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Wind of change

The hospitality industry is experiencing difficulties in attracting young recruits. Hildegard Dorn-Petersen FCSI looks at ways this trend can be reversed

The hospitality industry in Germany and Austria is experiencing a skills shortage. As has been widely reported in the media, it is harder than ever to find and recruit top-quality employees who have the skills required for their position and can fit in with the hotel, restaurant or kitchen team.

An FCSI Talk, held for the first time at the Intergastra trade show in Stuttgart, Germany, in February 2016 was designed to bring up burning topics of the hospitality industry. The increasing shortage, especially of qualified younger employees, is one of them. Consultants Iris Schmid FCSI

and Maria-Luise Gerber FCSI invited a representative of the Federal Labor Agency, an hotelier, a student and two start-up-entrepreneurs representing Generation Y to discuss the problem and find some solutions. Everyone agreed: there is no single solution, but moaning about it does not help.

The market speaks for itself. Talented young people between 18 and 35 select a new employer carefully, as they want to achieve the optimum result. If you want to understand the dramatic shift in the labour market of our industry you should pay attention to where and how young people are searching for

a new job: 50% go online, but interestingly 50% still send written applications. Making a good impression face-to-face is also important. Job advertisements in print media are out, with the exception being within regional markets.

Discovery days

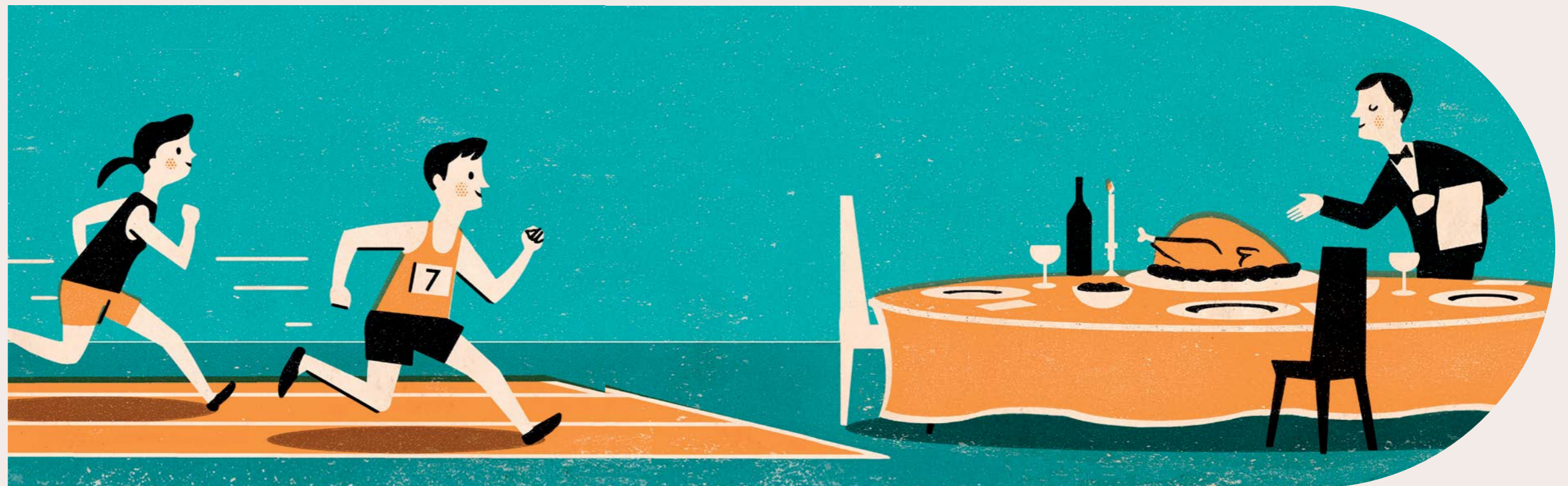
Employers in the hospitality industry should be taking precautions to prevent an impending skills shortage. It represents a considerable change in mentality, to realise the impact on the industry. "Employer branding" is one of the key phrases, not only for hotel chains, but also for every single operator. The performance of the hotel or

"It's great when young people leave after their apprenticeship and go out into the world to learn and experience as much as possible"

restaurant website is often underestimated. It is like a shop window, capable of arousing interest (or not) for spontaneous applications. You see it – you grab it!

Young people expect instant feedback from their application. Their own personal planning and determination period is rather short, so "discovery days" are a good idea for both sides.

Gerber has been working in the industry for many years. She recommends an action plan not only to attract but to keep employers: "It's great when young people leave after their apprenticeship and go out into the world to learn and experience as much



as possible,” she says.

In her view it is important to keep in touch with former employees and build a network. This can help to either re-employ them with more experience or to count on their recommendation to potential recruits. Social media offers a wide range of possibilities. Annual reunions of old colleagues present

Free training units and further education don't even need to be discussed any more - they are standard

another opportunity to stay connected.

The ultimate conclusion of FCSI's roundtable was that it's important to understand the motivation of young talent. To work to earn a living is a fading concept for Generation Y. Instead, they seek self-fulfilment and want to have fun. It's a particularly big challenge in the hospitality industry to provide working hours that allow young people to see their family and friends. A further aspect not to be underestimated is that those who are dissatisfied will leave on the spot, as new jobs are available around the corner.

Hoteliers and restaurant owners need to review their recruitment and retention

strategies. A simple but successful recipe was discussed at the roundtable: developing employees instead of finding skilled hospitality staff with the necessary “star quality” in what is an empty market place.

Flexibility and authenticity can help, as well as offering new perspectives. Free training units and further education don't even need to be discussed any more – they are standard. During the discussion, Hotelier Ralf Weißmann gave a good example of how to motivate not only young, but also long-time employers: in gratitude for 10 years of work and co-operation, he sent his head chef and his wife on a cruise for a week.

Ambitious goals

The German hotel chain Upstalsboom is going one better. Owner Bodo Janssen invited 10 young talents for a “Tour of Life” to climb Kilimanjaro together. Between 10-20 January 2016 the team of #KiliRockstars, and their boss, climbed the 5,895-metre-high mountain. Jansen said he wants to encourage young people to face challenges, but also to prepare and train for ambitious goals.

The public relations factor was not neglected by Upstalsboom either: a reporter from FFN radio station accompanied the group, and the story got wide media coverage. Once again we are reminded to, “do good things and talk about it”. ■



FCSI and the development of BIM

We are proud to announce that important steps and decisions have been made to promote the development of BIM (Building Information Modelling) in our industry. Since October 2015, FCSI Worldwide has been part of the committee and recently met the challenge of leading BIM standards within this group along with industry bodies NAFEM and CESA.

The Global Group, led by Roberto Assi, includes most of the international umbrella associations that national organisations such as NAFEM and CESA are part of. We have had the pleasure of welcoming FCSI Worldwide president William Taunton FCSI to our last meeting, and are looking forward to the major role FCSI will take in future developments.

FCSI is one of the few associations in the hospitality industry to represent manufacturers, professional planners and consultants under one roof. Now, for the first time, FCSI will be the vehicle for European and international organisations to bring BIM to the fore.