

# TeleGRAM

## Most Wonderful Time of the Year

In case you want to celebrate, here is a list of National and "other" holidays: 12/7 - Letter Writing Day; 12/12 - Gingerbread House Day; 12/21 - Ugly Sweater Day; 12/26 - Thank You Note Day; 12/31 - Make Up Your Mind Day; 1/3 - Fruitcake Toss Day; 1/8 - Clean Off Your Desk Day; 1/15 - Strawberry Ice Cream Day; 1/19 - Popcorn Day; 1/27 - Chocolate Cake Day.

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.

## Have a Holly Jolly Christmas

The Great American Hotel Group office will be closed on Wednesday, December 25th and Wednesday, January 1st. All other days we will be open and available. Please do not hesitate to reach out to us via cell phone if you need us.

Managers on duty will vary, so please check our voice mail and email away messages for details. GRAM prides itself on being accessible to our 24/7 properties. All of us can be of service for most every situation at any time - even a holiday.

## O Come All Ye Faithful

May the Holiday Season bring only happiness and joy to you and your loved ones.



*SpringHill Suites by Marriott Altamonte Springs management team, from left to right: General Manager Greg Teagarden, Assistant General Manager/Sales Manager Cristina Regis, Executive Housekeeper Naomi Velazquez, and Chief Engineer Javier Estrada.*

## Altamonte For Christmas Is A SpringHill Suites

Great American Hotel Group has been awarded a management contract for the beautiful SpringHill Suites in Altamonte Springs, FL. Located just 22 miles north of Orlando International Airport and 14 miles southwest of Orlando Sanford International Airport, the hotel is perfectly situated in the heart of Altamonte Springs, close enough to the Orlando attractions and theme parks to be convenient yet removed enough away to escape the crowds.

The hotel features 90 suites with either 1 king bed or 2 double beds, all with separate areas for living and sleeping, sofa bed, desk and mini-refrigerator/microwaves. Other in room amenities include irons/boards, coffee makers, and flat screen televisions with in room entertainment making it the perfect retreat for business travelers and families alike.

"We are delighted to be a part of this great hotel," noted Dave Akridge, President of Great American Hotel Group. "Our partnership with Anshu Jain and the ownership group is sure to make this hotel a powerhouse in the community."

"Greg Teagarden, the property General Manager has built a terrific team of hospitality professionals and we are confident that this team, combined with the upcoming renovation will strengthen Marriott's presence in this vibrant community," added Akridge.

What a great holiday gift to the Great American Hotel Group's portfolio, and indeed a beautiful set of new "front teeth!"

## Carol of the Bells



Have some fun learning about the personalities of the our Great American Hotel Group management team! Match the carol with the manager. Send an email to [Suzanne.Baele@GreatAmericanHG.com](mailto:Suzanne.Baele@GreatAmericanHG.com) listing the number corresponding to the GRAM name (red type), with the letter of the carol you think is their favorite (green type). Due date is 12/24/19. Winners will be announced on our GRAM Facebook page before Christmas!

1. Dave Akridge, President
2. Suzanne Baele, Corporate Director of Human Resources
3. Rob Greene, Regional Director of Operations
4. Jeff Karl, Accounting Clerk
5. Linda Komornik, Corporate Director of Sales & Marketing
6. Garrett Moylan, Executive Assistant
7. Jason Rickett, Staff Accountant
8. Gabrielle Smith, Corporate Controller

- A. Mary, Did You Know? Pentatonix
- B. Let It Be Christmas Alan Jackson
- C. Father Christmas - The Kinks
- D. What Child Is This - Traditional
- E. O Holy Night - Nat King Cole
- F. Silent Night - Dean Martin
- G. White Christmas - Bing Crosby
- H. Jingle Bells - Traditional

*\*Note: If an artist was not specifically noted by my colleagues, the editor has taken editorial license and selected a version of the carol to post as the link.*



## Rockin' Around the Christmas Tree

Flanagan's, a popular restaurant in Groton, CT, and located inside the Baymont Suites, has started a monthly pasta bar! Pasta dishes are made to order and the customers are loving this new feature. The next Wednesday Pasta Night is December 18th.



## I'll Be Home for Christmas

This past Veteran's Day, Hilton reiterated their support to Military Veterans and Families. Previously, the brand had announced that they had achieved their Operation: Opportunity target of hiring 30,000 veterans, military spouses and caregivers across hotels, corporate offices and work-from-home positions in the United States.

