

# TELEGRAM



## TRAVEL IS HEATING UP - WE MUST PREPARE FOR THE UPTICK

BY LINDA KOMORNIK, CORPORATE DIRECTOR OF SALES & MARKETING

*The following is an excerpt from the article "Tripadvisor: 67% of Americans Planning Summer Vacations", as published in Hotel Business on April 20, 2021. Follow this [link](#) to read the full article.*



*"With summer right around the corner, it's not just the weather that's heating up. Tripadvisor's 2021 Summer Travel Index reveals that—with every passing day—travel is making a big comeback. Nearly half of Americans (43%) in a recent Tripadvisor survey believe travel activity will rebound within three months. With Americans no longer settling for staycations and local trips, it appears true vacation getaways are coming back en vogue.*

*More than two-thirds of Americans (67%) are planning to travel this summer (June 1-Aug. 31), which is a 17% increase from those who traveled this spring (March 1-May 31). Millennials are the most excited to get back out there with the vast majority (72%) of the generation planning trips. Although many still plan to drive to their destination (43%), 19% plan to fly, up 4% from this spring.*

*Americans are done with quiet staycations and hanging out idly in their homes; they're excited to get out and about. Compared to the first week of January, hotel searches are up 65%, searches for experiences (attractions and tours) increased by 78% and restaurant searches are up 53%."*

With this said, we MUST prepare now for summer travel - both leisure and business travel! This means deep cleaning rooms, making sure all training is complete and our associates understand our standards and protocols, our associates are in full uniform and have all the tools they need to do their job, and all of our hotel amenities are operational and stocked. Pride in a job well done is paramount.

Our sales and marketing teams need to amp up their strategies and dust off their Sales & Marketing Plans. It has never been so important to have a cohesive prospecting and sales plan in place then now. Do your flyers and brochures need to be freshened up? Have you taken inventory of sales packets and what is inside these packets? When was the last time you reviewed your meeting room or wedding packages? Spring clean your office and go through all your sales gifts, collateral, and update your calendars. (See my article under "Selling The Sizzle" on Page 5 for unique ideas.)

Prospecting previous customers and resurrecting old relationships is very important. It remains to be seen how many of our "old" contacts are still in place. For those companies who have undergone organizational change, this is the perfect time to rekindle or begin friendships. Pull your 30-60-90 bookings from 2019 June, July and August. Take note of any events, groups or activities that took place pre-pandemic and call on these companies to see if they plan to restart travel or host meetings or events this year. Old school techniques are still good strategies for finding and booking business.

Don't forget to shop your competition! Knowing what they have in their hotels is important to building your own strategies. If you think they aren't shopping your parking lots..... think again. We must freshen up our sales efforts and hit the streets (and telephones) NOW or risk losing our business to the comp set.

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# NEW KIDS ON THE BLOCK

## SPRINTHILL SUITES QUAKERTOWN



Jose Mojica has been appointed General Manager at the SpringHill Suites in Quakertown, PA. Mojica, a 30-year hospitality industry veteran who has served in hotel management roles in New Jersey, New York and Puerto Rico, will oversee all aspects of the 89-room hotel's operations. He previously was general manager of several Fairfield Inn & Suites in New York & New Jersey and Springhill Suites in Erie, PA. From 2006-2010, he served consecutively as general manager of three hotels in Puerto Rico: the Courtyard by Marriott in Aguadilla, the Courtyard in Miramar and the Holiday Inn Express in San Juan.

Earlier in his career, Mojica held positions in human resources, food and beverage, housekeeping and front desk at hotels in San Juan and Manhattan. He also was a consultant in operations in hotels in San Juan and Kenilworth, New Jersey.

Mojica earned an associate's degree in travel and tourism at Berkeley College, New York. Fluent in both English and Spanish, he is certified as a human resources specialist as well as in revenue management and alcohol consumption safety. He has received general manager certification from Choice Hotels, Marriott International, InterContinental Hotels Group & Hilton. Jose also has Revenue Management Certifications from Hilton and Marriott.

