

Investors in People Review Report

Brief Executive Summary

For

LAS IGUANAS

Presented by Veronica Parsons

Investors in People Assessor

On behalf of Inspiring Business Performance Limited

July 2011

Assessor's observations:

My initial impressions of each restaurant I visited is that they have achieved what you set out for them to do i.e. they were fun, had a Latin American flavour, atmosphere, surroundings and gave guests a unique experience of Latin America.

Your staff have a real desire and commitment to making your company succeed. It was good to observe how the front of house staff were engaging well with the guests and helping to create this unique atmosphere.

The opportunity for your staff to progress their careers is very impressive and motivating for those who work for you and I heard from a number of people who are now managers after moving on from working in the bar, restaurant and kitchen.

I am impressed with the vibrancy, enthusiasm and energy in your restaurants and it was good to hear people laughing and having fun as well as working extremely hard.

Thank you for looking after me so well and I will certainly be eating in your restaurants in the future!

Staff quotes:

Quotes from your staff on what it is like to work for Las Iguanas included:

"I always look forward to coming to work here"

"Everything we do is focused on excellent quality and service"



T: 01452 413641 Gloucester
T: 0800 6123098 London

E: info@ibp.uk.com

W: www.ibp.uk.com

Commercial in Confidence

"I am very proud to work for Las Iguanas"

"I have recommended friends to work here I enjoy it so much"

"This company cares passionately about the brand and their staff"

"The senior managers here are really friendly and accessible"

"We are about delighting customers not just pleasing them"

"There is a lot of attention to small details that is what makes the restaurants different"

"There is a great opportunity for development with Las Iguanas my career has really taken off here I am now in a management role"

"We all taste the food so we can help customers decide what to have"

"The company is really flexible and will help accommodate the hours you want if they can"

It was very heartening to hear so many positive comments from your staff at all levels and across all areas of your business so well done and congratulations on continuing to achieve your Investors in People recognition.

Veronica Parsons



INVESTORS IN PEOPLE REVIEW REPORT

LAS IGUANAS

Presented by Veronica Parsons
Investors in People Assessor
On behalf of Inspiring Business Performance
Limited

July 2011



Delivered by IBP, an official partner for London, South East and South West
England

CONTENTS

1. Introduction & Background	Page 3
2. Outcome of Review	Page 3
3. Executive Summary	Page 4
4. Review Findings Against Business Objectives	Page 6
5. Suggested Action Plan	Page 12
6. Next Steps	Page 13
7. Support Available	Page 14
8. Evidence Requirements Matrix	Page 15

1. Introduction & Background

1.1. You were first recognised as an Investor in People organisation in 2001 and successfully retained recognition in 2002, 2005, 2008. This review will be 10 years since first achieving recognition. Congratulations and well done!

1.2. You started with 1 restaurant in Bristol in 1991 after seeing a gap in the market and have grown significantly since then and are now across 23 locations (including 1 Head Office in Clifton, Bristol) and employing approx. 780 staff. There are also plans to open a further 3 restaurants by October and more to follow aiming for 40 restaurants in total.

There are a number of challenges you are facing including; an industry wide high staff turnover particularly due to the number of students employed at each of your sites, the potential loss of some funding/Government support as chef's are no longer identified as a Government Skills Shortage area and maintaining effective communications across sites, which is not always easy, particularly with a large multi-cultural workforce. However the fun and creative ways of communicating with staff seems to work well.

Management development is a key focus for you and trying to ensure the best people are in place to fill these positions. This helps you to maintain a consistency and ensure your managers have a great understanding of how the restaurants work either in 'front of house' or 'back of house'. They are also clear about creating the Latin American experience which is not just about dining but about the music, décor, service, having fun and learning more about where the origins of the food and drinks are from and passing this knowledge onto customers where appropriate.

2. Outcome of Review

2.1. Having carried out the review process in accordance with the guidelines provided for Assessors by Investors in People – United Kingdom Commission for Employment and Skills, I (the Assessor) am completely satisfied that Las Iguanas fully meets the requirements of the Investors in People National Standard.

2.2. Investors in People recognition is granted indefinitely, with a proviso that reviews take place no greater than 3 years apart. Reviews can be undertaken at any time and more frequent reviews are recommended to maintain levels of good practice and continuous improvement.

