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Malmaison hotel Leeds

THE JUDGES

Michael Gray,
general manager,
Hyatt Regency London
– the Churchill
Peter Lederer,
managing director,
Gleneagles hotel
Annabel Shaw,
hotel manager,
Four Seasons hotel
Andrew Toole,
general manager,
Jurys Inn, Manchester

Here's a true story. A guest walks into Malmaison Leeds and is overheard by a receptionist saying she'd just endured a long and stressful journey and was dying for a gin and tonic. Imagine her feelings, then, when minutes later she was presented with a complimentary G&T.

It's this sort of service that goes above and beyond what most guests expect, but it's all in a day's work for the team at the 100-bed room Malmaison Leeds, which includes a reception manager, assistant manager, two full-time receptionists and two part-time receptionists. Incidentally, all the receptionists are on work-placement from Leeds Metropolitan University.

This is a team that never seems to run out of energy or ideas – and they never do anything by halves. Among the many company initiatives they've embraced is the Malmaison "Yes" campaign, emerging as the company's top department by generating £22,435 through upselling in four months.

Another area they excel at is talking to guests so they can anticipate their needs. This extends to compiling profiles of repeat guests to ensure they get their

favourite rooms and products on every visit.

Evidence of their enthusiasm is everywhere. In their bid to think up new ideas to impress guests they introduced an Oh Dear box with small but essential items that may have been forgotten, such as cufflinks, ties, shoe laces, safety pins and nail varnish remover.

The team's strength is down to the fact they work well together – as evidenced by zero staff turnover this year. This has partly been achieved through regular meetings to analyse each team-member's performance and to plot their development.

We'll leave you with another example of their exceptional customer service. When a guest cut her foot on a glass she broke, the team arranged transport to the hospital, upgraded her to a larger hotel room, visited her, had her car driven home for her as she was unable to drive and even brought her magazines and DVDs to ensure she didn't get bored.

Arguably, these aren't just professional skills; they are acts of kindness that go above and beyond the job description, never mind guest expectations.

THE SHORTLIST

Abode hotel, Glasgow
Brown's hotel, London
Malmaison hotel,
Leeds
Strattons hotel,
Norfolk

FORMER WINNERS

2007 Rudding Park,
Harrogate
2008 Jurys Inn,
Manchester