



# Job Quality Case Study

## SoDel Concepts

SoDel Concepts is an operating company overseeing 22 restaurant and hospitality businesses in coastal Delaware with 2000 employees including 150 managers and executives. SoDel Concepts employs a diverse workforce including career professionals, college and high school students as well as a large ESL population (15%).

SoDel Concepts was built on a foundation of serving the community and employees. This foundation has driven the work of job quality from the inception of the business, and it continues to provide the leadership team with a north star for their work.

### Benefits

SoDel Concepts has a large list of benefits offered to employees. Those benefits include reimbursement for 10 sick days for all employees, and a grant program offering employees 250-500 dollars for a one-time expense that creates a significant barrier for them to engage in their work (such as car maintenance). In addition, employees earn money towards improving their fitness (including a fitness instructor on staff), profit sharing for salaried employees, and a 401K for all employees.

To aggregate all the benefits offered to employees SoDel Concepts developed a resource website. When the leadership team saw that employees weren't taking advantage of benefits as expected, they implemented bi-monthly giveaways to drive traffic to the website. This tactic has increased benefit usage.

### Skills & Career Advancement

All employees are offered reimbursement for education courses to advance along a career pathway at the company. Employees are also encouraged to take part in SoDel's own education classes which train employees in numerous areas including classes focused on advancing front-line employees to management positions. One innovative approach to leadership has been the President's leadership class. Scott, the President of SoDel Concepts, provides a leadership class open to anyone. It is a small group format of about six employees that discuss key leadership pieces of the company. Workers represented in this group include everyone from Vice Presidents to Directors of Operations to dishwashers.

### DEIA

SoDel Concepts employs many immigrants from Central American, many of whom are native Spanish speakers. ESL classes are offered to assist this population in advancing their career. However, at first, engagement in these classes was low. After multiple discussions, the company found that there was also a need for management to have a grasp of Spanish language in the restaurant industry. SoDel Concepts then developed a Spanish program for English speakers to meet those workers in the middle. Managers were asked to go through the program to learn "Restaurant Spanish" and better communicate with their workers.

### Outcome

The business has seen a sales growth of double digits for the last five years. While SoDel Concepts does not formally track retention rates they do have a large cohort of ten-year employees. In addition, even in an industry with a greater rate of transiency, employees often come back to work at the restaurant after pursuing other endeavors, and close to 70% of employees attend employee recognition events, demonstrating the community built within the company. This to them is a strong indicator of their employees' connection to the business.