

TeleGRAM

Great American Hotel Group Newsletter

Around the Block

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

Ben Gosbee - 1 year

A Little Bit Wiser

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

Adam Robitaille - August 4

Dave Akridge - August 14

Jerry Ianella - September 14

Sheri Kresky - September 20

Ben Gosbee - September 22

Gabrielle Smith - September 24

Celebration Station

In case you want to celebrate, here is a list of National and "other" holidays:

Ice Cream Sandwich Day (8/2), Book Lovers Day (8/9), World Photo Day (8/19), Bow Tie Day (8/28), Eat Outside Day (8/31), Cheese Pizza Day (9/5), Positive Thinking Day (9/13), and Good Neighbor Day (9/28). Remember salesmanship means being unique and standing out from the crowd. Some of these "days" will allow you to get your customer's attention in a positive and unique manner.

A Laugh A Day...



Inn at Rio Rancho Joins GRAM Portfolio of Properties

Great American Hotel Group, Inc. recently added a third New Mexico property to its portfolio. The Inn at Rio Rancho is a 120 room hotel situated on 5 acres and located less than 20 miles north of Albuquerque and just 12 miles from Old Town Santa Fe. GRAM has been appointed the management company by a southern California bank. The property will be marketed for sale.

"We are delighted to have this property join our ever growing portfolio" noted Dave Akridge, President of GRAM. "Our goal is to help the hotel leadership reboot and become the success we know it can be." Akridge added, "We are fortunate to have a great team of GM's who are 'boots on the ground' at the Inn and who have accomplished a great deal since the takeover."

Jerry Ianella, GM at the Garrett Desert Inn in Santa Fe and long-time associate with GRAM, and Sheela Patel, GM at the Pan American Inn & Suites in Albuquerque have been instrumental in the smooth transition of services to the new management company.

"The trust and comfort level we have with Jerry and Sheela being on site during the takeover is a tribute to their hard work," noted Akridge. "They have successfully balanced the transition tasks all while keeping their own properties focused on the right course. We thank them for their hard work."

The Inn at Rio Rancho is a full service hotel with banquet and event space, restaurant, pool, and fitness room.



Getting to Know You

HOMEWOOD SUITES GATEWAY HILLS

Welcome aboard to new Sales Manager Trish Elliott. Trish joins the team from the Radisson



Nashua where she served as Catering Sales Manager for 2 years. Past experience also includes stints at Teresa's Prime as Director of Corporate Events, Davio's Northern Italian Steakhouse as Event Sales Manager, The Back

Bay Hotel as Food & Beverage Manager, Turner Fisheries at the Westin Hotel Copley Square as Outlet Manager, and at the PGA National Resort & Spa as Assistant Outlet Manager.

Outside of work she loves spending time with her husband and daughter. Family comes first! They love the beach and spend most weekends at the lake in the summer.

Trish is also an avid traveler. Her mother was in the airline business and she believes her love of travel is a result of the many trips they took together. She also credits her love of the hospitality industry to an early introduction into travel.

Eating out is one of her passions, as well as finding and trying new restaurants. Trish boasts an intensive knowledge of the food and beverage industry so she is very particular when it comes to food. Welcome to the team Ms. Elliott!

HAMPTON INN & SUITES EAST HARTFORD

Please join us in welcoming the new Sales Manager in East Hartford. Morena Cahtarevic, formerly a Front Office manager at the East Hartford hotel, has spent the last 5 years at the Homewood Suites in Southington as Operations Manager.



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

7 of the Best Situational Interview Questions

By Caroline Forsey for HubSpot

In an interview, let's say I asked you, "Tell me about a time you worked through a conflict with a coworker?" You'd probably think about a past experience, consider the lessons you learned from it, and articulate what happened and how it felt. You'd likely mention any shortcomings you had, how you've grown, and how you'd deal with conflict with coworkers in the future.

