



NEWS RELEASE

HOTEL INDUSTRY STARS OF THE FUTURE EMBARK ON UNIQUE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME LAUNCHED BY STARBOARD HOTELS

A new and unique UK wide employee accelerated development initiative has been launched by Starboard Hotels this month at their award winning Holiday Inn Express hotel, Burnley.

Selected as the national assessment centre for the course, Starboard employees from across the country journeyed to East Lancashire for the launch and opening day of the SHAPE, Starboard Hotels Accelerator Programme.

Aimed at developing the future careers of employees of Starboard Hotels, owners of the Holiday Inn and 19 other hotels across the country, the SHAPE accelerator programme launched with a special dinner at the hotel, prepared and hosted by the Holiday Inn team which has two candidates selected for this unique programme.

Highly regarded hospitality industry professional Robert Crook, who was born in Lancashire and studied at Nelson and Colne College, was the special guest along with Dr Alan Gregory, doctor of literature who will be involved in mentoring some of the 13 candidates who hail from across the country including Gatwick, Epping, Birmingham, Plymouth and Leeds.

During the first two days, the course began with the 'Insite' personality profiling module, teaching the candidates about their style, how they communicate and learn. They were also introduced to their mentors, senior managers from Starboard and agreed how they will work together over the coming year.

The scheme is the passion of Lancashire businesswoman Kerian Barnes, Director of Operations at Starboard Hotels, one of the UK's fastest growing hotel owner/operators with a portfolio that includes world leading brands such as IHG (Intercontinental Hotel Group), Wyndham hotels, Ibis Hotels and Best Western. Kerian is a shining example of someone who started out as a part time worker aged 15 in a Lancashire hotel and now sits on the board of Starboard Hotels running operations for a growing, highly valuable hotel portfolio.

As Kerian explains: "We are investing in excess of £30k on the programme, excluding the support from suppliers, many of them from the Lancashire region. Working in partnership they have a vested interest, sharing their knowledge, driving best practice, building relationships, share in our quest to keep great people within our business. If we can encourage and motivate these young Starboard team players to have a voice in the development of the company they will bring their innovation and style to the wider benefit of the group. It also prepares them for working across the brands."

"We really want to be the employer of choice. To achieve this, we have to look to enhance the training available through the brands, which is excellent but is very specific. SHAPE is

designed to broaden their horizons and is a blend of leadership, personal development and high level management training. It is designed to be motivating to encourage much more self learning, to grow confidence by working in teams on specific projects, working to deadlines."

The candidates, all of whom already work in various roles for Starboard Hotels, will go on to complete a series of set modules during the next 12 months, including learning how the hospitality supply chain works by shadowing suppliers such as food and beverage producers and furnishing suppliers. They will also "shadow" marketing and sales managers and the media communications team and other vital support functions.

Encouraging people to work in the hospitality industry and to see it as a long term career has never been more important. There are 4.5 million workers employed across hospitality and tourism as a whole, and it is the fourth largest industry in the UK contributing 10 per cent of GDP.

Robert Crook, an appointed advisor to the board at Starboard Hotels and former Managing Director of Interstate Hotels & Resorts Europe said he was "delighted" to be able to help launch this innovative development project. "Having spent the day with the team, I felt inspired myself, with an overwhelming sense and confidence that the future of our business and industry will be in good hands."

"SHAPE represents a new era in investing in the people who work in the hospitality industry. It has never been more important than it is today, to encourage and develop the careers of our hotel teams. Starboard Hotels are particularly forward-thinking in their approach to this. The programme Kerian and Sarah have developed will give the candidates a far greater understanding and range of knowledge in all aspects of the hospitality world. It will help encourage and develop careers, opening up opportunities for individuals to progress into areas they may not have considered previously. I look forward to their graduation from SHAPE in 12 months time added Robert/

Sarah Fountain, owner Director ODF consulting who are delivering the project said: "I am delighted to be working with Kerian and the team at Starboard to develop and deliver the SHAPE for leaders of the future. They have a clear vision of where they want to be and some fantastic individuals with passion and drive to be successful in their chosen path."

This is the first time such an ambitious employee development project of its kind has been seen in the hospitality business as the programme encompasses team members from all the different hotel brands within Starboards portfolio including Best Western, Days Inn, Ibis, Holiday Inn Express and Holiday Inn.

Ends

**Editors: For further information please contact Nicolette Webster, Flex Media nicolette@flex-media.co.uk. or call 07798 628429.
www.starboardhotels.com**