THE BURNT CHEF PROJECT FIND ALMOST ONE THIRD OF THOSE WHO HAVE LEFT THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY ARE LOOKING TO RETURN WITHIN THE NEXT TWELVE MONTHS

Wednesday 21 July, 2021

The Burnt Chef Project rolled out a hospitality survey to explore issues around staffing within the hospitality sector looking to ascertain why people had left the industry within the last 12 months. The vast majority of the 2,311 UK based respondents (84%) are still working within the industry: 45% of them were chefs and most (75%) had been furloughed during the pandemic.

The survey, which was launched in June and rolled out via Peopleful and Umbrella Insights, found that nearly a third of those not currently working within the sector are planning to return within the year, with 10% in the next six months. However, there are challenges the industry faces which are impacting those who work within it and must be addressed before the industry can become a sustainable career choice for many.

Work-life balance is the most frequently mentioned barrier to working in the sector and most commonly cited reason for leaving. Sadly, hospitality doesn't currently come highly recommended with one in five planning on leaving in the next 12 months and around a third (37%) is on the fence. When asked what changes would improve recruitment and retention in hospitality, the majority said, "feeling valued'. Unsociable and unpredictable hours - which are inherent in the trade - were a barrier to one in five, whilst salary and stressful working environments were also frequently cited barriers (one third). Only 4% of those asked highlighted job security as a concern.

The Burnt Chef Project Ambassador, Benjamin Souza-Morse, Owner of The Salutation Inn said "Things have to change to ensure the survival of the industry, sadly it's all too often seen as normal practice to work 80 hours a week with no respite. It's not feasible for people to work all hours under the sun and still perform to the best of their abilities, we wouldn't expect other industries to work two weeks in one. I am constantly adapting my business to try and meet its commercial needs but more importantly the needs of our team, we look closely at: maximum hours, consecutive days off, weekends off, competitive pay rates, free staff food, staff trips. These are just some of the things which attract and retain staff and we will be working closely with The Burnt Chef Project to ensure that we are an employer of choice, who focus on the mental health and well-being of our staff. If businesses recognised the needs of their team, the whole sector could produce a better balanced, desirable profession to work in"

Not surprisingly, 40% of respondents have struggled with their mental health over the past 12 months, with around 1 in 6 reporting it has been 'not good'. General Managers are seemingly those finding the pressures impacting their mental health the most with 42% reporting a decline in the overall level of mental well-being since reopening. However, 60% of individuals report feeling 'okay' or 'better' about working in the industry, showing there is a large proportion of the workforce keen to stay.

Kris Hall, Founder of The Burnt Chef Project said, "We're seeing it all over the media, and we're hearing it first-hand in the trade. The industry is facing a severe employment crisis right now, but what our survey has shown is that there is a way out of this. Hospitality 2.0 if you like, whereby we support our employees and give them a sustainable career choice. There are achievable, mid-term solutions which can be implemented within the workplace to put the industry on the path to success. Training for managers to understand effective communication, performance reviews to encourage and inspire, and mental health awareness training to understand stress and its impact on team members. Yes, we're facing a challenge, but we're also faced with a huge opportunity to make a better environment within the industry. The impact of COVID-19 has been detrimental to the industry, but now is the time to knuckle down and invest in the business and primarily the people who are working in it. We are already working on innovative tools, resources and support services to aid businesses in tackling some of the issues raised from our data".

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For anyone looking for advice or wishing to implement mental health training within their organisation, please contact info@theburntchef.co.uk for details.

For the full insight deck, please contact Media Enquiries.

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