But let's say I asked you a slightly different version of that question instead: "How would you handle it if you were assigned a project with a coworker, and you two had differing opinions on how to proceed?" That changes the game a bit. To answer, you could no longer rely on any fairly familiar story about yourself. Instead, you must use your problem-solving skills and your sense of self to answer how you'd hypothetically deal with a conflict that could arise in the future, without the advantage of hindsight. And, you'd need to think on your feet.

We previously covered behavioral interview questions like the STAR method, which asks candidates to articulate past experiences and what they learned. It's important to use behavioral questions in an interview, but there's another method you should integrate, as well.

Situational interview questions are largely hypothetical and can be intentionally ambiguous, such as, "How would you handle X if you ... ?" or "What would you do if ... ?"

Situational questions give you the opportunity to evaluate your candidate's quick-thinking skills, while seeing how she responds to curveballs, which is critical information when deciding whether she's qualified for the role.

Here are seven situational questions you can use when interviewing a candidate. What you should look for in the applicant's answer?

1. How would you handle it if your team resisted a new idea you introduced? (*respect and awareness of other's opinions and thoughts*)
2. How would you handle it if your employee wasn't meeting your expectations, or was performing below average? (*able to handle tough conversations with associates, honesty and recognize constructive feedback*)
3. What would you do if you were assigned to work closely with a colleague on a project, but you two just couldn't seem to see eye-to-eye? (*flexibility and ability to compromise*)
4. What would you do if you were working hard on a project and were almost finished when the goals or priorities were changed? (*willingness to adjust, adaptable*)
5. How would you handle an instance of receiving criticism from a superior? (*emotional maturity and able to learn, grow and accept mistakes, be coachable*)
6. What would you do if you were almost finished with a project on a tight deadline, when you realize you'd made a mistake back in the beginning that required you to start over? (*be honest about mistake, no cover up, admit mistake*)
7. How would you handle it if you were unsatisfied by an aspect of your job? (*understand some tasks less enjoyable and appreciate necessity of those tasks*)



Property Happenings

ATLANTIC HOUSE INN



New tenant, Fresh Press - Organic Juice, Smoothies and More has opened on the ground level of the Atlantic House Inn in York Beach, ME. The shop offers guests and locals options like juice, smoothies, cold press juice, and food. They are a welcome addition to the hotel and community as visitors are always looking for unique food/beverage opportunities. Other businesses on property include Pomp Boutique, My Wine-y Sister, and the Sand Dollar Bar & Grille.

FAIRFIELD INN & SUITES MILLVILLE

On Thursday, July 12th, the team from the Fairfield Inn & Suites volunteered with Urban Promise for their annual summer Carnival. Urban Promise Ministries is located in the City of Camden, operates a fully accredited school from K-12, and hosts an outstanding summer enrichment program that meets from July 2-August 24. The carnival consisted of games, devotions, and food/beverage. Highlighting the event was the best "Water Ice Team Fairfield" led by General Manager Jeffrey Webb who scooped 6 flavors of water ice, which was especially awesome in the 95 degree weather.



Operational Do's & Don'ts Trivia

1. What is NOT an important trait when hiring housekeepers?
a. Height/Weight b. Age c. Commute time d. Both A & B
2. Who is in charge at the hotel when other managers have gone for the day?
a. GSR b. Night Maintenance c. Auditor d. MOD
3. Which of the following 'sayings' is a popular guide to hiring staff in the hospitality industry?
a. Muddy shoes, sticky fingers
b. Everyone has something to hide
c. Go for sales
d. Hire the smile
4. Which of these is NOT one of the three most important things to consider when purchasing linens?
a. Durability b. Laundry Cost c. Price d. Brand
5. Which hand-drying method is NOT allowed in a hand washing station?
a. Hand Dryer b. Paper Towel c. Air d. Common Towel

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USA Hospitality School Visits GRAM

Great American Hotel group recently hosted the University of South Alabama Hospitality and Tourism Management School in Dover at the GRAM offices. Aimee Meyers, Development Officer - College of Education & Professional Studies, Global USA, set up the first ever South Alabama Northeast Alumni event at The Peddler's Daughter in Nashua, NH. While far away from the its Gulf Coast campus in Mobile, Alabama, the Alumni gathering was a huge success and set the stage in building larger gatherings that could meet on a more frequent basis.

