



Brookstreet Hotel

COMPANY NAME: Brookstreet Hotel
ESTABLISHED IN OTTAWA: 2003
NUMBER OF LOCAL EMPLOYEES: 191
HIGHEST RANKING LOCAL INDIVIDUAL:
Patrice S. Basille,
Executive vice-president and GM
INDUSTRY: Hospitality/tourism
LOCATION: 525 Legget Dr.
WEBSITE: www.brookstreet.ca

When employees are referred to as “partners,” new recruits are initiated game show-style and HR managers referred to as “casting directors,” you get a good sense of the working atmosphere at Brookstreet Hotel.

After all, the four-diamond hotel, offering a full-service spa, fine dining, golf course and state-of-the-art fitness studio isn't just rejuvenating for its guests – it's also a place where creativity, shared challenges and fun take centre stage for employees.

Management put a lot of thought into the internal environment before opening its doors in 2003, explains casting director Chantal Smitheram.

“We chose to call our employees ‘partners’ to reflect the type of relationship we would strive to have with the people who would choose to work for Brookstreet,” she says. “We strive to create an environment where partners’ ideas are not only valued but encouraged, where management and employees work in partnership and where partners can be who they are at work, and their unique talents are appreciated.”

“Be You, Be Brookstreet” is the recruitment tagline, and it seems employees are all for it. The following comments are taken from an internal employee survey conducted earlier this year:

“I have witnessed first-hand the positive results of constant employee/employer relations. When I mention I work for Brookstreet I say it proudly and with my head held high because I know that we truly are the best,” wrote one.

“Best place I've ever worked by far! Benefit package is great, facilities are beautiful, wages are competitive, people are overall wonderful,” another commented.

The extensive benefits include medical, RRSPs that are 50-per-cent employer-matched (up to a certain limit), two leisure days, up to \$50 per month dry cleaning allowance, discounts on room rates, golf, food and spa for family and friends, 24-7 counselling services, Hertz, Costco and CAA discounts, along with training opportunities and events.

Ms. Smitheram says the Brookstreet team works hard to be creative in everything they do.

“We are about to launch a new first day

on the job orientation program that includes a game we developed internally called Brookstreet Land, based on the Candy Land game.”

Other examples include game show health-and-safety training, a scavenger hunt to launch its strategic plan to employees and “unchain your brain” training sessions.

With such innovative approaches to communication, it's interesting that employees flagged more opportunities for input and better communication across departments as areas to improve on during the 2009 Employees' Choice Awards survey. But feedback was overwhelmingly positive with many writing that they couldn't think of anything to change. The “S.P.I.C.I.E.R.” awards, for partners who best demonstrate the values of sensational experiences, passion, integrity, commitment, innovation, empowerment and respect, received the most consistent praise.

“They ensure we know how we on an individual basis have an impact on the success of the organizational goals,” wrote one employee.

“It's not about the one thing that the hotel does, it is about the whole package. Working here is truly a rewarding and fulfilling experience!” praised another.

“We never stop trying!” agrees Ms. Smitheram. “Our values are much more than a poster on the wall – they are our daily guide to how we do business and how we interact with our partners.”

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