



Modern Personnel Management Trends in a Small Slovak Hospitality Enterprise

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ABSTRACT

The article analyses modern personnel management trends at a small Slovak hospitality enterprise, the Motorest XY. It is based on a combined document analysis, financial indicators, a questionnaire survey of 11 employees, and an interview with the enterprise head. The findings show that the enterprise uses several digital and administrative tools, including communication tools, payroll, accounting, booking, marketing, and social media tools. Still, it does not have a separate HR department. Employees expressed mixed views on the overall effectiveness of new HR trends: 55% did not consider them effective, while evaluations of concrete practices were considerably more positive. Development-oriented appraisal, personalised benefits, non-financial rewards, and work with age diversity were identified as promising directions. The enterprise's reward system combines financial and non-financial incentives, and productivity indicators improved after the crisis period, although financial pressure remains. The article proposes selective HR modernisation through adaptive evaluation, a flexible benefit menu, standardised onboarding, digital HR support, and age-management practices. The main conclusion is that small hospitality enterprises should implement modern HR trends as practical solutions rather than abstract managerial fashion.

Keywords: Personnel management, Hospitality, HR trends, Employee motivation, Age management, Small enterprise.

Introduction

Human resources are decisive for service quality in hospitality enterprises because guests experience the enterprise through employee behaviour, competence, speed, and willingness to solve problems. Small restaurants and motels face the same labour-market pressures as larger hotels, but usually with fewer managerial specialists and less formal human-resource infrastructure. Personnel management, therefore, becomes both a strategic and an operational task: the same owners or managers often recruit employees, organise shifts, evaluate performance, maintain culture, communicate with customers, and solve daily problems. The challenge is to implement modern personnel trends without losing the personal atmosphere that makes small hospitality enterprises attractive.

This article is based on research into new trends in personnel management at the Motorest XY, a small Slovak hospitality enterprise located in Trencianska Tepla (Williams *et al.*, 2025). The research examined existing personnel tools, employee perceptions of new trends, workforce structure, employee turnover, productivity, reward systems, motivation, corporate culture, and a managerial interview. Its value for organisational behaviour research lies in the combination of quantitative and qualitative evidence from a small enterprise in an industry characterised by high labour intensity and frequent staffing difficulties. Hospitality research emphasises that human resources are not only a production factor but also the visible representatives of the enterprise to guests (Bahoosh, 2024; DocSuite, 2024).

Modern HR trends are often discussed in relation to digitalisation, employee well-being, personalised benefits, adaptive performance appraisal, age management, and data-based decision-making (Svetozarovova *et al.*, 2021; Pence, 2024; Personio, 2024; Bekbolotova *et al.*, 2025). For small enterprises, these trends must be carefully adapted.

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A digital platform may be useful only if employees understand its value and if it does not create an administrative burden. Personalised benefits may motivate employees, but only if they are financially sustainable. Age diversity may be a source of learning, but it requires communication practices that respect different generational expectations. These conditions demonstrate why every HR innovation requires a risk-benefit perspective akin to that in strategic decisions in other fields (Kovalova & Vartiak, 2024).

The article also connects the hospitality case with broader Slovak organisational research. Research on the sharing economy shows how service sectors are transformed by new models, platforms, and customer expectations (Garbarova & Vartiak, 2021). Research on corporate social responsibility in Slovak e-commerce companies highlights that responsible behaviour and transparent practices can shape stakeholder trust (Jankalova & Vartiak, 2016). In the hospitality sector, these insights imply that personnel practices should not focus only on efficiency. They should also support fair treatment, employee well-being, transparent communication, and service reputation.

The research question guiding this article is: Which modern personnel-management trends are most relevant for the Motorest XY, and how can they be implemented in a way that improves motivation, productivity, and retention? The article contributes by translating research findings into a structured model for small hospitality enterprises that want to modernise HR processes without creating an impersonal or bureaucratic system.

