

TELEGRAM



CELEBRATING 10 YEARS OF MANAGEMENT

BY DAVE AKRIDGE, PRESIDENT

On one hand it does not seem possible that we embarked on our Great American Hotel Group venture 10 years ago. On the other hand, what a ride it has been! As with most ventures, despite best laid plans, there have been a few unanticipated challenges. All in all, I think it also brought about many more anticipated rewards. As we celebrate our 10 Year Anniversary this month, I'd like to share some of the milestones we've accomplished along the way:

- We are blessed with a core team of senior leadership and seasoned on-property assets. We have the benefit of having significant chemistry from working together. Without a doubt, had we not had this key element, I am not sure we would have survived. I am certainly not surprised by this, and probably would have preferred not to be tested, but we were and we did not just survive, but used this as means to thrive. It is truly an honor to work with each and every one of you.
- We were able to re-locate, and have our own corporate office building that was geographically better situated for our Dover based staff.
- We were able to re-embrace, by choice, those core values that started with GAP Management Inc. in 1986 and were always present, but with the re-brand, allowed us to return to those hallmarks of a small company.
- With the Covid pandemic, many companies were thrust into the world of a remote home office. Old hat for us. We have had that model, where appropriate for over 10 years. Just flip the switch and carry on.
- Our name is reflective of where it all started. While I might share that GAP Management stood for Great American Properties, the actual answer is that it did not. Although, when our clients and others assigned that meaning we readily agreed as if that were the plan all along. The real answer is a vintage Doug Greene story, founder of GAP. Those that knew him have zero trouble recognizing, and quite frankly smiling, as being the Doug we all knew.
- We have always tried to be innovative and early adopters of technology and innovative management practices. Of course, there is often a cost to that. Would you believe that our first fax machine was acquired at cost of \$4,000 and the first cell phone we purchased was over \$2,000? However, that is the cost of being an early adopter and staying ahead of the curve and quite frankly the investment has almost always paid off. This practice has served us well.
- We have, and will always recognize that we serve many. Our clients, each other, our associates, and the guest that we exist to serve.
- We have all had the opportunity to experience the diverse landscape of this country by operating hotels in just about every state in this country. While we are a small company, our footprint and the number of locations we have operated has allowed us to reach as far West as California, as far North as Alaska, as far South as Florida, and all points in between.
- When we say that we have a multi-faceted skill set, it is not talk. We have successfully operated small locations (15 rooms), to many over 1,000 rooms. We have operated limited-service, select-service, and full-service hotels. It takes different approaches and management requirements, but having the depth of experience to do so, have done so.
- While we can talk technology, and resources, and how things have changed, we must ever be mindful that at our core, it is about providing and selling the most rooms at the best value and ensuring that each and every one is sold with quality service, and cleanliness, by a core of dedicated associates that can take pride in their work in whatever segment the hotel exists... a very basic hospitality concept that has existed forever.

While we are certainly mindful and thankful for our last 10 years, and will take an appropriate moment to pause and reflect on our journey, we will not dwell on those past accomplishments. We will celebrate July 15th and then turn our attention to our future and how we will continue to build on the foundations and core values that were established in 1986 by our founder, Doug Greene, who sadly, left this world way too soon. Here's to the future of Great American Hotel Group! Thank you.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

NEW KIDS ON THE BLOCK - 2

LET'S CELEBRATE - 3

I AM HUMAN - 3

FIZZ - SONG OF THE SHRIMP - 4

SELLING THE SIZZLE - 5

CELEBRATING SERVICE HEROS - 6

OPERATIONALLY SPEAKING - 7

BY THE NUMBERS - 7

ROOMER HAS IT - 8

NEW KIDS ON THE BLOCK

CLARION INN & SUITES SHEFFIELD - FIZZ

We are pleased to welcome Nancy Graham as Director of Food and Beverage Operations. Nancy will oversee both Fizz and banquet food service operations.

A native of Florence, Alabama, Nancy has worked in the service industry for more than 15 years. For the past 10 years, Nancy has served as Lead Bartender at Swamper's Bar and Grille, located in the Marriott Shoals Hotel & Spa.