We are delighted to have Jose join our crew in Quakertown. "Jose is a fresh breath of air and we are confident that his knowledge and expertise, combined with his enthusiasm and calm approach will bring this team of dedicated hotel professionals to their full potential," noted Linda Komornik. "GRAM is so excited to be working with Jose on this great hotel property."

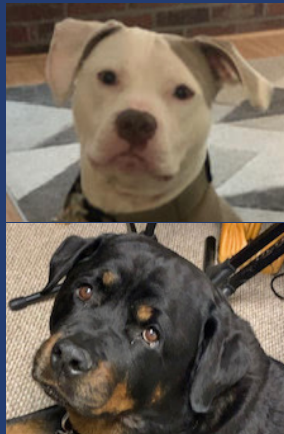
Welcome aboard!

## FAIRFIELD INN & SUITES MILLVILLE

We are pleased to welcome Carissa Kania as the new Sales Manager in Millville, NJ. Carissa is a graduate of Rutgers College with a degree in Fire Science and Municipal Finance. She began her career in a NJ fire district as an administrative clerk to the the Board of Fire Commission and then became assistant to the Fire Commissioner. One of her duties was to oversee the sales of the banquet rooms for all three fire companies in her district. Subsequent to this position, she was hired as the GM/Sales Manager at a newly renovated, large catering establishment and found her niche. She joined the Ramada in Vineland and it was at this point that she fell in love with the hospitality industry.

Family is very important to Carissa. She has been married for 22 years and has two children, two grand children, and two fur babies. She loves cruises, long weekends at the Jersey shore, working on her house, shopping, and spending time with her loved ones. Her most important accomplishment: Being a Mom and Grandma.

Carissa has already made a difference at the hotel - even after just a short time. Her team work and work ethic makes her a great asset to the team and to the hotel. Welcome!



## CLARION INN & SUITES SHEFFIELD - FIZZ

### ZACH MARKS - DIRECTOR OF FOOD AND BEVERAGE OPERATIONS

Zach began his food and beverage career as a bus boy and dishwasher at one of the nation's largest food and beverage chains nearly 22 years ago. He rose through the ranks and has worked every position in multiple restaurants during that time. After many years as a manager and general manager Zach is extremely excited to bring a new dining experience to the Shoals area for locals and tourists alike. Using his experience, Zach will team up with the other food and sales professionals on staff to not only develop Fizz as a top performer in the area, but to refine the banquet offerings for the hotel. Welcome back Zach!

### WILLIE THOMPSON - EXECUTIVE CHEF

Willie started his career at Dale's Restaurant in Florence, AL in 1990. With hard work and a willingness to learn Willie quickly rose through the ranks in the front of house and moved into the kitchen where he really began to hone his skills. A quick study, Willie was soon promoted to Kitchen Manager and began a long career of serving some of the best cuisine in the Florence area. After nearly 21 years of service at Dale's, the business closed and he moved to another fine dining restaurant in town where he was responsible for designing menus and creating signature dishes. We are extremely lucky to have Willie on board as part of the team.

### HANNAH WHITE - RESTAURANT MANAGER

Hannah has been in the restaurant and bar industry around the Shoals area for 16 years and has made a name for herself in the area as one of the top bartenders around. She has been in management and bartended at multiple local venues including the previous incarnation of the Fizz. Hannah loves the Shoals area and is active in the community, in social as well as professional settings, and will be a huge asset to the team.