Literature Review

Personnel management has shifted from administrative recordkeeping to strategic coordination of people, skills, motivation, culture, and performance. Rao (2008) defines personnel management as the planning and supervision of the application, development, and use of human resources within the enterprise. The literature summarised in the research emphasises recruitment, training, performance management, reward systems, legal compliance, employee relations, health and safety, diversity, and HR information systems as key areas of modern HR (Bhayani, 2020; Verma, 2021). These functions are highly interdependent (Tuleutaev & Kerim, 2025). Recruitment affects training needs; training affects performance; performance affects rewards; and rewards affect retention.

In hospitality, personnel management has special importance because the quality of service is inseparable from the quality of employees. Bahoosh (2024) presents HR management in restaurants as a bridge between management and employees that fosters a harmonious, productive workplace. Pocket HRMS (2024) links employee satisfaction in restaurants with service quality, communication, teamwork, personal development, benefits, and feedback. Qualee (2023) identifies persistent challenges in food-service HR, including onboarding, communication, workplace stress, payroll administration, training, and team relations. These issues show that small hospitality enterprises need practical HR systems even when they lack formal HR departments.

Modern HR trends in hospitality include digital recruitment, promotion of benefits in job advertising, wellness programs, flexible schedules, referral bonuses, diversity and inclusion, mobile onboarding, and technology-supported communication (Hufn, 2022; Petrov, 2022; Black Box Intelligence, 2024). However, trends become effective only when employees perceive them as useful (Berto *et al.*, 2025). The literature, therefore, stresses the importance of employee experience, adaptive evaluation, personal development, and work-life balance (Svetozarovova *et al.*, 2021; Pence, 2024). For a small enterprise, the implementation question is not whether to follow every trend, but which trends solve concrete problems in recruitment, motivation, service quality, and turnover.

The research also highlights the relevance of external conditions. Hospitality enterprises have been affected by pandemic restrictions, energy price pressures, inflation, demand uncertainty, and staffing shortages. These pressures make HR decisions financially sensitive. Effective HR can increase productivity and retention, but poorly designed HR innovations may increase costs without improving outcomes (Samuel, 2024). The appropriate strategy is therefore selective modernisation: a small enterprise should implement tools that deliver visible value, align with employee capabilities, and strengthen its culture.

Materials and Methods

The article uses a mixed-methods case study design derived from the research. The empirical object was the Motorest XY. The research combined document analysis, financial analysis, employee survey data, and a managerial interview.



The quantitative part included a questionnaire survey of 11 employees focused on satisfaction, personnel trends, evaluation, rewards, motivation, and corporate culture. The qualitative part consisted of an interview with the enterprise head about HR trends, digital technologies, adaptive evaluation, age management, and the possibility of introducing a separate HR function.

The article reorganises the research findings around four analytic dimensions: HR tools, employee perceptions of trends, workforce structure and productivity, and improvement recommendations (**Table 1**). Descriptive statistics from the survey are presented as percentages and frequencies. Internal company information is summarised in tables. Financial indicators and productivity ratios are interpreted cautiously because the enterprise operated in a period affected by external shocks.

Table 1. Existing personnel-management and business tools used in the Motorest XY

Category	Tools identified in the research
Communication	Zoom, direct communication, contact form, and telephone for customer support.
Recruitment	Local newspaper, Pardon, local radio, Facebook groups, website, Profesia.sk (formerly used).
HR administration	e-mzdy and Humanet for payroll and HR administration.
Business systems	CRM and ERP tools, iDoklad and Pohoda for financial and accounting activities.
Digital operations	Microsoft Office 365, ESET security, Booking, Google services, Ecomail, Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube.

Results and Discussion

The first result is that the Motorest XY already uses several digital and administrative tools, but the HR function remains concentrated in the hands of the owners. The enterprise has no separate HR department or specialised HR team. According to the managerial interview, the owners are considering either HR outsourcing or hiring a qualified HR specialist in the future. This is a critical finding. The enterprise has adopted tools for payroll, communication, accounting, booking, and marketing, but HR modernisation still depends on managerial capacity. In a small enterprise, this is understandable. Yet, it increases the risk that strategic HR activities such as talent development, succession planning, and systematic evaluation will be postponed under operational pressure.