Dr. Robert Thompson is the newly named Chair of the University of South Alabama Hospitality and Tourism Management School. Dr. Thompson brings the energy, enthusiasm and more importantly, the practical experience of being in our field, working for Wyndham for 20 years, Circus Circus, and other hospitality properties. The University of South Alabama Hospitality degree is designed to provide the necessary skill set to enter into many of the wide choices of hospitality service jobs. Course curriculum provides numerous opportunities to gather first hand information from those in the field as a regular part of any hospitality course, the opportunity to hear from guest speakers already established in the field, and have that one on one interaction to network with those employers seeking new industry graduates.



Dr. Robert Thompson and Aimee Meyers in front of the GRAM Offices in Dover. Note the USA Flag flying over the door!

Most South Alabama students in the program work in the field to gather practical experience, are required to intern in the industry and graduate with job readily available.

While the Hospitality School is only three years old, the growth in this department has exceeded all enrollment expectations. Good things are happening in Hospitality at the University of South Alabama.

Roomer Has It

COURTYARD AND FAIRFIELD INN & SUITES QUEENS/FRESH MEADOWS

With just a few hours before both hotels opened, the team joined Linda Komornik from Great American Hotel Group for a celebratory dinner at a local restaurant. Great job team!

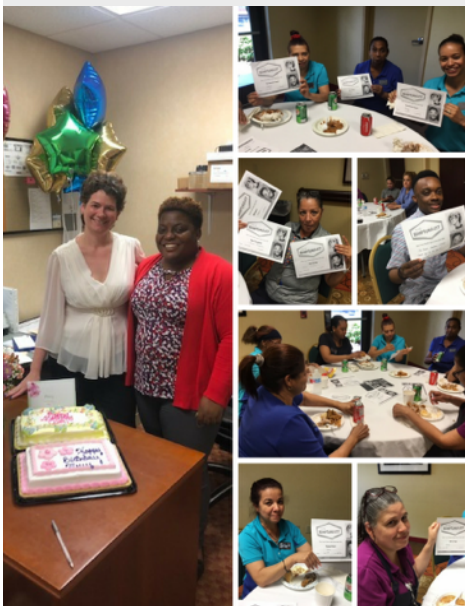


Pictured from left to right: Alexa Silver - AGM; Brian Stokes - Director of Operations; Leidy Perez - Director of Food & Beverage; Jon Kozma - GM; Joe Slane - Director of Sales & Marketing, and Linda Komornik.

The two hotels officially softly opened on June 6th. A grand opening celebration is being planned for late September. A much anticipated addition to the community, travelers have embraced the two new hotels and occupancy has ramped up nicely with several sold out nights under their belts.

HAMPTON INN & SUITES EAST HARTFORD

It was Team Appreciation Week in East Hartford! Property leadership organized a luncheon featuring KFC chicken and all the fixing for the staff. Also, both General Manager Mercy Breitenbach (left) and Assistant General Manager Charlotte Thompson (right) were celebrated on their birthday. It is a coincidence that their birthdays are July 22 and 23 (respectively).



A Tale of Two Cities

When a little guest leaves their treasured toy or stuffed animal behind, they are often inconsolable. While all hotels have standard Lost & Found policies and procedures, the Hampton Inn in East Hartford recently took giant steps to assure a little guest that her trusted friend was not lost, sad, or lonely,

Hampton Inn & Suites East Hartford:



When the staff at our Hampton Inn & Suites East Hartford CT received a call from a distraught parent that their child's beloved stuffed Sloth had been left behind, Nicole and Charlotte stepped up to find the toy and return it to a very upset little guest.

