

# TELEGRAM

## AROUND THE BLOCK

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

Jeff Karl - 5 years (February)

## A LITTLE BIT WISER

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

Ron Nassef - January 16  
Greg Smith - February 14

## WHAT'S COMING UP?

Are your Romance packages active and bookable?  
Plan now for 2/14/23.



## 2023 HOTEL & HOSPITALITY TRENDS

By Linda Komornik, TeleGRAM Editor

The following is written using key points from an eHotelier article published on 1/18/23 and authored by Aaron Belton, Head of Global Hospitality at DocMX. Read the entire article [here](#).

We've all been talking about how much the pandemic has changed the way we sell, and how we need to continuously strategize to regain our footing.

The recent article, *2023 Trends: Top 5 Future Innovations in Hotels and Hospitality*, speaks about expected trends that we may see in our industry this coming year. The author of the article specifically mentioned the following topics: *Drive to Digital, Rise of Robotics, Customers in Control, Sustainability and Behind the Scenes* as areas of focus. I can't help but agree with his predictions and specifically the section about "Customers in Control". Here are his ideas on how we should allow customers to control their stays, while we focus on service, our product, and profits:

*"Putting customers in control is a common theme in hotel innovation right now and as such, smart hotels are beginning to take their place in this new future."*

*"So what is a smart hotel? Essentially it's an experience that enables customers to operate devices through a range of technologies including AI, AR and digital connectivity. Smart room technology might include voice control, facial recognition, automation, energy efficiency and improved responsiveness. In-room technology may also be controlled through Apps and via the guests' own mobile devices."*

*"Smart hotel technology is an important development, because it can personalize the customer experience and through AI machine learning, remember a customer's preference for even greater personal care and comfort. For example, smart room controls allow guests to adjust the ambience of their room through temperature, lighting and air conditioning without having to manually adjust devices or ask for staff support."*

*"A smart hotel might offer entertainment, reservations or room service controlled through customer voice commands - replacing frustrations caused by waiting in a queue or hanging on the phone. These enhancements all add to overall convenience. By personalizing the experience, a hotel can double down on better customer knowledge, making it more likely that customers become loyal returning guests."*

Brands are putting these operational controls in the hands of the customers thereby allowing them to be the master of their travels. From the hotel perspective, giving up these tasks will open up our staff's ability to take care of the customers needs without micromanaging their stay.

## I AM HUMAN, I AM A RESOURCE

SUZANNE BAELE, CORPORATE DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES

**"Everyone talks about building a relationship with your customer. I think you build one with your employees first."**

*Angela Ahrendts - Apple*

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## BY THE NUMBERS

GABRIELLE SMITH, CORPORATE CONTROLLER

**"When Internet fraudsters impersonate a business to trick you into giving out your personal information, it's call phishing."**

*OnGuardOnline.gov*

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## SELLING THE SIZZLE

LINDA KOMORNIK, CORPORATE DIRECTOR OF SALES & MARKETING

**"People influence people. Nothing influences people like the recommendation of a trusted friend. A trusted referral influences people more than the best broadcast message. A trusted referral is the Holy Grail of advertising."**

*Mark Zuckerberg - Meta*

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## OPERATIONALLY SPEAKING

DAVE AKRIDGE, PRESIDENT & REGIONAL OPERATIONS

**"A company can achieve extra-ordinary opportunities only if it is good at ordinary operations."**

*Marcel Telles - Anheuser-Busch InBev*

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# I AM HUMAN, I AM A RESOURCE

SUZANNE BAELE, CORPORATE DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES

**HAPPY NEW YEAR ONE AND ALL!**

**2023 WILL LIKELY BE A YEAR UNLIKE ANY OTHER IN OUR RECENT HISTORY.**



As an HR professional, I often am asked about the best way(s) to 'be' with our associates. As Tim English says, "Wherever you go, BE there."