## LET'S CELEBRATE

### CELEBRATION STATION

In case you want to celebrate, here is a list of National and "other" holidays: 5/25 - Wine Day, 5/31 - Memorial Day, 6/4 - Donut Day, 6/10 - Ice Tea Day, 6/12 - Peanut Butter Cookie Day, 6/18 - Picnic Day, 6/20 - Father's Day, 6/21 - Selfie Day, 6/25 - Catfish Day, and 6/29 - Waffle Iron 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:

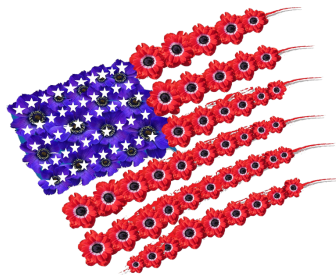
Tim Carroll - May 4  
Dan Hays - May 28  
Rob Greene - June 28

### AROUND THE BLOCK

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

Linda Smola - 1 year (May)  
Rosalind Montague - 1 year (June)

"HONOR TO THE  
SOLDIER AND SAILOR  
EVERYWHERE, WHO  
BRAVELY BEARS HIS  
COUNTRY'S CAUSE. HONOR  
ALSO, TO THE CITIZEN WHO  
CARES FOR HIS BROTHER IN  
THE FIELD AND SERVES,  
AS HE BEST CAN,  
THE SAME CAUSE."  
~ ABRAHAM LINCOLN ~



MEMORIAL DAY 2021

## I AM HUMAN, I AM A RESOURCE

SUZANNE BAELE, CORPORATE DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES

In these unheralded times we continue to see fallout that is unprecedented.

One of the newest challenges, which will likely last through September, is our inability to find and hire associates that are ready, willing and able to return to work.

During the 32nd Hunter Hotel Investment Conference which just ended days ago, leading professionals representing many facets of our industry identified the current labor shortage as the primary reason hotels are scrambling. We here at Great American Hotel Group are well aware of the difficulties our industry is facing.

While we continue to utilize traditional recruiting platforms like Indeed, Ziprecruiter, etc., we are also using individual hotel's Facebook pages, General Manager's LinkedIn profiles, and Craigslist. We are also thinking outside of the box. For example, our Manager Rosalind Montague created flyers for her Housekeeping team to distribute in their home communities, churches, and local markets.

Nothing is off limits. I encourage you to think beyond what you have used in the past. Be creative. Ask your team for ideas! By all means share your successes so that we are better able to support one another.

### 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.

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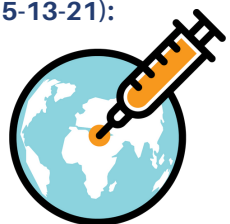
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Traveling again remains a top desire and is directly tied to rates of vaccination (reported by Marriott on 5-13-21):

72% of Americans say they have or intend to be vaccinated

Over half of parents say they will vaccinate their children

Coronavirus anxiety - both from a health and financial perspective - remains lower than any other period during the pandemic; pessimism about the pandemic's course in the US reach a record low of 10.9%.



# FIZZ WHERE THE MUSIC IZZ

Excitement is building in Sheffield, AL where the new restaurant/music venue Fizz is fine tuning the menu, hiring staff, and preparing for their anticipated opening in early summer 2021. The hotel is also completing renovation of their guest rooms and banquet spaces.

Kim Bates, hotel General Manager, and Zach Marks, the Director of Food & Beverage Operations at the Clarion Sheffield AL have begun building a strong team of culinary and supervisory professionals to not only operate the hotel and Fizz but to revamp the hotel's catering operations and menus. Plans are in the works to offer customers of the hotel the opportunity to book parties, events, and packages that include tent parties, outdoor tailgate parties, and unique parties in the courtyard. The new Fizz culinary team is also working closely with hotel veteran Catering Sales Manager Emily Thompson, to provide the community with a new look and feel to their meeting and banquet needs.



*THE FIZZ TEAM: (FROM LEFT TO RIGHT) WILLIE THOMPSON (EXECUTIVE CHEF), HANNAH WHITE (RESTAURANT MANAGER), ZACH MARKS (DIRECTOR OF FOOD & BEVERAGE OPERATIONS). SEE PAGE 2 FOR BIOS.*

Visitors to historic Sheffield, Alabama, will enjoy a step back in time when they visit Fizz, a retro-infused bar and live music room. Located just a stone's throw from the legendary Muscle Shoals Sound Studio and Fame Music Studio, Fizz will offer patrons a nostalgic glimpse into the Muscle Shoals of the 1970s, right down to the rock and roll vibes and fun, splashy colors of the era. Decorated with mid-century modern furniture, colors, and cues, Fizz provides a festive space for intimate pre- or post-show gatherings, lively parties, or leisurely dinners. Tourists and locals alike will savor spending time among the vibes of the Shoals' musical past while enjoying all that the Quad-Cities area has to offer.