In order to ease the little one's mind, the two took a few pictures of Mr. Sloth enjoying his vacation at the hotel, assuring them he was safe and having fun, and then tucked the pictures in the box before sending him home! Now that's "Feeling The Hamptonality".

There is much publicized in industry news lately about the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). This, in coordination with the May 25th European Union (EU) implemented policy, allows individuals to now have more control over their personal data. Our standard of protection for guest data and privacy, requires hotel properties to comply with GDPR requirements, even if they are not physically located in the EU.

So, with privacy and security of data on our minds, what happens when a public figure decides to have a secret wedding in your town and you are the host hotel? You do what the staff at the SpringHill Suites Quakertown team did - they kept the secret!

SpringHill Suites Quakertown



Philadelphia Eagles quarterback and Super Bowl champion Carson Wentz married long-time girlfriend Madison Oberg on Saturday, July 14th at the Lake House Inn, exclusive partner of the SpringHill Suites Quakertown.

The official wedding hashtag was #WentzUponATime and both national and social media had thought that the wedding was to take place in July 2019 in Kentucky. To avoid a media spectacle, the bride and her family booked the event at the stylish Lake House Inn and reserved a wedding block of rooms at the hotel under another family name. Not until 2 weeks before the actual wedding, was the true identity of the wedding party announced as it was important to the families that they protect the info so that the couple and notable guests could enjoy the day without paparazzi.

The staff at the hotel did what they were supposed to and not until a unsuspecting canoe enthusiast paddling the lake discovered what was happening at the Lake House Inn, did the public become aware of the festivities. Watch the follow-up broadcast on the local news affiliate! Congrats Team Quakertown!



How to Suffer in Sales *By Anthony Iannario - July 19, 2018*

"The first way that you might suffer in sales is wishing that you had hot, ready to buy leads burning up the phone lines. Ready to buy leads are much better than targets in the mind of those who suffer, because ready to buy leads don't require that you sell. Targets, or what I call dream clients, require that you displace your competitor, which requires a relatively high level of skills as a salesperson.

You might also suffer in sales by wishing that prospecting was easy. You might wish you didn't need to use the telephone to make outbound calls to prospective clients. You wish that you could sit comfortably behind your screens sending emails to schedule meetings instead. You wish that your brand was big enough on LinkedIn that your prospects hunted you down instead of you having to hunt yourself. Selling is in large part about creating opportunities, and that requires prospecting.

Believing that your client should not perceive you as a commodity, nor should they treat you as suspect just because you're a salesperson will leave you disappointed. Wishing that the bar was lower and that you didn't need the business acumen and the situational knowledge necessary to be perceived as a peer doesn't in any way, shape, or form lower the bar. The reality is that your behavior determines how you are perceived. You decide whether you are a time waster or a value creator. You decide whether you are a commodity or a strategic partner.

It may not seem fair that your prospective client is going to resist making the commitments that you need them to make in order to help them produce the result they believe is necessary now. They will resist having certain meetings, bringing in other stakeholders, and even something so little as providing you with the information you need to do an analysis of their current state. The fact that you must control the process, and you have to sell the client on making and keeping their commitments, well, that is what salespeople do. In fact, that's why we call it selling.



There is a difference between being efficient and being effective. Efficiency is doing things faster, with greater ease, and with less effort. Effectiveness is about producing an outcome. About 80% of your revenue likely comes from approximately 20% of your clients, plus or minus. This being true, it would make sense that effectiveness be the goal in the 20% of activities responsible for creating 80% of your results. Efficiency might be a better goal for the 80% of things that don't move the needle.

Being angry, upset, or disappointed by the things that happen in the normal course of business is a recipe for suffering. The fact that your operations team struggles to deliver the outcomes you sold is the reality of execution. Your client refusing to make the changes they agreed to make as you were going through the process and causing them not to be able to generate the results you promised, is also something happens in the normal course of business. If you are going to be upset over the things that happen in the normal course of business, you're going to spend a lot of time being upset.

