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## The Berkeley hotel London

### THE JUDGES

**Linda Halliday**, human resources director, BaxterStorey  
**Martin-Christian Kent**, research and policy director, People 1st  
**David Lowth**, director of human resources, The Dorchester  
**Jon Reed**, operations director, Learnpurple  
**Philippe Rossiter**, chief executive, Institute of Hospitality  
**Sean Wheeler**, group director of people development, Malmaison and Hotel du Vin

They say that when the going gets tough, the tough get going – and that’s certainly true of the Berkeley’s four-strong HR team. Not only do they provide HR support and advice to more than 300 permanent and 60 casual staff, but last year they also took on the added responsibility of providing support and training for top chef Marcus Wareing and his 60 staff during the transfer of his hotel restaurant. Initially the HR team had to step in to run the restaurant while Wareing established his company. This meant they had just six weeks to organise the TUPE transfer process for 60 GRH staff and recruit 15 new staff.

So who is this dream team? Well, director of human resources is Lizzie Bullen; human resources manager is Jose Ruiz; learning & development manager is Kirsty Low; and human resources co-ordinator is Eva Pittnerova.

The team have been working tirelessly to improve staff welfare, training and retention at the hotel. A workshop on attendance management has seen absence figures reduce by 55% this year. Work with Learnpurple’s Talent Toolbox online appraisal system resulted in 21% of staff and 32% of managers being promoted in 2008. No wonder that staff turnover is a mere

19.7% for the past 12 months, compared with the industry average of more than 45%.

But perhaps the greatest achievement of this tightly-knit HR team is that, despite the recession, there have been no redundancies. To this end, in 2008 the team cross-trained and multi-skilled enough staff to give the hotel flexibility to cover key vacancies that couldn’t be filled immediately. Their forward-planning saved the day for many of their staff...

### What the judges said ...

- “The Berkeley HR team is highly thought of in the hotel and its focus on succession planning, training and making sure no redundancies were made during tough times are a lesson to us all.”  
*Jon Reed, operations director, Learnpurple*
- “The team has demonstrated a commitment to continuous improvement. This reinforces the message that a well-motivated team is good for the bottom line.”  
*Philippe Rossiter, chief executive, Institute of Hospitality*
- “They were focused, practical, yet inspirational, achieving a lot of respect and results in a short space of time.”  
*Sean Wheeler, group director of people development, Malmaison and Hotel du Vin*

### THE SHORTLIST

**Royal Garden hotel**, London  
**Starwood Central London Hotels**  
**The Berkeley**, London

### FORMER WINNERS

**2008** The Dorchester, London