To celebrate this milestone and honor National Veterans and Military Families Month, Hilton is proud to expand their commitment pledging to hire 25,000 additional veterans, military spouses and caregivers by 2025.

Hilton will continue to provide enhanced training and development opportunities, and comprehensive benefits truly tailored for the veteran community. Their hiring commitment remains the largest in the hospitality industry and is one of the largest in the U.S. private sector – something of which they can all be extremely proud!

### How to Support Veterans and Military Spouses:

Here are a few ways that your individual property can support veterans and military spouses and continue to spread the word about Operation: Opportunity program:

Show your #WeAreHilton pride for this achievement and our newly expanded commitment to the military community on social media. Be sure to add the Operation: Opportunity sticker GIF to your Instagram story—simply search "Operation Opportunity" or "We Are Hilton" in the Instagram app to access it.



If you know a veteran or military spouse interested in joining the #1 Best Company to Work for in the U.S., invite them to apply today using your unique referral link. Visit Referrals on the Lobby to learn about rules and restrictions\*.

Encourage hotel teams to visit the Diversity & Inclusion Toolkit on the Lobby to download materials to display in your Heart of the House and resources to share with all your Team Members.



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

### **Hark! The Herald Angels Sing**

In March of this year, the Department of Labor released their long awaited, proposed new rule that will increase the minimum annual salary a person may receive and still qualify for overtime compensation. This new annual salary amount changes from (previous) \$23,660 to (new) 35,308, effective January 1, 2020. Exempt managers who make at least \$35,308 annually are not entitled to overtime.

In my professional opinion, this exercise of diving deeply into our associates and what they do day-in and day-out is also about recognizing the associates who routinely perform nonexempt duties. It also forces our property managers to really look at why an associate is compensated as a salaried/exempt individual, further identifying those whom qualify as either an executive, administrative or professional employee.

We have been looking very closely at this and have made tremendous inroads. Our legal department is fully engaged and advising us as well. Most of our hotels will be increasing some of their managers salaries, while others will be re-coding associates as hourly/non exempt.

### **It Came Upon A Midnight Clear**

Each of your hotels has its very own EPLI Policy (Employment Practices Liability Insurance). This policy is exactly as described; it is insurance that protects the hotel, you, your owners and the management company should there ever be a claim made by an employee(s) alleging discrimination based on race, sex, disability; wrongful termination; harassment; or other employment-related issues.

It is absolutely imperative that before dismissing an associate, for any reason, you contact HR.

### **Let It Snow. Let It Snow. Let It Snow**

With three major holidays right around the corner, remind your associates to be careful, plan for the weather and always be safe!

### **HR Corner**

#### **New Hot Line Phone Number guarantees total anonymity!**

All complaints of harassment must be taken seriously and communicated to Suzanne Baele, Corporate Director of Human Resources at 603-828-4212.

GRAM has also launched a few new policies for associates. These new policies include Weapons and Violence in the Workplace and Conflicts of Interest. Please contact Suzanne for more information.

## **Winter Wonderland**

When Travis Burton, owner of TO2 Photography located in Charlotte, NC checked into the Hampton Inn East Hartford CT recently, it was far from a celebration. He was visiting his brother who was hospitalized with cancer.

At check-in, Charlotte Burke-Thompson, the hotel Assistant General Manager managed to uncover the purpose of his visit and was determined to try to lift his spirits as best she could given the circumstances. They had a good conversation and he told her he was a photographer. He asked about places to take pictures, even though he said he may not go because he wasn't really feeling it. She encouraged him to go by the river and told him that the pedestrian bridge would take him over to the city and there were many opportunities for great images. He laughed and commented that it was so dark and dreary outside that he might not go.

At check out she asked if he had taken any pictures and he thanked her because he said capturing the images of peace, beauty and tranquility had really helped him. He he promised her he would share them with her when he got home. He also shared some good news about his brother which was a relief to Mr. Burton and the hotel team. Here are the results of his session with Mother Nature. We hope you see the peace and beauty of the season captured by his lens.



*He had a very shiny nose...*

## How To Recognize The Hunter Salesperson

*Excerpted from an [article](#) written by Robert Post, CEO, Knowland, November 10, 2019*

In a recent article "[The Hunter Group Salesperson: Endangered Species or Already Extinct?](#)" we identified three types of salespeople, the Hunter, Order-Taker and Farmer. In this article, we take that concept a bit further to identify the DNA of the Hunter salesperson and offer ways to help you recognize them – in the wild or in captivity.

