

TeleGRAM

Great American Hotel Group Newsletter

Around the Block

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

Mercy Breitenbach - 5 years

A Little Bit Wiser

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

*Dan Hays - May 28
Rob Greene - June 28
Jon Kozma - June 21*

Celebration Station

In case you want to celebrate, here is a list of National and "other" holidays: Say Something Nice Day (6/1), Hug Your Cat Day (6/4), Red Rose Day (6/12), Take Your Dog To Work Day (6/22), Independence Day (7/4), Sugar Cookie Day (7/9), Cousins Day (7/24), Uncle and Aunt Day (7/26)

Social Butterflies

GRAM recently opened a Twitter account. While we are newbie tweeters - we'd love you to follow us! @GreatAmerHG.

If you haven't already - "Like" us on Facebook too.

A Laugh A Day...



Millville Hosts Prestigious Golf Group

Eighteen years ago, the Luanshya Boys Golf Invitational held its first tournament in Las Vegas. It started humbly with just a small group of male golfers, all born and raised in Zambia. During the past 3 decades, these men devoted their time and skills towards building careers and raising families; however, they each felt an indelible void in their lives. They believe that success does not mean anything unless you have someone to share it with and had it not been for the opportunities afforded to them by their alma mater (University of Zambia), they would not be who they are today. Today, these childhood friends, now board members of the Friends of the University of Zambia, have forged a bond and committed to the task of not only establishing an endowment, but also funding and managing the endowment with transparency. Their mission is to give back to the country and university they hold dear to their hearts.

Every year the group hosts a golf tournament in a different location (US, Canada, England, or Zambia). This year they chose the the Fairfield Inn & Suites in Millville, NJ. The event is traditionally three days, with two days of golf competition. The money raised during the invitational is donated to the Luanshya Boys Club. Their organization now boasts almost 200 co-ed members of both golfers and non-golfers.

It was a great weekend for the hotel with a total of 63 rooms occupied each night, for a total of 199 roomnights. Mr. Janak Vashee, coordinator of the Luanshya Boys Golf Invitational, presented Sales Manager Margie Williams of the Fairfield Inn & Suites Millville, with a plaque of appreciation for their support, generosity and hospitality at the Luanshya Boys Golf Invitational.



Getting to Know You

COURTYARD/FAIRFIELD BY MARRIOTT FRESH MEADOWS/QUEENS NY



Welcome aboard to our new Dual Property Director of Sales, Joe Slane. Joe joins the team with a plethora of local NYC group sales experience. His most recent position was Director of Group Sales from

the Roger Smith Hotel in NYC where was responsible for creating relationships with planners, maintaining the planner network, and training staff on how to use various business and market share tools. Joe is a graduate of Penn State University where he earned a Bachelors in Business Administration. He holds MPI, CMP, and SGMP professional affiliations. A proud father of 4, and grandfather of 2, Joe is an avid Philadelphia sports fan. Good Luck Joe!

ATLANTIC HOUSE INN

Dan Mitchell, the new GM at Atlantic House Inn, a fabulous summer boutique Hotel on the seacoast of York Beach, Maine, was nurtured with "a server's heart" from an early age.



When Dan was 4 years old, his parents (of modest financial means) welcomed Cuban refugee families into their own home of eight children, at a time when Fidel Castro had just taken over their country.

58 years later, Dan continues to stress "hospitality, kindness, and service" as his journey over the years has had him assuming GM operations at a ski resort in northern NH, owning his own restaurants and lounges over 20 years, and working on both the east and west coasts in developing strong relationships of hospitality in both the for profit and non-profit arenas.

Continued next page...

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

The current administration announced this week, its intention of doubling the number of work place investigations and audits with the goal of ensuring US businesses are not employing people whom are here illegally. Thankfully, we all use E-Verify in the normal course of our business.

Having said that, here are seven must do's, as suggested by Ohio attorney Jon Hyman's blog, all related to the I-9 form, with which all of us are very familiar.

