

'Our energy is verified as being sourced from renewable generation'

In this series, Bord Gáis Energy is sharing details on some of its commercial customers and their business success. This month, we feature Stephen McNally, Deputy Chief Executive, Dalata Hotel Group plc.

What is the history of Dalata Hotel Group in Ireland?

Dalata Hotel Group was founded in June 2007 by our CEO Pat McCann, who was at that time already a successful Irish hotelier. We are now Ireland's largest hotel operator and one of the fastest growing groups in the UK. Having taken the business public in 2014, Dalata now operates the Maldron and Clayton hotel brands throughout Ireland and the UK, as well as managing a portfolio of Partner Hotels. We currently have 41 hotels in the group, as well as 10 more in the pipeline.

Since 2007, Dalata has worked hard to build a centralised management team with expertise across all areas of the hotel business, and we now have one of the most experienced and successful teams in the sector. We currently employ over 5,000 people and we predict that number will continue to grow at a steady rate.

Dalata's strategic objective is to become the leading four-star hotel operator in Ireland and the UK, and to use that position to drive long term shareholder returns. In working towards that objective, we are guided by our core values, which include: Our People, Our Fairness, Our Service and Our Individuality. We incorporate these values into our decisions to help us to achieve our strategic objectives and operate as a responsible business.

We were delighted that our people's hard work, and ongoing success was recognised by our peers in business last year, when we were named as company of the year at both The Irish Times Business Awards 2019 and the 2019 Business and Finance Awards.

How are you working to improve the experience for your customers?

With good service being one of our core values, customer feedback is of paramount importance, and we



Pictured at the Clayton Charlemont Hotel in Dublin city centre, which opened in 2019, are (l-r) Stephen McNally, Deputy Chief Executive of Dalata Hotel Group; Adrienne Volpe, Industrial and Commercial Sales Manager at Bord Gáis Energy; and Stephen Clarke, Group Financial Controller at Dalata Hotel Group

carefully analyse this feedback, both the positive and the negative, to ensure we are giving our guests the service they expect from our hotels. We are consistently looking for ways to improve our guest experience, and we find that paying close attention to customer feedback is a very effective way of doing that.

Providing excellent service to our customers is crucial to our success. We run a continuous programme of training and development in order to ensure that our service standards are consistently high. Our people strive for success, are enthusiastic about what they do, and take responsibility for getting things right.

With the growing importance of tackling climate change, what challenges has the Dalata Hotel Group faced in reducing its carbon footprint?

Challenges have included finding the best and right solution for each hotel. All our hotels are very different in terms of size, mix of facilities, business requirements, energy consumption and a multitude of other factors.

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Dalata is committed to implementing proactive measures to help protect and sustain the environment for future generations, and we know that this is becoming more and more important and is the right thing to do. We have taken the challenge head on, and our efforts are led by a sustainability committee comprised of heads of departments who continuously strive for best practice.

Why is it important to the Dalata Hotel Group to reduce its carbon footprint?

Dalata Hotel Group takes our responsibility for the environment very seriously. Since 2018 Dalata has carried out an extensive engagement programme with a variety of stakeholders to identify their expectations of Dalata as a responsible corporate citizen. This allowed Dalata to design a 'responsible framework' where energy and waste management processes were identified as key, and these have been made as efficient as possible. Water and waste were both reviewed and are covered by ongoing projects to ensure full compliance.

We reaffirmed our commitment to reducing the carbon footprint of our business in our 2019 Environmental Policy, which is communicated through training and awareness campaigns with all of our staff, and lays out the environmental improvements we are making across a range of areas.

What measures has Dalata Hotel Group implemented to reduce its energy usage and its carbon footprint? How successful have these measures been?

Some examples of measures implemented include LED lighting, installing combined heat power units, and employing voltage optimisation. We work with Bord Gáis Energy to ensure that we are using our energy as efficiently as possible across all our sites, each of which has to address its own specific and complex challenges in reducing its carbon footprint. All have been very successful to date and Dalata will continue to adapt.

How has Bord Gáis Energy helped Dalata Hotel Group to meet its energy needs?

Bord Gáis Energy now supplies 26 of our hotels in the Republic of Ireland with 100% Green Energy contracts, which means that our energy is verified as being sourced from renewable generation. Their energy efficiency obligation scheme also assists us in pursuing better projects aimed at reducing our carbon footprint. We are also very familiar with working alongside their team to improve our efficiency. All of these things help us to fulfil our commitment to practice responsible energy management through reduced consumption, and the encouragement of energy efficiency throughout our business.

Why has Dalata Hotel Group renewed its contract with Bord Gáis Energy until December 2021?

Dalata has a long-standing agreement with Bord Gáis Energy and their support continues to today. Last year we renewed our agreement with them for a further 27 months to December 2021. We are committed to the partnership because they offer excellent service and advice through a dedicated Bord Gáis Energy Key Account Manager, who has assisted us in numerous utility saving projects.

How has your relationship with Bord Gáis Energy developed and why is that relationship important to your business?

Our relationship with Bord Gáis Energy has brought us even further along than we had anticipated. It is vital that we in Dalata play our part in addressing our environmental impact, and we have shown our commitment to addressing this challenge in our most recent Environmental Policy. In order to advance this, Dalata Hotel Group has now appointed an Environmental Social Governance (ESG) committee at board level.

What does the future hold for Dalata Hotel Group?

Dalata will continue to evolve and expand, to develop everyone we work with and to give the best quality service. Our key strategic objective is to become the leading four-star hotel operator in Ireland and the UK, and we are committed to keeping sustainability at the forefront of any expansion that will occur.

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