



### **HSMAI Award**

#### **2020 Talent & Leadership Development Best Practice Awards Program – G6 Hospitality**

Winning entries will recognize individuals and campaigns that have mitigated the pandemic's impact on staff, provided staff onboarding/cross-training, increased utilization, demonstrated leadership courage and led retention efforts. Entry is free and honorees will be recognized globally.

**\*Situational Analysis: Please provide a brief background on the initiative and the problem, challenge or issue you were seeking to address in the areas of developing emerging talent and engaging existing talent to meet the demands of your business.**

The COVID-19 pandemic has created unparalleled challenges for our industry, and we are firmly committed to supporting our Motel 6 and Studio 6 family through this period of uncertainty. In the early days of the health crisis, continuing today, we continue to “Leave the Light On” for travelers, and welcome guests where it is still permissible under the latest state and local mandates, and where we were/are able to operate safely and have the staff available to do so. With that said, it was and continues to be imperative that we keep the health and safety of our staff a top priority, especially at a time when the hospitality industry is faced with unprecedented uncertainty as the virus continues to slow down travel in comparison to years past.

**\*Goals: What did your organization set out to achieve in undertaking this initiative? What obstacles did you encounter?**

We strived for and accomplished our goals in three key areas: 1) created a Clean@6 program focused on our team members and guests to help make safety a priority during COVID; 2) we provided “emergency time off pay” for front line workers with COVID or needing to quarantine; 3) if/when we had to furlough individuals we made sure to provide them a stipend and ensure they had their health benefits coverage and we paid their monthly benefits premium. As the country still needed to provide lodging to various front line workers – health care, truckers, etc., our goal as an organization was to continue “Keep the Lights On” while also ensuring we quickly pivoted to provide enhanced training and support to our team members with safety protocols, PPE, and new ways of operating. The ability to move quickly and ensure our organization was aligned on these new protocols required a series of new trainings and communication that we designed to be engaging yet taking the seriousness of a pandemic. We developed over 20+ COVID online trainings and instituted weekly calls with all team members across our system, along with over 400+ separate communications to engage team members and franchise owners. Trainings included:



- Cleaning Check Out Room – Level 1 (with COVID precautions in mind)
- Cleaning Check Out Room – Level 2
- Enhanced Cleaning & Disinfecting Protocol
- Enhanced Equipment and Supplies
- Face Mask Guidelines – General Manager level
- Face Mask Guidelines – Hourly Team Members
- Given Me a Sign – Sign Guidance (communication on how we are protecting team members and guests)
- Guest Services Relations Protocols (with a COVID focus)
- Guest Services Relations Talking Points (with face mask addition)
- Modified Housekeeping Services Virus Prevention Protocol
- Public Area Checklist (ensuring the safety protocols are followed in an easy-to-follow format)
- Social Distancing – Night Window
- Social Distancing – No Night Window (for hotels without this offering)
- Social Distancing – The Blue Line
- Modified Housekeeping Services – Guest Communications
- Suspended Coffee Service (FAQs, etc.)
- Temporarily Closed Sign (in the event of operation suspension due to the crisis)
- Understanding COVID-19 Disease
- Viral Laundry Protocol

Through these micro-learnings, we reinforced key leadership and line level messaging to ensure we supported the frontline. We utilized virtual calls, newsletters, e-learning and recognition as a method to engage leaders and employees for following safety protocols. Given our population is also heavily Spanish-speaking, we made sure all of our communications and training vehicles represented the diversity of our team members and communicated in a way that would resonate with these audiences.

Additionally, we put in place a campaign called “Super Heroes Wear Masks.” We highlighted team members who were following protocols of social distancing and wearing their PPE equipment so they could feel proud about a safe workplace, while also creating a clean place for guests to stay at a time in need. Furthermore, we established immediately in March a “hotline” for all team members to call if they had symptoms of COVID as we wanted them to feel comfortable that they did not need to come to work and we paid them to take off of work if they were ill or needed to quarantine.

In addition to the training we leveraged new and enhanced communication approaches to engage our leaders to inspire and motivate during these challenging times. These programs included: “Leading@6 Series” – which included topics such as managing through change, how to support the wellness of your teams – physically and mentally. We also coached and trained our leaders that our guests may similarly be going through tough times and this is a time where we can show empathy and support to our guests even more which supports our values at G6 of Respect and Care. Additionally as we navigated the various issues of racial injustice we brought in external experts on issues of race and equality to help us better connect with the issues facing the nation and we instituted a new council to support addressing



issues of diversity and equality, along with supporting various community efforts as well through looking to creating change with cities and law enforcement and providing funding for training for law enforcement to use more community friendly approaches.

**\*Results and Impact: What results had the greatest impact on your target audience? Please comment on the process and the outcomes.**

Fundamentally, our goal has been to keep our team members safe, support our leaders through navigating these changes and serving our guests during this difficult time. During this time our results and protocols have resulted in relatively low incident of COVID+ amongst our team members and our ability to support guests during their time of need.

While during this difficult time we recognize some of our own team members may be in need, as a result, we had our Care@6 Team Member Relief Fund which is open to team members at any Motel 6 or Studio 6 hotels. It is an anonymous grant-giving foundation created to support team members in financial hardship due to unforeseen circumstances, including our current health crisis. This support gives our team members additional assistance that can be life altering and exemplifies how our Heart for Service extends to our team members, not only guests.

In the unfortunate circumstances where we did have to temporarily furlough a small portion of team members for a short time period (90 days or less), we made sure to provide financial and health care support. As this occurred, we made sure our executives had conversations with every single impacted team member on our corporate staff-- they took complete ownership in these discussions, further emphasizing our commitment to people. Our leaders talked through 1:1 on how we would support them through this process. With a heart for service, we treated our people with respect and care, cornerstones of our values as an organization. During this period, it was imperative we genuinely lived and practiced these values as we supported our team members through an unexpected time.

We increased messages from corporate to the properties, messages throughout the corporate-side and conducted CEO and Executive team virtual calls with our corporate teams, as well as property and franchise teams. We conducted corporate surveys to determine the level of connectivity corporate team members having transitioned into a Work From Home environment. Team members felt better informed about company priorities than pre-COVID (91% vs 65%). In fact, we found that nearly 91% of team members feel more connected to their team and their managers while working from home, 86% feel the same or even more connected to company culture, and 96% believe their productivity is the same or higher. This is a result of our increased and connected communication throughout the organization across all levels.

We did this while still growing our business as we added over 90 new franchisees to our system. Our small training team of 4 people created new virtual trainings for our new franchise owners so they could learn our brand and how to operate their new property. With launching the new program we had the majority of new franchisees engaged and participating in the program in the first 3 weeks and received



4.9/5.0 on feedback about the program (as measured by the MIT Virtual Training Report), at a time when franchisees are also struggling with managing their business, and they've communicated we've helped set them on the right path.

Overall, the listed protocols enabled us to "Leave the Light On" for our team members. We are grateful to our team members as we all navigate the challenging circumstances the world continues to face. That said, we know that we will endure and come out stronger for the future so can continue to invite guests to stay with us wherever the road may take them. We've led, trained, coached and supported our people throughout 2020 and plan to continue to do for years to come.