Arming your teams with a healthy mix of the different types of salespeople will set your hotel up well. Within this mix, we like to see a good number of Hunters within each hotel group sales team because this type of salesperson has both the natural instincts and trainable qualities that we find best aligns with proactively selling group. In any economic environment, a Hunter will systematically source and book "best-fit" group business for your property helping you to ride out storms and outperform your competition.

So how do you find these Hunters? It can often be one of the hardest parts of running a sales team if you don't know what to look for. Our first instinct in hiring is to look at the resume. How many years of experience do they have? Has the person worked at the same caliber hotels? However, limiting yourself to the resume only might mean you overlook a better candidate. Almost without exception, Hunter sales DNA trumps the resume.

Additionally, we think we can train someone to be a Hunter. And while many elements of being a good salesperson are teachable, there are basic characteristics of Hunters that can't be taught – they are an intrinsic part of the DNA of that person.

So, when you are sitting across the table from a sales candidate, what are the go-getter traits you should look for in the hiring process? And, more importantly, how do you determine if that person possesses them?

### The DNA of Good Hunters

There are certain personality traits every truly great Hunter salesperson possesses. These traits lead them, and your property, to success, often where others fail. Among these traits are:

**Fire in the Belly** – Hunters wake each day with an inherent desire to succeed. Set a goal for them and they will not only meet it but set for themselves an internal goal that's even higher. These individuals don't settle for average and firmly believe "Good is the Enemy of Great."

**Create Value AND Demand** – Hunters know they don't simply fulfill demand; they go out and create demand. They are skilled communicators who can vividly present the value of their product and how it will solve the "pain points" of their customers.

**Control the Sales Process** – Hunters know the value of controlling the conversation. They set expectations at every step of the sales process to drive to the outcome they want. They don't allow themselves to get taken off track but, rather, guide the customer around their internal processes to get to the end.

**Crave the Word No** – Hunters understand that a "no" from a prospect is just the beginning of the process. They know it simply means they need to adjust. They learn from each "no" and come back stronger for it.

**Evolve Constantly** – Hunters understand what worked on the last call with a prospect might not work on the next one. They cater each proactive sales call to the needs of that customer. They don't have a one-size fits all process.

**Know When to Walk Away** – Hunters understand not all pieces of business are a good fit. And, they respect their time and the customer's time enough to let it go. Chasing after a bad piece of business wastes time and for the Hunter, time is a precious commodity.

**Success is What You Do Tomorrow** – Hunters don't rest on their laurels. They celebrate the win and let that momentum propel them forward to create more wins. They keep moving.

Think about each of these traits. Do you have individuals in your group sales teams with these characteristics? Do you have individuals who are the [antithesis](#) of this? You should strive for a healthy mix of both Hunters and Farmers, noting that [Farmers won't be primarily Hunting in their role](#).

### The Hunter In Action

Now that we've nailed the traits, how do you determine if someone you have on staff or are interviewing has these traits? Paying close attention to how they talk about their sales process should give you all you need to know to recognize them as a Hunter.

**Are they talking openly?** – Hunters are eternal optimists. They are happy to share with you how they've grown a book of business, closed specific deals. They will be able to share specifics about deal sizes, when they've exceeded quota, what they brought to the table.

**Do they talk about tasks?** – Hunters focus on the mechanics of sales; it is what separates them from the pack. They can detail how they penetrated accounts, what their approach to cold-calling is, and how they adapt their selling style to meet the needs of the customer.

**Are they good listeners?** – Hunters know how to establish trust and part of that is because they listen to and understand what motivates each customer. They can use that to build a bond and create a sense of value. They truly understand people.

*Hunters.... Continued on Page 6*

*He's making his list, checking it twice*

## **Read What You Right Before You Send Is Out**

*By Linda Komornik. Originally posted in [RoomerMill.net](http://RoomerMill.net) on July 25, 2014*

Our plates are full and we are always in a hurry to move to the next task, next customer, and next idea. We rush to get a document of email finished and press send. But wait! Did you read back through what you have written? Should "is" be "it", should "there" be "their", should "sence" be "sense"? While I thoroughly understand that we oftentimes need to power through tasks to get everything done, it is imperative that you make sure you proofread every document, every sentence and every word.