The challenge we face as managers of our most important asset - our associates - is to completely and deliberately engage with them. One on one opportunities present themselves to us on a daily basis. It is our responsibility to ensure that our associates have our undivided attention, that there isn't anything more pressing than this moment in time with them.

You may in fact have a myriad of other matters demanding your attention, but I promise that if you are present and engaged when interacting with your team, your team will be all the better for it.

Results you wonder? Increased confidence to take better care of our guest's. Stronger willingness to step up and make a difference in a guest's experience. Above all, you're teaching our associates by example, that they too can and should engage with our guest's.

Who wins? We all do!

## LET'S CELEBRATE STANDING OUT FROM THE CROWD

In case you want to celebrate, here is a list of National and "other" holidays: 2/1 - Groundhog Day; 2/6 - Frozen Yogurt Day; 2/9 - Pizza Day; 2/17 - Random Kindness Day; 2/27 - Strawberry Day; 3/3 - Dress in Blue Day; 3/6 - Oreo Day; 3/20 - Storytelling Day; 3/23 - Puppy Day; 3/30 - Doctor's Day; 4/5 - Walking Day; 4/7 - Walk to Work Day; 4/13 - Make Lunch Count Day; 4/19 - Bicycle Day; and 4/28 - Superhero 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.

*Weird and wacky sales suggestions from Linda.*

**February 9th - National Pizza Day** - Grab a pizza and go visit your favorite customer. Or, celebrate a great producing company by hosting a pizza party at their office..... better yet - invite them to the hotel for pizza and a hotel tour!

**February 27th - National Strawberry Day** - Grab a pint of fresh strawberries and visit a client. Or, print up your favorite strawberry dessert recipe, gather the ingredients, and gift them to a client.

**March 20th - National Storytelling Day** - Go through all your sales letter templates and craft a story to help sell your hotel. Re-read my blogs on how to improve your salesmanship through the 4 types of storytelling.

**April 5th - National Walking Day** - Put together a snack and visit a customer. Pick a day where the weather is beautiful and ask your customer to take a quick walk while discussing business.

**April 13th - National Make Lunch Count Day** - This holiday says it all... make lunch count! Entertain a customer today!

**April 19th - National Bicycle Day** - Grab a bike or one of the hotel's bikes and take a ride. Better yet - invite a customer over for a quick ride around the hotel area to show how their customers might enjoy a quick ride during their stay.



Image by Jess Foami from Pixabay. Free to use under the Pixabay license.

**April 28th - National Superhero Day** - Be a hero for your customers by saving their day!

## TELEGRAM STAFF:

**EDITOR/CORPORATE SALES & MARKETING**  
Linda.Komornik@GreatAmericanHG.com

### CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

**PRESIDENT**  
Dave.Akridge@GreatAmericanHG.com

**CORPORATE HUMAN RESOURCES**  
Suzanne.Baele@GreatAmericanHG.com

**CORPORATE CONTROLLER**  
Gabrielle.Smith@GreatAmericanHG.com

180 LOCUST STREET | SUITE 2 | DOVER, NH 03820  
603.373.1510 | WWW.GREATAMERICANHG.COM

## BY THE NUMBERS

GABRIELLE SMITH, CORPORATE CONTROLLER



### WHAT TRICKS ARE SCAMMERS USING?

The following is good information, recently sent out by Chase Bank. While this notice is specific to Chase, it is important information for all credit card and bank account cardholders. We all need to be aware of fraudsters and their attempts to gather our financial, credit card, and guest information. Here are a few tips from Chase:

**Learn how to spot a scam** - Scammers often pretend to be someone they're not. They may trick you into providing information to gain access to your account. Get to know the following scams to help keep your accounts safe and secure.



#### Online Shopping

A scammer sets up a fake online store and asks you to pay in ways other than a credit or debit card, leaving you without recourse when the item doesn't arrive.