Here are seven important things that should be front of mind:

1. I-9's are low-hanging fruit for any employer. The government makes the form available online, complete with instructions how to fill it out.
2. You must complete an I-9 at the beginning of employment for every employee you hire (except for employees hired on or before Nov. 6, 1986, who are continuing in their employment and have a reasonable expectation of employment at all times). It does not apply to independent contractors (but be wary of who is, and is not, a bona fide independent contractor).
3. An employer's I-9 obligations do not depend on the citizenship of the employee. All employees means all employees, regardless of citizenship or nationality.
4. All employees also means all employees regardless of tenure or length of service. The obligation to retain an I-9 for each person hired applies from the date of hire, even if the employment ends shortly thereafter or if the hired employee never completes work for pay.
5. Employers must retain I-9's for the later of three years from the date of hire, or one year from the date of termination. You can choose to retain them on paper, microfilm (really), or electronically.
6. You may choose to copy or scan documents an employee presents when completing an I-9. Making photocopies of an employee's document(s), however, does not take the place of completing or retaining the I-9 itself. If you choose to retain copies of an employee's documents, to avoid a Title VII violation, you must do so for all employees regardless of actual or perceived national origin or citizenship status.
7. The Department of Homeland Security, the Department of Labor, and the Immigrant and Employee Rights Section of the Department of Justice are all authorized to inspect an employer's I-9 forms.



... Dan Mitchell continued

Dan is excited to be able to bring his passion and energy to Atlantic House Inn (continuing what previous GM's had before him). His personal passions all surround his love of photography (especially seacoasts and lakes), his amazing family (Dan will welcome his first grandchild this Autumn), and his lifelong commitment to helping those in need. In the off season's he's a strong supporter of the largest family and individual emergency/transitional homeless shelter in NH.

Dan understands Mother Teresa's quote, "If you take time to judge people, you won't have time to love them." Dan believes that his AHL guests and anyone he comes in contact with in his daily life, deserves the treasure of hospitality, kindness, and service. Welcome Dan!

Property Happenings

SPRINGHILL SUITES QUAKERTOWN

The hotel was the recipient of **booking.com's** 2017 Guest Review Award, earning a 9.1 overall average! Holding the award are two of the hotel's GSRs, Nizayah and Chad. Congrats team!



ELITE INN

Congratulations to GM Gerald Lawton who just celebrated his 1 year anniversary with the Elite Inn in St. George, SC. "I have learned a great deal over the past year - especially patience," said Lawton. Gerald has not missed one day of work in the past year... now that notable!

HOMEWOOD SUITES GATEWAY HILLS



Easter morning was a celebration for both employees and guests at the Homewood Suites. Lucky guests searched for eggs. This lucky lady found 500 Honors Points in her egg. One lucky employee found an egg with a paid day off inside. This joint was hoppin' with Easter fun and games!

Travel Trivia

1. What city is home to the world's tallest Ferris Wheel?
a. Orlando b. New York City c. Las Vegas d. London
2. Which of the following attractions has the most annual visitors?
a. Las Vegas Strip b. Niagara Falls c. Faneuil Hall
d. Times Square
3. Which of the following is not true about the attraction called "The Ledge"?
a. There are 4 glass enclosures
b. It extends 4.3 feet out with 1,353 feet underneath
c. It overlooks the Grand Canyon
d. It is on the 103rd floor of a building
4. New Jersey's roller coaster Zumanjaro: Drop of Doom, drops its riders a record-breaking height that is equivalent to how many stories?
a. 30 b. 36 c. 39 d. 41
5. The World's Tallest Waterslide, Verruckt, is located in Kansas City. It is a German word that means?
a. Waterfall b. Fast c. Insane d. Wedgie

Answers on Page 6

What TO DO and What NOT To Do When Interviewing

Excerpt from an article written by Oleg Vishnepolsky, Global CTO at DailyMail Online

Remember, candidates do not get paid for their time. Interviewers do. It is considered disrespectful to waste a candidate's time, so make sure BEFORE you ask a candidate to come in for an interview that you have pre-qualified them and reviewed their credentials. Make sure there is a good reason why you are interviewing this candidate

Candidates more often PREPARE for interviews. Interviewers often come to interviews UNPREPARED and read resumes in front of candidates. It is unprofessional.

Interviewers do not explain what the job is about, what it is like working there, advantages and potentials.

Interviewers ask questions like "where do you see yourself in 5 years". Instead Interviewers should explain where they see their company in 6 months.

The process takes too long; candidates go through too many rounds of interviews with too many different Interviewers.

Interviewers ask the same questions over and over again, making interviews look like interrogation.

Consider paying travel expenses to candidates interviewing for senior positions.

Do not hire people to work FOR you. Hire people to work WITH... people you can learn from, and eager to learn from you.

Instead of being upbeat, interviewers often look tired, bored, stressed.