Prior to that, Nancy was Bar Manager at Side Pockets Lounge for 13 years, and Mixologist at the 360 Grille (also located in the Marriott).

Nancy and her husband Trent are the proud parents of two beautiful children (Mason and Jewel). A former rodeo competitor, Nancy continues to ride and owns 6 horses. The family also enjoys the outdoors and lake activities. Welcome Nancy!



BEST WESTERN PLUS BOLINGBROOK



Brian Kasper has assumed the role of General Manager at the Best Western Plus Bolingbrook near Chicago. An accomplished hospitality professional, Brian's vast experience includes (most recently) GM roles for the Best Western Sandwich, IL, and the Holiday Inn Express in Algonquin, IL. He served 21 years with Hilton in the Chicago area originally starting as a night auditor and ending his tenure with Hilton as Dual Property Director of Finance in Oakbrook Terrace, IL. His foray into the operations side of the hospitality business started with IHG as a Front Desk Clerk.

Originally focused on food and beverage, Brian confesses that he thought his path would follow that recipe. Loving to bake, he soon found that baking for hundreds was not as fun as for 10 and refocused his journey on the front side of the house.

Brian is a hard worker, and his work ethic is beyond measure. He has improved every hotel he has worked for from the very small property to properties up to 1,550 rooms. This makes perfect sense as he is a marathon runner and has completed 40 events across 19 states. His goal is to compete in all 50 states!

A Triton College attendee, his studies concentrated in Hospitality Management.

Brian is a proud father of 8 children and grandpa of one. He and his wife Michaela boast four daughters (Anna, Gala, Kimberly, and Isabella) and four sons (Arion, Miguel, Charles, and Alberto). His granddaughter April is also the apple of his eye.

Welcome Brian! We are confident that you will be an asset to Bolingbrook and look forward to a marathon journey at this hotel.



LET'S CELEBRATE

CELEBRATION STATION

In case you want to celebrate, here is a list of National and "other" holidays: 7/20 - Lollipop Day, 7/23 - Gorgeous Grandma's Day, 8/1 - National Girlfriend's Day, 8/6 - Root Beer Float Day, 8/11 - Son and Daughter Day, 8/21 - Poet's Day, 8/24 - International Strange Music Day, 8/26 - Women's Equality Day, and 9/6 - Labor 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.

A LITTLE BIT WISER

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

Dave Akridge - August 14

AROUND THE BLOCK

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

Linda Komornik - 26 years (July)



CUSTOMER SERVICE SHOULD NOT BE A DEPARTMENT, IT SHOULD BE THE ENTIRE COMPANY

TONY HSIEH, CEO OF ZAPPUS

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I AM HUMAN, I AM A RESOURCE

SUZANNE BAELE, CORPORATE DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES

The following is just an excerpt from a blog written by Stephanie Ricca, and published in Hotel News Now on July 15th, 2021. Follow this [link](#) to read the full article.

"Burnout is one of the toughest things to talk about in the workplace. Everyone has it, and most people are afraid to talk about it because that stigma of non-productivity is an albatross around our necks.

Let's all just admit it up front: We all feel some level of burnout right about now, no matter where we live in the world. The toll the last 15 months has taken — whether we feel it acutely or not — is significant.

In the hotel industry, Burnout Season comes at a particularly tough time, especially in countries that are opening up and hustling to make hay while the proverbial summer leisure sun shines. The employees you have left are overtaxed, and you're getting fewer potential employees filling out job applications because many already have been massively burned — by the hospitality industry in many cases — and want nothing to do with you.

The first step is acknowledging it, and the second is finding a way to deal with it, for yourself and your team."

What are you and your team doing to fight burnout? It's tough enough to find new employees; we have to do our best to keep the ones we have.

Appreciating associates, resurrecting Employee of the Month, recognizing reviews and call outs for good service, and other such activities go a long way to maintaining our work force. We welcome your ideas and best practices at what is working at your hotel.

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.

MONTANA TRAIL HEAD INN

Renovation is continuing at the Billings Montana Trail Head Inn, slated for a soft opening mid-July, with full renovated opening in September. Below is the artist's rendering of the lobby which includes 'Big Sky' inspired decor complete with an indoor waterfall.