#### Pay Yourself

A person pretending to be a Chase employee asks you to transfer money to yourself to resolve fraudulent activity.



#### Grandparent

Someone impersonates a loved one in crisis like claiming their car broke down or they lost their wallet and they need money right away.



#### Tech Support

A scammer requests access to your device to fix a technical issue, but really, they're collecting personal information.



#### Utility Shutoff

A person may pose as a utility employee saying your service will be stopped unless you pay them immediately.



#### Romance

A scammer creates a fake profile to gain your trust then asks for money for a health crisis or other bogus scheme.

**Protect yourself** - The following tips can help keep you and your money safe.

- Guard your personal information - Don't offer information to someone who calls you directly, even if they say they're from Chase. When in doubt, call us.
- Don't act immediately - Scammers may pressure you to pay them quickly and can have a demanding tone. Remember to take a moment, verify who they are and think about what they are asking for.
- Use caution when sending money - Scammers could tell you to pay in ways where you may not be able to get your money back, like money transfers, gift cards or using Zelle®1. Always verify who the recipient is before sending money.
- The way you pay matters - Different payment methods offer different protections. Chase debit and credit cards can help give you peace of mind with protections like fraud monitoring for unusual purchases.

If you think a call, email or text that looks like it's coming [from Chase] seems suspicious, call us directly using the number on the back of your card or account statement.



## SERVICE WITH SMILES - GOING THE EXTRA MILE

### SPRINGHILL SUITES ALTAMONTE SPRINGS

"Absolutely best hotel we have ever stayed at. Greg and his staff have been wonderful, welcoming, and supportive of our longterm stay (moving here from out of state, for our sons medical needs). They have gone above and beyond releasing stress. Would absolutely recommend to anyone needing a short or longterm stay!" | Rebecca S.

### SPRINGHILL SUITES QUAKERTOWN

"Home Away from Home for Christmas - We lost power during the bitterly cold Christmas holiday weekend and were unable to stay at home. Staying at the SpringHill Suites was the best option for us and it became our home away from home until our electric was restored on the 3rd day. It was quite comfortable in an uncomfortable situation and we appreciated the spaciousness and cleanliness of our suite." | The "K" Family

### HOMWOOD SUITES GERMANTOWN

"Could not ask for a better experience. The lady at check in was very nice, exceptional customer service. Manager Greg was nice on the phone. Hotel is big, beautifully maintained for cleanliness..." | Josie C.

**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.

# SELLING THE SIZZLE

LINDA KOMORNIK, CORPORATE DIRECTOR OF SALES & MARKETING



## HOW TO ASK FOR A REFERRAL IN SALES

This blog is based on an article written  
by Anthony Iannarino - January, 2022

One of the many lines on the job description of our Salespeople is to create new opportunities. While many properties are fortunate to have a steady stream of inbound leads, others must rely on their ability to seek business on their own. One valuable, yet underutilized technique for creating sales opportunities, is referrals. Are you taking advantage of your current customer base to generate new business?

One of the reasons salespeople don't benefit from referrals is because they often wait too long. You worked hard to develop the relationship, win the client's business, deliver the result promised, and by waiting too long, asking for a referral now feels like an imposition. Instead of asking when your client was still experiencing the good feelings from the work you did, you have lost opportunity.... the value you created isn't top of mind. Value degrades over time. When you are outside the time frame of asking for a referral, you are now asking them to turn over their friends, family, and peers to a salesperson whose sole intention to sell them something. It's weird.

On the other hand, some salespeople are afraid of hearing the word no when they ask for a referral. The truth about asking for referrals is that no one is likely to tell you no. Mostly they politely agree to provide you with a referral and then do nothing. You will hear a yes followed by some form of a hedge, like: "Sure. Let me think about who it might make sense to introduce you to, and I'll get back to you."

There is nothing to fear when asking for a meeting, requesting a referral, or asking for your client's business. If they have concerns that cause them to reject your request, you can ask to resolve their concerns and try again. If the answer is an unqualified no, you move on and try again later (but not too much later).