Do not only look for faults in candidates. Nobody is perfect. Interviewers are often unwilling to take any risks, and keep looking for that perfect candidate to come along.

Stop treating candidates as "just" applicants. Treat them as people, like you want to be treated.

Industry News

HVAC from Hell

Excerpted from a blog written by Larry Mogelonsky

Any hotel that does not deliver a good night's sleep to its guests because of loud or non-functioning HVAC systems is a failure!

HVAC systems aren't for rookies. Older buildings are particularly complex, as the control systems are almost entirely mechanical with dated and often broken or inefficient parts. Often air conditioning and heating are separate systems. Humidification is another touchy issue that is rarely addressed in many operations.

So, what can a hotelier do, save for a costly retrofit? First, speak to your engineering team and ensure that all systems are operating with maximum efficiency. Conduct maintenance as per manufacturer's recommended schedule. Replace any parts or systems that are past their best before date. Next, look at ways to reduce noise. Often with external units, there are sound deadening kits available that isolate vibration. Ask about multi-speed fans and compressors that have quieter start-ups.

In climates that are dry, examine the addition of supplemental humidification units, available as either built-in or portable, albeit the latter is slightly less elegant. If not in the room when the guest arrives, these units should be identified as available at the front desk at check-in or ready for the maintenance team to deploy by request.

Remember the mantra that a guest that does not get a good night's sleep will never be a repeat guest. So, above all, ask your customers how their sleep was. Get firsthand feedback and when a problem arises be sure to act swiftly to remedy the situation.

Parasites and bacteria may be lurking in hotel pools, hot tubs, CDC warns

Excerpted from a CNN Report by Susan Scutti

Hotels set the stage for nearly a third of all disease outbreaks in the US linked to chlorinated or treated water -- such as pools and hot tubs -- according to a new government report. During a 15-year period, a total of 493 outbreaks linked to treated recreational water were reported in 46 states and Puerto Rico. The report defines an outbreak as similar illnesses occurring in two or more people that are linked by location and time to a particular body of treated water.

All told, these outbreaks caused at least 27,219 illnesses and 8 deaths, according to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Thursday Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. The culprits: parasites and bacteria. More than half (58%) of the outbreaks with a confirmed source were caused by the parasite *Cryptosporidium*, commonly called Crypto, which can survive even in well-maintained pools and can give swimmers gastrointestinal illness and diarrhea.

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Prepare Now For 2018 Hurricane Season

Being prepared is half the battle. States and communities around the country are reviewing procedures, checking supplies, and conducting drills to make sure that their physical plant and staff are ready and able. While communities are preparing - hotels should also be prepared. Here are a few useful tips for preparedness:

- Purchase (or review) flood insurance for your home/business and make sure premiums are paid and you are protected. There is a 30-day waiting period for flood insurance policies to take effect so plan ahead as most property policies do not include flood protection.
- Secure loose, lightweight objects such as patio/pool furniture, garbage cans, etc. inside. Trim or remove damaged trees and limbs close enough to fall on structures. Secure loose rain gutters and downspouts and clear any clogged areas of debris.
- Purchase/service portable/whole-house generator to use during power outages.
- Take photos and document the condition of your home/business prior to a storm to aid in future insurance claims.
- Document employee's responsibilities and role(s) before and review with each employee. Conduct drills and test your emergency plans to ensure staff comprehends their roles. Follow-up with an after action report and lessons-learned session.
- Contact your vendors to understand their preparedness plans and how a disaster will impact your supply chain.
- Relocate valuables and IT systems to the upper level of your facility, away from large windows and doors or to a more secure location if needed.
- Collect and store critical paperwork. Ensure vital records are protected: analyze your off-site backup record storage, place valuable documentation and digital storage in a waterproof, fireproof box.
- Create an "emergency kit". It can take several days or weeks for government services and assistance to reach you, depending on the severity of the storm and geographic location. Sample items include:
 - At least a 3-day supply of water and non-perishable food. Don't forget infant formula and diapers as well as pet food and supplies.
 - Medications for at least one week and copies of prescriptions. Prepare medical equipment, assistive technology and backup batteries. Double check first aid kit.
 - Have ample supply of flashlights/batteries as well as glow sticks. Double check tools, tarps, rope, and other items that might be needed. Make sure you have smart clothing available, sturdy shoes and/or boots, ponchos or rain gear.
 - Have emergency funds available to sustain your family or business for several days. Consider funds to cover fuel, lodging, and meals as well as pet boarding. Do not rely on credit or debit cards as critical networks such as Internet or electrical infrastructure may be damaged.
 - Make sure you have antibacterial soap and disinfectant, paper towels and toilet paper, bleach and rubbing alcohol, toothbrushes and toothpaste.
 - Write down and store phone numbers for emergency services, utilities and service providers (with account numbers), medical providers, veterinarians, insurance companies and other critical services.
 - Prepare extra cell phone charging devices and batteries, AM/FM radio, NOAA Weather Radio with additional batteries.