The lounge and bar boast a bright color palette derived from the '70s plus fun and funky throw-backs like wood paneling and mid-century modern design elements. Locals and tourists can enjoy dining on affordable, casual, steakhouse fare while aspiring artists fill the lounge with music and entertainment.

During the summer, the open garage door and circulating fans will bring in the warm night air. Musicians and their managers, local businessmen, and friends will love gathering for a quick drink or casual business meeting at the bar or a casual meal from our "Southern made-from-scratch-inspired" menu.

In the lounge area, brightly colored graphic prints of famous Shoals alums such as Bob Dylan, Etta James, and the Rolling Stones will set the tone and enhance the decor. Guests will enjoy kicking back in 70's inspired chairs and listening to vintage records from the era or live music from local bands. Framed by prints and decorative guitars, the stage offers musicians an opportunity to debut new songs or cover old favorites. Couples can relax and enjoy the music while lingering over dinner or join each other on the dance floor.

For Fizz, just like for the Shoals, the fun, food, and music never stop. Fizz... where the music 'izz.



**FIZZ**  
Where the music 'izz



# SELLING THE SIZZLE

LINDA KOMORNIK, CORPORATE DIRECTOR OF SALES & MARKETING

There is a holiday for everything. It borders on ridiculous - but, as a sales and marketing professional, I tend to embrace these events and "celebrations" thinking more along the lines of social media and menu planning, than actual sales activities. BUT, every once in a while, I have a brainstorm and try to think outside the box to make our hotels stand out from the crowd in that crowded sea of sameness. As we approach a more normal sales environment with the gradual opening of the US, and States reducing the restrictions imposed during this pandemic, I am lured by the pull of "unique and weird" holidays and celebration days.

Thinking back to June a few years ago, I wrote a blog entitled "[Lettuce Turnip the Beet and Sell](#)" with ideas on how you could "wow" your customers and bring attention to National Fresh Fruit and Veggies Month (June). Here were my ideas:

*Selling is a very broad-based activity. Everyone's style is different - kinda like listening to different music genres.*

*Because June is National Fresh Fruit and Vegetables Month, (June 16 is Fresh Veggies Day, and June 17 is Eat Your Vegetables Day), wouldn't you stand out from the crowd visiting a client with a basket of tomatoes or other fresh fruit/veggie? "Lettuce Turnip The Beet"!*

*It's very simple: you come up with a message (hopefully clever), pick up some fresh veggies or fruits from the farmer's market, design a card, and go visit clients with your bounty in tow.*

*Here are a few clever slogan ideas:*

- *Lettuce Turnip the Beet. (Choose one) Take a client to lunch at a vegetarian/vegan restaurant. Wear your favorite vegetable shirt. Find some great music about vegetables. Get adult coloring books about vegetables. Wow the customer with your knowledge of fresh fruits and veggies.*
- *Lettuce Be Happy. Lettuce Be Friends. Lettuce Work Together. Pick up a salad and go visit a client. Better yet, pick up 2 salads, pack a picnic basket and invite a client to lunch.*
- *I Carrot A Lot. Get a bunch of carrots, put them in a basket and find a great carrot recipe to tie into your idea. Let your customer know you care (carrot).*
- *You Look Radishing. Add radishes to a pampering theme basket. Invite a client to get a manicure with you.*
- *It's Thyme To Talk. Plant thyme seeds in a mini herb garden. Remind your repeat customers its time to rebook their event.*
- *You're One in a Melon. Get a fruit tray and take it to a client visit or presentation. Emphasize the value of their account to your hotel.*
- *Kale Me Maybe? Let that tough-to-reach-customer know that you'd like to talk. Kale is superfood so pick up a specialty salad from the deli and deliver your message (that you'd like to talk) to the gatekeeper. Or, tie up a bunch of kale like a floral delivery and deliver to the client with your card.*
- *If you Cantelope - Host Your Wedding Party Here! Visit a bride or a wedding venue. Work a wedding show.*

