

TeleGRAM

Great American Hotel Group Newsletter

Celebration Station

In case you want to celebrate, here is a list of National and "other" holidays: September is "National Courtesy Month". 9/6 - Read a Book Day; 9/9 - Teddy Bear Day; 9/11 - Remembrance Day; 9/13 - Grandparent's Day; 9/18 - National Cheeseburger Day; 9/19 - National Dance Day; 9/21 - World Gratitude Day; 9/26 - National Hunting & Fishing Day. October is "National Pizza Month", National Cookie Month", and "Breast Cancer Awareness Month". 10/1 - International Coffee Day; 10/2 - World Smile Day; 10/4 - Golf Day; 10/14 - Emergency Nurses Day; 10/16 - Bosses Day; 10/24 - Make A Difference Day; 10/25 - World Pasta Day and World Opera Day; 10/27 - Black Cat Day; 10/31 - Candy Corn Day; 10/31 - Halloween.

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 Little Bit Wiser

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

Jerry Ianella - September 14
Sheri Kresky - September 20
Gabrielle Smith - September 24
Angela Deutsch - September 27

Around the Block

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

Suzanne Baele - 26 years
Jason Rickett - 2 years
Greg Smith - 1 year
Gregory Teagarden - 1 year

Shifting Pricing Priorities: To Discount or Not to Discount... That is the Question

By Linda Komornik, Corporate Director of Sales & Marketing

We are not selling in the real world anymore. Everything is different and sales people must adapt. Sales and revenue management teams must find their niche in the market and build strategies to capitalize on winning business for their hotels. Gone are the days - at least for the time being - where we can write our sales and marketing plan during the fourth quarter for the next year. We must be reactive and spontaneous moment-to-moment, day-to-day, and week-to-week. This circumstance doesn't mean we don't make a sales and marketing plan; it just means that our plans need to be fluid and changeable.

Traditionally, revenue management best practices would have us rethinking rate structures from a low occupancy mindset (i.e. drop prices/discount so you are the lowest in the marketplace and try to win revenue by attracting occupancy). But this is not a low occupancy or compression maximization situation - because our competition is not filling and pushing business they don't want out into the market. We are not in a traditional downturn, we are facing a global pandemic and that means we need to re-evaluate everything we know about revenue management and rate strategy. What we MUST do is focus on innovative ways to bring in business that is happening in the moment, and then capitalize on more business from those who are traveling.

To be successful, we must take a few lessons from the extended-stay toolbox and adapt/overhaul these tools to look at select service hotels through a different lens. I think if we were to look closely at our business mix right now we would find that we have less guests staying longer. We have all cut back some of our offerings (staffing, pools/fitness rooms closed, limited breakfast offerings, etc.) and so we need to decide: "Do we price based on normal offerings, or do we price based on limited offerings?" Are our customers looking for deals, or are they looking for assurances that they can travel safely in a pandemic?

- ☐ Later
- ☐ Tomorrow
- ☐ Today
- ☒ **NOW**

Finding new sources of business is paramount. To do this our sales teams (including our GSRs) need look closely at who is checking in our hotels, why they are checking in, where they are coming from, and how many more friends/colleagues do they have that need accommodations. Then, we need to immediately adapt and make phone calls, send emails, video chat, and/or send notes via snail mail. Whatever means of communication (and hopefully a combination of all of them), we need to be focused in our message: We Care, We Are Here For You When You Need Us, and We Are Clean.

..... Article continued on Page 7 "Cover Story"

Match the Logo to the Name



(For answers - see page 6)

- | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| ___ Waldorf Astoria | ___ Hilton |
| ___ Capella Singapore | ___ St. Regis |
| ___ Ritz Carlton | ___ Shangri-La |
| ___ Four Seasons | ___ Mandarin Oriental |
| ___ Sheraton | ___ Clarion |
| ___ JW Marriott | ___ Intercontinental |



There's more than one way to travel in these pandemic days...bring your own home, drive your own home...meet Rob Greene's new addition to the family!

