



TeleGRAM

Great American Hotel Group Newsletter

A Little Bit Wiser

Wishing a "Happy Birthday" to our Great American Hotel Group office and property associates:

Suzanne Baele - November 18

Around the Block

Wishing a "Happy Anniversary" to our Great American Hotel Group office and property associates:

*Gabrielle Smith - 19 years
Dave Akridge - 26 years*

Giddy Up

Congratulations to the following office and property associates on moving on up the corporate ladder:

Karen Beranger - GM Shrimp Boat Restaurants

A Laugh A Day



GRAM Tapped To Operate Two OK Properties

We are proud to announce that Great American Hotel Group has been chosen to operate two Marriott products in Tulsa, OK. Beginning the first week in January, 2017, GRAM will assume the operational management of the Fairfield Inn & Suites Tulsa Central, a 62 unit property, built in 1997 and located near Tulsa Tech, the Tulsa Expo Center and just 6 miles from Tulsa International Airport.

Following two weeks later, GRAM will also assume the management of the Courtyard Tulsa Central, located adjacent to the Fairfield Inn & Suites. The Courtyard is a 122 until property, built in 1997 and features Marriott classic amenities such as the Bistro, two meeting rooms totaling 1,060 sf, an indoor pool and spa, business center and ample free parking.



"We are delighted to be working with David Lesser and Patrick Haynes from IntelliStay Hospitality on these two projects" noted Dave Akridge, President, GRAM. "Both Tulsa properties will complement our portfolio of hotels and we look forward to building our relationship with this fine company."

I Am Human, I Am A Resource *Suzanne Baele, Corporate Director of Human Resources*

Excerpt from the article "5 Discouraging Phrases You Need To Avoid As A Boss" by Lee Price, Monster Contributor

No teachable moment should ever start with the phrase, "No offense, you probably weren't even aware of this, but..." Regardless of what words come next, the speaker has already communicated a dismissive attitude. Nowhere is this gaffe more potentially destructive than at work.

Words matter, especially when they're coming from you, the boss. As a supervisor, you can't afford to be insensitive, even by accident. "Often, a dismissive boss is pressed for time," says John Baldoni, author of *Great Communication Secrets of Great Leaders*, "and does not think about what he or she is saying." Big mistake.

Monster rounded up five phrases that you should rethink or eliminate from your repertoire, as well as alternative approaches that can help you say what you mean, kindly and professionally.

"That's a waste of time." Instance in which you might say this: You see an employee working on a task or project that doesn't tie to the team's current goals and priorities. You've been around the business for a long time, and you know what matters and what's a time-waster. What the other person actually hears: "I assume you don't know what you're doing. I don't respect your ideas, so I'm shutting you down." New approach: Baldoni suggests a conversation with the employee that starts with, "Tell me about what you are trying to do." Use additional questions to help the employee realize their actions might not produce the result they intended. Suzanne Bates, author of *Speak Like a CEO: Secrets for Commanding Attention and Getting Results*, suggests saying, "That's an interesting idea. I recall we worked on a similar approach (talk about when) and (how it turned out). However, a lot has changed since then. Tell me more about what you have in mind."

HR CORNER

"You probably aren't aware of this, but ..." Instance in which you might say this: You see an employee making a mistake that you know they wouldn't make if they knew a key piece of additional information. What the other person actually hears: "I'm the boss, and I know more than you do." New approach: Baldoni suggests starting by emphasizing your own missed opportunity to keep everyone informed: "I am sorry, I neglected to tell you about this." Kelly Decker, co-author of *Communicate to Influence: How to Inspire Your Audience to Action*, notes that emphasis is crucial here. "Whether you emphasize you or this completely changes the meaning of this phrase," Decker says. "You can make people feel more included, more supported and more validated by shifting the emphasis you use. The trick here is to make sure that the other person feels like the emphasis is this rather than on them."

"I can't help you there." Instance in which you might say this: An employee has asked you a question or requested help on a project or task that shouldn't fall on your plate. What the other person actually hears: "I'm not interested in helping you get the information you need." New approach: If the question would be better directed at someone else, help your employee connect with that person. For example, Decker says, you can give them specific direction, such as, "That's something I haven't experienced, but it really plays to Susan's strengths. I'd like for you to talk to her—let me make an introduction."

