

# TELEGRAM



**"There are certain things that are fundamental to human fulfillment. The essence of these needs is captured in the phrase; to live, to love, to learn, to leave a legacy. The need to live is our physical need for such things as food, clothing, shelter, economical well-being health. The need to love is our social need to relate to other people to belong, to love and be loved. The need to learn is our mental need to develop and grow. And the need to leave legacy is our spiritual need to have a sense of meaning, purpose, personal congruence, and contribution."**

**Stephen Covey**

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## A TIME FOR THANKS AND A TIME FOR GIVING

*By Dave Akridge, President GRAM*

On a recent revenue call, an owner took a few minutes at the start of the call to quote Stephen Covey:

**"Live, love, learn, and leave a legacy."**

All of us on the call were touched by the sentiment and the time he took to make sure that we all understood how this quote influences his life choices. After hearing this, it struck me that perhaps, we should all take these words to heart and embrace this message, especially as we move through the next several months. The holiday season always brings out the best of people and I think it is important for each of us to reflect on the meaning of thanks and giving not only during this timeframe, but throughout the year. This quote is a good reminder.

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Our Company commitment to ownership groups and property teams is that we will always work with you to provide the highest quality of service for our valued guests and clients. We strive to consistently deliver quality services and products the first time, and every time and to that end, we strive to hire the brightest, most talented people who will work together in achieving our common goal - "Being the most responsive company in the industry".

You are our greatest assets and we value each and every one of your contributions to our mission. As a management company, we are a small yet mighty team of professionals, who rely on property leadership and our joint commitment to standards of performance.

We thank you for all you do and wish each and every one of you a happy and joyous holiday season.

## LET'S CELEBRATE

### CELEBRATION STATION

In case you want to celebrate, here is a list of National and "other" holidays: 11/8 - Election Day; 11/10 - Forget-Me-Not Day; 11/14 - Operating Nurses Day; 11/17 - Great American Smokeout; 11/24 - Thanksgiving; 11/25 - Black Friday; 11/28 - Cyber Monday; 12/7 - Letter Writing Day; 12/9 - Christmas Card Day; 12/12 - Poinsettia Day; 12/16 - National Chocolate Covered Anything Day; 12/21 - Winter Solstice; 12/23 - Festivus; 12/25 - Christmas; 12/31 - NY Eve.

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.



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### AROUND THE BLOCK

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

Dave Akridge - 32 years (November)  
Gabrielle Smith - 25 years (December)

### A LITTLE BIT WISER

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

Gregory Teagarden - November 10  
Suzanne Baele - November 18

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## STANDING OUT FROM THE CROWD

Weird and wacky sales suggestions from Linda.

**November 10th is Forget-Me-Not Day** - Make sales calls with seed packets for this beautiful little purple flower. If you can find actual plants.... even better.

**Great American Smokeout is November 17th** - This is the perfect chance for you to emphasize that your hotel is 100% non-smoking!

**November 28th is Cyber Monday** - Make sure your hotel is stocked with gift card blanks and that GSRs know how to sell them at the front desk! A reminder on hotel confirmations that they are available for purchase and that gift cards make great holiday gifts would be a great up-sell!

**December 9th is Christmas Card Day** - If you plan to send out holiday cards to your top producing customer base, make sure you are prepared! Order cards in advance and take time to mail or deliver cards during this week! Couple your sales call days with **Poinsettia Day on December 12th** and **National Chocolate Covered Anything day on December 16th!**

**Festivus - December 23rd** - "Festivus for the Rest of Us" - celebrate by showing a marathon of Jerry Seinfeld and the subtle and creative humor this blast from the past show ignited around the country!



## CRYPTOQUIK

CLUE: X=E

" E X S E A X I R A A

Q S L K X O I G W O

F S B C W R Z, Q S L K X O

I G W O F S B Z R Z, M B O

E X S E A X N R A A D X J X L

Q S L K X O G S N F S B

T W Z X O G X T Q X X A."

T W H W W D K X A S B

(SOLUTION ON PAGE 3)



## BY THE NUMBERS

GABRIELLE SMITH, CORPORATE CONTROLLER

Believe it or not, Year End is fast approaching.

To all GMs – Please take some time to confirm all of your employee home addresses are correct in your payroll system. This will help insure their W-2's reach them in a timely manner.



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Please also have your employees verify that their social security numbers are correct.