INTRODUCING MUSCLE SHOALS NEW GUITAR ART

We are pleased to unveil this beautiful Guitar Art print featuring "The Shoals" landscape. Licensed by DAC Art Consulting, the Clarion Inn Sheffield and Fizz will be able to use this in their promotions and merchandising!

CHEF ROB SINGS THE "SONG OF THE SHRIMP"



Regional Director of Operations Rob Greene, who has been charged with overseeing the renovation and opening of the new Fizz Sheffield, a restaurant, bar, and live music room, took his operational responsibilities one step further and shared his famous "Butterflied Fried Shrimp" recipe with Chef Willie "Cadillac" Thompson.

The Chef and staff pronounced it "excellent" and the decision was made to include it in the new menu!

Rob has only shared his 'secret recipe' with Chef "Cadillac", but notes that it is butterflied shrimp, seasoned with an array of secret spices, and hand battered before quick frying. Guests will be able to choose this shrimp dish in either an appetizer or a dinner portion.



Fizz Sheffield opens to the public on Friday, July 23rd and will serve both breakfast and dinner daily. The new Fizz will feature a music theme and will include live music most nights.

WHEN EVERYTHING
SEEMS TO BE
GOING AGAINST YOU REMEMBER
THAT THE AIRPLANE
TAKES OFF
AGAINST THE WIND
NOT WITH IT



SELLING THE SIZZLE

LINDA KOMORNIK, CORPORATE DIRECTOR OF SALES & MARKETING

Happy 10 year anniversary to Great American Hotel Group! As a 26-year veteran with this amazing company, I cannot tell you how honored I am to serve with this team of professionals and work with you - our portfolio properties. We are all friends, colleagues, and family, and we work hard daily to be at your service.

In this issue, I had intended to talk about "creating value" or the "value proposition" in sales. And, I still intend to write about that fact.... however; to honor our 10 year anniversary, I am going to write from a different perspective.... that of a management company and what I think is the value that we bring to you as sales people.

As Anthony Iannarino (my favorite blogger) said this week, "People hate to be sold, but they love buying." That statement begs the question, "Why Us?" As a sales leader for GRAM, if I were to only suggest that our primary sales strategy was to feature-puke our hotels, then I have failed. It all goes back to listening.... to our customers, to our owners and on-property leaders, to our brand representatives, and to our management company leadership. Any presentation of information designed to directly create an outcome that is beneficial to YOU (sales person) and ME (management company sales person), while creating no value for your client creates negative value. If I don't make you think and be creative with your hotel property first and foremost, then I have not done my job.

Let's explore this idea a little deeper. Any approach that only screams "buy from me", no matter how kind, nice, helpful, or organized, probably isn't one that your client finds helpful to the goals and outcomes they are pursuing. You/we are very literally prioritizing your desires over your prospects desires. If I simply gave you a "to do" list I would be failing you. Instead, I choose to suggest ideas to make you think; think about ways you can apply promotions, sales tactics, and strategies into your market. It is not sane to believe that just because 'we build it they will come'. It is not 'my way or the highway!' We need to fine tune the big picture ideas that I give you and run with them.

"But Linda" (you might be thinking), "every week you ask me to send my Weekly Sales Reports and 'tell you about the booking successes and achievement of my Weekly Sales Goals. Isn't that the same thing? You constantly suggest that I need to get my clients to buy my product!" You might be right..... but let's dig a bit deeper. Perhaps I haven't clearly communicated my wants and needs and/or perhaps you haven't listened. We are all guilty of the same thing, not listening is the same thing as getting too far ahead of your client in the sales process - I may have gotten too far ahead of your process by only asking for sales results. I need to ask more probing questions and have you report more updates to strategy as well as hard results. We all may know why our solution and our product will be the best solution, but it is not our job to pound our chest and tout our superiority.... it is our job to lead the customer to discover this on their own.

A Warning About Too Little Value - The reason clients avoid booking a second meeting, suggest you call them next week to schedule, or go dark after an early meeting, is because you didn't create enough value in a first conversation. Once you waste a client's time, they are reticent to agree to allow you to waste more of their time.

