

Inspiring Excellence Through Innovative People

Helen Fairclough, Director of People, Culture and Improvement, Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre, explains how an innovative, service-driven and visionary team of employees with a culture that inspires excellence has helped the venue be recognised globally for outstanding achievement in recruitment, engagement and retention practices - one of only six organisations in the world.

At Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre (MCEC) our diverse and inclusive culture is something we pride ourselves on, and is key to our recognition as an Employer of Choice for two years running (2017-18). This accolade is a testament to our people, who work hard every day. Our working environment is defined by a commitment to shared learning and continuous improvement, and we invest in our talent and encourage them to be innovative.

EMPLOYEE VALUE PROPOSITION

In 2016, we engaged with our employees across our casual and permanent workforce to determine our employee value proposition (EVP). We think of our EVP as the promise we make to our people. Through a series of focus groups, we looked at the value our employees placed on a range of offerings at MCEC, why they were attracted to work for us initially, and what keeps them engaged with our brand.

From these discussions, our EVP was born – ‘expect anything, experience everything’. Just like every event, every day at MCEC is different. Once we knew our EVP we could build our talent acquisition strategy, focusing on sourcing, recruitment and selection. The strategy includes educating managers on unconscious bias, and the importance of attracting the best and brightest employees who form part of a diverse, inclusive and collaborative culture.

We also focus on upskilling and progressing our employee’s career development, with a preference to promote from within the organisation. This has led to over half our positions being filled with internal applicants. We offer ‘temporary transfers’ across our business, opening opportunities for employees to work across different areas, allowing them to develop skills and enhance their professional growth.

HOW TO RETAIN TALENT

One of the most important ways to retain talent is through employee engagement and recognition. Effective communication is a strong focus throughout the stages of the employee journey, and we encourage continuous feedback, ensuring employees are supported, valued and feel connected to the business. We’re proud to provide an inclusive workplace where senior leaders actively engage with and mentor employees - it’s important for leaders to provide an environment where employees are encouraged to take risks, learn from colleagues and collaborate.

Managers and employees are provided with a framework for employees to participate in reward and recognition activities. As a result of feedback from employees there has been a focus placed particularly on recognition with recent examples being a ‘Thank You’ event and ‘Shout Outs’ in our weekly employee newsletter. We strongly believe recognising and rewarding performance motivates employees to want to be part of the company.

CONNECTED WITH THE COMMUNITIES

We also recognise our employees’ desire to be involved and connected with their community and global issues, including sustainability, volunteering and wellbeing. We have formed an Employee Health and Wellbeing Committee to organise a calendar of activities including massages, workout sessions and yoga.

Our employees are supported by processes to help them achieve, and we have worked hard to implement a holistic performance framework that encourages our employees to succeed. This starts with on-boarding, which includes regular check-ins and objective setting and continues with our annual review process MAP (meet, align, perform), which outlines the responsibilities of both manager and employee throughout the performance management process, ensuring employees are supported and empowered to achieve their goals.

It’s important for us to focus on our employee experience, and to continually improve.

We learnt our employees value a ‘personalised’ approach to their MCEC experience: How they work, when they work and their benefits. We listened to what they want and introduced flexible working, opt-in and out benefits, and performance-related pay.

Our EVP is evolving as our business, people and culture have shifted and grown. We need to ensure we’re aware of the brand we have, the brand we aspire to, and how we leverage that to identify, connect to and ultimately attract key talent both locally and internally to work at MCEC.

Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre is a long-standing member of the International Association of Convention Centres (AIPC). AIPC represents a global network of over 190 leading centres in 64 countries with the active involvement of more than 1000 management-level professionals worldwide.
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