Here are some proofreading tips:

- Never put the addressee or cc addresses in your email until AFTER you are completely satisfied that the message is correct, written in the tone you intended, and the message is clear. By not having addressee entered, you won't accidentally send the email until you are perfectly satisfied with the content.
- Never write a response to an email/letter when you are mad. Write the rebuttal/answer and save as a DRAFT. Take a break, go to lunch, take a walk around the building – then come back and reread the document. Have someone else read the document without explaining what your intentions are, and then have them tell you their understanding and impressions of the email. You should never purposefully hurt anyone with your words. Frustration is a difficult thing and you cannot take written words back.
- Read what you write from the end – backwards. You will oftentimes catch mis-spellings when you use this technique. Remember, this will NOT catch mis-used words such as at, it, be, me, they, them, etc. You must read it forward to catch these errors.
- Read your text out loud. You will be astounded at what some documents sound like when you use your voice to convey your message.
- For goodness sake – use spell-check!
- Use basic grammatical fundamentals. Write sentences using the correct form of verbs, correct punctuation, and proper capitalization.
- Do not over-abbreviate or over-use acronyms in professional documents/correspondence – LOL. Of course there are exceptions (for example: Ltd., Inc., St., Rd. Ave., USA, etc.)
- Do not use emoticons in professional documents. <3
- Try not to over-use symbols in professional documents. Using & instead of and, or # instead of number is sometimes too casual for the document.
- Do not go on, and on, and on, and on, and on.... The person reading the document may be in the same time crunch as you are and getting to the point is important. This does not mean that you should be vague and assume information, it just means that you should write in a clear, concise manner.



Happy proofreading!

*Linda*

BTW – did you catch all my mistakes!

*P.S. While some may think that the power of the pen makes no difference in sales negotiations, it does. If you do not have a keen eye for proofreading, ask someone else to read your correspondence, contracts, hand-written notes, texts, emails, bounce messages, etc. Yes - all of these are important to YOUR image.*



## Joy To The World



### HOMEWOOD SUITES GERMANTOWN

The entire team of the Homewood Suites Germantown, located just outside of Memphis and nearby Hilton Worldwide headquarters, gathered together to watch the live-stream of the grand opening of Homewood Suites 500th hotel (located in the Dominican Republic).

The hotel staff attending included the Housekeeping Team, General Manager Greg Smith, Assistant General Manager Katie Page, Director of Sales Derricka Lane, Guest Service Manager Antonio Buckley, Executive Housekeeper Debbie Housewirth, as well as members of the Hilton corporate staff: Manager of Openings - Tru James Cash, Brand Management for Suites Shari Neely, Manager Openings Embassy and Hilton Garden Inn Beverly Netusil, and Manager Openings Hampton Stephanie Gilton. Not pictured (the photographer), Manager Openings Homewood and Home 2 Melissa Ruacho.



### HAMPTON INN EAST HARTFORD

The Hampton Inn East Hartford has been busy celebrating kindness around the community!

Several staff members attended the "Light The Night" walk for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society in support of our Leukemia Survivor and Front Desk Supervisor Nicole Walker.

Pictured are Nicole, Charlotte (AGM), Javian (Houseman), Shantae (GSR), TJ (Houseman) and Sophia (GSR).



Several of the staff also celebrated the grand re-opening of the GoodWorks Infinity. Previously known as Fairfield Theatre Company for more than a decade, and GoodWorks Entertainment, a live entertainment company, the exclusive talent buyer for Fairfield

Theatre Company for more than a decade, merged and rebranded. Soon to be re-branded GoodWorks Infinity, the new ownership aims to build on Infinity Hall's successes of the past decade looks forward to celebrating music and entertainment in the local area. Attending the event was Morena (Sales Manager), Nicole (FOS), Charlotte (AGM) and Sophia (GSR).



## Here We Come A-Caroling

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**Have they walked away from deals?** Hunters know when to say when. They will be able to tell you of times they walked away from the deal because it either wasn't the right "fit" or they knew it would be a disservice to both entities. They will sometimes take a pass on a single piece of business as part of a bigger strategy down the road. They know how to make the customer feel understood, heard and with their best interest at heart.

**Are they focused on solving business challenges?** – Hunters are consultative in their approach to customers. They are there not just to sell something; they are there to solve a problem. Part of solving problems is to question the status quo and to push back when the customer needs to see things a different way. That is how they create value for the customer and forever endears them.

Once you understand the traits of Hunters, build your interview questions to elicit answers to help you uncover if the person is one. A Hunter won't be afraid to delve into specifics and show you how they succeed. Above all, Hunters do not just rely on their natural traits. They are coachable, take responsibility and are [proactive](#) in order to control positive outcomes.