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Legolanders – making people smile

WORKING in the tourism industry is ultimately about making people smile. And that's the goal at Legoland.

Unlike other 'theme' parks, Legoland is not full of 'white knuckle' experiences but nevertheless it has a big 'wow' factor. So much so that Legoland has coined the phrase 'Amazement Park'.

The range of positions there is quite varied, as is the magnitude of the workforce.

Human Resources Officer Emma Tarvin explains: "We have about 260 permanent support members of staff. In the height of the season we have up to 1,000 people doing all kinds of jobs, all sorts of hours.

"We have a wide variety. We cover anything from attractions, operating the rides, admissions, helping people, catering, environmental services, warehouse and retail. We also have support departments: human resources, marketing, sales and our call centre.

"We look for applicants who have the desire to please people, who want to win others over, who like talking to people, who are cheerful, who smile.

It's one of the most amazing attractions in the UK. In 1999 it attracted 1.6 million visitors and consists of over 2.2 million bricks – Lego bricks. Richard Hill finds out what it's like to work at Legoland Windsor.

"Outside the professional departments, qualifications don't mean a lot. As long as people can smile and talk politely to guests, that's all that matters.

"We take all ages, from 16-year-olds looking for their first job. Our oldest employee is 82. Everyone gets something different out of working here. It's a chance to work in a very friendly environment. It's all first names, it's all open door. We treat everyone exactly the same. Sixteen-year-olds can get their first work opportunity in a friendly, non-threatening environment. We also provide training for them. We can provide training in NVQs and Modern Apprenticeships."

At present Legoland offers modern apprenticeships in landscaping, mechanical and electrical engineering and is planning to extend the opportunities to include retail, catering and guest services, areas in which they currently offer NVQs.

Working patterns vary. Many of the seasonal jobs require working five days out of every seven, but because of the nature of the work, few of these roles follow the Monday to Friday routine. Some work patterns are ideal for working mothers such as ticket sales working from 9.30am to 2.30pm, while quite a lot of students work at Legoland during the holidays.

Emma herself has graduated through a range of roles. She loves the work.

"It's a pure buzz," she says. "You can tell when it's a busy, hectic day and everyone's up for it. Everyone's high, they really are. That buzz keeps you going. It's great!"

Further information:

Recruitment Hotline: 01753 626 144/5
Website: www.legoland.co.uk