It is also a good time to carry out some general housekeeping:

- Terminated employees should be marked in the payroll system with the date and the specific reason.
- ACA report filing data should be updated.
- Check in with your Staff Accountant regarding any outstanding checks that may need research (voided/reissued).
- Make a concerted effort to collect any outstanding Accounts Receivable.
- Confirm that any Insurance binders for contractors/vendors that are maintained on property are for the current policy year.

## I AM HUMAN, I AM A RESOURCE

SUZANNE BAELE, CORPORATE DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES



*While many of us equate the month of October with fall festivities and perhaps Halloween, the month is also devoted to covering bullying awareness. Due to the nature of our business, each and every associate regardless of position, may have the opportunity to observe first hand bullying. We are compelling you to report this behavior immediately to your General Manager, AGM, or the Manager On Duty.*

*The beginning of November is often the calm before the storm. Thanksgiving, Black Friday activities and the surge of prep for the holidays are looming, which oftentimes leads to stress. This is a perfect opportunity to connect deeply with your teams and keep them motivated, affirm your appreciation for them and everything that they do.*

*December. Ah yes, December. We find most everyone ramping up for the holiday season in some form or fashion. It feels as if there is less time in the day to accomplish all the things we need to, and coupled with year end business duties, it launches the almost perfect storm that demands we walk a fine line. As hoteliers we are laser focused on our teams and our guests. Let's ensure we are doing all that we can to keep the waters calm for each and everyone.*

## THANKS FOR GIVING!



Congratulations to Lori Jannay for earning Employee of the Month honors for September at the SpringHill Suites in Quakertown. Lori works in the hotel Laundry.

"Although Lori has only been employed at the hotel since April, she has earned the reputation of being a team player, hard worker, and a great person to work with. She always goes above and beyond of what is asked of her. If she is called into work on her day off, she will come in. She never complains and gets the job done. Lori is well respected by peers, management and owners. She is a pleasure to work with," notes GM Ron Nassef.

### 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 | 978.3201**

*Hotel Cryptoquik Solution:*

*"People will forget what you said,  
forget what you did, but people will  
never forget how you made them  
feel."*

*Maya Angelou*

# OPERATIONAL SPEAKING

DAVE AKRIDGE PRESIDENT AND REGIONAL  
DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS



## SECURITY ALERT: REVIEW NEW TACTICS OF PHONE SCAM TARGETING HOTELS

An ongoing phone scam has been identified where fraudsters are calling hotels and pretending to be a brand or vendor support technician requesting access to the associate's device. The tactic involves the threat actor requesting the associate (most often a front desk associate or night auditor) to visit a website or download software that will grant the threat actor remote access. The threat actor will claim that the access is needed to install an update or perform other maintenance activities. Once a remote connection is established, the threat actor has access to any applications open on the device, including the hotel PMS system if the associate is logged in.

Hotels should not (and will not) receive an unsolicited phone call from any brand support team or vendor to download or install software. If an unsolicited phone call is received from someone claiming to be a support or vendor representative, do not install or allow to be installed any software or provide log-in credentials or personal details to the caller. Instead, simply end the phone call and report the suspicious call to the property GM and your brand security team.

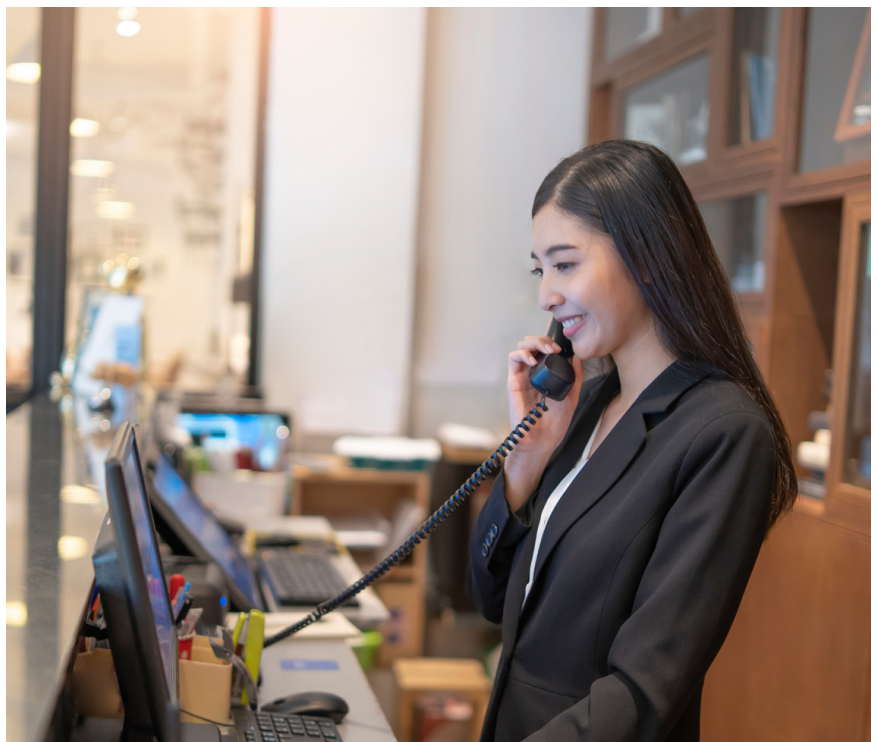
Please share this information with all associates during daily stand-up meetings and in your pass-on logs.

