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HAMILTON BRADSHAW
Investing in people with passion

How to serve up festive cheer for restaurant staff



James Caan

Dear James,

I am a restaurant owner and we are open over Christmas. I would like advice on how to keep my staff motivated and reward them.

– Thomas Sinden

You have to look after every customer and make sure they have a fantastic experience, and that is down to your employees. People spend more time at work than at home, and businesses that create good working environments tend to get more out of their people than those who don't.

Smart employers want their employees to engage with a business as much as possible, because motivated staff deliver the best performance. Plan ahead for Christmas and make sure you have enough staff to cover all shifts. Encourage those who want extra shifts to swap with those who want fewer.

Many employees can get distracted by the festive season, so each day create a fun environment. Run incentives or rewards for staff. You could let them pick the music to be played in the restaurant, or organise a fancy dress competition. Customers love to see that the staff are also having a good time.

Keep employees informed – if you have a full restaurant, make sure they know. It will be a busy period and it can be stressful and you don't want your staff to feel overworked and underappreciated. At the end of the day do a round-up, and reward those who have done a good job.

The key to success is to understand that your employees need to feel valued. Small and inexpensive gestures can make all the difference.

■ For the full article and news of James Caan's free app, go to standard.co.uk. His book, *Start Your Business in 7 Days*, is out now.