Slow is fast, and fast is slow when it comes to the outcomes you are pursuing in sales. Too little value means your client gains nothing through the conversation. Rackham once described the test as something like, "Would your client be willing to pay for that meeting?" That's as good of a test as you'll ever need. When you are too committed to your end goal, you will not create value for your contacts. ~ Anthony Iannarino

So how do create value without wasting your customer's time? How do I help you without wasting your time? Four words. Value Driven Probing Questions. Not the standard questions like "how many rooms", "where else are you looking", "what's your budget", etc., but questions like "what is the most important thing to you and your travelers when choosing hotel accommodations", "what do you like about your current hotel", "describe the perfect client/vendor relationship", "how do you like to communicate" and questions that allow you to actually hear what the client wants and needs and tailor your sales approach to the client. It reminds me of dating, you never should dance around the important things - but get them out in the open so that you build trust from the outset of the relationship. "Trust the idea that the sales person who creates the most value for the client as they pursue their goals will create a preference to buy from them." Our motto at Great American Hotel Group is that "people buy from people they know, like and trust." I have always coached and mentored from this perspective. I wrote a blog many moons ago about the "sales dance". There is a leader and a follower. But which is the most important? A poor leader will bore his partner if he consistently does the same 'ole steps. A good leader thinks about the dance and listens to the music, forming steps and patterns that fit the music and the level of the partner he is dancing with. A poor follower frustrates the leader because they are constantly fighting against the steps and out of sync with their partner. A good follower listens to the lead and adds their brand of style and grace to the movement. In essence, moving together in one sales dance.

Happy listening,

CELEBRATING SERVICE HEROS AMONG US

WE DON'T SAY IT OFTEN ENOUGH - BUT YOU ARE AWESOME!

THIS SECTION OF OUR NEWSLETTER IS DESIGNED FOR PROPERTY LEADERS TO SHARE STORIES FROM OUR CUSTOMERS ABOUT OUR MOST VALUABLE ASSETS - OUR ASSOCIATES.

SEND YOUR SUBMISSIONS LINDA.KOMORNIK@GREATAMERICANHG.COM FOR INCLUSION IN FUTURE EDITIONS OF THE TELEGRAM.

SpringHill Suites in Quakertown, PA shared a great compliment from a recent guest. Read on:

Please forgive me for just getting this out to you. I wanted to take a moment to thank you and your team of professionals for the job well done in not only assisting us, but in going the extra mile to help our Election Tally Event to be successful. From the front desk, to the housekeeping staff and supervisor, you made a huge difference in establishing an atmosphere where we could accomplish a challenging task, in the most efficient manner possible, while keeping everyone safe. For your efforts in making the adjustments you made to help us, I say thank you especially. I hope that the group that came in brought some additional revenue to the property. I know that I received several good comments about the cleanliness, convenience, and upkeep of the property.

Your overall team performance was exceptional, and I look forward to working together with you for future events whenever possible. As the pandemic protocol is changing, these opportunities may become less frequent, but its always good to know that I have someone who is able to provide a level of service that will help our company to shine and exceed the expectations of our clients.

Kevin Champman, Director of Election Services - Elections USA, Inc.

Fairfield Inn & Suites in Millville, NJ boasts that GSR Cynthia Nelson has been racking up the compliments recently. In her role at the front desk, Cynthia is a true service champion. Read on:

Cynthia who is absolutely phenomenal. Not only does she go above and beyond with EVERY guest. She never leaves with out asking - what she can do to help. When I am here late Thurs/Fri nights she literally ensures that EVERY guest is completely taken care of. She goes out of her way to know each of the guests names. We had a guest highly upset that she couldn't take her kids in the pool (our pool is still closed for COVID). I thought I was going to have to step in and speak with the guest. However she handled herself so well. She delicately explained the Covid/staffing issue in a way the guests could completely understand. She has an amazing way to soften every situation and do so in a way the guests completely understand.