Employee perceptions of new HR trends were mixed. In the survey, 18% of respondents considered new personnel-management trends very effective, 27% took a neutral position, and 55% did not consider them effective at all. This result does not necessarily mean that employees reject modernisation. It may indicate that the benefits of trends have not been sufficiently explained, that implementation is uneven, or that employees associate 'new trends' with additional obligations rather than concrete support. The result is a warning that HR innovations should be communicated through practical benefits: easier feedback, fairer evaluation, better scheduling, clearer rewards, and development opportunities.

In contrast, perceptions of specific practices were more positive. 46% of employees stated that the evaluation process strongly considers individual needs, and another 45% perceived it as partly adapted to individual needs. Regular evaluation focused on development goals was considered very useful by 36% and rather useful by 46%. New reward trends were perceived as reflecting changing employee requirements by 81.8% of respondents when strong and partial agreement were combined. Personalised benefits were viewed as highly effective motivational tools by 64% of respondents, while 18% considered them partly effective and 18% were neutral. Non-financial rewards, such as environmental engagement, wellness programs, and volunteer activities, were rated excellent by 55% and good by 45% (**Table 2**).

Table 2. Selected survey findings on HR trends in the Motorest XY (n = 11)

Survey area	Main result	Interpretation
Overall effectiveness of new HR trends	18% very effective; 27% neutral; 55% not effective.	Trend communication and practical explanation need improvement.



Individualised evaluation	46% strong agreement; 45% partial agreement; 9% disagreement.	Adaptive appraisal exists but can be systematised.
Development-oriented evaluation	36% very useful; 46% rather useful; 18% neutral.	Employees generally accept developmental feedback.
Reward trends	81.8% perceive rewards as reflecting changing needs.	Flexible reward policies are a promising direction.
Personalised benefits	64% very effective; 18% partly effective; 18% neutral.	Benefit choice may increase motivation and loyalty.
Non-financial rewards	55% excellent; 45% good.	Non-financial recognition supports culture and satisfaction.

Workforce analysis shows the importance of age management. Students from Generation Z usually work as part-time employees for an average of approximately three years. Cooks from Generation Y have an average employment duration of about 3.5 years, while servers from Generations Y and X average about four years. Women of retirement age working as support staff have an average duration of about 6.5 years. The director and economist, who are the owners, have held stable, long-term roles for 25 and 22 years, respectively. This structure creates both stability and risk. Older employees and owners provide continuity, while younger employees and cooks may be more mobile and responsive to external opportunities (Table 3).

Table 3. Workforce structure and age-management implications

Position group	Typical profile in the research	HR implication
Students/part-time staff	Generation Z: average employment is about 3 years.	Use flexible scheduling, learning opportunities, and return pathways.
Support staff	Older women, including retirement-age employees, average about 6.5 years.	Protect stability, respect experience, and ensure a manageable workload.
Cooks	Mainly men aged 20-40; average about 3.5 years.	Career development and skill recognition are central to retention.
Waiters	Women aged 20-48; average age is about 4 years.	Service training, feedback, and work-life balance matter.
Owners/management	Generation X: very long tenure.	Formalise HR knowledge to reduce dependency on owners.



The productivity and financial findings must be interpreted in context. The research reports that total revenues increased to EUR 380,289 in 2023 and sales reached EUR 370,752, the highest level in the five years under review. At the same time, the enterprise still reported a loss of EUR -17,742 in 2023, an improvement compared with the larger loss in 2022. The ratio of employee costs to revenues was 66% in 2019, 183% in 2021, 127% in 2022, and 105% in 2023. The extreme values in 2020-2022 reflect pandemic and crisis conditions, but the declining ratio after 2021 suggests partial recovery and improved labour-cost efficiency. HR modernisation should therefore be financially disciplined and tied to productivity, retention, and service quality.