"No offense, but..." Instance in which you might say this: An employee says or does something that you think is wrong or misguided, a probable result of their naiveté. What the other person actually hears: "You said or did something foolish, and I'm about to insult you." New approach: Nix this phrase and its implications entirely. "It sounds immature and unprofessional," Bates says. If you take issue something an employee said, begin your response with, "Here's why I disagree." If an employee did something incorrectly, take them aside and say, "I understand why you might have thought that was the best solution. But next time, I'd prefer it if you could handle it this way."

"Never mind, I'll take care of it." Instance in which you might say this: An employee's mistake or inexperience is going to cause you more work in the long run, so you think it's better if you take over. What the other person actually hears: "I don't trust you to do it, nor do I want to take the time to mentor or coach you." New approach: You could try taking over the work temporarily, with the promise to explain more later about what went wrong. Baldoni suggests saying, "I did not give you enough time/information. Let me take it from here. Then when I am finished we can discuss so you will know how to do it next time." Or, you could help them make a plan right away. "The worst part about using this phrase, as a manager, is that it dumps all the work back in your own lap," Decker says. "It's better when you can take a step back and identify exactly what your direct report can do and how they can close the gap. It empowers your team, and it helps you."

Property Happenings

Homewood Suites by Hilton Gateway Hills Nashua set its social media on fire with its 2nd Annual Employee Pumpkin Contest. This year in addition to letting guests vote the hotel opted to give a prize for fan favorite. Within just a few hours some pumpkins already had 40 votes. Guests loved to see the pumpkins live but had a hard time picking a favorite so they were also drawn to the Homewood Facebook page so they could cast a second vote. The hotel received 10 new Facebook fans in just 3 hours of the competition beginning.

Homewood Suites pumpkin contest is the highlight of their week long Halloween festivities which include a "Hunger is Scary" Food Drive, Halloween Jewelry Blingo, Music by Paul Murdaca, and Halloween Social Hour "Monster Munchiesness".



By The Numbers Gabrielle Smith, Corporate Controller

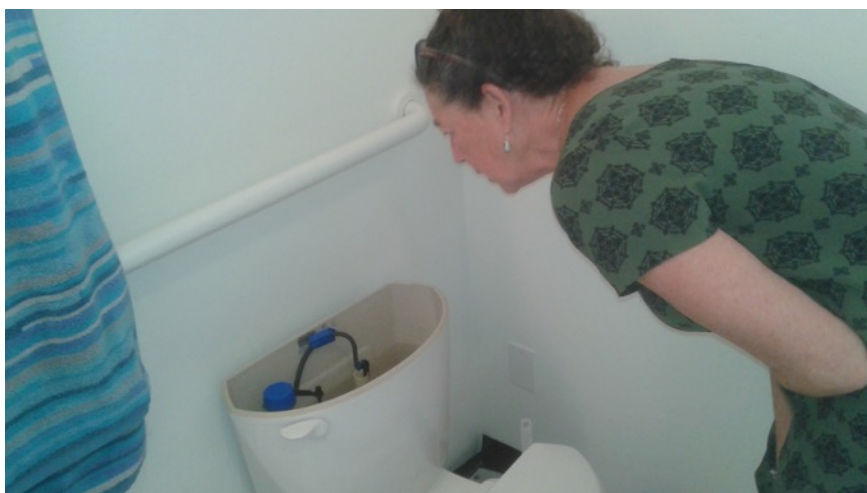
Crunching numbers doesn't have to be laborious. Sometimes numbers and letters can be fun. Try your hand at this fun quiz! This does not measure your intelligence, your fluency with words, creativity or mathematical ability, it will however give you some gauge on your mental flexibility.

Each equation below contains the initials of words that will make it correct. Example: 60 = M in and H --- Answer 60 = Minutes in an Hour

(Answers on page 6)

- | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. 26 = L of the A | 11. 90 = D in a R A |
| 2. 7 = W of the W | 12. 24 = H in a D |
| 3. 1001 = A N | 13. 1 = W on a U |
| 4. 12 = S of the Z | 14. 57 = H V |
| 5. 54 = C in a D (with 2 J) | 15. 1000 = W a P is W |
| 6. 88 = P K | 16. 29 = D in F in a L Y |
| 7. 18 = H on a G C | 17. 40 = D and N of the G F |
| 8. 32 = D at which W F | 18. 80 = D to G A the W |
| 9. 8 = S on a S S | 19. 2 = number it T to T |
| 10. 3 = B M (S H T R) | 20. 64 = S on a C B |

Operationally Speaking



It's nice to know that all of our corporate personnel are cross-trained in disciplines. Suzanne Baele, Corporate Director of Human Resources uses her expertise in maintenance and engineering to make a quick repair at the Bakersfield pre-opening office. Crisis averted!

