

# People and Training Award

Sponsored by Admiral Recruitment

## SHORTLIST

Jeremy Ford  
Gather & Gather

Rapport People Team

Sarah Hutchings  
Searcys

## PAST WINNERS (Previously Training Award)

2018

CH&Co learning and  
development team

2017

Rik Razza  
BaxterStorey

2016

Tim Sturk  
BaxterStorey

2015

David Bridge  
and the food  
development team  
ISS Food & Hospitality

2014

Graham Eveleigh  
BaxterStorey

2013

Yen Chong  
Harbour & Jones



## 2019 WINNER

### Sarah Hutchings, Searcys

**D**escribed as a “one-woman powerhouse” who has demonstrated “a clear focus on people and business strategy” and “added value to the people within the business”, Sarah Hutchings has been making quite the impact at Searcys since arriving at the company last year.

Her role of head of recruitment was created to support and enhance the recruitment and selection process across all 20-plus Searcys venues, including the Gherkin and the Barbican in London, and Blenheim Palace in Woodstock, Oxfordshire.

In her role Hutchings has sole charge of attracting recruits and selecting for all vacancies across the business. The recruitment process had been described as “tired” prior to her joining, with a lack of focus on candidate care, employer branding and effective selection as well as no standardised job specs. The resulting inconsistency in hiring standards led in turn to overspending on agency staff.

Hutchings was given the job of building an effective talent pool for key Searcys roles in catering, front of house and management to ensure business continuity, as well as implementing a streamlined recruitment process across the whole company. To attract a high standard of employee, the company also needed a strong employer brand.

To address the issues, Hutchings researched hospitality recruitment trends, pay and structure, and set a benchmark for the company. She restructured the recruitment process company-wide to make it clear and efficient, introduced exploratory interviews, and built up the Searcys employer brand through a variety of marketing tools, including the targeted use of social media.

In her first three weeks, she filled a general manager role that had been open for four

“A one-woman powerhouse who has had an amazing impact on recruitment”

**Russ Scanlon**

months. Her recruitment adverts for Searcys were also used as best practice examples at *The Caterer* People Summit 2019.

The company says she has been instrumental in its turnaround success, directly contributing to its best annual results in 2018 through a clear recruitment strategy delivering measurable results. Senior hires are now made increasingly from direct approaches, and the company says Hutchings has saved the business £150,000 in recruitment fees in her first year alone by eliminating agency spend.

Hutchings is a trailblazer, instilling the level of pace needed to meet the industry’s recruitment challenge. She also approaches recruitment with a clarity of purpose and kindness, getting the very best from candidates.

## WHAT THE JUDGES SAID

“Sarah has made an outstanding contribution to the business, creating and developing a clear people strategy to support a demanding business model as well as delivering tangible benefits in retention and commercial areas.”

**Andy Milner, procurement and supply chain director, WSH**

“A one-woman powerhouse who has had an amazing impact on recruitment and onboarding, providing a streamlined process with identifiable commercial benefits to the business.”

**Russ Scanlon, business director, Midlands and North, Bartlett Mitchell**