The reward system is one of the enterprise's strengths. The research identifies a combination of basic wage, punctuality rewards, year-end bonuses, summer vacation bonuses, birthday and name-day gifts, jubilee premiums, small gifts for Valentine's Day and St. Nicholas Day, Christmas parties, summer barbecues, meals beyond legal requirements, a 50% discount on meals outside working time for employees and family members in the same household, and free drinks during working time. This combination of financial and non-financial rewards supports both motivation and social belonging. It aligns with the hospitality literature, which links satisfaction to benefits, communication, teamwork, and feedback (Pocket HRMS, 2024).

The case shows a paradox of HR modernisation in small hospitality enterprises. Employees are not fully convinced by the general idea of 'new trends', yet they respond positively to concrete practices such as personalised benefits, development-oriented evaluation, non-financial rewards, and supportive workplace culture. The managerial implication is clear: trends should not be introduced in an abstract managerial fashion. They should be framed as

solutions to specific employee and service problems. For example, adaptive evaluation should be described as a way to give fairer feedback and identify personal development needs, not as a new control system.

Digitalisation should be implemented gradually. The enterprise already uses digital tools for communication, payroll, accounting, marketing, and reservations. The next step should be a simple HR dashboard or digital checklist for evaluation dates, training needs, certifications, and benefit preferences. Such a system would not replace personal communication; it would support it. This distinction is important because hospitality employees often value direct managerial contact. Digital HR should reduce administrative confusion and create transparency, not distance employees from management.

Age management is a promising strategic direction. When information is purposefully shared, the presence of several generations can improve the business. While older workers offer stability, dependability, and real-world experience, younger workers might contribute digital skills and an openness to new tools. Mentoring pairs, short peer-learning sessions, and mixed-age teams could convert age diversity into a source of service quality. This is consistent with the literature on diversity, inclusion, and employee experience (Svetozarovova *et al.*, 2021; 6 Pence, 2024).

The absence of a dedicated HR role is the most important structural limitation. A full HR department may not be financially realistic. Still, partial outsourcing or the appointment of an internal HR coordinator could create accountability for recruitment, onboarding, training records, evaluation schedules, and employee feedback. In a small enterprise, formalisation should be light. The aim is not bureaucracy; it is continuity, fairness, and prevention of managerial overload.

Recommendations

Four recommendations follow from the findings. First, the Motorest XY should introduce a short, adaptive evaluation form with two parts: common service standards for all positions and position-specific goals for cooks, servers, support staff, and students. Second, the enterprise should create a flexible benefit menu that allows employees to choose among meal benefits, schedule preferences, training, wellness support, or family-oriented benefits within a realistic cost limit. Third, onboarding should be standardised through a simple checklist covering service standards, safety, values, customer communication, and digital tools. Fourth, age-management practices should be integrated into daily work through mentoring, task rotation, and knowledge-sharing meetings.

These recommendations address the central tension in the case: the enterprise needs more systematic HR practices, but its competitive advantage also depends on a family atmosphere and personal contact. The best solution is therefore selective formalisation. Processes that affect fairness, evaluation, training, and legal compliance should be documented. Interpersonal communication, recognition, and team culture should remain personal and flexible. This balance can increase employee trust while maintaining the enterprise's authentic service culture.

Conclusion

The article examined modern personnel management trends at the Motorest XY using mixed-method evidence. The findings show that the enterprise has adopted several digital and administrative tools and has a broad reward system, but it lacks a dedicated HR function. Employees are sceptical about the general effectiveness of new HR trends, yet they respond positively to specific practices such as development-oriented evaluation, personalised benefits, and non-financial recognition. Workforce analysis highlights the importance of age management, while financial indicators show that HR modernisation must remain connected to productivity and cost control.

For small hospitality enterprises, the most promising HR strategy is selective modernisation. Adaptive evaluation, flexible benefits, standardised onboarding, digital HR support, and age management can strengthen motivation, retention, and service quality if they are implemented practically and explained clearly. Future research should compare similar small hospitality enterprises and test whether employee attitudes toward HR trends improve after a period of structured communication and participatory implementation.