Now would also be a good time to review telephone procedures with all associates who answer hotel incoming calls.

- Never forward calls to guest rooms if the caller simply asks for room 204. The hotel operator should always reply "would you please provide the name of the guest in room 204 please?" The caller must be able to identify the name of the person in that guest room to be connected. If the caller does not know the name of the guest, you may take a message and let the caller know you will make sure the room recipient gets the message. Sometimes a caller may become upset that you won't connect them. Simply and calmly, you should say "We are very sorry for this inconvenience, but it is our [brand/hotel] procedure not to blindly connect calls to rooms. This is for our guest's security. I'd be happy to take a message and make sure that the occupants of room 204 get the message."
- Review how to handle guest emergency calls. Making sure everyone knows the procedure if a guest calls down (or dials 911) and indicates there is an accident, medical emergency, or a security issue. Employees should never go to guest rooms solo. Always take another associate with you. Also - one should never put themselves in the middle of a violent situation or domestic issue. If this type of situation presents itself, contact local emergency personnel to handle it.
- Consider adding a seasonal greeting when answering the phone. If you are not comfortable with a holiday greeting, try a little something different to make you stand out from the crowd. For example, instead of answering the phone and saying "XYZ Hotel", try "Thank you for calling the XYZ hotel. This is Linda, at your service." Get creative and get your team involved. However you choose to answer the phone, please make sure you are speaking at a moderate speed, in a normal and friendly tone, using a warm and welcoming greeting.

For more information on safety and security for your hotel, contact your brand and/or local authorities for guidance.

For more information on telephone etiquette, check out Linda's blog: <https://www.theroomermill.net/tips-on-telephone-etiquette/>



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## CELEBRATING SERVICE HEROES AMONG US

**WE DON'T SAY IT OFTEN ENOUGH - YOU  
AND YOUR TEAMS ARE AWESOME!**

SPRINGHILL SUITES QUAKERTOWN

66

*Lisa & Michael*

Wedding

Neel

Thank you very much for making our daughter's wedding run so smoothly and for taking care of our guests!

★★★★★

**CUSTOMER  
REVIEW**

MARRIOTT.COM/UKTSH

SPRINGHILL SUITES ALTAMONTE SPRINGS

SpringHill Suites  
Altamonte Springs, FL

### CUSTOMER REVIEWS

**Carlos H.**

"Excellent staff and hotel. Front desk staff (Julia / Omar / Jeff etc.) are always kind, courteous and willing to help. Housekeeping staff are always friendly and efficient. Management of hotel is superb, genuinely involved in ensuring guest satisfaction. 10/10 experience. Rooms and facilities are clean, breakfast is sufficient. Honestly not much more you can ask for out of a hotel - especially in a heavily trafficked tourist city like Orlando!!! Most important part of this stay? EVERYONE always has a smile on their face and is friendly - even during the middle of Hurricane Ian!"

**John & Erica C.**

"As a 'environmental services operator' (storm debris remover; loader truck operator), my husband travels a lot for work. This hotel is by far the CLEANEST and has the most accommodating and personable staff I've ever witnessed! Rooms are perfect for two people and maybe, one child (sofa pull out bed). Showers are beautiful, clean and awesome! I'd recommend this hotel to ANYONE traveling to this area!"

