

Industry leaders reflect on staffing crisis at annual HOSPACE conference

◇ INDUSTRY by EAMONN CROWE on NOVEMBER 26, 2021

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The hospitality industry “must convince” people of the career opportunities afforded by the sector, says veteran hotelier and President of HOSPA (Hospitality Professionals Association) Harry Murray MBE.

Leading the opening speech at the annual HOSPACE conference, Murray said that as an industry, hospitality “must convince parents, teachers, careers advisors and young people” of the job opportunities within the sector if it is to overcome the ongoing staffing crisis in the long term.

The speech reflected on the devastating impact of the Coronavirus pandemic, but also highlighted the resilience of the sector and offered proposals on how the industry can once again attract talent and rebrand its current image. Murray said: “Businesses must create the right culture and values,

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He also stated that operators should “focus on retention and treat staff not just as employees but as family, and ensure work-life balance” if they were to change how the sector was perceived from those considering a career in it.

The keynote address of the conference was delivered by Kate Nicholls, Chief Executive of UKHospitality. Her speech echoed Murray’s sentiments, saying that the hospitality sector is the “flagship industry” for “global Britain” with “world class hotels, bars, pubs and restaurants” but that it needed to “invest in our employer brand” to solve its staffing difficulties.

The conference was delivered to several hundred in-person delegates, with more joining remotely. In-person guests were also able to enjoy a gala dinner in the evening, an aspect of the event that wasn’t possible at the 2020 edition.

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