I Am Human, I Am A Resource

Suzanne Baele, Corporate Director of Human Resources

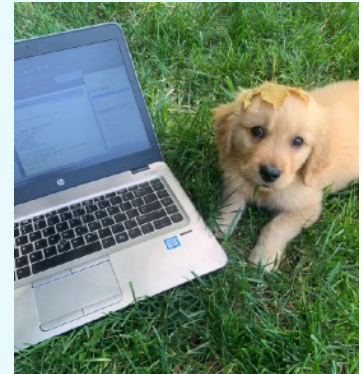
Excerpted from the article "How COVID-19 Changed the Face of Recruitment Overnight" by Riia O'Donnell. Published on yello.com.

As COVID-19 continues to sweep the nation and the world, businesses are looking for ways to stay productive in the face of unprecedented challenges. Managing staff procedures, increasing or decreasing headcount, and maintaining workloads has become a remote process for many businesses as they look to protect their workers, their customers and the public.

The pandemic has shifted a major sector of the workforce in ways we hadn't anticipated. For organizations that are able, CDC-recommended social distancing measures have made remote work the new norm. Businesses are facing difficult decisions about how to adapt and survive this seismic shift, and hiring practices have changed overnight.

Recruiting trends in the wake of COVID-19:

Trending Up - While some industries are being decimated by the coronavirus pandemic, like brick and mortar retailers, others are ramping up hiring to meet demand. Healthcare providers may be the largest sectors looking to increase staffing levels as systems prepare for worst-case scenarios already being seen or anticipated. And as Americans turn to online shopping to reduce virus exposure, delivery drivers, warehousing and distribution are also hiring at scale.



Meet Finn - the newest member of the Staff! This little bundle of fluff has been busy helping Suzanne navigate the Human Resources waters.

Trending Down: The travel, restaurant and hospitality industries are among the most hard-hit by the virus. From international hotel and restaurant chains, to airlines and the local family-run restaurant, the pandemic is forcing layoffs around the world. For the hotel industry, the effects of COVID-19 may be far reaching and long-term. Some industry leaders predict that for those hotels that manage to stay open, five years will be needed to fully recover. Some suggest that half the airline industry may be wiped out by the outbreak. The ripple effect of retractions in travel are impacting a host of other businesses.

What's different about recruiting now that COVID-19 is here? For organizations looking to hire, virtual recruitment is a go-to method to keep hiring processes moving while protecting recruiters and candidates. The change may be uncomfortable at first, but talent acquisition professionals are up for the task. Initial phone screenings remain the same, but the face-to-face interview has moved online. To speed up time-to-hire, many companies are offering candidates the option of video interviewing as soon as possible. While some are waiting until an in-person interview is possible, many fear losing candidates to a competitor during the wait.

..... Article continued on Page 3 "Recruitment"

RIDE THE WAVE

RECOGNIZING THE SERVICE HEROES AMONG US

We don't say it enough - but you are AWESOME! We are adding this new section to our newsletter to share stories from our customers about our most valuable assets - YOU. Share your service stories with us and help us shout that our people are GREAT people! Send your submission to Linda.Komornik@GreatAmericanHG.com for inclusion in future editions of the TeleGRAM.

FAIRFIELD INN & SUITES MILLVILLE

During this challenging time, the staff at the hotel has been performing professionally and offering a warm, welcoming experience to those guests who must travel. Even with limited services available, the hotel received several very positive reviews:

"We stayed here Friday through Monday this past week with a group - about 10 rooms total. Rooms were clean, the staff was friendly, very helpful and had answers to any questions regarding COVID procedures. Cynthia at the front desk was great, always looking for a way to say "yes" to our requests. And, there couldn't be an easier or more competent guy to work with than Chuck, the GM. Will definitely stay here again."

"This is our third time staying here and Cynthia was amazing! The rooms are very clean and the customer service was awesome!! We will definitely be staying again! Thank you for a great stay. Thank you!!!!"