**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.**

## CELEBRATING HOUSEKEEPING APPRECIATION WEEK

About 100-years-ago, housekeeping was a very time-consuming task. Chores that we consider simple and quick to complete would often take days because they were so time-consuming they were allocated a whole day of the week to complete. The production of goods like soap, candles, and other detergents was also considered housekeeping. When these tasks were outsourced at the advent of the Industrial Revolution, and women began to work in factories, housekeeping declined and changed to more family-oriented tasks. With the creation of professional housekeeping services and the rise of working-class women, housekeeping personnel are still in high demand. Today, lives are so busy that it is difficult to find time to keep up with household chores, so the need for professional cleaning services has increased in the past several years.

Indeed without housekeepers, diseases would spread, and productivity would decline. That is why we need to celebrate them! Housekeepers Week has been sponsored by Integrated Environment and Health Assessment for almost 41 years and has successfully grown into a week-long celebration each year. Housekeeping is an integral profession — hotels, casinos, restaurants, and other establishments simply cannot do without these services.



The housekeeping team at the SpringHill Suites Altamonte Springs celebrating Housekeeping Week 2022.



# SELLING THE SIZZLE

LINDA KOMORNIK, CORPORATE DIRECTOR OF SALES & MARKETING

## How Do I Use the DATA in my STR (STAR) REPORT?

The following article was written by Linda Komornik referencing information from "[How to Read a Star Report](#)", published in Hotel Tech on September 29, 2022.

We get weekly STR reports every Tuesday and monthly reports around the 18th of each month. But, why do we need them and how can we use the data within the report to improve performance and profitability? Here is some great information and explanations about these reports and how you can benefit from this valuable information:

- Developed by the hotel management analytics firm Smith Travel Research, the STR report is a benchmarking tool that compares your hotel's performance against a set of similar hotels. In order to receive your STR report, hoteliers must submit performance data (like daily occupancy and ADR) to Smith Travel Research, who then compiles all of the data they receive into the nicely presented STR reports.
  - Choose your comp set wisely! Having just any hotels in this set will give false information to you and not provide you with valuable comparisons. Your set should include hotels in your geographic area, have similar rates and amenities, and target the same types of guests (i.e. extended stay, corporate, transient or group heavy segments and/or local attractions/activities). A strong comp set includes 3-5 hotels with these qualities. Comp sets should have a minimum of 5 hotels. You can always change your comp set but bouncing all over the place will not give you accurate trends.
- The STR report uses a variety of metrics to show performance data. Here are a few of the main terms that you'll see throughout the report: Occupancy, ADR, RevPAR.
  - Occupancy - Rooms occupied divided by the total number of your hotel's rooms. It is always shown as a percentage. Keep in mind, that STR occupancy is absolute, meaning if your hotel has 100 rooms, you will have to sell 80 rooms to achieve 80%. If a hotel in your comp set has only 80 rooms, they will only need to sell 64 rooms to achieve 80% occupancy. Conversely, if a hotel in your comp set has 150 rooms, they will need to sell 120 rooms to achieve 80% occupancy. This information will primarily influence rank.
  - Average Daily Rate (ADR) - Total revenue divided by the number of rooms sold on that night.
  - Revenue Per Available Room (RevPAR) - Total Revenue / Total Number of Rooms. RevPAR can also be calculated as ADR x Occupancy
- You'll also see your hotel's performance calculated as an Index, which shows you whether your hotel is performing better or worse than average within your competitive set. Index is calculated by dividing your hotel's data (occupancy, for example) by the competitive set's data (the average of all the competitive set's occupancy numbers), then multiplying by 100. If your hotel scores higher than 100, then you're outperforming your comp set, or capturing more than your fair share. If your index is below 100, then you're not earning your fair share and have some room to improve.
  - Many STR users overlook the value of knowing your index. This is a quick and easy way to understand if your hotel is performing better or worse than your comp set.