Fresh Faces in Fresh Meadows

We are pleased to announce our newest General Manager and Director of Sales at the Courtyard by Marriott® and Fairfield Inn & Suites by Marriott® Queens/Fresh Meadows NY. Jon Kozma has assumed the role of GM and Luis Zaragoza the role of DOS. Both have started the count down to our projected March 1, 2017 opening and are taking control of all the tasks associated with new build openings.



Jon Kozma comes to the team with a plethora of Marriott and hotel leadership experience. A native New Yorker, Jon has served as General Manager for Island Hospitality's Residence Inn White Plains, Marriott International's Courtyard by Marriott Parsippany, Residence Inn Fishkill, and Westchester Marriott Tarrytown. Other positions he has held include GM at the Inn at Arbor Ridge in Hopewell Junction, NY and FOM at Marriott Eastside in NYC. Jon is a graduate of Ridley Lowell Business & Technical Institute in Poughkeepsie, NY.



Ever smiling, Jon enjoys spending any free time he can with his family. He and his wife Kate, and daughter Kylie love the outdoors. They are kept busy by their two Cavalier King Charles Spaniels (Oscar and Maggie). An avid fisherman, Jon loves to fish - mainly in streams and rivers for trout.



Luis Zaragoza assumes the DOS position after successful Sales stints at the Wyndham Garden Brooklyn Sunset Park and the Hampton Inn JFK Airport, as well as other related hotel positions with Radisson, Iberostar and Holiday Inn. He is a bilingual sales manager with more than 17 years hotel experience.

You heard of Cinco de Mayo (May 5th) right? well, people in the US thinks is Mexico's independence day but in fact it is the day we celebrate the battle of Puebla, when Mexico beat the French. Fun fact: Luis is a direct descendent of General Ignacio Zaragoza who commanded the Mexican army versus the French Army during this battle. General Zaragoza is featured on the \$500.00 pesos bill (@\$35), and his picture is display throughout the state of Puebla on that day.

Luis is an avid football player in Queens and used to practice Karate. At the age of 14 he won a World Championship in Seoul Korea.



Excerpt from the article Top 10 Hotel Digital Marketing Trends to Capitalize on the Holiday Season published by Milestone

For most people, the holiday season is filled with shopping, eating and sipping on holiday drinks while catching up with friends and family. However, for hotels, things are different. Between finalizing budgets and finishing end-of-the-year projects, hoteliers are trying to think of creative ways to fill the property during the holiday season. Here are a few strategies you can use to drive incremental revenue during the holiday season:

Define your holiday strategy. Include creating content on the hotel website focused on the holiday and the offer. Think about local holiday events, specials, and popular activities that can be demand generators for the business. Any on-property specials should also be communicated on the hotel's digital marketing entities. Identify which channels will be most effective in reaching your desired audience

No matter how small or large, there are always things to do in the local market during the holidays. That is why it's always a great idea to create a page on the hotel's website and social media dedicated to holiday happenings. Not only will this help improve the site's SEO relevancy for holiday related phrases, but it will also serve to provide useful information to the end user, the hotel guests! Talk about places to go, where to eat, places to shop, and more! Not only does fresh and holiday-relevant content help the website gain, it is a page that is able to be used year after year simply by updating the date-sensitive content. When building the page, structure it so that each of the insider tips and suggestions can be shared to social channels. This will increase the likelihood to gain social shares, visibility, and increase your websites overall social signals!

Everyone loves a fantastic holiday special, which is why it's highly recommended to create a holiday specific package and special offer page on the website. Remember, it doesn't need to be something new! An existing bed & breakfast package that is usually offered year-round can be repurposed with a holiday twist. Simply add peppermint cocoa with the served breakfast and refresh the package name to something festive for the holidays. The holiday event information page is a great way to get visitors to the hotel's site, while this holiday package page should entice those users to convert and become actual guests.