Carissa Kania, Sales Manager

After an 18 hour aggravating day, Cynthia welcomed us as soon as we walked in. She was excited that we were able to come try us out for the night. She made an awful day so much better with her attitude & outlook. She assisted us in finding a great restaurant that delivered, and set us up to be able to have a quiet dinner on the veranda. She made sure the AC was on before we arrived so that our rooms were nice & cool. She called to ensure that our room was satisfactory and to make sure that we did not need anything else. We were blown away by how amazing she was. (We stay in Hotels 5-6 out of the 7 seven days in a week all over the world). We have never met any Hospitality employee that we ever felt needed special recognition until meeting Cynthia. The entire staff was great and responded in an efficient manor. We get up at 4:20am everyday and came down to hot fresh coffee, and amazing instructions and where to go for breakfast. We wanted to ensure that you are aware of how amazing of an employee that you have.

NetJets

GM Tim Carroll, Fairfield Inn & Suites in Millville, NJ also shared a great letters from other satisfied guests:

Our family of almost 30 stayed at the Fairfield Inn by Marriott Millville/Vineland this past weekend, May 21st and were very satisfied with our stay and the hotel staff we encountered during our stay. I would especially like to call out Carissa Kania who made our stay possible. Carissa Kania was such a big help with our 10 room reservation. She was patient and always followed through with her commitments even after the reservations were confirmed, which I find rare based on prior dealings with hotel staff. At the last minute she was able to add an additional room and change a room type. Given all the reservations were under my name she assisted with assigning rooms to my family members enabling them to check in seamlessly without me being present at the front desk and was able honor our request for early check in. The family was very grateful for the early check in as they were able to get a quick nap, after driving from Virginia, Maryland and Long Island. I hope you recognize what a gem you have with Carina!

Busola Oyefesobi, Marriott Ambassador Elite Member

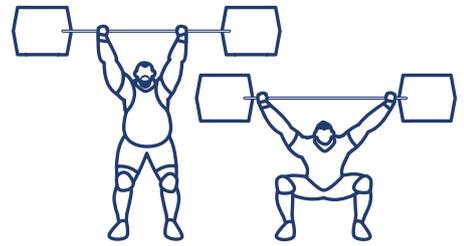
As a wedding photographer, I've photographed brides and grooms here many times, and also stayed here, all of the rooms are beautiful and extremely clean. You will find the staff very friendly and helpful. I'd stay here any chance I get.

Steven, Steven Gregory Studios

OPERATIONAL SPEAKING

ROB GREENE, DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS

The following is an excerpt from the article "Minimizing COVID Risks in the Hotel Fitness Center" by Kurt A. Broadhag, President, K Allan Consulting, and published in Hotel Executive on July 11th, 2021. Follow this [link](#) to read the full article.



"Gyms have long been categorized as a "higher risk" public space in relationship to the spread of colds and the flu. It seems ironic that a place whose main function is to maintain one's health can actually increase the chance of getting you sick."

"Long before Covid, gym members were susceptible to a number of health risks. In addition to the common cold and flu fitness centers have been breeding ground for other disease such as MRSA, ringworm, and staph. There are a number of reasons for these increased risks. Health clubs create a perfect environment for breeding illnesses. Sweat and increased respiration in a hot environment combined with a lack of proper HVAC and venting allow bacteria and viruses to spread in the air (at least the airborne types) and multiple contact surfaces on the equipment, benches, and dumbbells allow them to be passed on among members. "

"First and foremost is to adopt an in-depth cleaning protocol which involves both cleaning and disinfecting. Cleaning or "removing substrate" is the most visible and should be done consistently throughout the day. This removes dust and impurities but does not necessarily kill the germs. End result is a fitness center that looks and smells clean. Equipment should be wiped free of sweat using a mild cleaner, floors vacuumed and moped, and equipment should be put in place. Although this created a perception of clean within the gym it does not address the issue of disinfecting, or killing the viruses and bacteria. To fully disinfect effectively cleaners must be allowed to work through their dwell time which is the amount of time a disinfectant must stay on a surface to kill the bacteria and viruses. Often times this can be anywhere from 2-10 minutes."

