

## CLAIRE ORLOWSKA DICKSON

### CONTACT DETAILS

Mobile Telephone 07768 615710  
Email claire@topoftheworldconsulting.com  
Location Hertfordshire

### PROFILE

Strategic, results orientated hospitality specialist with a track record of success in Operations, HR and Project Management, spanning 25 years. An award winning area manager, I am an operator at heart with additional skills in employee relations, learning & development, recruitment, communication and managing complex projects. A passion for people, empowering, coaching and motivating to deliver transformational change.

### KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

I won my body weight in Champagne for the greatest customer service in the company, beating 30 other area managers.

Delivered double digit sales and profit growth to win the company holiday incentive twice, with trips to Canada and Russia.

Area manager of the year for the best results across all key performance indicators, against 22 other area managers.

I revolutionised the Cafe Rouge brand of 115 restaurants, re-designing all aspects of the restaurant - menu, uniform, crockery, restaurant, bar, training and marketing. Taking the initial idea and bringing it to life, from market research to a fully operational restaurant. Capital Return on Investment exceeded for each restaurant, target 20%, achieving 24.7%, restaurants delivering 11.7% sales growth like for like. Project delivered ahead of schedule and to budget of £5.5m.

I introduced a social portal to improve employee engagement for 7,000 Tragus employees with 43% take up in the first month of launch, 20% ahead of equivalent companies.

I coached a national recruitment company on setting its 3 year business strategy, they have hit their first year targets through my monthly business review meetings and are on target to hit year 2.

I successfully introduced the food safety management system for Mazi Mas restaurants, which is a social enterprise dedicated to supporting women from migrant and refugee communities. Detailing all HACCP (hazard analysis and critical control points) for the business and working with the head chef to implement.

### EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

December 2013 - present

#### **Director, Top of the World Consulting**

Operational, HR, talent management and business consultancy for a variety of customer and people focused businesses

Projects include -

- Business Associate and Lead Restaurant Consultant with the Buell Group, an elite group of industry leading associates and partners. The Buell Group exists to support owners, operators and investors within every aspect of the business life cycle. I provide operational, project management and HR consultancy to all of the restaurant projects.
- HR guidance, production of all employee relation documentation and monthly people reviews, for Be More Mobile, an O2 franchisee, getting them ready for a successful sale.
- Restaurant management leadership training for the Casual Dining Group, for their leading London restaurant managers.
- Restaurant consultant to Mazi Mas which is a social enterprise dedicated to supporting women from migrant and refugee communities. I developed their customer service programme and wrote their food safety management system and worked with the team to implement both.
- Coached the senior team to develop the 3 year business plan for Appetite4Recruitment, a national recruitment business. I have monthly business review meetings; through this they have achieved their first year target and on track to hit year 2.
- Registered and approved Growth Coach for Growth Accelerator, part of the Business Growth Service, a Government initiative to help small and medium sized businesses achieve growth.
- Mentor to the Academy of Food and Wine Service's UK Restaurant Manager of the Year 2014.
- Working with an expanding osteopath business to provide all their HR support and employee relations documentation, including employee handbooks and contracts.
- Business Mentor for the Princes Trust, working with an illustrator - Drawn by Nicky and a Pilates instructor - Therapy through Pilates, to bring their businesses from business plan to reality within tight timescales and budget constraints.

November 2012 - November 2013

**Director of HR and Service,**

**Cafe Rouge, Belgo and Concessions, 144 restaurants, 3000 employees, £155m net sales**

**Tragus Group, now known as the Casual Dining Group**

- Reporting into the Group HR Director and dotted line report to the Managing Director, sitting on the brand board, making decisions across all aspects of the business.
- HR and Service ownership for 3,000 employees and 144 restaurants.
- Responsible for the Cafe Rouge, Belgo and Concessions Employee Relations, Learning and Development and Recruitment team of 8 people.
- Responsible for the Tragus communication team of 3 people.
- Led the change culture within the brands, implementing the new vision and values and engagement schemes.
- Introduced a social portal to improve employee engagement for 7,000 Tragus employees with 43% take up in the first month of launch, 20% ahead of equivalent companies.
- Increased customer net promoter score by 10% in 6 months, ahead of the other Tragus brands.
- Led the team that developed the Leadership in Tragus management training programme and supporting courses for roll out to all 900 salaried managers, to a tight budget, delivered on time.
- Worked with People 1st to introduce apprenticeships to the whole of Tragus, 7,000 employees and over 300 restaurants.
- Reduced team and management turnover by 6% within 6 months.
- Led the project to implement a new business and talent review system, on time and on budget to the full Tragus business of over 300 restaurants.
- Developed the Standard Operating material for all restaurants in the group.
- Had the highest team engagement score within support centre, out of 15 teams.