*If you don't like the "cheesy/fruity message" route - what about,*

- *Celebrating fresh fruits and vegetables by getting a pint of fresh blueberries or strawberries, printing a recipe and giving them with your sales kit when you visit your client?*
- *Take a package of veggie seeds, a pot and dirt and encourage clients to "grow their business" with your hotel.*
- *Plant a "salad bowl" and deliver with flavored oil and vinegar.... "I'd love to toss about some ideas about your travel!"*



Not into fresh fruit or veggies - or it is just beyond your sales comfort zone.... there are oodles of wacky holidays to choose from. Here are a few: *National Zoo and Aquarium Month, African-American Music Month, Men's Health Month, Adopt A Cat Month, National Candy Month, National Camping Month, National Country Cooking Month, National Dairy Month, National Great Outdoors Month, National Ice Tea Month, National Rose Month, National Safety Month, or even Turkey Lover's Month.* These crazy month-long celebrations are supported by "celebration days" too. Check out the Celebration Station blurb in this newsletter on page 3 for individual day ideas or simply Google "weird wacky holidays".

Make your sales calls fun and interesting - most importantly, make them unique and different from every other sales call made by your competition.

Happy Celebrating with Panache!

*Linda*

## ROOMER HAS IT

FAIRFIELD INN & SUITES MILLVILLE NJ

Congratulations to the team of great associates in Millville. They are recipients of the 2021 Loved by Guests Award Winners from Hotels.com! These fantastic properties have high guest rating scores and lots of great reviews.



## TRENDS ACROSS US & CANADA

Here are a few things to consider and be prepared for during sales negotiations at your hotel:

- Airline, Entertainment and Sports segments performing well short term versus other segments who have begun traveling. Amp prospecting in these market segments.
- Sustainability will be a central theme during 2022 RFP pricing across most major brands. Plan now how your hotel will address protecting resources and carbon footprint.
- End User Accounts have started asking for commissions to help defray costs for travel for their companies and associations. Trends are specifically from associations getting IATA numbers and retroactively asking for commissions. Contact your national sales offices for help in overcoming this new obstacle to booking. Be prepared on how you will respond to this request!
- Customers are asking for flexibility with definite groups in 3rd and 4th Quarters 2021 with updated attrition, and/or overflow block cancellations in order to hold meetings versus canceling.
- Customers have concerns around consistency of cleaning protocols that were introduced during the pandemic, and want to know how restrictions and protocols are evolving and how they differentiate from pre-pandemic to post-pandemic. Identify which protocols you will keep as a standard.
- Customers have concerns about staffing on property - some requesting performance standard clauses in contracts.

## 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](mailto:LINDA.KOMORNIK@GREATAMERICANHG.COM) FOR INCLUSION IN FUTURE EDITIONS OF THE TELEGRAM.

GM Jose Mojica, SpringHill Suites in Quakertown, PA shared a thank you note from a recent group booked by Gail Dehelian, Sales Coordinator. Extraordinary service is her middle name! Read on:

*Gail & Team - We can't thank you enough for your help and hospitality this past week. Our team loved staying here in Quakertown and you've greatly contributed to the success of our film. Enjoy this little gift and I hope we can work together soon. All the best,*  
*Alex - Neighborhood Film*



GM Tim Carroll, 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:

*Timothy, I checked in on the afternoon of the 13th. Cynthia was working the front desk when I arrived. I wanted you to know that I had probably the best check-in experience with her. I am a Titanium member, so I travel a lot. Very lovely, checked about upgrade without asking. Just the way she came across during the entire check-in was refreshing. I just wanted you to be made aware of my experience, and hopefully she is recognized for her service."*