### How to Ask for a Referral:

- **Start When You Sign a Contract:** The best time to set up your future ask for a referral is when you are signing the contract with your new client. You want to ask for an introduction to someone in your client's world early, contingent on them being happy with the outcomes you deliver.
- **Explain Your Need for Referrals:** While you are setting up the ability to ask for referrals in the future, you explain that your business is one that grows by referrals. You also tell them that it would be helpful if they could introduce you to someone who might value the outcomes you are about to create for your new client.
- **Thank you.** "Thank you for trusting me with your business. My business depends on my clients introducing me to other people who might value the outcomes I am going to create for you. If everything is perfect and I do good work, may I ask you to make an introduction to someone you believe might need my help in the future?"

### Here is how you ask:

- When you are following up after you have generated the promised results, you now need to ask for a referral. If you don't want the awkward feeling of asking after months (or years) have passed, ask when the value you created is still fresh in your client's mind. The fact that you are following up will help you in getting the introduction.
- Because someone is making an introduction, you need to assure them that you aren't going to make them look bad by being a pushy, smarmy, self-oriented salesperson. You need to let them know that you will do nothing to damage their relationship and that it is okay if they don't buy anything from you now or in the future.
- How you ask is important. "I am thrilled that you are pleased with the results. If you are completely satisfied, would you introduce me to one person who might benefit from these same results? I promise I will not pitch them, and even if they don't need me now, they may need me later. Would you connect us with an email and ask them to take my call? "

### Earn It:

If you want to make successful referrals part of building your pipeline, the best thing you can do is to earn them by executing and producing results and asking early for the right to ask for them when you do.

Happy asking for referrals!



## ROOMER HAS IT

### SPRINGHILL SUITES ALTAMONTE SPRINGS

*Recently, the SpringHill Suites in Altamonte Springs held a complimentary hotdog cook out for ECNL teams staying in the hotel.*

*The ENCL is an annual soccer tournament that brings in teams from all over the country. There are two tournaments (Boys and Girls), held a week apart. It was a great way for us to say thank you for staying, as well demonstrating an example of our hospitality*

*In the first two pictures below are Toby (Chief Engineer) and Omar (Front Desk Manager) who, along with the rest of the hotel team, cooked and served the guests. The bottom two pictures are two happy guests!*

*This type of customer "wowing" allows the hotel to show their great service with a great ROI!*



## PROPERTY HAPPENINGS

### SPRINGHILL SUITES QUAKERTOWN

Sales Manager Gail Dehelian was recently invited to join the Board of Directors of Visit Bucks County. She will serve a four-year term beginning [this past] January 1st, and will work with the county hotels and businesses to better the visitor experience in the area. Congratulations Gail.



## NEW KID IN TOWN

### SPRINGHILL SUITES QUAKERTOWN

Devin Velez has joined the team in Quakertown as Assistant General Manager. In addition to his operational duties, Devin will champion sales for the hotel, focusing specifically on corporate and local negotiated company solicitations.



Devin is a 2020 graduate of Muhlenberg University where he earned a BA in business Administration. He also holds an associate degree in Hotel and Resort Manager from Lehigh Carbon Community College.

His prior experience includes, most recently, Director of Operations at the Holiday Inn Express & Suites in Allentown, Front Desk at the Homewood Suites in Center Valley, and Operations Supervisor at the Allentown Park Hotel.

Devin is fluent in Spanish and has a plethora of retail experience.

Travel and hotels are a personal passion. He is an avid travel junkie, loves spending time with family and friends, has a love for movies and TV.

Additionally, Devin has great interest in technology and innovation.

Welcome to Team Quakertown!



"THE EARTH HAS MUSIC FOR  
THOSE WHO WILL LISTEN."

