



commercial profile **optimus programme**



Ireland's Best Award
SERVICE EXCELLENCE PROGRAMME

The Optimus approach



The Optimus Programme has enabled Eurest units to deliver exceptional levels of customer service across a range of sectors from financial services to manufacturing

Eurest is a leading provider of high quality catering and support services to business and industry in Ireland and abroad. With a 50-year history, Eurest is part of an international brand which operates in more than 80 countries, creates a powerful network for sharing best practice and innovation, and ensures the delivery of common and consistent standards for all its clients.

There are 190 Eurest units in Ireland with 24 participating in the Optimus service excellence programme. 18 units received the Ireland's Best Award recently at an awards ceremony in the prestigious K Club, while six more continue on the journey towards accreditation. These units operate primarily in Ireland's financial services and manufacturing sectors, and the Service Excellence programme is an established concept which underpins the Optimus Best Practice and Business Excellence programmes. It focuses on the development of a service excellence culture that is specific to the hospitality sector and can be adopted by individual enterprises within the sector. It also provides a solid foundation on which real progress can be made on the organisation's journey to excellence. The Service Excellence Model incorporates concepts such as the service journey, moments of truth, the internal customer supplier and service recovery. All employees in the organisation, from back of house to senior management, participate in a customised training programme, and on-going training for new employees is provided thereafter by certified in-house trainers.

Eurest has been operating in Ireland since 1993, and currently boasts a turnover of €100 million and a workforce of over 2,200 staff that serve in excess of 76,000 meals per day. All Eurest suppliers

are sourced in Ireland, and €60m of goods is purchased annually within the Irish market. Its mission is to deliver great service and results, and to achieve this goal, Eurest's objectives can be broken down into five key result areas: customer client satisfaction, market leadership,

to Ireland and is worth over €250 million to the Irish economy."

The Optimus programme advocates an abiding enthusiasm for continual learning and innovation based on rigorous benchmarking, and companies who have successfully implemented the

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preferred employer, operational excellence and financial performance. According to Irene Collins, operations director with Eurest, the Optimus award sits very well with the goals of customer client satisfaction and operational excellence. "Since we embarked on this quality route about three years ago, our retention record has improved year on year and last year we actually had a 95.5% retention rate and 27 new openings so it goes hand in hand with our commitment to quality and excellence," she says.

According to Denis Tucker, manager of quality assurance with Fáilte Ireland, the Eurest customers, particularly the management and staff of the many financial and manufacturing companies from within its client base, are also regular users of hotel services. "The fact that they now associate the Optimus Ireland's Best award with service excellence in their own work environment will undoubtedly influence them to look out for this or similar accreditations as a guarantee of quality in their leisure pursuits," he says. "These sectors also make a significant contribution to the overall Business Tourism market. This high-yield market currently attracts almost 150,000 visitors

Optimus programme are encouraged to seek independent accreditation in recognition of their achievements. This process involves a comprehensive

assessment of their organisation by accredited assessors, and their findings are then endorsed by the Optimus Approvals Committee who recommends the final and appropriate award for the company. Partners in the approvals process include the Excellence Ireland Quality Association (EIQA) managing director Paul O'Grady and the Optimus Approvals Committee, who are independent assessors.

"The audit process is rigorous but it is the independent accreditation that we value most. There is no point in us thinking that we are doing a good job, let the auditors be the judge of how well we value our clients and customers," says Collins. "The programme is easy to implement, we have very good support from Fáilte Ireland. We generally start by having a meeting between key people in Fáilte Ireland & and our Operations managers to ensure that everyone understands the required outcomes of the programme. We then agree the next steps and timeframes involved. After that every single member of staff receives appropriate training which ensures that we keep our focus firmly on each and every customer." ■

