

TeleGRAM

Great American Hotel Group Newsletter

Around the Block

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

*Sheri Kresky - 1 year
Diana Fowler - 15 years
Dan Hays - 16 years
Rob Greene - 20 years*

A Laugh A Day

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GRAM Adds Albuquerque Hotel To Portfolio

Great American Hotel Group assumed the management of the former Quality Inn & Suites North Albuquerque in late January, 2017. Now operating as an independent property - Pan American Inn & Suites, under a receivership agreement, this 168 unit hotel is conveniently located within 2 miles of Balloon Fiesta Park. Property amenities include complimentary continental breakfast, free WiFi, seasonal outdoor pool, work out room, and business center.



Located near Journal Center in Northeast Albuquerque, the hotel offers one bedroom suites with either one king bed or two queen beds, separate living area with sleeper sofa, 2 televisions, microwave and mini refrigerator in addition to standard king and double queen guest rooms.



Excerpt from Ohio Employer's Law Blog

Do you know the top 10 passwords used to “secure” enterprise-connected devices in 2016? Sadly and unsurprisingly, here they are, along with how long it would take a computer to crack each (and hack into said device and network):

123456 (instantly), password (instantly), 12345 (instantly), 12345678 (instantly), football (instantly), qwerty (instantly), 1234567890 (instantly), 1234567 (instantly), princess (instantly), 1234 (instantly)

Do you see a theme developing here? This theme translates to your networks not being nearly secure as you think and hope them to be. Your employees are your first and best line of defense against cybercriminals trying to do your company harm. You should be providing those employees the tools necessary to mount that defense. And one of those tools is training on proper password strategies and techniques.

On what should you be training your employees? Consider these 10 tips.

- All passwords should be reasonably complex and difficult for unauthorized people to guess. That is, employees should not use any common name, noun, verb, adverb, or adjective, like “password”, “football”, or “princess”.
- Passwords must be a minimum of 12 characters long, and must contain at least one uppercase letter, one number, and one ASCII character. One recommended method to create a complex and secure password is to pick a phrase, take its initials, mix up the capitalization, and further replace some of the letters with numbers and other characters. For example, the phrase “This will help me remember my password” can become “TwHm8mPw!”.
- Employees should use common sense when choosing passwords. Avoid basic combinations that are easy to crack. For instance, choices like “password,” “password1” and “Pa\$\$word” are equally bad from a security perspective and must be avoided.
- Default passwords—such as those created for new employees when they start or those that protect new systems when they’re initially set up—must be changed with the employee’s first login.
- Employees must choose unique passwords for each company accounts, and may not recycle a password they already use for a personal account.
- Passwords should not be posted on or near computer terminals or otherwise be readily accessible in the area of the terminal. Post-It notes are the enemy.
- Password must be changed per a set schedule. (I suggest every six months.) You should enforce this policy with software.
- If an employee doubts the security of a password—for example, if it appears that an unauthorized person has logged in to the account, or if the employee clicks a suspicious link in an unknown email or otherwise thinks a password has been divulged—the password must be changed immediately and IT must be notified.
- User accounts will be frozen after “x” number of failed logon attempts. (I suggest three.)
- Employees should be share their password(s) with anyone. Those who need system access will receive their own unique password.



It would take 16 billion years to crack my current network password. And, unless I fall victim to a phishing or other scheme that reveals it, I feel confident that my password is safe. My challenge to each of your employees is to top me.



Property Happenings



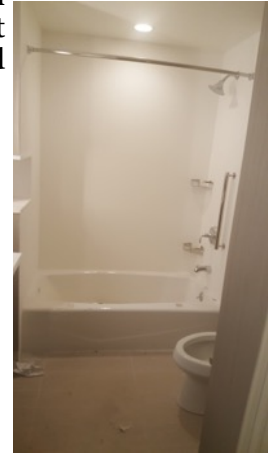
Congratulations to Nanette Gonzalez from Homewood Suites Gateway Hills Nashua. Nanette rang in the New Year receiving highest recognition for an individual employee - The Homewood Spirit Award. Nanette joins an elite group of Hilton Worldwide employees. Less than 2% of Hilton employees have ever won this award and less than 1/3 of hotels can boast ever having had a winner.