"There are some basic rules to follow to protect your equipment. If using a spray cleaner/disinfectant always spray onto a lint-free cloth. This prevents spray directly onto sensitive electronics. The type of cleaner/disinfectant used is another important factor to consider. There are a number of chemicals to avoid using on the equipment. Using alcohol based cleaners over time can lead to cracking on surfaces, rusting of some metals, and can dissolve some screen coatings. Hydrogen peroxide oxidizes some metals. Bleach can fade and discolor and can corrode some protective coatings. Finally, ammonia can irritate respiratory system and can also fade and discolor the equipment. "

"To protect equipment, search for cleaners that do not contain these chemicals and use something that is odorless, non-staining, and non-corrosive yet still kills the bacteria such as a QUAT cleaner. Whatever cleaner you use make sure you have access to the safety data sheet to determine chemicals and proper handling. Also, make sure they are on the EPA-registered list of Products Effective Against Human Coronavirus. The main objective is to find the balance of effectiveness while protecting the equipment when choosing the correct cleaning products."

The above is just a brief synopsis of how to maintain your fitness room for your guests and maximizing the safety and sanitation of this amenity. While this article was written particularly for public gyms, following many of these protocols for your hotel Fitness Room will give guests the assurances that you value their health.

BY THE NUMBERS

GABRIELLE SMITH, CORPORATE CONTROLLER



Congratulations and thank you to all of our GRAM portfolio property associates for working and staying safe! These efforts have helped defray our overall insurance costs. GREAT JOB!

We are pleased to announce that the Workers Compensation Experience Mod went down from 1.14 to .98 for the next policy year, beginning August 1, 2021. This decrease of 16 base points places us in a credit status for this portion of the cost calculation.

The Net Rate also went down, from 4.12 to 3.41.

These are 2 important factors in the Total Workers Compensation calculation which aids in keeping overall costs down.

However, unfortunately, certain states did see an increase in the Base Rate due to both the statewide legal and settlements costs that are on the rise.

Insurance carriers look to the National Council of Compensation Insurance (NCCI) which gathers data, analyzes industry trends and provides objective rate and loss cost recommendations to them.

Let's keep up the great work!

INDUSTRY RECOVERY HEADLINES

The following information was published by Hotel News. For more details, follow the links in each topic below.

POLITICAL

The Biden administration's swift distribution of three different vaccines for the COVID-19 virus has likely increased the speed of recovery for the hotel industry from what was initially predicted.

ECONOMIC

According to STR's April 2021 profit and loss information, U.S. hotel profits reached 60 percent of the comparable 2019 level. This is encouraging but also shows how far the industry has yet to go to reach full recovery.

SOCIAL

Diversity and inclusion are key concerns among younger generations. Hotels can permanently damage their reputation if they are not delivering excellence equally to all guests. Addressing unconscious bias is key to creating a positive and welcoming customer experience.

TECHNOLOGY

As the hotel industry anticipates economic recovery, it is likely those businesses able to integrate technology throughout the entire customer journey that will succeed. Automation and integration of platforms can reduce costs, increase business insights and account for labor shortages.

LEGAL

As cannabis laws loosen around the U.S., the hotel industry is beginning to explore what new opportunities this makes available. 420 Hotels Inc. has set their sights on being the first hotel chain in the country with legal, licensed on-site cannabis.

ENVIRONMENTAL

Consumer trends indicate that travelers are looking for slower travel options. This involves staying in one place for longer, connecting more with destination culture, and therefore is more sustainable for communities and the environment.

"Customers who love you will market for you more powerfully than you can possibly market yourself."

Jeanne Bliss



SEO FOR HOTEL WEBSITES

The following information was published by eHotelier. For more details, follow this link. Written by Jessica Day, Senior Director of Marketing Strategy at Dialpad.

With websites now becoming a necessity for businesses (especially in the hotel sector!), getting noticed has become even more of a challenge.

Studies have found that being on the first page of a Google search is vitally important, with only 0.78% of people clicking on results from the second page. In comparison, a #1 search result on Google boasts a 31.7% click-through rate (CTR).

The saturation of the hospitality industry has made effective Search Engine Optimization, or SEO, integral to a company's business strategy.

(... Continued on Page 9)

ROOMER HAS IT

FAIRFIELD INN & SUITES MILLVILLE/VINELAND

GM Tim Carroll has resurrected the Employee of the Month program at the hotel. The honored associates were recognized in ceremonies, presented with a plaque, and rewarded with a gift card. Not only are the guest scores and comments the highest they have been in many years, but the associates are working together as one cohesive unit. Congrats Team Fairfield! Congrats Avelina and Cynthia!