*Blake Ducote, Regional Sales Manager - Extron - Intelligent Innovation*



# OPERATIONAL SPEAKING

ROB GREENE, DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS

*The following is an excerpt from the article "Three Steps to Decarbonize Your Hotel" by Paloma Zapata, Chief Executive Officer, Sustainable Travel International, and published in Hotel Executive on May 9th, 2021. Follow this [link](#) to read the full article.*

"Beyond the design of the building itself, hotels can utilize energy saving technologies to further drive down their carbon footprint. Consider upgrading washing machines, refrigerators, air conditioning units, and other appliances to more efficient models. Alternatively, some hotels are switching to ozone laundry systems which eliminate hot water use and shorten drying times.

Replace existing light fixtures with LED bulbs which use 75% less energy, and last much longer, than incandescent lighting. Heat pumps offer an efficient alternative to traditional furnaces and boilers since they capture heat from the outside air, water, or ground. Similarly, sea water air conditioning systems (SWAC) use cold ocean or lake water to cool buildings. Combined heating and power (CHP) systems also require less energy due to their ability to generate electricity and heat simultaneously. Other carbon reduction tactics include reducing waste, conserving hot water resources, or providing sustainable transportation options such as electric golf carts, bicycles, or kayaks.

This day in age, it's no longer just about which devices you use, it's also about how you control them. Automated energy management technologies are quickly becoming the way of the future. Photosensors or timers can be used to automatically turn off or dim lights at certain times of day. This is especially useful for areas such as parking garages or outdoor areas that only require bright lighting after dark. More hotels are starting to add keycard master switches into their guest rooms. These systems conserve energy by automatically switching off the power in the room when guests leave and remove the keycard from the designated slot.

More advanced "smart" energy management systems utilize sensors to detect when a guest room is empty. These systems prevent unnecessary energy use by automatically turning off the lights, closing the curtains, or adjusting the thermostat when rooms are unoccupied. Sensors can also be used to shut off the heating or air conditioning when a balcony door is left open or to control lighting in conference rooms and other less-trafficked areas. Some smart systems even allow guests to control the air conditioner, lights, curtains, and television via a universal remote or an app on their phone."

## BY THE NUMBERS

GABRIELLE SMITH, CORPORATE CONTROLLER

*The following is an excerpt from the blog "How To Read Your Profit and Loss Statement" by Patrick Landman, CEO and founder of Xotels. Published on December 3, 2018. Follow this [link](#) to read the full article.*

A hotel profit and loss (P&L) statement provides you with an analysis of your hotel's revenue, cost and profit performance. Therefore, it is essential for any hotel manager to fully understand each line item of their P&L statement, and where pertinent, how to interpret the data to make informed business decisions.

A hotel P&L statement typically includes the following components:

### REVENUE OR TOP LINE:

This is typically itemized into departmental revenue sources. These include room revenue, food and beverage revenue, and if applicable, events, activities, telephone, and gift shop income, among other possible revenue sources.

### COSTS:

Departmental Operational Expenses - These are the operational costs for delivering the services of each revenue source, for instance: front office, housekeeping, restaurant, bar, banquets, cleaning, supplies, commissions, and others.

Additionally, there are Undistributed Expenses - Overheads such as administration costs, franchise fees, sales and marketing expenses, utilities, and property maintenance related costs.

Fixed Expenses - These costs usually remain constant. They include property tax, building and/or equipment rental leases, amortization, depreciation, and insurance. Any interest will fluctuate depending on your loan documents.

### EARNINGS OR BOTTOM LINE:

Your net operating income/profit is calculated by subtracting the costs from the total revenue.

Knowing how to read your P&L will help make you a more effective manager. For more information, feel free to reach out to us.