"My husband and I were recently guests at the Fairfield Inn in Millville NJ. Upon leaving, we left a rather valuable item in the room. It was quickly reported via the housekeeping staff to the Fairfield's managing staff. We received a phone call that we'd left something behind. Mr. Chuck Baginski worked hard to arrange a solution that was suitable to us, ensuring that our valuables were safe and well cared for, allowing us to get our items back as expediently as possible. It is a mark of Mr. Baginski and his team's care and concern for guests of this Fairfield Inn that the issue was resolved expediently and effectively. I wanted to say thank you to Mr. Baginski and his team for their quick action. We look forward to staying at the Fairfield Inn the next time we're in town. Thanks so much."

Congratulations to all the staff, and specifically to Cynthia and Chuck. You are the true definitions of hospitality! Thank you.



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"Recruitment" Continued from Page two

Job seekers recognize that when organizations put safety protocols in place, they're putting their employees first. Virtual interviews are highly interactive. Recruitment professionals can assess gestures, expressions, engagement and body language as easily online as in person, as can candidates. The handshake, which may become a thing of the past, may be the only loss in the process.

Guidelines for video interviewing:

- Be as professional as you would be a normal interview.
 - Be prepared with job requirements, and know the candidate's resume and background. Just as you'd send an intro email with directions to the office and parking instructions, send details on how to access and best prepare for the video interview. Don't assume that sending a link is sufficient.
- Remember time zones. Assure the invitation to the interview is adjusted for any differences for areas of the country or the world.
- Presentation is key. Make sure you're prepared for the video interview by dressing the part, choosing a good background and eliminating distractions from your surroundings.

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.

Roomer Has It

SPRINGHILL SUITES QUAKERTOWN



GM Sheri Kresky recently suffered a personal loss. Her longtime pet Nadia suddenly and peacefully crossed over the rainbow bridge and is now heaven's new angel. She will be missed and loved forever.

Welcome Aboard

GREAT AMERICAN HOTEL GROUP



Meet Tenny DiCarlo! Tenny joined the GRAM team earlier this year as a Staff Accountant and is based in the Dover, NH corporate office.

Originally from the Boston, MA area, Tenny previously worked in the Real Estate/Asset Management industry for about 23 years.

Prior to joining GRAM, she was a Senior Property Accountant, overseeing the finances and reporting for multi-million dollar commercial assets.

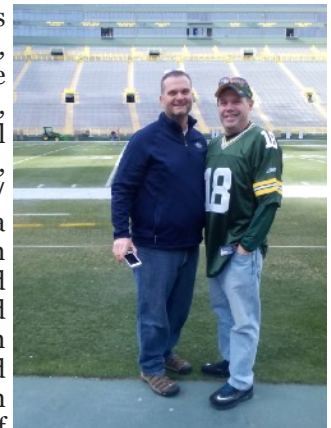
Tenny loves all things accounting BUT is also artsy. In her spare time she loves to sew and craft. She also loves music and sings in a Blues/Southern Rock band with her fiancé. Tenny and Jason have been together for almost 13 years and are getting married in November. She is the proud mom of a great son who is a police officer in Massachusetts. They also have a beautiful 12 year old kitty named Gypsy.



New Kid on the Block

We are pleased to welcome Chuck Baginski to the Fairfield Inn & Suites Millville/Vineland NJ. Chuck joined the team this past June as Sales Manager. Following the departure of the hotel's General Manager in July, and given his experience as a Marriott GM, Chuck graciously assumed the role of Interim General Manager. It is our hope that this will be a permanent assignment and are currently looking to fill the sales position.

Hospitality comes naturally to Chuck. His career in the industry started in high school, as a front desk clerk at the George Washington Motor Lodge in Willow Grove, PA. His experience includes operational stints at the Holiday Inn, Fort Washington, PA, takeover team and renovation/reopening at the Motel 6 Philadelphia International Airport, hotel openings in King of Prussia PA, Baltimore, MD and Dallas, TX, restaurant and food and beverage director at the Holiday Inn Philadelphia, and Dual GM at the Fairfield Inn Deptford NJ and Philadelphia, PA. In 2001 he was awarded General Manager of the Year for 2001 for the East Coast.