AVELINA WOOTEN, HOUSEKEEPING - JUNE



CYNTHIA NELSON, FRONT DESK - MAY



(SEO - Continued from Page 8)

SEO is about pairing the right people with the right products. When done efficiently and effectively this has the potential to boost one's exposure, resulting in more clicks. Done correctly, SEO ultimately ensures customer satisfaction through an understanding of the target audience.

SEO is the art of increasing the quality and quantity of your website traffic via organic search. For many companies, SEO is viewed as more important than other traditional marketing methods – and is much cheaper too! It's key is to understand the user's intent when searching for keywords and phrases for SEO purposes. Not only can this help you provide high-quality and relevant content for your website, it can also give you some insight into what your top ranking-rivals are providing, and whether there is a niche in the market you can exploit.

Meta titles and descriptions, containing descriptors of the contents of a webpage on the search page, are also important aspects of SEO. The key to an effective meta description is to be highly relevant and concise, this way a user will be able to quickly decide whether a website is relevant to their search. These can divert you to the most appropriate area of the website without you having to enter the site at the homepage.

Defining target audience - In order to know what keywords and phrases to use, you first need to define and understand who your target audience is. By doing this, we are much more likely to know what search terms our intended audience will use, as well as what their search intent is. As a hotel, for example, a combination of your destination and facilities is most likely to lend itself to a specific target audience. Generally speaking, it can be expected that a hostel would attract solo or budget travelers, whereas a serviced apartment is more likely to attract corporate or business travelers. Similarly, an adventure hotel may be popular with a specific demographic (such as millennials), whereas a resort might cater to families. When discovering your target audience, it is key to pinpoint identifiers such as age, demographic, and lifestyle. Once the desired target audience has been found, words and phrases most likely to be used by this group can be strategically used in content on your website.

Optimizing Google reviews for organic search - Targeting the right audience is also more likely to result in positive reviews on sites such as Google. These positive reviews can further improve your organic search ranking. According to Google, local ranking factors into the categories of relevance, distance, and prominence, as well as a user's reviews and ratings. User engagement by the company with these reviews is also important and demonstrates that you value your customers. Alongside this, review quantity, diversity, and velocity can all influence your search page ranking. Being able to find frequently posted reviews for a company not only helps users to make decisions at a glance, but also provides a company a sense of legitimacy. While algorithms do a lot of the heavy lifting, search engines such as Google also have human teams who are influential in prioritizing quality suggestions in the search rankings.

Building links - A further way in which SEO can be boosted is through the building of links across other websites. This can be done in several ways, such as directly asking other companies to use your links on their websites, guest posting on blogs, and creating online viral content that will organically attract the creation of links. Hotels, in particular, can use their facilities in order to build a big presence through the sponsoring of events, which may be reported on by various news outlets. The presence of links to your website on other sites can represent your trustworthiness, relevance, popularity, and authority.

Other top tips (Do's and Don'ts) -

- Remember to update your page titles and meta descriptions! These are most often the first things someone will see on a search results page, and are prime locations for your keywords and phrases.
- Tailor your targeted words and phrases! Match the words and phrases you use in your content to those being used by prospective guests. There are also SaaS SEO agency companies who are able to help you with this and SEO in general.
- Make sure pages load quickly! Not only are faster websites ranked higher than slow ones, but prospective customers can also be rather impatient. Much the same as long wait times can lead to call dropping, a slow loading page will mean higher abandon rates.

- Buy links! This is against Google's terms of service and could result in your site being removed from the search engine.
- Neglect customer service! While SEO is a great resource for your company it should be used alongside great customer service rather than usurp it. One great customer service tool is the use of a parked call feature for inbound calls.
- Be impatient! The effects of SEO take time so don't be dismayed if you don't recognize an increase in traffic within the first couple days. Be wary of anyone promising to make you #1 ranking within the week. It's probably a scam!

Conclusion - When used correctly, SEO can increase your brand and business exposure significantly. After reading this article you should know how SEO can become an integral part of your business strategy. Armed with the basics, you can now relate it to your own website and watch as you creep up those search result rankings!