		Sunday		Monday	
			% Chg		% Chg
Occupancy	My Property	57.8%	10.6	96.7%	67.3
	Comp Set	67.7%	23.0	72.3%	33.8
	Index (MPI)	85.3	-10.0	133.7	25.1

- In the example above, you can see that on Sunday, this hotel's Index was 85.3. Since the score was under 100.0 the hotel did not perform as well as its competitive set. However, on Monday, the Index was 133.7 which was superior to the comp set.
- The next step is to dive into the data. With so many numbers to look at, where do you start?
  - Start on the Glance sheet and look for trends. Compare year-over-year numbers, and take notes on performance so you can get the most out of the report. Keeping notes on your STR reports or in a journal is paramount. Jot down special events, weather-related trends, city-wide groups, high group or high transient performance, hotels entering or exiting the market, or anything that affected the performance of your hotel on a given day/week. This will become important as you analyze your hotel's information, write your monthly Executive Summary, and/or explaining to owner's why you did well, or hopefully not, why you fell short.
  - Looking at your Index performance will also show you trends..... do day-of-the-week (DOW) trends show that your hotel is always lower/higher than your comp set on a particular day? Using the Index on the Running 28 data will help you. Pull out your previous reports and look to see if your performance is consistent season-to-season or an anomaly.

(Continued on Page 7 - Sell The Sizzle....)



(Sell The Sizzle ... Continued from Page 6)

- Looking at the performance to last year will also give you insight. Using the same example above, this hotel's performance was actually up on Monday (10.6% year-over-year) while the comp set was only up 23.0%. By the same token, on Tuesday, this hotel's occupancy performance was up 67.3% year-over-year and the comp set only improved 33.8%. What was going on in your hotel and comp set this same time last year. What can your hotel do to capitalize on improvement during this same timeframe next year (or next week/month)? Make notes in your journal!
- Don't limit yourself to only the Glance page! On subsequent sheets you can explore further into your year-over-year trends to pinpoint which metrics were affected. For example, maybe your occupancy stayed the same, but your ADR decreased. When you look on your "Segmentation at a Glance" sheet, you might notice that your group segment grew while your transient segment decreased. Since the transient segment generally has higher ADR than group, that might explain why your ADR was down overall. Knowing this, you could start to brainstorm strategies to attract more transient guests.*
  - Some other criteria might be the number or rewards stays at your hotel. Large numbers or comp, employee rated, or point related stays will affect ADR. Keep track of this information and be able to explain why your ADR is lower!
- While the STR report shares a lot of valuable data, it's purely quantitative. It tells us the "what" but not the "why." To really understand what's happening in your hotel's performance and the market, you'll want to dig into the "why" behind the data. Coupling your findings from your STR report with insight from a business intelligence tool or a rate shopper can help you develop more effective strategies to capture even more of your fair share.*
  - A good revenue manager can be an integral part of analyzing STR results. On most of our calls, the revenue manager will often pull data from your brand portal to look at segmentation. You can see when you had group, or if a group cancelled last minute with no time to pick up rooms.... you can see if a hotel in your comp set had an issue and had to move rooms to their comp set.... you can analyze DOW performance and try to push group bookings to slower days and better rates to "spread the wealth" to lower performing days. There is so much you can do with this valuable data!
  - Don't focus on rank. No - you don't want to consistently be the lowest ranking hotel in your comp set (or the highest). This might mean that you have the wrong comp set and are not comparing apples-to-apples. But, if you have the right comp set and consistently rank low - look at the number of total rooms at each hotel in your comp set. If you are much higher (or lower) then your rank could be false as occupancy rank is absolute (see explanation above).

A good revenue management team knows their way around a STR report, but a great revenue management team uncovers insights from multiple sources to paint a holistic picture and uncover trends. By reading a STR report and studying the trends and year-over-year changes, then comparing the data to your own property performance with comp set rates with a rate shopper, you can take your revenue management strategy to the next level.

Happy reaching for the STRs!

*huda*

## ROOMER HAS IT

### SPRINGHILL SUITES ALTAMONTE SPRINGS



The hotel's annual employee pumpkin decorating contest was a huge success. Twelve associates entered this year's competition with creative and fun pumpkins. Guests voted for their favorite for several days prior to Halloween.

(To the left) Posing with General Manager Gregory Teagarden, the staff proudly pose in front of their pumpkins!

The WINNER was Jorge - Maintenance tech. His pumpkin (#2 - fourth from left) featured everything "maintenance". Congrats!!!



# WITH SOCIAL MEDIA, THERE'S ONLY ONE MOVE TO MAKE - VIDEO

*The following is an excerpt from an article written by Juliana Shallcross and published in Hotels on October 28, 2022. Full article can be read [here](#):*

A well-framed picture may say a thousand words, but these days on social media a simple video can garner thousands of views and likes, the internet's barometer of popularity. Indeed, if you ask any social media marketer what's hot right now, they will undoubtedly say, "video."