Chuck left the hotel business to go work and build a business with family but soon realized that he missed the hospitality business and returned to Flanders Hotel in Ocean City, NJ as Night Operations Manager and Operations Manager at the Berkeley Condominiums in Atlantic City, NJ before joining the Millville team.

Along with his joy of the hospitality business, Chuck is a proud Dad of 3 boys Garrett, Michael and Ryan. Garret now works in the family business, Michael is an incoming freshman and headed to Goldey Beacom College in Wilmington DE on a Baseball Scholarship, and Ryan is a junior in high school. Family comes first for Chuck. His mom is the glue that keeps everything together, with 2 brothers, 2 sisters and 12 nieces and nephews.

Sports is another of Chuck's passion. His late Dad started collecting baseball cards from when Chuck was born and he has a collection of cards dating back to the early 1960's. He also collects baseball and football jerseys and caps with over 300 jerseys and 700 ball caps in his collection.

Chuck considers it an honor to be working at the Fairfield Inn & Suites Millville/Vineland and looks forward to the challenge and to make this property a well oiled machine.



Selling the Sizzle *Linda Komornik, Corporate Director of Sales & Marketing*

What should your sales people be doing right now? Filling in at the desk, assisting housekeeping, off-the-payroll at home waiting to come back, or back in the hotel selling? My suggestion:

Bring sales people back to the job of selling, and reaching out to customers.

There are critical questions that you need to ask yourself as General Manager/Owner. Is it safe? Should they work part or full time right now? Should they be prospecting from home or at their hotel desk? What markets can they truly effect right now? Is there corporate travel, team travel, or is it all transient travel?

While not pounding the pavement might not hurt you right now (those payroll numbers look pretty good), it will hurt you as we move into the third and fourth quarters of the year. If your sales manager is helping out the hotel and doing everything but selling, I think you need to evaluate the risk to sales. A good barometer would be to look at our competitive set and note if any of them are actively selling. If they are, then you can bet that they are trying to shift all the available business from your hotel to their hotel. You'd best beat them to it.

You may ask - who and what should they be selling when the world is fighting a pandemic?

I have addressed this information in on-going and recent emails, blogs, and phone conversations - specifically Monday Matters calls. I have had conversations with individual sales people and we have discussed specifics for their market and where their market is in terms of recovery.

Here are several general suggestions and ideas:

Hotels located in pandemic hotbeds with very limited openings and stay-at-home mandates:

- Sales people should focus on kindness, compassion and checking in on their clients. Many of these planners and corporate contacts are still working from home and their teams/colleagues are not traveling.

Hotels located in areas where the numbers are dropping and they are seeing some transient travel and only a very small amount of corporate travel:

- Contacts should continue to focus on kindness, compassion and checking up, but should start moving into prospecting for business in the next 3 months. Sales people should be asking if their companies have developed travel protocols and what their company future of travel will look like.... will they reduce travel and do more Zoom/WebEx/Facetime meetings or will their travel protocols remain as they were pre-pandemic?

All hotel sales people should be armed with digital and printed collateral that focuses on the "clean and safe" aspect of our business. We should have photos of our meeting rooms set both to capacity and to show physical distancing. We should have information at our fingertips about companies and businesses that are open locally and how they are operating (i.e. restaurants, transportation, and other vital travel related businesses availability). We should highlight our hotel's technical capabilities... video conferencing equipment, band width and streaming information, etc. We should all have a very active and supporting social media campaign. Everyone is on their computers and smart devices and if we aren't making it easy for them to look up our hotel then we have missed the proverbial boat. Social media strategies should support markets we are calling on and focusing on the same things our sales people are touting to customers: kindness, compassion, safety, cleanliness, and the 'we are here for you ready and waiting' theme.

It is also important that we vary the way we contact our account contacts. Chances are that their company has added many responsibilities to their already-full plates to account for furloughed associates within their own company. They are busy and trying to juggle multiple balls just like you and your team area doing. A combination of phone calls, emails, video chats, in person visits (if safe), direct mailings, and gift drops will keep things fresh and (hopefully) not overwhelm your contact. For some, walking to the mailbox might be the highlight to their day - when was the last time you sent a note or letter through the mail?