The timing of your next review will be within 3 years and we will use your Improvement Planning Meeting on 21 September 2011 at 10:00 to agree the best strategy for future use of the Investors in People framework.

3. Executive Summary

3.1. I would like to pass on my thanks to Angela Da Silva for all her help, patience and support in making this a very interesting and enjoyable review for me. The organisation of the on-site interviews was extremely well planned and managed (this is by no means an easy feat!). When arriving at each site people were expecting me and made me feel very welcome – so thank you to everyone involved and especially to Cath & Robin in Leeds where I arrived early and was well looked after. My initial impressions of each restaurant I visited is that they have achieved what you set out for them to do i.e. they were fun, had a Latin American flavour, atmosphere, surroundings and gave guests a unique experience of Latin America. It was good to observe how the front of house staff were engaging well with the guests and helping to create this unique atmosphere. I can now appreciate how hard everyone works to ensure your Latin American concept is delivered effectively to all guests.

3.2. Good practices of particular note are:

- ❖ An excellent and thorough induction giving staff time to settle into the role, many staff mentioned this is *“unusual in the hospitality industry where you are usually thrown in at the deep end”*
- ❖ Many staff commented on how they felt Las Iguanas is *“A great company to work for”*
- ❖ There is a vibrancy, enthusiasm and energy at all sites and it was good to hear people laughing and having fun as well as working extremely hard

Commercial in Confidence

- ❖ The wide and varied training opportunities available to your staff
- ❖ There is a real desire to 'promote from within' wherever possible which encourages a number of people to stay with the organisation as they can see a clear career path
- ❖ The wide ethnic diversity across the organisation where people learn about each other's cultures and practices
- ❖ The incentives programme is excellent ranging from £5 bonuses to the 'Race to Rio'
- ❖ The award ceremony at Birmingham Hippodrome; people who attended this thoroughly enjoyed themselves and appreciated the time, effort and expense you had committed to recognising the achievements of your staff
- ❖ Using your regular customers as mystery diners works well and is a great incentive for repeat business
- ❖ Effectively communicating details of targets and achievements via notice boards at sites
- ❖ The Tell Us Cards are also a great immediate way of obtaining feedback
- ❖ Many people commented on the flexibility of working hours and where possible are adjusted to fit in with people's home/student life, this is very much appreciated by staff.

There are also some suggestions of areas you may want to consider to help you to improve / move the business forward they include:

- ❖ Investigating the new QCF scheme (post NVQ's) to look at how you can maximise the level of support for your internal training programmes. I will ask a contact to call you to explain how this may work to your advantage
- ❖ The incentives are working well across the majority of the organisation; however there are a few areas where they could be positioned more effectively. For example the office based staff do not appear to have the same opportunities as the restaurants to 'win' the same level of incentives
- ❖ Making closer links with Academy Schools; in particular those who specialise in Arts or Business. This could also be a positive way of recruiting new staff including chefs
- ❖ You may want to consider applying for a National Training Award in 2012

- ❖ There maybe a restaurant site where people feel under more work pressure than other restaurants and may value some extra help to ensure they are operating consistently with other sites
- ❖ Although the extended framework was not a part of this IIP review I have indicated on the Evidence Requirements Matrix on page 15 some areas where I feel you could be close to, if not meeting, the extra evidence requirements to achieve a higher level award i.e. either Bronze, Silver or Gold at a future review.

4. Review findings against Business Objectives

4.1. Ensure the organisation is best placed dealing with chef's removal from the Governments Skills Shortage list (Indicators 1, 2, 8 & 9)

- ❖ A key part of your concept of creating a unique Latin American experience is that it is **not** just about the food it is the whole experience starting with the initial engagement with a new customer/guest. Your website clearly engages people and gives them a 'taste' of what they can expect at one of your restaurants. The telephone contact with potential customers is good and the booking process seems to be easy and efficient. When guests enter the restaurants the décor is Latin American and it was good to see the new designs in Cardiff Mermaid Quay, the music and the personalities of your staff all add to creating this unique diner experience. I was very impressed with this concept and have been and will be recommending your restaurants to friends and colleagues!!
- ❖ The performance of the kitchen staff is crucial to the diner experience and recruiting and retaining chefs with the required level of skill, knowledge experience, professionalism and personality is essential. The chefs I spoke to during the interviews are all very knowledgeable, experienced and understood what their role is within your organisation and what is expected of them; typically the comments included *"the quality of the food is crucial to giving people a taste of Latin America"*. It was impressive to see the range of cultures and backgrounds of the chefs all working and learning together, some had little or no experience of Latin American cuisine and feel they have learnt so much at Las Iguanas.