Tell the target market all about the holiday special by promoting it online! Most people won't know about holiday specials unless hotels announce them. Here are 3 easy ways to promote holiday offers: 1) Update the special offer listed on TripAdvisor with the holiday-specific offer: It's a compelling way to promote an offer and typically converts well. 2) Create a Facebook, Twitter or Google+ post around the offer. 3) Talk about the holiday special and provide a link back to the holiday package page on the hotel's website.

Don't forget to Blog all about the holidays! A blog is a great way to thank customers for supporting the business throughout the year and can help boost the property's social media strategies for the holiday season. Remember to keep the content about the customers and their holiday experience. Keep in mind that blogs and most social channels are indexed the fastest by search engines, so if there's any last minute schedule updates to local or hotel events, be sure to leverage the blog or the hotel's social profiles to get the word out to the public!

One of the easiest ways hotels can spread holiday cheer is by decorating its social channels with a holiday theme. Much like the website, the cover photo is the first thing that social media fans see when they land on the social channels, and is one of the easiest way to get them excited about the holidays. It will also help make the message consistent across the board and will show users that the hotel is current and involved in the holiday season – helping it continue to build its brand. Hotels can keep it simple and “wrap” the social cover images with a bow or create a more involved graphically-enhanced winter image as another festive idea. While the options are endless, the messaging is what is important to highlight, so be sure it is something that will help visitors remember the business.

Finally, be sure to bring offline holiday fun online. It's clear that the hotel staff have spent hours (even days) putting up holiday decorations at the property, as they gear up for the festivities. Why not encourage guests to showcase the hotel's wonderful decorations and the staff's hard work by helping them share it easily! Try having a “selfie booth” by simply placing a sign in the hotel lobby encouraging guests to take photos of themselves with the holiday decorations in the background. Be sure to include a holiday and hotel themed hashtags for them to tag their photos to promote consistent messaging and drive awareness for the hotel. Hashtag examples include #merrymarriott or #hamptonholidays – get creative! Why encourage selfies? According to a recent Travelzoo survey, the “selfie” obsession spans across the board. According to the survey: 86% of Americans take at least 1 selfie per week, 33% of Americans take 3 or more selfies per week, 55% of selfies are taken on vacation. We already know that people love to share their travel adventures and memories through selfie, so take advantage and have guests help spread the holiday message for the hotel.

In Summary, make sure to leverage the holiday season by planning and cross-promoting holiday marketing efforts across all channels.

Happy Holidays!

Linda



GRAM Christmas decor in Dover

Roomer Has It

ATLANTIC HOUSE INN



Greetings from Atlantic House Inn in beautiful York Beach, Maine! What a record breaking 2016 season we had here. We are now closed until end of April, 2017. I had the pleasure of meeting guests from all over the world – many the first time visiting our beautiful Inn and Atlantic playground. And you know what? The look on their faces when they walk through our front door after a day of exploring tells an amazing story. Those beaming faces, fresh glow from the warm sun, breezy beaches and fresh salt air is the reason I am doing the happiest job in the world. A guest once asked me, if you weren't doing this job, what would you like to do? I pondered for about 15 seconds, and said I am doing what I was meant to do. Creating memories, making a day extra special for someone – it's not a job for me – it's a way of life. It's in my soul. Have a fantastic winter everyone – Pete and I have headed south!

Happy Halloween!



Diana Fowler and
Teena Nikias -
GRAM Home Office



Suzanne Baele -
GRAM and Bear
The Cowardly Lion



Linda Komornik
Real Housewives of
GRAM



Dan Hays - Bakersfield and
Suzanne Baele - GRAM and
friends



Adam and Tiffany -
Garrett Desert Inn -
Santa Fe



The Ace of Spades

(Answers from page 3)

1. 26 Letters of the Alphabet
2. 7 Wonders of the World
3. 1001 Arabian Nights
4. 12 Signs of the Zodiac
5. 54 Cards in a Deck with 2 Jokers
6. 88 Piano Keys
7. 18 Holes on a Golf Course
8. 32 Degrees at which Water Freezes
9. 8 Sides on a Stop Sign
10. 3 Blind Mice (See How They Run)
11. 90 Degrees in a Right Angle
12. 24 Hours in a Day
13. 1 Wheel on a Unicycle
14. 57 Heinz Varieties
15. 1000 Words that a Picture is Worth
16. 29 Days in February in a Leap Year
17. 40 Days and Nights of the Great Flood
18. 80 Days to Go Around the World
19. 2 Number it Takes to Tango
20. 64 Squares on a Chess/Checker Board