



## **WORKING SMARTER WITH PSL BARCELÓ HOTELS GROUP CASE STUDY**

Charles Prew is a leading light in the hotel industry having held senior roles at Hilton Hotels, Jarvis Hotels, Hanover International and of course his current role as CEO of Barceló Hotels UK. Part of Barceló Hotels & Resorts, a privately owned Spanish Group, with 185 hotels across 15 countries and 3 continents, the UK operation was formerly known as the Paramount Group of Hotels and currently consists of 21 4-star hotels covering 2,800 bedrooms in inspiring locations across Scotland, Northern England, Central England, Southern England and Wales, from vibrant city centres to spectacular coastal resorts and countryside retreats.

One of the jewels in the crown of this broad portfolio of properties is the prestigious Lygon Arms Hotel, Broadway in the picturesque Cotswolds, which is where we met with Charles to find out more...

A consummate professional, Charles takes his business very seriously, he even learnt Spanish to facilitate his role when Paramount was bought out by Barceló, and delivered his inaugural speech in both English and Spanish – pretty impressive! As is his approach to business, Charles believes in working smart and getting the right people for the job. Whether it's recruiting a highly skilled chef or the most welcoming of receptionists, he knows that you never get a second chance to make a first impression, so working with the right people is essential in the hotel business. It's a principle he has applied to one of the most important functions within the Barceló operation, as when it comes to purchasing and training he has found a valuable partner in PSL.

PSL is a purchasing & operations consultancy representing an impressive client portfolio in foodservice with over £300 million worth of buying power, which they leverage to the benefit of their wide range of clients including Barceló Hotels. Charles has been working PSL for the last five years and has achieved savings of 20% and improved sales by 10% - equating to a saving of well over a £1m (so you can understand why he views the partnership as valuable!) From purchasing to back of house checks and process implementation, as well as revenue generation training, PSL has worked closely with Barceló to bring about these impressive results.

But not all operators think like Charles “A lot of people think that when you outsource your food purchasing, the quality goes down in order to reduce your food margins, but this is not the case. We’ve improved the quality of the product we buy-in, improved the food processing in the kitchen – which has reduced our costs and has resulted in a really good bottom line. The key thing about PSL is that you only pay them if they actually produce a profit for you.”

Flexibility is also something operators fear they will lose if they outsource their purchasing, especially as local sourcing and provenance become so crucial to many menus, but Charles has found quite the opposite “PSL have been really helpful in sourcing local suppliers, there is no doubt that they excel in this area.”

Charles was also happy to give some examples of how PSL has made significant results through seemingly small changes “Since PSL came on board they have introduced a number of systems that really have helped us to improve our food margins, one of them being a waste book in the kitchen, so we know how much food is being wasted. It has enabled us to ensure that our chefs focus on the food coming in and being served throughout the day.” So not only is Barceló saving money, they are also improving their green credentials by minimising kitchen waste.

Having improved both purchasing and back of house systems to maximise margin, PSL turned their attention to training to teach the front-of-house staff ‘up-selling skills’ in order to boost sales. Charles comments: “The training programme PSL put together is fabulous! The first phase of the training not only increased sales but staff morale and retention was also boosted. Staff knowledge of the food and wine are much stronger, this improves customer relations as they can be of greater assistance in advising what is good to complement their meal.”

The principles of the training are simple, these include encouraging the selling of side orders, mineral waters, a la carte menus and premium branded drinks. An example of its success is at The Imperial Hotel, Torquay, which has increased its average spend by £2 per head.

Charles summed up by saying “Working in partnership with PSL is just like having an expert extension of your own Food & Beverage team – with a wealth of experience and dedicated specialist resource. If you want to improve your margins, improve your quality and increase your revenue to me PSL is the answer.”

**NEWS UPDATE!** Things move fast in the hotel game and since this interview with Charles the next chapter in this successful partnership between PSL and Barceló is now underway, as Barceló has now placed their drinks purchasing and training with PSL and will doubtless be watching the results eagerly!