In addition to a beautiful trophy and a call from Hilton VIPs, Nanette was able to deposit a check for \$350 right before the holidays as part of her prize.

Nanette was nominated by Jayme Putnam, Sales Manager for her hard work and dedication to a guest with special allergy and emotional needs. Nanette spent close to a month on her hands and knees scrubbing the guest floor with rubbing alcohol and triple sheeting both the bed and pull out sofa. Nanette did not complain. She rallied the team to assist her in making this guest feel at home. The day the nomination was placed the guest told Putnam that it was the first time in years she felt "normal" anywhere.

COURTYARD AND FAIRFIELD INN & SUITES/QUEENS FRESH MEADOWS NY

Progress is continuing with construction in Queens on our two new Marriott product hotels. Model rooms are almost completed and target date for opening is 4/27/17.



LAKESIDE OFFICE PARK/WAKEFIELD MA

Three new promotions have been developed and marketed to target real estate brokers and new tenants. The promotions coupled with a new video promoting the office park will hopefully drive new business to the development. To view video, follow the link below or go to www.thelakesidepark.com.



WOODSPRING SUITES BAKERSFIELD CA

The new hotel in Bakersfield is busy swarming the market to try to tell the community about this new hotel and brand. New Assistant General Manager Jason Heinemann is working hard meeting with local companies and organizations.

Later this month, the property staff and Linda Komornik will join forces in a citywide sales blitz. Target markets include hospitals, real estate, agriculture, utilities and oil and gas.

BAKERSFIELD, CA



WOODSPRING SUITES
AN EXTENDED STAY HOTEL

What is WOODSPRING SUITES?

Simple. Clean. Affordable. We are a new hotel brand, now open in Bakersfield, California. Our specialty is long-term hotel accommodations, but we do overnight stays as well. Think budget friendly, basic essential accommodations and you have WoodSpring Suites.



It's Simple. Done Better.™







Extended Stay. Done Better.
Our rooms are designed with the extended stay guest in mind.



Civics Quiz: Are You Smarter Than A 5th Grader?

You might have been “born” an American, but are you knowledgeable enough about our country and its rich history to “become” an American. (Quiz answers on Page 6.)

1. **What is an amendment?**
a. Change Constitution b. Addition to Constitution c. Change Bill of Rights
d. Both A and B e. A, B and C
2. **What is one right or freedom from the First Amendment?**
a. Speech b. Religion c. Assembly d. Press e. Petition the Government f. Right to Vote
g. A and B h. A and D i. A, B, C D, E j. A, B, C, D, E, F
3. **What are two rights in the Declaration of Independence?**
a. Life b. Liberty c. Pursuit of Happiness d. Equal Pay
4. **Name one branch or part of the government?**
a. Congress b. Legislative c. President d. Executive e. The Courts f. Judicial
5. **US Senators are elected for how many years?**
a. 2 years b. 4 years c. 6 years d. 8 years e. Lifetime
6. **Who is Commander in Chief of the military?**
a. President b. Vice President c. Speaker of House d. Secretary of Defense
7. **Why does the flag have 13 stripes?**
a. 13 colonies b. Lucky Number c. Superstation d. First 13 Founding Fathers
8. **How old do citizens have to be to vote for President?**
a. 16 b. 18 c. 21 d. 25
9. **Why did the colonists come to America?**
a. Tea Party b. Freedom c. Practice Religion d. Potato Famine e. To Explore
f. A and B g. B and C h. B and E
10. **Who wrote the Declaration of Independence?**
a. Benjamin Franklin b. George Washington c. Thomas Jefferson d. John Adams
11. **What did the Emancipation Proclamation do?**
a. Freedom of Speech b. Freedom to Gather c. Freedom of Religion d. Freedom for Slaves
12. **Why does the flag have 50 stars?**
a. One star for each year of the Civil War b. One star for each founding father
c. One star for each state d. One star for each colony
13. **Which of the following is not a US national holidays?**
a. Veterans Day b. Labor Day c. Columbus Day d. Christmas
e. Independence Day f. Easter g. Memorial Day h. Martin Luther King Day
14. **Where is the Statue of Liberty located?**
a. New York b. Washington DC c. Plymouth Rock
15. **What is the name of the national anthem?**
a. America The Beautiful b. Sweet Caroline c. Star-Spangled Banner d. Amazing Grace