Commercial in Confidence

- ❖ It was also good to hear that chef's and other kitchen staff sometimes serve customers if the front of house is very busy, they take this opportunity to seek instant feedback on dishes and the quality of food which is a great idea as customers can feel privileged to meet the chef/s.
- ❖ Your internal development for chefs at all levels is excellent; many people I interviewed commented on how valuable your regular chef's development days are and how they learned such a lot at these events.
- ❖ There is an incredible amount of sharing of learning, information and expertise between the more experienced chefs e.g. the head chefs and the sous chefs and chef de partie. Many interviewees commented on how they had "*learnt new techniques*", "*learnt how to use new spices and flavours*" and "*how to cook and develop new dishes*."
- ❖ It is a great process to generate new dishes from your existing catering staff and asking them to suggest, design and create new dishes for your menus. The most successful dish is then added to the menu, this is very motivating and inspiring for chef's to become a real part of Las Iguanas.
- ❖ It is essential moving forward that you retain this high level of chef competency, professionalism and development and taking advantage of alternative options of development may be available to you through your Hospitality Industry Sector Skill Council; People 1st. More information can be accessed at <http://www.people1st.co.uk>. I will ask a colleague to contact you to help you through the perceived 'maze' and complexity of apprenticeships, diploma's, academies and funding options. This may go some way to helping you to recruit people in the future with the right skills and personalities for Las Iguanas. It is worth noting that Brighton appears to have good links with a local college and have implemented the NVQ programme with good results.
- ❖ It was good to hear waiting and bar staff explaining to customers the origins of the food and drink which creates a very professional image of a workforce who can educate the guests when and if appropriate.

- ❖ Not just in the 'back of house' with the chefs but throughout the restaurants there is a high degree of commitment to training and Lucy and her team are extremely well thought of throughout the organisation, where they see the training support as an excellent resource. The use of a training buddy is also a good resource to have 'on hand'. There are many examples of excellent not only formal training but informal coaching, shadowing, encouragement, observation and feedback. People throughout the organisation at all levels seem to be very keen to share their knowledge and skills with less experienced staff.
- ❖ The opportunity for people to learn and develop at all stages of their careers are very motivating from initial induction to Managers in Training (MIT) and of course every level of specialist expertise in-between. This has a direct impact on your guest feedback. It was very encouraging to see how at all the restaurants I visited that the Tell Us Cards and Mystery Diner feedback was taken very seriously and praise given where it is due and areas for improvement discussed together and addressed very quickly. Any required subsequent development or training activity is put into action quickly.
- ❖ The opportunity for the bar staff to learn how to 'free pour' effectively and efficiently by testing their skills daily ensures there is a clear understanding of the economic issue of getting the free pouring accurate, many bar staff had not used this technique before, prior to joining Las Iguanas, but have responded well to the coaching and are confident to do this now. People commented *"the free pouring is a lot more difficult than it looks and takes a bit of time to master"* and *"I got the technique and counting right in the end after some help from other bar staff"*
- ❖ It was very clear to me that the vast majority of staff are very clear about making sure that guests enjoy their experience at Las Iguanas and that they are served good quality food at reasonable prices and that they have an enjoyable fun experience which makes them want to return again and again.

