

# Case Study

## Westfield Insurance



### The Client

Based in Westfield, OH, The Westfield Insurance Group provides commercial and personal insurance and surety services to customers in 28 states. Westfield Hospitality, a unit of the company, self-operates a world-class conference center, hotel, 36-hole golf club and corporate dining facility on their corporate campus, entertaining clients and agents from across North America. In addition, the facilities have hosted a number of high-profile national and international golf tournaments, most notably the Junior PGA Championship and the Junior Ryder Cup.

*LRA works with the hospitality group at Westfield Insurance to help define and implement a unique, consistent service experience and helps drive improved performance and operating efficiency.*

### The Situation

Westfield had long used its golf and resort facilities as the showpiece of its operation, promising employees, agents and clients alike a high-end hospitality experience. Internally, the challenge was consistently living up to that promise in the delivery of outstanding products and services using a predominantly transient and seasonal workforce. Typically, independent agents who come to Westfield have been entertained by other insurance carriers at prominent resorts around the world. Located in landlocked Northern Ohio, Westfield realized that strategically they

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*Mark Farrell  
Executive, Corporate Hospitality Operations  
Westfield Group*

needed to differentiate by providing a guest experience that was second to none. With this in mind, Westfield's Corporate Hospitality Operations determined that it was mission critical to be able to define and codify the elements of "Westfield Hospitality"...and to be able to deliver it consistently.

### The Solution

Westfield engaged LRA Worldwide to help design and implement a unique, differentiated service culture from scratch. LRA conducted a series of facilitated workshops to guide the Westfield team through the process. The first workshop was designed to help Westfield executives articulate and define their vision of hospitality and ultimately what "The Westfield Promise" meant to them – i.e., "who we are." The second step was to take that definition and translate it into a thorough set of service standards designed to enable the desired experience at each guest touch point - i.e., "how we deliver."

The final phase involved training Westfield associates on not only "The Westfield Promise," but how "I Make it Special Everyday." The primary targets of the training: resort and golf course supervisors and managers, who were trained not only on the basics of the newly-defined service culture, but on how to effectively coach, teach and model the desired behaviors on the job. Westfield and LRA recognized this core of "service champions" would be crucial to ensuring that the efforts of employees from each operation consistently demonstrated and reinforced Westfield's brand image in support of an ongoing cultural shift.

"We changed many of our methods in terms of hiring and training managers," said Mark Farrell, Executive, Corporate Hospitality Operations for the Westfield Group. "To borrow a metaphor from the sports world, we had to shift from a focus on 'playing the game' to a 'teacher/coach' mentality."

## The Results

The design and implementation of this program was – in Farrell’s words – time consuming on the front end, but resulted in extraordinary measurable benefits over time.

“Through our work with LRA we were able to find the right formula to empower and hold accountable our workforce,” Farrell continued. “We’ve created universal standards that now apply to our entire workforce, and this same model serves as the central theme for all customer service components at Westfield, including the insurance side of the business. Through ongoing reinforcement we’ve experienced very tangible results.”

Westfield employs a variety of survey and audit tools to monitor and improve performance; they have universally trended upward over the lifetime of this program. Some notable results include:

- Westfield conducts a weekly audit of facility standards; since program implementation there has been a more than 30-percent decline in missed standards in each audit.
- Post event surveys are administered to those designated as “host” of large scale functions; satisfaction rates have climbed from 84-percent to 96-percent in 2008.
- Survey scores for both “key customers” and guests at the Westfield Inn have increased substantially; the vast majority now rest in the “very satisfied” category, displaying a far more consistent service delivery.
- A corporate dining survey, administered to 1,400+ employees who office and eat at Westfield corporate headquarters, grew from a 30-percent participation to 70-percent in 2008; scores rose from the predominantly “average” range to the “significantly above average” range.
- Membership evaluations administered annually to 600+ private club members have shown a steady increase in satisfaction and have indicated a far more consistent member experience; in 2008, the average rating registered “Very Satisfied” for the first time in club history.

Perhaps most importantly, Profit and Loss Statements have reflected steady improvement since the Universal Standards model was implemented. While other factors have influenced Westfield’s success, improved efficiency in labor costs, reduction of full time employees and greater accountability and empowerment at lower levels in the organization have been important by-products of this initiative. Through the partnership with LRA, Westfield’s overall strategy enhances revenue building opportunities as well as expense reduction, yielding higher net financial performance, greater customer satisfaction and better employee retention.

Farrell describes the journey as having some very definite milestones...but as an ongoing process. “It started with defining who we are and who we want to be and reinforcing that continuously through words and deeds. It took some time, but the numbers definitely confirm our improved effectiveness - we operate more efficiently and provide better service than we did four years ago, and we expect to be even better four years from now.”



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