For more information on how to prepare your business, family and property against weather threats, visit your state emergency preparedness website.

Every issue I write an article about selling or leadership. This issue, I wanted to address Guest Satisfaction. In researching my topic, I happened on this article and rather than try to rewrite what this author so eloquently wrote, I decided to just publish his article. I've highlighted a couple of lines that I feel are important.

Happy Impressing the Guest!
Linda

3 Reasons Why Focusing On Guest Satisfaction Is A Losing Battle: Here's What You Should Do Instead...

By Justin Effron, Co-Founder and CEO of ALICE. Published by hospitalitynet on 2/2/2018.

In the world of retail, knowing what your customer wants, when they want it, how much, and how frequently can be the difference between a booming business and going out of business. In the service industry however, getting to know your customer's preferences isn't quite as clear-cut.

Trying to understand the capricious whims and complex emotions of human beings you're hoping to please is an exercise in futility at best and can actually harm your relationships at worst. Why? [Because pretending to know someone you don't really have a deep relationship with can come across as presumptuous and insensitive.](#) And should your guesses actually be correct, you can inadvertently come across even worse because no one likes to think of themselves as being that predictable.

So what's a GM to do to make their guests feel right at home? [The solution is to not make their stay anything like home. Make your guests feel like guests!](#) In this regard, we've listed three common pitfalls of trying to placate clients that hotels often fall into, and their respective solutions. By putting the focus on a winning culture instead of winning over customers, you'll be more effective in getting the desired result: satisfied guests who'll want to return again and again.

1. If You're Trying To Guess What Guests Want, You're Probably Getting It Wrong

The same guest doesn't necessarily behave the same way from one visit to the next. For starters, that guest could be on a business trip, family vacation, romantic getaway, or girls' night out. Even if it's always a business trip, what's the nature of the business this time around? Is it pitching a new client, trying to keep from losing a client, or being wooed as a client by another business? Is it an easygoing trip or a stressful one where everything is on the line—including his or her job? What's his mood like now? What's the season? What's going on in her life?

If your hotel bases its services and amenities on what a particular guest wanted the last time they stayed with you, you're probably not going to get it right. So why even try? No one expects you to. [What guests expect is great service, convenient amenities, comfortable accommodations, and the preferences they'd requested for this visit.](#) Just do that and do a spectacular job of it, without trying to know what your guest will want before they do.

2. Great Service Is More Important Than Great Customization

Hotels have yet to get service so perfect that they're ready to focus on customized stays. For the most part, these highly specific techniques aimed at generating loyalty fail to leave guests with the loyal connection that was intended. As discussed above, people don't necessarily want the same thing every time, but even if some of your guesses are correct, guests are rarely all that impressed. Knowing that they like decaf in their room or a certain kind of pillow isn't going to impress anyone about the quality of your service or details of your memory. [It only serves to remind them that you've got a profile on them in your computer.](#)

What would impress them a lot more is a staff that makes them feel good by remembering their names, asking about their families, and wanting to know about their lives. People love to talk about themselves. They feel positive about those who like them and are like them (similar interests, values, etc.). [You want a staff that remembers guests, asks how they've been, and genuinely seems to care. And the kind of staff that tends to do that, is one that's happy and productive. By better incentivizing staff and giving them better tools to do their jobs, you'll see much greater impact on the guest than leaving their favorite board game in their room.](#) And this brings us to our last point.

3. Stop Guessing What Guests Want And Start Focusing On Staff Success

Trying to proactively predict what every guest wants is labor-intensive, resource-draining, and usually off the mark. However, giving your staff what they want is much easier since you know them better and have more control over providing the benefits they desire. The labor market is more competitive than ever at hotels. In a 2015 report, Deloitte found employee turnover at hotels to be as high as 31%—nearly double the average rate for other industries. [Your best option to attract higher quality employees with fewer turnovers is to provide them with a great place to work. That means creating a positive, uplifting culture that's as stress-free as possible and focuses on teamwork so the entire staff feels a sense of pride about their role in it all.](#)

(There's more info. To read the entire article, follow this [link](#).)