The recipe for suffering is wishing that something was different than it is. In large part, we humans wish that things that are outside of our control were in our control, so we could have the certainty of outcomes we desire. The truth is, the only thing that you can control is yourself, and most of us are very good at that. If you are going to try to exercise control of yourself, you may as well start with working to control your response to things that are difficult, things that are uncomfortable and the things that are outside of your control. To do less is to suffer."

Happy Suffering In Sales!

Linda

Operational Trivia Answers

1. d - No one's height, weight or age matters as long as they can do the job.
2. d - Manager on Duty. This typically rotates and all managers/supervisors at the hotel take turns.
3. d - 'Hire the smile' applies to the attitude a potential worker brings to the workplace. "Hire the smile, everything else is trainable."
4. d - Durability is generally determined by the thread count, but the type of material used is also a factor. Purchase price is always important. You must never forget to factor in the laundry cost. The heavier the sheets the more it will cost the hotel to have them cleaned.
5. d - The use of a common hand towel is not permitted because they can transmit contaminants from one person's hand to another.

Continued from Page 2 ...

Morena started working in the hospitality business at a very young age. At the age of 14 she worked in housekeeping at the Sheraton in Burlington, VA. Always knowing that "hospitality" was her interest, she boasts a Hospitality degree from Champlain College, in Burlington, VT and a Liberal Arts degree from Community College of Vermont.

She is originally from Bosnia, coming to the US in 1997 and settling in Vermont. In 2011, she moved to Connecticut.

Morena is a mother of 5 month old Emma and enjoys traveling, dancing, and cooking. "My co-workers would say that I am devoted to my job, a caring person, a team player, and always comes to work with a smile on my face. This is my first sales position, I look forward learning new things, and establishing new business," notes Ms. Cahtarevic.

We welcome Morena to the team!

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GRAM Turns Seven

On July 14th, Great American Hotel Group celebrated their seven year anniversary.

While our mutual history is certainly longer through our Ocean Hospitalities, Inc. and GAP Management days, and we are essentially the same company, our seven year anniversary is something to celebrate.

Dave Akridge, President of Great American Hotel Group noted in a message to all the company staff, "Our journey has made us better and I personally appreciate the support and sacrifice that each of you made over the years. Each day we all grow stronger and our company becomes a better a company as a result. Some seven years later we not only survived but are beginning to prosper."



A Little Help From Our Friends



From left to right: Jeff Webb, Margie Williams and Jack Surrency

Mr. Jack Surrency, Cumberland County Freeholder, visited the Fairfield Inn & Suites Millville recently. General Manager Jeff Webb and Sales Manager Margie Williams had the opportunity show him the hotel and to discuss the proposed exit off of Route 55. This new exit would allow guests quicker and more convenient access to the hotel and area shopping. The hotel looks forward to working with Mr. Surrency to make this happen.

Dover Staff Grows By One

Garrett Moylan has joined the staff at the GRAM corporate office in Dover as Executive Assistant, replacing Candy Grimbilas who retired last Spring. His previous experience includes working as the Office Manager for Forward Merch/JSR Merchandising, Admissions Coordinator at the Partridge House Assisted Living Community, and Recreation Assistant at Oceanside Skilled Nursing and Rehab. A 2009 graduate from the University of New Hampshire, where he earned a BS in Recreation Management and Policy, Garrett hails from Portsmouth, NH and has lived in Dover, NH for the last four years.

Mr. Moylan is athletically inclined having played three sports growing up all the way through high school, including basketball, baseball and football (his favorite). He is an avid sports fan and follows all four of the Boston/New England sports teams. He enjoys going to the beach, fishing, playing golf and enjoying the outdoors.

He is excited to be joining the GRAM team and is looking forward to making solid working relationships with everyone involved. We welcome Garrett to the team!