Building and keeping relationships means that we still need to keep our name and your face in front of the contact, but most importantly, to keep your hotel top of their mind. You don't want to be remembered as a pest - but as a good friend who cares. Emphasis on "we are here when you need us" will go a long way in the sales relationship.

Let's talk about what you need to make your sales efforts effective and relevant.

Happy building and rebuilding, *Linda*

6 Hospitality Trends for Rebuilding Consumer Trust as Hotels Reopen

Article published in Hotel Online | EHL Insights | August 18, 2020

Arguably the key factor in instilling trust among consumers is ensuring strict safety standards are met. This pertains not only to the safety of patrons, but also of hotel staff. Guests want to spend time in an environment in which they feel everyone is looked after – including those tending to their needs. To this end, hotels are drafting policies and in some instances, national policies provide industry-specific guidance on what these should entail.

Bringing in the experts. To give their policies some authority and muscle, hotels are bringing in the big guns. They refer to associations of repute, such as the U.S. Travel Association or the American Hotel & Lodging Association. They draft in the expertise of medical experts and the authorities, turning to the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, for example. They use clinically-approved products and seek partnerships with pertinent manufacturers. Travel Risk Management companies also lend a helping hand to ensure the correct protocols were in place when accommodating healthcare workers. These same protocols may prove useful to hotels welcoming guests in general, although some allowances must be made for what is feasible in practice.

Cleanliness is next to godliness - Top of list in meeting health and safety standards: hygiene and cleanliness. Providing staff with personal protective equipment in the form of masks and gloves is just the first step. The use of anti-viral cleaning agents, disinfectants and UV light is set to become commonplace as is the use of electrostatic sprayers, which uniformly mist disinfectant throughout spaces. Sophisticated air filtration systems could become a differentiator. Wall-mounted hand-sanitizer dispensers may well feature in high-touch areas, while rooms may be equipped with multi-purpose disinfectant wipes.

Technology for a low-touch experience - Contactless payments and deliveries have long since assumed a starring role in curbing contamination during the pandemic. The hospitality industry will be no different, likely offering especially packaged contactless room service. A low-touch guest experience will be embraced in all its facets, with mobile check-in encouraged even once guests have arrived in the lobby. Room keys may also become a thing of the past, with virtual rooms keys on smartphones being a possible way forward. Technological innovation of all kinds will be drawn upon to facilitate smooth operations with the least possible dependence on members of staff. Thermal cameras can perform unobtrusive temperature checks as a risk gauge upon entry. Any existing IT infrastructure will be leveraged to its best potential, with websites or apps utilized to provide real-time updates on housekeeping visits, for example.

Design adaptations & adjusted service offerings - With social distancing a must at present, we have become accustomed to floor markings and barriers. In the same vein, dining tables and loungers will be more spaced out and the number of guests in an elevator at any one time defined. For the foreseeable future, hotel staff may need to work from every other workstation in order to satisfy the two-meter distancing requirement. In the longer term, hotel design may evolve to accommodate more health-oriented guest behavior. Specialists in innovating hospitality architecture and design, told EHL Insights, guests may give preference to hotels able to provide larger rooms, enabling them to pursue work, leisure and enjoy meals in their own private space. Service offerings may have to be adjusted accordingly. Holiday-goers less eager than usual to brave communal spaces such as spas and gyms may appreciate more one-on-one offerings such as personal training sessions or in-room spa treatments. The sharing spirit will probably be dimmed in general for the time being, with any form of communal access minimized: buffets, minibars, and bellhop and valet services will be momentarily sacrificed.

Cleanliness & safety integral to brand identity - Implementing cleanliness and safety measures will be crucial in winning over guests. However, they can only exert pulling power if potential patrons are aware of them. This raises the stakes in corporate communication and puts a considerable onus on employees to ensure visibility. In essence, the virtues of cleanliness and safety must become part of hotels' brand identity. A step in this direction could be adding a description of hygiene procedures to each hotel room's information pack. Giving an overview handout placed on guests' beds may raise the profile of cleanliness further still.