Not surprisingly, many hospitality brands have leaned heavily into video content on social media, experimenting with new ways to bring their properties to life via the hand-held screen. "A few years ago, we were creating content to square images, utilizing carousels to have people swipe left and right, and just repurposing broadcast video on social platforms," said Katie Johnson, VP for Hyatt Hotels Corp.'s Independents Collections and Residences. "Now social has become video-first, specifically vertical video."

Whitney Reynolds, director of content and partnerships for Kimpton Hotels and Resorts, said video has been a great way to tie in all the elements of a hotel stay from checking in to opening the door and admiring the room view. "A short-form video allows us to tell the whole story and really showcase all of those little moments that lead to the magic of your hotel stay. A static image can't do that. If you're looking at one image of a guest room or an image of a view, it's only capturing that one part of the guest journey."

With the emergence of TikTok and Instagram Reels, along with advanced video production tools often found within social media apps, user-generated videos can do just as good of a job telling a story as slick professional shoots. "User-generated content (UGC) is like social currency and when we can have other people tell our story, it feels more authentic and genuine," Johnson said, mentioning a case study her team did showed that UGC content outperformed produced content. "Consumers still trust people they know when it comes to being influenced."

**The influence piece:** This preference for user-generated content highlights another subtle shift in brands' social media strategy—seeking out niche influencers who have both content creation skills and high engagement rates as a means of boosting a hotel's return on investment. "The influence piece is only part of the value in partnering with them," Reynolds said. "They're really some of the best creators of original content. So, if you look at them as creators, which we have done at Kimpton, that kind of opens up a whole new value proposition for influencer work."

Depending on the terms of the agreement, a hotel brand can use a content creator's photo and video assets on their own channels, at the brand and property levels. "Knowing the volume of content that we need to be churning out successful on social that's critical, especially with video being so important now," Reynolds said. "For them to be in our properties, capturing these beautiful videos and then delivering that video file to us to share with our followers, that is worth the investment."

Brandon Billings, VP of social media and content strategy for MMGY Global, said incorporating these creators into longer-term engagements will become the norm for marketing campaigns. "These content creators, you can almost think of them as another paid media channel, but from a very much social perspective, building content that can really help elevate a property or a destination," he said. "And that content is usually better than any production house that you bring in, and it's built in a way that people are naturally already wanting to engage with it."

**Cutting through clutter:** Yet as social media platforms continue to mature, the hotel marketplace has become more saturated (both offline and on), making it difficult for brands to stand out, no matter how good their content is - long gone are the days when a post can go viral organically. Add in rapidly mutating viral trends and mysterious algorithms, the social media landscape is a dizzying place to navigate.

Hyatt Hotels have cut through some of the content clutter with paid social campaigns. "A paid strategy is required these days to ensure people are seeing the content we're carefully curating and creating," Johnson explained. "You can have the most elegant content that truly showcases your brand, but you have no control over who sees it if you post organically."

**Building brand:** But one thing hasn't changed - hotels still see social media as the best tool for brand awareness, and not so much as a driver of sales. "Compared to CPG, booking travel takes a lot more planning. So, the immediate booking does not necessarily happen when you see a video of our hotel," Johnson added. "We look at a full-funnel integrated marketing approach and try to inspire people when they're first thinking about travel through social media."

Reynolds said that not every single social media post can address all the stages of the marketing funnel. Kimpton's social channels do drive bookings around their big sales such as their annual October sale and Cyber Monday deals but, in general, 90% of their social media posts are about brand-building and brand affinity. "Our number one goal for social is introducing people to our brand, growing interest in our brand, and really creating that brand love and the love of our hotels," Reynolds added.

**Next steps:** As for what's next, Billings said social media will keep evolving and moving forward, meaning brands have to be ready for whatever emerges next. "They have to understand what's working within the [social media] space and then be able to be a fast follower, step in, and activate," he advised. The push for more authentic, not as polished, video-based content will also remain strong, especially on TikTok where Johnson said "raw and honest" content is expected. "Consumers have gotten smart when it comes to consuming content on social, so they want to see what our hotels really look like without a heavy filter," she said.