

Human Resources Manager of the Year

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Sean Wheeler Malmaison and Hotel du Vin

Sean Wheeler's flair for HR has not gone unnoticed in the past. He was a finalist in *Personnel Today's* HR Director of the Year award in 2006, and his work was recognised in the HCPTA Awards for Excellence in Training and Development the same year.

This year, though, Wheeler was the judges' favourite for the Hotel Catey – thanks to his results-focused outlook, management excellence and clear devotion to development of all the hotels' staff.

One of Wheeler's key objectives in his role has been to support the fast growth of the hotel groups with staff policies designed to retain and develop in line with the hotels' expansion. His in-house training initiatives such as the game-format knowledge tools and an online appraisal system that enables individuals to log in and consolidate their strengths, development needs and career aspirations with their line manager, show how he has been innovative in achieving these goals.

The results speak for themselves, as 74% of the general managers have been appointed from within the company, 92% of deputies and head chefs have progressed through the ranks and 70% of all appointments come from within.

Wheeler's approach to training has

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been to keep it fun, fast and focused. His strategy has been an inclusive one – creating programmes for chefs, such as the AAA Chef Apprenticeship, and schemes such as the Housekeeper Olympics – designed specifically to motivate a team, as well as ensuring that English lessons run in most of the group's hotels to support the increasing numbers of overseas employees.

"Sean Wheeler took a very thorough, well thought-out and strategic approach to HR at Malmaison and Hotel du Vin," said judge Jane Sunley of Learnpurlpe. "He showed tremendous skill and courage in engaging a very tough board and persuading them to really invest in their people. This approach has reaped substantial, tangible business benefits."

THE SHORTLIST

Heike Becker
Hyatt Regency London
– the Churchill

Della Fanning
Holiday Inn,
Chessington

Sam Hayter
Starwood Hotels
& Resorts

Sean Wheeler
Malmaison and Hotel
du Vin