According to entries submitted to HR Careerbuilder, some applicants have done some very unusual things during an interview. For example, *Candidate asked to step away to call his wife to ask her if the starting salary was enough before he agreed to continue the interview; Candidate ate a pizza he brought to the interview (no offer to share); Candidate told employer that if they wanted to get to heaven they should hire him; Candidate sang along with the office music; Candidate bragged that they had been in the local newspaper for allegedly stealing a treadmill from an older woman from her house; Candidate repeatedly put on and took off her sunglasses.* What is the strangest thing you've ever encountered during an interview?

 **HR CORNER**



Excerpts from an article by Alicia Hoisington entitled Customer Service Success Starts with Employee Training and published in Hotel News Now.

Customer service standards can make or break any hotel, especially when it comes to online review sites such as TripAdvisor. Due to the nature of business, hoteliers must be nimble when it comes to training employees to set them up for service success. Customer service is critical. It doesn't matter what level—everyone from housekeepers through to the managers need to master customer service. Anyone can build a fantastic building, but at the end of the day, hotel business is a live show. When you go on stage, it takes every person working as a team putting on the best to exceed expectations. It's critical to get repeat guests and to get consistency. You must have everyone on the team rowing the boat in the same fashion to be successful. Variance creates inconsistency and that disappoints guests.

But it's impossible to have great customer without first having a plan in place for great employee training. Sources say there is opportunity for training during every step of the employee journey. It starts during the interview. Great customer service starts before candidates even become employees, sources said. It all starts with the interview and selection of the team. We can train people for many of the tasks at hand. Look for attitude, smile and how they carry themselves. The hospitality "spark" has to be innate in employees and cannot be taught.



What questions should you ask to make sure a potential hire has a hospitality personality? Here are a few examples:

- What they did they do when things went wrong.? Tell us about the worst day you had and how you made it the best day.
- Tell us about a difficult customer and how did you deal with it. You can see on their face how they will react if there's a problem.
- Ask about a personal experience when people travel. Have them tell you about a specific situation that stands out in their mind. Look for what they felt was important in the traveler experience.

It's all about the training. Great customer service boils down to employees feeling great about themselves—and when employees are trained well, they feel as if the company cares. Employees should get significant training before they are let loose in the field. On their first day, associates should receive training manuals that outline step by step, day by day, who they will work and train with, listing out all tasks at hand.

During their first month, new employees should participate in an orientation where they talk about company culture, and then watch videos about safety, loss prevention, team environment, etc. Basically the message is to treat the guest how they want to be treated.

Encourage everyone on the team to be engaging. Even housekeepers should say hello and ask guests how they are enjoying their stay. Share TripAdvisor reviews with the entire team. When there is praise for rooms being spotless, simply knowing can empower teams. It never ends. Training isn't stagnant, however. It can't just be about handing out a training manual on an employee's first day; training needs to be an ongoing process, sources say. Employee manuals need to be updated as the business changes. If there's a new service standard that needs to change that's working or not working, or if guests are asking for a new amenity, it should be added to the training.

Sit down with new associates after 90 days of employment to talk about their progress.

Happy Training and Serving!