An open book - It will be important for hospitality providers not to shy away from scrutiny. On the contrary, practicing transparency, perhaps subjecting one's establishment to association ratings for cleanliness and safety could help regain consumer trust. Communication with staff is also set to take on new importance. Not only will training be required to ensure employees comply with requirements and arm them with knowledge, but also letting them know their safety is a top priority will be paramount. This is as much a matter of corporate social responsibility as it is a liability topic. Staff who feel their employer has their best interests and good health at heart may be less likely to jump to the conclusion that an infection was picked up at work.

Thinking outside of the box - The present circumstances may require hoteliers to think beyond the realms of their specialism to incorporate lessons learned from the medical arena. Incorporating an "incident command centre" enables teams to deal proactively with any health and safety concerns, while also reacting to and incorporating any new governmental guidelines or medical developments.

In what is perhaps an opportunity for more far-reaching change, hospitality businesses may choose to unlock the potential for sustainable strategic renewal. A reinvigorated appreciation of the importance of service excellence may see the hospitality industry refocus on changes in the customer experience, customer perceptions and consumption patterns and even reassess their asset management. Entire business models and value propositions may be up for debate in the quest to realign with the new reality. Buckle up, hoteliers, be ready for the long haul.

Those hotels who have GREAT relationships with their customers are going to be the true winners. Successful sales teams have already won their previous business contacts over and if they have been following a sales plan of action that includes keeping in touch, being kind and compassionate, and making sure their client base has updated information and collateral, then they don't have to shop around. It's like the old Pantene commercial.... If they love what 'ya got - they'll tell someone, who will tell someone, who will tell someone. People do business with people they know and like, and now - do business with people they trust!

For the time being, we are going to need to replace most of our group business with transient business. Typically a hotel sales team is not tasked to prospect for transient leisure business - that client base is way too big and too hard to target through conventional sales methods. This market (with the exception of corporate negotiated rate which is part of the transient market segment), should be part of our overall revenue management strategy typically directed by our GM/operations teams in congress with sales managers. Group and corporate group business make up the majority of our sales department focus in normal times. Now, in this time of COVID-19, these segments have dried up and we find ourselves scratching the ground for anyone who will listen to our sales pitches. To be successful, sales teams must find out the reasons why people are traveling and sell to those reasons - and that includes transient travel. This type of sales focus might not be voice-to-voice selling, it might not be traditional prospecting - but a combination of share shifting, lobby lizarding, social media selling, and developing promotions and packages that are both sold by sales teams and marketed through social media.



Know the risks - reap the rewards!

Since our sales teams (including our front desk sales teams) are now scurrying to find new sources of demand, our sales efforts are needing to be massaged almost daily. This doesn't mean we toss our Sales & Marketing Plan in the trash bin - it just means that we need to look at the written strategies and ADAPT them to fit the current selling environment. Some of our sales successes are going to be rate based and some will be demand for our location. We don't want to make the mistake of discounting where it is not necessary. We should not decrease rates in the transient sector because we "think" people must pay less to stay. We need to uncover the reason they are traveling (or not) and then determine economics. Making the decision when to fall back is going to be based on demand.

Are there signs of life out there in hotel markets? Yes, absolutely. Hotels close to medical communities will continue to see improvement. Hotels in suburban or rural locations - just close enough to businesses and who typically have better numbers as it relates to COVID-19 will see improvement. Hotels close to activities and/or recreation that is open and practicing safe protocols will see improvement. If schools stay virtual, families can still travel (think long weekends) without risking absenteeism. If business are still encouraging remote working then people can still travel without jeopardizing vacation or missing work for pleasure (think work from anywhere). Customers will return - we just need to pay attention and keep in close communication with them. We need to be telling our customers why they should choose our hotels and locations over the competition.



Match the Logo to the Name Answers from Page 2 - 1. Four Seasons 2. Hilton 3. Intercontinental 4. Mandarin Oriental 5. Ritz Carlton 6. JW Marriott 7. Sheraton 8. Capella Singapore 9. Shangri-La 10. Clarion 11. St. Regis 12. Waldorf-Astoria