

Customised Professional Development Programme for Winning Finalists

Evaluation Report 2024 – 2025

Following the success of earlier customised Executive Education programmes delivered at EHL Hospitality Business School Lausanne in 2019 and 2022, the Gold Service Foundation partnered once again with EHL to deliver a third programme in 2024.

This four-day programme brought together 16 Winning Finalists from the 2023 and 2024 cohorts, marking the first time finalists from two years were combined into a single learning group. Building on feedback from previous cohorts, an additional fourth day was introduced to allow greater depth in financial management, case study analysis, and group-based practical work.

The programme took place in late April and early May 2024. It was made possible through the generous support of the Lord Forte Foundation, the Sir Rocco Forte Family, David Levin MBE, and the Savoy Educational Trust. The additional day of tuition was provided by EHL Hospitality Business School.

The programme was designed to strengthen participants' ability to improve restaurant and hospitality business performance through three core themes:

- Managing Quality
- Creating Value
- Driving Innovation

Key areas of focus included:

- Cost control and waste reduction
- Sales development and profit growth
- Demand and capacity management
- Service design and innovation
- Value creation in food and beverage operations

The curriculum blended theory, real-world case studies, group discussion, and practical application, ensuring relevance to participants' current and future leadership roles.



Pre and Post-Programme Evaluation

Participants completed a pre-programme questionnaire to capture expectations and baseline confidence levels, which was shared with course tutors.

PA post-programme evaluation assessed participant satisfaction, learning outcomes, and perceived impact.

The programme achieved an overall satisfaction rating of 98%, a significant increase from 89% in 2022.

88% of participants reported that their **expectations were met or exceeded**, with many describing the experience as both **professionally transformative and personally memorable**.

Participants praised:

- The organisation and administration of the programme
- The quality of teaching and learning environment
- The welcoming and professional culture at EHL

For several finalists, this marked their first visit to Switzerland, adding to the overall significance of the experience.

Knowledge and Skills Development

Participants reported a marked increase in their understanding and confidence across key business disciplines:

- Average self-assessed knowledge increased from 54% pre-programme to 81% post-programme
- The largest gains were reported in:
 - Cost cutting and waste management
 - Innovation in food and beverage
 - Building sales and profitability
 - Use of analytical tools such as KPIs and value chain analysis

Many participants highlighted sustainability as an area of growing importance and expressed a desire for further learning in this field.

Teaching Excellence

Participants were particularly appreciative of the programme leadership provided by Alain Najar, whose participative and inspirational teaching style was consistently highlighted in feedback.

Alain was seen as a major contributor to the programme's success, especially for his ability to:

- Translate complex business concepts into practical applications
- Facilitate meaningful group discussion
- Use relevant case studies to bring theory to life

Work-Based Projects and Measurable Outcomes

Following completion of the programme, all participants agreed terms of reference for a work-based project, supported by their employers and Gold Service Scholarship mentors. The majority of projects were completed within six to nine months.

The outcomes reported demonstrate clear and measurable business impact, including:

- F&B **staff turnover reduced** from **65% to 44%** over nine months
- Service levels **increased** from 65% (2023) to an **average of 86%** in late 2024
- Food gross profit **increased by 13%** over five months through improved cost and waste management
- Wage costs **reduced by 6%** over 12 months
- Staff retention **increased** from 75% to **80%**
- Average spend per head **increased** by **£4.00** over 12 months
- Beverage spend per cover **increased** by **£3.71**
- TripAdvisor ranking **improved** from 13,999 to 1,784
- Net Promoter Score **rose** from 27% (May 2024) to **69%** (September 2024)

These outcomes clearly demonstrate the programme's effectiveness in translating learning into tangible commercial and service performance improvements.



Participant Reflections

“The educational course has been fantastic and has really been eye-opening to the world of business and hospitality.”

Jupiter Humphrey-Bishop, The Royal Household

“I am so excited now to bring the theory into practice. We are such a lucky group of young professionals to be part of The Gold Service Scholarship.”

Lynn van Logtestijn, Core by Clare Smyth

“The experience has been life-changing, both professionally and personally. I feel empowered to apply what I've learned to make a positive impact in my workplace.”

Kevin Ricou, The Ritz Hotel

Conclusion

The 2024 EHL Customised Professional Development Programme has proven to be an exceptionally effective investment in the development of Gold Service Winning Finalists.

With outstanding participant satisfaction, significant skills development, and demonstrable business impact, the programme continues to strengthen the leadership capability and commercial effectiveness of the UK's most promising hospitality professionals.