# GETTING BACK UP ON THE BIKE

*The following is an excerpt from the article "Creative Pragmatism Will Help Hotels Get Back On Track" by Emily Weiss, managing director and Global Travel Industry lead, Accenture (NYC), and guest contributor to Hotels on May 10, 2021. Follow this [link](#) to read the full article.*

After a year of unprecedented disruption, hotels are hoping the summer season will provide a much-needed boost to occupancy, rates and revenues. And if the progress in vaccine rollout can be maintained, there are encouraging signs those hopes could be realized.

However, as we've all learned over the past year, nothing with COVID-19 can be taken for granted. What's more, the ripple effects of the pandemic are certain to be felt long after the pandemic subsides.

## A TIPPING POINT IN CONSUMER BEHAVIOR

Accenture's consumer research shows the scale of the changes the pandemic has catalyzed. A huge 95% of consumers say they've made at least one lifestyle change they expect to be permanent—such as switching to eCommerce, shopping locally, working from home, changing travel patterns, and so on.

For hotels, one of the biggest changes – and challenges – is the impact on business travel. In Accenture's survey nearly half of consumers (46%) said they will currently either not travel at all for work or will reduce their business travel by half following the pandemic. Their employers, too, have come to realize that much of their business can be done just as effectively online.

There's no doubt the continued decline in business revenue will hit hotels hard in the short term, especially when you consider how important this revenue stream has historically been to the industry. The reality is the travel market is now principally a leisure market—and a structurally smaller market.

The good news? We've already seen how the behavioral changes forced on people by the pandemic have sparked a wave of innovation from many consumer-facing businesses, who have responded by repurposing their physical spaces or exploring new business models.

## MEET CONSUMER NEEDS FOR "THIRD SPACES"

One interesting finding from Accenture's research is that a huge majority (79%) of remote workers say they'd like to work occasionally from a "third space" – somewhere other than their home or usual place of employment. Even more interesting is that more than half said they'd be willing to pay up to US\$100 a month to do so.

It's not hard to see why, especially where employees lack a dedicated home workspace or are frequently interrupted by family life. And hotels are ideally placed to capitalize on this need, repurposing unoccupied rooms or other spaces as temporary work or meeting locations. We saw some experimentation with this idea during the pandemic, but with a bit of creative thinking it could be scaled up as a permanent revenue stream.

## BE CREATIVE ABOUT CONTACTLESS INTERACTIONS

Hotels must adapt to the fact that contactless is now an even greater part of hospitality – and an expectation. This does not simply mean kiosks, it means using the cloud to enable fully contactless interactions, from check-in to check-out and everything in between.

Hotels also need to think creatively about contactless health and safety in the room itself, including the use of voice interfaces and hands-free equipment for curtains, lights, TVs, soap dispensers, and so on.

## RE-CENTER MARKETING AROUND LEISURE

For many hotels, the leisure market has been a secondary focus until now. So, re-centering around leisure will require a fundamental rethink of many aspects of the business, especially the pre-travel and post-travel phases of the customer journey.

In particular, hotels will need to get much more active in the early inspiration marketing phase, using social media and aspirational content to spark and capture that initial desire to travel. Global hotel brands will also need to ensure genuine local flexibility in their marketing strategies – much more important in the leisure market – and scale up their abilities to deliver personalized media and omni channel content in multiple markets around the clock.

## RETHINK LOYALTY

Another consequence of the pivot to leisure is the need to update the loyalty program. Points-per-stay simply don't make as much sense for leisure travelers since no one but a select few makes enough hotel stays each year to make a difference. Instead, the program needs to be centered around experiences and other kinds of emotional or trust-based rewards.

We're already seeing some interesting moves in this space. For example, Marriott has teamed with Uber so its members can benefit when they take an Uber ride or use Uber Eats. This speaks to an important broader point – that partnerships, even unconventional ones, can be a powerful way of sparking innovation in customer engagement.

The key point is that, with ongoing uncertainty about what the future holds, hotels will need to be pragmatic, creative and agile, making better use of their data to respond quickly and innovatively to a fast-changing set of consumer needs and expectations. There are huge opportunities for those who can get it right.