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Gary Gateley Concierge, Holiday Inn London Bloomsbury

THE JUDGES

Senior members of the Caterer Group editorial team

The energy, enthusiasm and initiative shown by Gary Gateley is enough to make lesser mortals wonder what they have been doing with their time.

Every day Gateley readily takes on jobs outside his remit as concierge, such as fixing lavatories, loaning guests his own cufflinks, passing on information on the London sights to new front of house staff, dressing up as Father Christmas, producing a "bible" on what staff should recommend to guests in London... and so it goes on.

Through Gateley's example, the culture, motivation and working atmosphere across the concierge department has been boosted considerably, which is no doubt why the front office manager has so many requests from staff wanting to work on Gateley's shift.

What bowls many guests over is his trick of checking their luggage labels while they disembark from a taxi so that he can address them by name.

However, arguably what Gateley does best is listen to the guests. For instance, on discovering that one couple were in London to research the burial site of a relative, he spent some of his own time making enquiries and found the site for him. His gift of getting to know people also uncovered the fact that Muslim guests would find it useful

to have prayer mats with a compass. Needless to say, Gateley sourced them and then bought some for guests to use at the hotel.

Nothing is too much trouble for Gateley – whether it is accompanying infirm guests to the Bureau de Change, or carrying luggage down the stairs of the Underground for a guest who was lift-phobic. He is known throughout the hotel for his ready smile, great attitude and unbelievable service. Armed with his passion for wanting everything to be perfect for "his" guests, he succeeds in finding a solution for every problem.

Certainly, it's telling that although Gateley only joined the hotel in June 2008, he has already made a huge impact on the standards of service at the hotel. Without doubt, he helps inspire the young students who come to the hotel for work experience through his infectious enthusiasm for the hospitality industry. That in itself makes him a valuable member of any team.

What his employer said...

● "Gary is our diamond. One of the most important things he does is listen. Sometimes our guests don't want anything in particular, they just want to talk to someone."
Brendan Hennessy, general manager, Holiday Inn London Bloomsbury

THE SHORTLIST

Tess Campbell,
Malmaison, Leeds
Gary Gateley,
Concierge, Holiday Inn
London – Bloomsbury
Stefan Kozak,
Radisson SAS
Manchester Airport
Fred Sirieix, Galvin at
Windows, London
Hilton on Park Lane

FORMER WINNERS

2007 Paula Middleton,
Premier Travel Inn,
Glasgow East Kilbride
2008 Premier Inn
Gloucester East,
Barnwood