4.2. To develop and encourage effective managers to be able to ensure a great diner experience (Indicators 4, 5, & 10)

- ❖ The whole ethos of your company is to create a unique Latin American experience and a key part of this is how your staff *“Greet guests like old friends”* and generate new business from a variety of local opportunities e.g. *“we get a lot of business when the Millennium Stadium has an event which helps us reach new customers and then they will return to us or another of our restaurants”*. Other comments included; *“We are trying hard to create the right image of delighting customers and I think we have been successful”* and *“We try to recreate not just the food & drink of Latin America but the way of life and an understanding of the culture”*.
- ❖ The managers and supervisors I interviewed spoke highly of being given the opportunity to develop their careers and also of the support through their Area Managers, the Training Team and their MIT development programme. Some commented on how it wasn't always easy to make the transition from *“one of the guys”* to a manager but that there was a lot of support and encouragement to help them succeed. This support is needed and valued in particular for the 'step-up' to the General Manager role.
- ❖ The regular job chats and annual performance reviews/appraisals are felt to be very useful and beneficial people felt they are a good opportunity to focus on their own individual needs and aspirations.
- ❖ There was very good feedback regarding how managers support and develop staff including; *“he's a good manager, he takes time to explain things clearly and make sure I understand”*, *“he helped me prepare for my on-line tests”*, *“I now have a lot more confidence in what I can cook”*, *“there is a lot of respect both for and from our managers”* and *“I have worked for a number of similar sized restaurant chains but this company is excellent, I wouldn't want to work anywhere else”*. Managers were thought to be respected, supportive, good listeners, encouraging, good at problem solving and in some cases inspiring and good role models.

- ❖ There may be a minority of managers who may benefit from some extra support or 1:1 coaching to help them to operate and manage their sites more consistently in-line with other sites. This is not a major concern but if some issues are not addressed they have the potential to escalate especially when people are under pressure to achieve.

4.3. To use a wide range of incentives for staff to reduce staff turnover and ensure staff want to work for Las Iguanas (Indicators 3 & 6)

- ❖ I was extremely impressed with the range of incentives you offer to staff across the organisation and how they feel the incentives work effectively. It is good to see that you have given responsibility to local General Managers to use incentives as they see fit for their restaurant. There are some really unique ways of applying them e.g. the 'bingo game' and the 'chase the fiver' seemed to be great fun for guests and staff alike. The Star of the Month is also very popular.
- ❖ The initiative to reward restaurants with DAB radios again was very popular and an ingenious idea it motivated staff and also enabled them to listen to radio stations and music 'from home' in some cases. Well done!
- ❖ The 'Race to Rio' is seen as achievable by the majority of sites. You may want to consider how the incentives can be effectively utilised with the Head Office staff who could feel they are 'on the sidelines when it comes to incentives'. This was not mentioned as an issue but more from my observation.
- ❖ Apart from the more formal rewards and incentives it is evident there are a lot of informal 'thank yous' and well dones', people really value and appreciate this approach. It is also good to see how General Managers and Team Leaders are using incentives with a 'local twist' to make them even more effective.

- ❖ Your incentive scheme works well and is effective. It does encourage in part people to stay working for you, however, due to the nature of people you employ i.e. students this will always be a more 'fluid workforce'. This said there is a lot of loyalty and pride in working for your company.
- ❖ The SQ2 tests used in-line with your recruitment & selection process appears to work well and help to ensure you have staff with the right personality and disposition to work in Las Iguanas to help you to create the fun and vibrant Latin American atmosphere.
- ❖ The vast majority of your staff I spoke to enjoyed working for Las Iguanas and comments included: *"I am very proud to work for the company", "This is a great company to work for"*

4.4. To identify how the survey response rate could be improved to help the views of the staff to be considered (Indicator 7)

- ❖ When discussing the response rate for the survey and in fact the survey itself with interviewees, staff felt it was a useful and beneficial process. Many people commented that they *"meant to fill it in", "forgot to complete it" or only had access to emails via a smart phone where it isn't easy to respond to surveys"*.
- ❖ When discussing further what would have either encouraged them to complete the survey or made it easier for them to complete it the overwhelming response from staff at all levels was to enable them to have time to complete it before or at the start of their shift, several people also felt that being, encouraged or prompted by managers or supervisors would also help. Another suggestion was to send a reminder email to people who hadn't responded to the survey. Some people may also feel more at ease with a paper copy to complete.
- ❖ As I am sure you are aware there needs to be a positive balance between encouraging people and not being too imposing with your request for people to complete the survey.

- ❖ The general feel was that General Managers were supportive of this process and that many staff felt they would be more likely to complete the survey if they were given a brief amount of time in work to do this.