April 2012 - November 2012

**Project Leader**

**Cafe Rouge, 115 restaurants, 2,500 employees, £135m net sales**

**Tragus Group**

- Reporting to the Group Marketing Director and the Blackstone management board.
- Led a company wide project team "Revolutionising" the Cafe Rouge brand - redesigning the restaurant look and feel, improving the menu offer, service standards, design and marketing with full brand and team engagement. Taking the market research and bringing it to life to hit Cafe Rouge's new target audience.
- Created double digit sales growth YOY of 11.7%, increasing day part sales and bringing new customers to the brand.
- Capital Return on Investment target of 20% exceeded for all restaurants, average at 24.7%.
- Project was delivered ahead of schedule and to budget.

March 2008 to April 2012

**Regional Director**

**Cafe Rouge, 115 restaurants, 2,500 employees, £135m net sales**

**Tragus Group**

- Reporting to the Operations Director.
- Responsible for a team of 5 area managers, 56 restaurants, 1,000 employees and £48m of net sales.
- Strategic brand development activity including developing and project managing "Plus Service" to improve the customer experience, across all 115 restaurants.
- Led the Café Rouge refurbishment programme. Visiting sites to see if they were suitable for the Cafe Rouge brand, putting a report together with the finance team to forecast anticipated sales to see if the site was financially viable. Briefing the property team on the look and feel of the restaurant. Putting together the project management time line for all departments to ensure nothing was missed.
- Operational lead for the menu development team, monthly menu review and planning and development for each seasonal change.

February 2005 to March 2008

**Area Manager**

**Cafe Rouge, 115 restaurants, 2,500 employees, £135m net sales**

**Tragus Group**

- Reporting to the Operations Director.
- Day to day management of 19 restaurants, including 5 new openings in 2008 with 2 high profile Center Parcs concession restaurants.
- Operational lead on the Health and Food Safety steering group for the Tragus Group of 200 restaurants.

- Produced the Openings Schedule used in all new restaurants.
- Won the Tragus customer service award in 2006.
- Won the Tragus sales and profit holiday incentive in FY07.
- Won Area Manager of the year in 2007.
- Increased sales by 12.4% versus last year in 2006- 2007, increased profit by £300,000 at EBITDA.

March 2000 to February 2005

**Area and Brand Manager**

**Mamma Amalfi, Abbaye, Leadenhall Wine Bar & Tapas restaurant and Amalfi, 12 restaurants, 500 employees, £15m net sales Whitbread/Tragus Holdings Ltd**

- Reporting to the Operations Director, management of 500 managers and team members with 13 direct management reports.
- Menu development and operational implementation of the menu for all the individual brands.
- Developed and launched the "Guest" training programme to standardise and improve the customer experience across all concepts.
- Development and implementation of brand mission, vision and values for the individual restaurants.
- Won the Tragus sales and profit holiday incentive in FY04.

March 1999 to March 2000

**Area Manager for Scotland**

**Bella Italia and Café Rouge, 150 restaurants, 3,750 employees, £125m Whitbread**

- Day to day area management of 12 restaurants across two brands.
- Management of brand Mystery Guest programme.

June 1996 to March 1999

**Project Manager, New Openings**

**Bella Italia and Terraza, 55 restaurants, 1,375 employees, £46.8m net sales Whitbread**

- Opened six new restaurants for Bella Pasta and worked with Claudia Roden on the Terraza concept, developing the design, menu, uniform, crockery, and bar set up. Taking the initial concept idea and making it a reality, from a new site to open day.
- Project managing the opening process including recruiting and training of all new team members and operational setup of all businesses, including stock, health and safety, food safety.

June 1994 to June 1996

**Restaurant Manager**

**Pizza Piazza and Pizzaland, 80 restaurants, 2,000 employees, £76m net sales Brightreasons**

- Won a car for best profit contribution in my first year and a holiday to Florida for sales improvement.

**EDUCATION**

BA Honours in Hospitality Management

Personal license holder

Level 3 award in Supervising Food Safety in Catering

Stephen Covey - 7 Habits and Leadership courses

WSET Level 3 Award in Wines and Spirits