

# Driving Business Excellence

## Optimus Awards 2008

Two of Killarney's best-known hotels, the Brehon and the Gleneagle, have received the Mark of Best Practice Award from Fáilte Ireland under the Optimus Programme.

The Brehon Hotel was built to 5-star standards four years ago and includes 125 rooms and suites. Its restaurant has been listed by Michelin and Georgina Campbell guides and received an AA rosette earlier this year.

Sean O'Driscoll, General Manager at the Brehon, says that internal standards systems designed through Optimus to produce a culture of quality service are yielding impressive returns. So much so that 90% of guests surveyed singled out the quality of the service they got from staff. He said *"Four internal teams representing staff at all levels, set up under Optimus, drive policy in the hotel ensuring that all staff are very involved and committed."*

Its sister hotel in the O'Donoghue group, the Gleneagle, has 250 rooms, a leisure centre, pitch and putt and tennis courts. General Manager of the Gleneagle, John Dolan said Best Practice has given them a structure to examine all aspects of the business and to continuously seek improvements. *"For the Gleneagle Hotel the experience of the customer is always the main focus of what we do and the Best Practice programme supports that. Among the improvements generated by the Best Practice programme are an increase in customer satisfaction rating and decrease in staff turnover."*

John Concannon, Director of Regional Development, Fáilte Ireland, congratulated the latest enterprises

to be accredited and said *"Optimus was designed to change the service culture and engage management and staff in a continuous pursuit of improvements which would deliver a competitive edge and sustainability. These objectives are even more vital now because of the changing economic and trading environment at home and internationally."*

The 150 enterprises which have undertaken the Optimus programme so far are succeeding in raising the quality of their products and of their business performance to equal the best found anywhere, and Mr Concannon urged more tourism enterprises to follow their example.

Optimus is an innovative, multi-tiered programme which supports tourism businesses in becoming more profitable, more efficient and more competitive. It is based on international research which shows that companies that adopt performance excellence principles can significantly improve their income and sales.

The programme provides, initially, three distinct but inter-related levels, Service Excellence, Mark of Best Practice and Business Excellence Award. These allow participants to build their capabilities and performance at each stage, gaining national recognition as they progress through each level.

**The Service Excellence Award** is an established concept which underpins the other two levels. It focuses on the creation and development of a culture of service excellence that is specific to the hospitality sector.

**Mark of Best Practice** is a business process improvement programme that enables enterprises to benchmark their business against the best in the industry, discover what makes them successful and apply that to their own operations. It focuses on key business processes under the headings of planning, people and operations.

**The Award of Excellence** is awarded to businesses that demonstrate a deep commitment to continual improvement and superior performance with a primary focus on the development of a strategic approach to managing their business.



*Pictured receiving the 'Mark of Best Practice' at the Fáilte Ireland Optimus Awards ceremony held in the Castletroy Park Hotel, Limerick, were (l. to r.): John Concannon, Director of Regional Development, Fáilte Ireland; Patrick O'Donoghue, The Brehon & The Gleneagle Hotel, Killarney; Eilis Loughrey, The Brehon; Dame Geraldine Keegan, Optimus Approvals Board; John Dolan, The Gleneagle Hotel; and Sean O'Driscoll, The Brehon, Killarney*

### Want to know more?

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