course more during the summer, so it is essential for us to keep an overview of the costs associated with that.

One solution fits all

I am a great Planday advocate simply because of what a big difference the scheduling rota software has made for my business. Planday’s solution has delivered on a complex set of requirements for businesses that by nature need to be very flexible, since they’re all different and diverse. This means we can get the most out of it being a smaller hospitality business, but it can work equally for an operation five times smaller or larger, in a completely different field.

Planday pays for itself by saving on management time, especially since the templates are so easy to use and adjust. You can apply different templates based on different seasons and expectations for sales, something I was just was not able to do with Excel.

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The greatest thing when you’ve got over 50 staff is being able to swap shifts when writing the weekly rotas. When I write my rota for each area, it’s helpful being presented only with people who are qualified
to do that specific job and have specified that they are available for work. It also gives me a great peace of mind that I can see who has signed in, read their messages and caught up on the day’s plans.

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**Improving the staff experience**

Rota scheduling can be the difference between make or break in our industry, as the number of scheduling tasks to keep track of are very high. They've been getting higher because of legislation, pension contributions, and staff being much more aware of their entitlements and using them to the full, which is a good thing.

I am a strong believer in treating staff the best way possible and having them stay with us for as long as possible. Having everything in one place in Planday is just another way of showing Crabshell Inn is an employer who truly cares and goes the extra mile to improve the staff experience.

**Local community at heart**

Being a local business is about a lot more than just turnover, as pubs these days are cornerstones of local lives, much like churches in the past. If you don’t take a share of your responsibility within the community holistically, whether that’s providing a great service to the customers, nurturing the staff or building lasting relationships with the locals, then all you are doing is focusing on yourself and that’s rather dated. We are proud of running a place that fosters communication and building true relationships across the board, because in the end that is a lot more important than the bottom line.

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