Travel Trivia Answers

1. c - Las Vegas. 550 ft. tall, 28 glass enclosed gondolas each holding as many as 40 people.
2. d - Times Square. Roughly 40 million visitors a year.
3. c - Take the elevator to the top of the Willis Tower in Chicago. The Ledge is the highest public viewing area in the US. It is a plexiglas box that extends from the side of the building with unimpeded views of how far you would fall if the floor gave away.
4. d - Drops 415 ft. - the equivalent of a 41-story building. You'll hit speeds of up to 90 mph on the gut-churning descent.
5. c - Insane. You'll reach speeds of up to 70 mph with a drop of 168 feet (higher than Niagara Falls).

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At least six of the eight deaths and 16% of the illnesses could be attributed to bacterial Legionella, which causes Legionnaires' disease. Another type of bacteria, Pseudomonas, which can cause folliculitis ("hot tub rash") and otitis externa ("swimmers' ear"), sickened nearly 13% of those enjoying recreational waters. Both Legionella and Pseudomonas can withstand disinfectants.

What's a swimmer or parent of swimmers to do? "The advice is pretty standard no matter who you are," said Michele Hlavsa, chief of the CDC's Healthy Swimming Program. "Once in the water, don't drink the water you swim in." She added that, even though this simple step can protect you against some germs, it does not protect you against everything in recreational waters. "Also, before you get into the water, check out the inspection scores," Hlavsa said. Just like restaurants, public swimming pools are scored by inspectors, and many will post their scores either online or near the swimming facility itself.

"The message is simple: Keep your children out of the pool or hot tub if they are having diarrhea. We are talking about preventing an illness by prescribing basic hygiene," Glatzer said. "If Crypto is confirmed, it's essential to remain out of the water for two weeks."

Hlavsa said the new report is simply an opportunity to get the message out: Check and test the water before diving in, and never drink it: "We are by no means saying not to swim."

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Welcome to the emoji future.

How emoji are made and what new emoji you can expect soon

Excerpted from an article written by Shayanne Gal and Rachel Premark from Business Insider

Emoji aren't decided by Apple, Samsung, or any other tech company. They're often dreamed up by people like me or you, Jeremy Burge, the creator of Emojipedia and renowned emoji expert, told Business Insider.

Anyone can propose their own emoji ideas to the Unicode Consortium, a non-profit organization that ensures that multiple languages, alphabets, and emoji can be portrayed on screens worldwide. To do so requires following a specific set of submission guidelines. The LA Times reports that Unicode receives around 100 proposals a year for new emoji.

In order for an emoji to exist anywhere from a MacBook to Huawei device, members of Unicode emoji subcommittee must vote to approve them first. Then, they're sent to the Unicode

Technical Committee for a

final evaluation. For approval, emoji should be "visually-distinctive," Burge said. It's crucial that the viewer can decipher what the emoji is without too much analysis. There also must be indication that the emoji will be popular and usable.

What's next for emoji? Written language has always demanded new ways of expressing our emotions and daily lives. The first smiley face may have appeared as early as 1648, while the computer science community at Carnegie Mellon University developed symbols in 1982 like "<-)" for "dumb questions."

Emoji in 2018 push us further yet. In the same way that you can hold down on a hand or person emoji to select their skin tone, Burge said someday you may be able to choose your cake frosting color, the fur color of a cat, or whether your hot dog has ketchup or mustard (or neither) the same way. In fact, Burge said emoji users are already looking for this level of customization. "Because you have the skin tone pop-up, people have a mental model of pressing down on the pizza and getting the toppings," Burge said.

More representation and inclusivity is also on the horizon, Burge said. Apple has proposed 13 new accessibility emoji, including prosthetic limbs, a service dog, an ear with hearing aids, and others. By late 2018, emoji with gray hair, no hair, red hair, and curly hair will be usable.

But, despite the relentless addition of new emoji, Burge said hearts and faces remain the most popular. "The smilies are communicating, 'Here's what I'm saying in words and here's what I'm feeling.' None of the other emojis do that," Burge said. "Except the eggplant, maybe."

FOOD & DRINK