Linda



Roomer Has It

SPRINGHILL SUITES QUAKERTOWN

The hotel has been selected as the official hotel of The Farm at Eagles Ridge, a 150 acre, lovingly restored wedding location that is romantic, comfortable and chic. Pictured here are the attendees at their recent trade show including Sheri Kresky, GM and Gail DeHelian, Sales Coordinator..



SHRIMP BOAT RESTAURANT

Jessica, one of the service staff at Gracie Rae's is often described as having a "never ending smile" (Mike T.) The trio of restaurants under the Shrimp Boat umbrella, has been receiving a steady stream of accolades: "I am always welcomed by name" - Deb G. "I'm treated like family, not a customer" - Jeff M. "Keith in Salty Hawg. If you haven't met him, you are missing the whole experience" - Julie M.

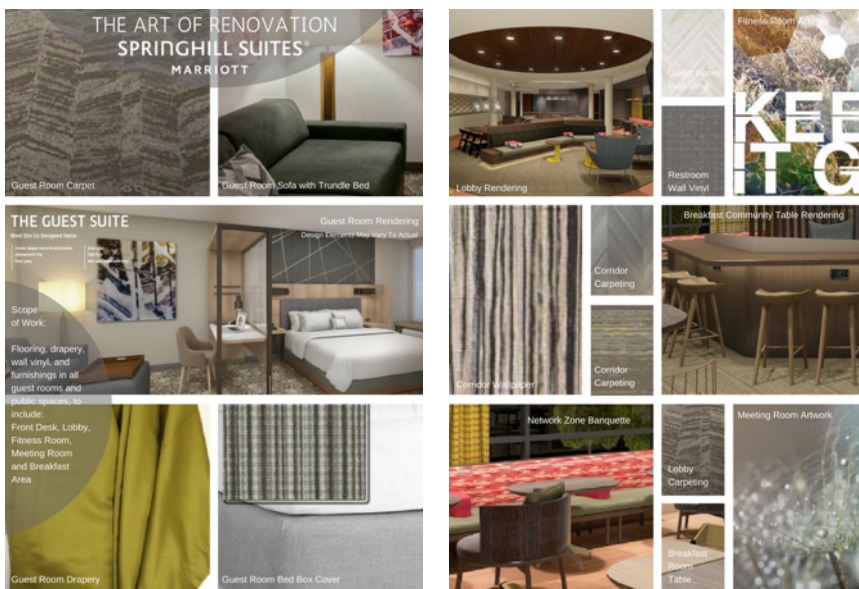


Karen Berringer (GM) has focused on training and sales since her arrival, and the staff was definitely up for the challenge. Some of their recent comments about the restaurant and management include: "The staff is unfaltering and dedicated" - Chef Lee. "I don't know what's nicer - the sunsets or my customers" - Bar Manager Ivana. "My opinion matters" - Chad, Master Mixologist and Server. "So much encouragement from Karen to be creative" - Jack, F&B Director. Come see what Southern Hospitality is really all about!

The Art of SpringHill Suites

SpringHill Suites by Marriott Quakertown PA is undergoing a renovation of their hotel as part of the ongoing commitment to consistent and upscale product assurances. The process is due to be completed in March 2017.

The new generation of design "Palettes" is inspired by nature and its transition and evolution through the seasons. Neutral backgrounds, rich in texture and pattered with pops of color that celebrate the brand's cultural pillars: Watermelon for ALIVE and Citron for RENEW. There are several different regional choices of artwork to create locally relevant experiences.



The hotel also recently celebrated an "Arts" fair in conjunction with their brand culture and support of local artists. Vendors were invited to display and sell their crafts in the hotel meeting room and breakfast area and the public was invited. Working with the community and the Marriott brand to support the arts is a focus of the hotel and the local community has been very receptive and supportive of their endeavors.



1. d. i. 3. a. b, and c 4. a, b, c, d, e, and f 5. c 6. a. 7. a. 8. b. 9. g. 10. c. 11. i. 12. c. 13. f.