Implementation Pathway

A practical implementation pathway should begin with communication rather than technology. The survey results show that the label does not automatically persuade employees of new HR trends. Management should therefore



present each proposed change through a simple logic: the problem, the proposed practice, the expected benefit for employees, and the expected benefit for the enterprise. For example, a digital evaluation form should not be introduced as an innovation in itself, but as a way to make feedback more regular, comparable, and transparent. This framing can reduce resistance because employees see the practical value of the tool.

The first phase should focus on evaluation. The Motorest XY can introduce quarterly development conversations lasting 15-20 minutes. Each conversation should include three One personal development objective and one position-specific criterion might be included in the same form. For cooks, the criterion may concern consistency and kitchen coordination; for servers, customer communication and accuracy; for support staff, reliability and teamwork. This structure keeps evaluation fair while respecting different tasks.

The second phase should focus on onboarding. The research indicates that hospitality enterprises face challenges with recruitment, training, and retention. A standardised onboarding checklist can shorten adaptation and reduce dependence on informal explanations. The checklist should include workplace rules, service standards, safety and hygiene, customer communication, digital tools, and the reward system. It should also assign a mentor for the first few weeks. This would support Generation Z and younger employees, who may need a clear structure, while also using the experience of older employees.

The third phase should focus on benefits. Because employees responded positively to personalised benefits, the enterprise could create a small menu of benefits with comparable costs. Choices might include additional training support, preferred shift planning where operationally possible, family meal discounts, wellness support, or small non-financial recognition. The menu should be reviewed once or twice per year. This process would make benefits visible and participatory, while allowing management to control financial exposure.

The fourth phase should focus on HR responsibility. If a separate HR specialist is not immediately realistic, the enterprise can appoint an internal HR coordinator for a limited number of hours per month. The coordinator would maintain employee records, schedule evaluation conversations, collect benefit preferences, track training, and prepare simple reports for owners. Outsourcing can support payroll and legal compliance, but internal coordination is still needed because culture, motivation, and daily employee relations cannot be outsourced completely.



Managerial Implications

The findings suggest that small hospitality enterprises should treat employees as strategic partners in modernisation. When employees are involved in discussing new HR practices, they are more likely to perceive them as support rather than control. Participatory implementation can include short meetings where employees comment on evaluation criteria, suggest benefit options, and identify training needs. This approach is consistent with responsible management because it links efficiency with respect for employee voice.

Another implication is that financial recovery and HR investment should be coordinated. The enterprise showed improved revenues and a better labour-cost ratio after the crisis years, but it still reported a loss. HR innovations should therefore be prioritised according to expected impact. Low-cost, high-impact actions include structured feedback, onboarding checklists, recognition, mentoring, and clearer communication. More expensive actions, such as broad wellness programs or advanced software, should follow after management has evidence that basic practices are working.

Finally, HR trends should strengthen the Motorest XY's employer brand. The enterprise has a family atmosphere, long-term owner involvement, and a rich set of informal benefits. These strengths should be communicated to applicants. At the same time, the enterprise can improve its external attractiveness by making values, employee development, and benefits more visible. Employer reputation is a practical recruitment tool, especially in hospitality, where applicants often compare not only wages but also atmosphere, respect, scheduling, and team stability.

Limitations and Future Research

The article is limited by the small number of survey respondents, which reflects the size of the enterprise. Percentages should therefore be interpreted as descriptive indicators rather than statistically generalisable results. The value of the data lies in the detailed case context and in the combination of survey, interview, internal, and financial information.

Another limitation is that the survey captured perceptions at one point in time. Employee attitudes toward HR trends may change after a better explanation, implementation, or experience with specific tools.

Future research should compare several small hospitality enterprises and examine whether selective HR formalisation improves retention, service quality, and employee satisfaction. Longitudinal research would be particularly useful. For example, employee attitudes could be measured before and after the introduction of adaptive evaluation or a benefit menu. Such research would show whether the positive attitudes toward specific practices, in this case, translate into measurable outcomes over time.

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