

Celtic Manor swing ahead with a **WINNING** formula for the Ryder Cup



The famous Celtic Manor Resort in South Wales has revealed an innovative approach to staffing as it prepares to host the prestigious Ryder Cup golf tournament in 2010.

The exclusive five-star resort has recently introduced an annualised hours system of working, replacing the traditional 40 hours per week. Now, employees' hours are rostered and averaged over a year to reflect hourly, daily and seasonal variations in business demand.

The full-scale overhaul was introduced in March to cope with an anticipated surge in business generated by the famous Ryder Cup and the All Star Cup celebrity competition which has drawn stars including Catherine Zeta Jones. This year's event took place from August 26 to 28, when more A-listers and golf pros, including Colin Montgomerie, tackled the Roman Road course.

Anticipating the interest both events would generate, the Celtic Manor called on leading consultants, Working Time Solutions, to investigate options for improving the old working time arrangements, to deliver benefits for staff and management alike. Now the resort boasts some of the best human resource practices in the industry – and the happiest staff. The

changes are also set to save the company thousands of pounds within the first year.

Mark Colcomb from the Celtic Manor Resort began consultation with Manchester-based Working Time Solutions in August last year (2005).

He said: "Working Time Solutions did a lot of research into the business, and staff needs, and provided us with a solution. The efficiency of annualised hours has provided us with the opportunity to take on 30 extra full time staff. This will mean our customers get a better service, and staff are generally happier."

The Celtic Manor Resort, in the Usk Valley, boasts two hotels including a 330 luxury bedroom hotel and a 70 bedroom 19th century Manor House Hotel. Other facilities include two championship golf courses, a state of the art golf academy, two spas, two health clubs, four restaurants, a 1,500 delegate convention centre and 31 function rooms.

To cope with peaks and troughs in the seasonal and weekly demand at such a massive resort, the Celtic

Manor Resort often drafted in expensive agency staff.

Full time staff were also working excessive hours some weeks, but were underutilised during quieter times.

The whole operation caused mountains of paperwork, and additional administration costs. However, annualised hours helped to solve these problems.

Now, full time staff work more hours during busy times, and take time off during quieter periods – rather than working a set number of hours per week. And, once the full compliment of permanent staff are in place, the need for agency staff will be drastically reduced.

The workforce is happier with the system, which, through better forward planning, not only provides them with bigger blocks of time off, but also allows them to see their rosters six months in advance, rather than being notified of their hours for the next working week every Thursday.

Staff also have the ability to earn extra money through additional hour contracts if required. From the resort's perspective this provides a lower cost and significantly improved service when compared to agency staff.

"Staff were suspicious at first but quickly settled into the new routine," added Mr Colcomb.

"The initial resistance appeared to be from people who hadn't understood the concept.

"Now the comments I hear are positive. They are happier with the structure of their shifts and they are enjoying the visibility aspect of seeing them so far in advance."

Working Time Solutions, which has advised the Government on recent working time directives, has transformed employment practices with leisure providers including The Gleaneagles Hotel in Scotland, and multi-nationals including Coca Cola Enterprises.

Robert Crossman, from Working Time Solutions, estimates the changes

will save the Celtic Manor Resort £200,000 in labour within a year.

"The tangible benefits will be there in black and white, but I would expect the system to have far-reaching benefits for everyone involved with, or visiting, the Celtic Manor," he said.

"Quality of service will improve as the reliance on temporary workers reduces and as staff turnover – which has been 40 per cent per year – lessens."

He added: "Many sectors of British industry have suffered because of the archaic staff rostering systems commonly used, but it really doesn't need to be the case.

"Celtic Manor is a great example of what can be achieved with good planning."

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