**Get your travel on.**

William Shakespeare

## OPERATIONAL SPEAKING

DAVE AKRIDGE PRESIDENT AND  
REGIONAL DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS



### HOTELS FIND NEW WAYS TO CUT ENERGY COSTS

Published in HOTELS on December 8, 2022

Energy prices have fallen marginally from their peak in the third quarter, but they are still more than 20% higher than they were this time last year, and with winter demand booming and the imposition of a price cap on Russian oil and gas exports, hoteliers are unlikely to get any relief in the near future.

For years, hotel operators could reliably budget that energy outlays would account for less than 10% of their costs, but those days are over. Power prices have risen everywhere, and have quadrupled in some places over the past two years. Today, more and more hotels are looking for new ways to reduce energy expenditure, from grand investments in renewable micro-generation to saving a few cents by turning off lights.

Owners and operators are pursuing a three-pronged strategy to cut their energy bills: reducing or stabilizing their current outlays on energy; cutting their consumption, and using conservation measures to make the energy they use go further.

**Price stabilization** - Physical or financial engineering can be used to stabilize costs. Some larger hotels are installing renewable energy generators including solar, wind, or micro-hydro plants. These ensure a long-term supply of relatively cheap energy, but they typically require both the right conditions — extensive land holdings, reliable sun, wind, or water depending on the source — and significant upfront investment. It is a common mistake to think of renewables as free energy. Ongoing repairs from storms or routine wear-and-tear, combined with regular maintenance costs and replacement programs for solar panels and batteries can tip the balance between saving energy and creating a new hole in the balance sheet.

**Cutting consumption** - Much of the industry's focus has been on cutting consumption. More and more hotels are adopting voltage optimization technology, which reduces the power fed to appliances that do not need full mains voltage, but most measures involve turning machinery down or off when not in use. The big power consumers — climate control, lighting and kitchens — have all received attention.

Heating or air-conditioning is a huge cost center, but it can be controlled. Turning up the heating or AC by one degree can add 5-10% to heating and cooling bills. The key is fine control: being able to turn different zones on and off as needed; shutting off floors during the low season and turning down radiators, and obtaining accurate estimates of how long it takes to bring empty spaces back to temperature. It may save costs to turn the heating in a banqueting suite right down if it isn't going to be used for a week, but not if it is only going to be empty for a day.

Most hotels have already switched to more efficient LED or CFL lighting, but significant savings can be made by using time switches or movement sensors, particularly in service areas, to allow lighting systems to be turned off when they are not needed.

Kitchens are also power-hungry, and there are trade-offs here as with many energy-saving techniques. Gas hobs are cheaper to run than induction hobs, but they release more heat into the environment, requiring heavier use of atmospheric cooling. Dishwashers need to run at about 140 degrees Fahrenheit by law, but many machines run hotter than this.

**Energy conservation** - The third strategy is to make the energy you do use work harder for you. Some hotels are retro-fitting with energy-efficient glass or double-glazing, which saves costs but is expensive to install. For those that cannot afford a full refit, adhesive films are available that reduce heat transfer. Automatic doors can allow staff and guests to move seamlessly between the exterior and interior of a restaurant or lobby while maintaining interior temperatures.

A considerable proportion of energy conservation is down to routine maintenance: making sure filters in kitchen smoke hoods or AC units are clean; ensuring refrigerator coils are kept dust-free and insulation is undamaged; making sure water softeners are working properly to prevent limescale clogging pipes, and checking timer switches are still set. Good maintenance saves energy and prolongs the life of expensive plants.

Possibly the most important energy-saving technique is training staff to be energy aware. If it becomes second nature for them to close doors and turn off lights, or to call maintenance if a filter needs to be changed, or to avoid booking rooms on a floor that can be mothballed for a few weeks, savings will follow.

Elevated energy prices will remain high for a while, but even when — or if — they come down, the energy savings made today will remain, leaving a leaner, more profitable hotel for years to come.