5. Suggested Action Plan

Areas for Improvement	Activity	By Whom	By When
Investigate the new QCF scheme (post NVQ's) to look at how you can maximise the level of support for your internal training programmes.			
Consider how incentives are working well across the whole organisation including office based staff.			
Making closer links with Academy Schools; in particular those who specialise in Arts or Business. This could also be a positive way of recruiting new staff including chefs.			
There maybe an area where people feel under more work pressure than other restaurants and may value some extra help to ensure they are operating consistently with other sites			
To consider agreeing to staff completing the staff survey during work hours which will increase your response rate			
You may want to consider applying for a National Training Award in 2012			

6. Next Steps

6.1. Both myself (your Assessor) and IBP would welcome your feedback on this review and you will be supplied with a Client Feedback Questionnaire to complete on line. We would very much appreciate it if you would complete the questionnaire after your Improvement Planning Meeting has been concluded on 21 September 2011.

6.2. Should you wish to contact a Client Relationship Manager for any reason, please telephone 01452 413641, use the contact option on our website www.ibp.uk.com or send an email to info@ibp.uk.com

7. Support Available

7.1. Investors in People Interactive

This **free** online support tool is designed to guide you through development activities and help you maintain the benefits of using Investors in People as an organisational development tool. Obtain an on-going understanding of your organisation's current strengths and development areas by using the tool's diagnostic function which is built around 5 management practices which relate directly to the Investors in People indicators.

You can also review and update your progress within the tool and access a wide range of downloads, good practice tips, templates and other resources to inspire and inform - no matter where you are on your Investors in People journey www.investorsinpeople.co.uk/interactive

7.2. Managers Pitstop

IBP has teamed up with [Managers PitStop](#), to offer **free** online Leadership and Management training for managers, business leaders, human resources professionals and individuals. The training, which would normally cost some £200 per person, is available as bite-sized audiovisual online tutorials that last between five and 25 minutes, the training covers recruiting, coaching and managing people.

Each tutorial is accompanied by a selection of downloads which include top tips, exercises and resources for further training. The wide range of topics covered include: absence management; developing people; delegating to others; managing change in business; resolving conflict; evaluating training; recruitment interviews; inductions; barriers to performance; and self-esteem. Log on via our website or using the link below:

www.managerspitstop.com/ibp

7.3. Promoting continuous improvement

IBP offers an integrated advice and assessment support service, workshops, surgeries and networking events to promote continuous improvement and maximise the benefits of working with The Standard. We also work with a team of highly experienced consultants to offer an extensive range of tailored business support and organisational development solutions to help improve business performance. Details of the support available to you can be found on: -

Internet:  www.ibp.uk.com
Telephone:  **01452 413641 Gloucester**
0800 612 3098 London
Email:  info@ibp.uk.com

8. Evidence Requirements Matrix

Core Standard										
Total number of core evidence requirements assessed - 39										
Total number of core evidence requirements met - 39										
	Indicators									
ERs	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10
1	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
2	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
3	N/A	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
4	√	√	√		√				√	
5	N/A		√						√	
6	√									

Wider Framework										
Total number of additional evidence requirements assessed - 0										
Total number of additional evidence requirements met – 0										
Additional evidence requirements where good practice may be identified - ♦ 93										
	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10
4	Core	Core	Core	♦	Core	♦			Core	♦
5	Core	♦	Core		♦			♦	Core	
6	Core	♦	♦	♦	♦			♦		
7	♦	♦	♦		♦				♦	
8		♦			♦		♦	♦		
9	♦	♦	♦		♦	♦	♦	♦		♦
10		♦			♦	♦	♦	♦		
11	♦	♦	♦		♦	♦		♦		
12		♦			♦	♦	♦		♦	
13	♦	♦				♦		♦		
14	♦	♦	♦				♦	♦		
15	♦	♦	♦			♦	♦	♦		♦
16		♦			♦	♦	♦	♦		
17	♦	♦	♦		♦	♦		♦		
18			♦		♦	♦		♦		
19	♦		♦			♦	♦	♦		
20	♦		♦		♦					
21	♦				♦					
22					♦					
23	♦		♦							
24	♦				♦					
25			♦							
26			♦							
27										
28			♦							
29										

In conclusion the evidence not only shows how you have retained Investors in People recognition but also how you could meet areas of the extended framework in the future. Congratulations and well done!