



CHECK-IN

Focusing on issues important to all members of the Hospitality Industry

Check This Out

- ✓ **Check out with a pup!** Who needs a bellhop? The Aloft Asheville has the friendliest and furriest front desk staff in town. Since last year, the pet-friendly hotel has partnered with a local pet rescue to foster rescue dogs. The hotel houses one pooch at a time, who wears an "Adopt Me" vest and has the run of the hotel lobby and on-site dog run. In all, almost 20 dogs have been adopted. Stay tuned! More wags and forever homes will be forthcoming.
- ✓ **What cities do you love?** Hotels.com, in conjunction with Google, recently conducted a survey, asking travelers that question, and some of the answers were surprising. We're happy to report Chicago was the clear favorite. New York City, Boston, Savannah, San Diego and San Francisco also topped the list.
- ✓ **Taking a bath in the middle of a guest room could get messy,** but not at the Hotel Particulier Montmartre in Paris. Perfect for a romantic hideaway, the deluxe suite features a beautiful painted claw-footed bathtub that looks like it's part of the furniture. To add even more interest, two large portraits of young women stare at you expressionlessly from one wall while you're bathing. Hmm, maybe it's not so romantic, after all!
- ✓ **Turn a rainy day into a jam session... say what?** Get your hands on a cherry-red Fender® Stratocaster and riff right in your room at any Hard Rock Hotel. Offering a menu of 20 premium Fender electric guitars, along with headphones and a floor amplifier for big, beautiful sound, the hotel chain provides it all free during your stay. Just make the request, plug in and rock out.

Third Spaces Enrich Guests' Lives and Loyalty

You've probably heard the term "third space," and you've probably given it some thought. With all the recent shifts in consumer behavior, however, it's important that you understand this concept and how you might use it to enhance your property's atmosphere.

To summarize, the third space describes a place where people congregate outside of the home (first space) and the office (second space). If you can engineer parts of your hotel – the lobby, the restaurant, the bar, the café and so forth – as flourishing third spaces, then it will play to your advantage for higher occupancy levels and cachet.

Originally coined by the sociologist Ray Oldenburg in his book "The Great Good Place," the term is formally used to represent public or neutral centers for community building, civic engagement, intellectual discourse, peer encouragement and group validation. Cafés, markets, bazaars, pubs, bars, clubs, shopping malls, plazas, gyms, spas, barber shops, hair salons, recreation halls and even post offices can fit the bill as long as they are designed correctly.

Starbucks is an excellent example of third space. The franchise has experienced exponential growth in the past two decades principally due to its superb products but also because of the atmosphere the stores exude. For instance, the vibe is not one of "grab and get out as quickly as possible," even though that is a very likely consumer action. Rather,

the universal application of warmly colored furnishings and humble décor at the shops encourages customers to sit and enjoy their beverages or snacks. Follow its lead: designing a food-and-beverage area with the third space in mind can boost sales.

Why care, why now?

Third spaces are almost as important as the home and the office because they are the places that individuals frequent to enrich their lifestyles. Working in hospitality

should mean more than just looking at numbers. We should aim to nurture our guests and offer them a common area to develop their own identities. This isn't a quality captured in most accounting

ledgers, but it will certainly have an emotional impact on your guests, reflected in increased loyalty and positive reviews. Given that more people are working from home – thus combining the first and second places – the desire to offset any monotony of visual stimuli will only be exacerbated. Visiting a local hotspot, for instance, can service the need for external stimulation. People want to be where the action is.

Neutral third spaces such as cafés, bars and restaurants are now much more likely to double as conduits for casual business meetings and interviews. Of course, this shift in consumer behavior and use of space dovetails with the rise in buying power of the Gen X and millennial generations. More surplus cash equals increased spending and more time allotted for public gatherings

... continued on page 2



Third Spaces Enrich Guests' Lives and Loyalty...continued from page 1

– both outcomes that make these two demographics key proponents of the third space, especially as they continue to mature.

Gen Xers and millennials are also the ones most associated with Internet fluency, electronic communications and social media usage. These digital interactions are forms of social discourse. We now live in a very social world, and smartphones play a significant role in our collective culture. Hence, a solo person accessing the Internet for this express purpose while in a neutral setting is, in today's standards, a third-space participant. He or she could be on a phone anywhere but chooses to be in, and contribute to, a social ambiance. The more smartphones proliferate, the greater the need for third spaces.

Third-space criteria

As the proprietor or manager, it's your job to configure parts of your property so they are optimized for a third space. You don't have to meet all of these standards, but the more you can check off, the better your chances of creating a hotspot. For instance, the reception area of your fitness facilities or spa likely won't be able to meet any alcoholic beverage criterion, but that doesn't mean you can't compensate by offering other aspects.

1. Accessibility. If consumers can't find your neutral space, then it will be seldom frequented. In order to do that, you have to make your restaurant, bar or lounge convenient for everyone. Think in the lobby and within sight of the front desk or elevators. Signage is always good, too.

2. Ambiance. You probably will want to strive for an informal, unassuming manner in your overall décor. This means that the lighting is not excessively dimmed, so people can gather for work purposes. It also means that the music isn't too loud or clubby; aim for a playlist that inspires a lighthearted spirit with perhaps samplings of cool jazz, blues, standards and more. Additionally, consult an interior designer to learn about some of the more clever ways you can induce a steady flow of conversation, like how ample amounts of the color green are scientifically known to enhance creative thought.

3. Stylish yet ergonomic seating. You don't have to emulate a lavish supper club in this regard, but on the other hand, you don't want to aim for a clinical, white-walled classroom look either. Give patrons comfortable, upright chairs positioned around tables large enough to spread out a few papers or laptops. Do so abundantly to allow for a large congregation and a reasonable amount of people watching. Next, throw some couches and divans in for variety, but don't go overboard as these eat up a lot of space.

4. Quality food & beverage. Good people and good dialogue go hand-in-hand with quality food, coffee, craft beers and mixology. Just as pints of ale were the third-space lubricants in the taverns of yesteryear, so too must you weigh in on the significance of libations for your third space. Alcohol isn't mandatory (and neither is food), but it certainly helps set the tone, as

does high-end coffee. Fascinating cuisine and cocktail choices also can make for great conversation starters.

5. Tech support. It's the 21st century; people want to hang out with their devices. Power outlets shouldn't be sparse and hidden, even if that means running a few extra wires around the place. Then if you really want to create a bustling haven, make Wi-Fi free.

6. Grab and go. You shouldn't expect every patron ambling by to want to sit down for an extended period of time, even though this is something your space should encourage. Instead, consider some facets of self-serve for flexibility – pastry carts, buffet stations and so on. True, including these features might make your third space feel less classy, but it will also be more efficient and accessible for busy guests.

7. Savvy staff. The last main characteristic of a modern third space is the presence of regular patrons. Sometimes you just want to go "where everybody knows your name." And just like the hit TV show "Cheers," your waitstaff are the connective glue to nurture steady guests and convert first-timers into long-standing habitués. I say "savvy" because you can't just hire anyone. Staff members need to be socially smart, remember who the regulars are (even after weeks or months of absence), be thoroughly knowledgeable on all menu items and receptive to inducting newcomers by opening the conversation. Without great staff, no other point listed above will matter.

Source: *Larry Mogelonsky, Hotel News Now, 1/13*

Choose the commercial vacuum that's right for your business

You may have tried getting by without the use of commercial vacuums to clean guest rooms and other areas around your property. Vacuums certified for household use typically do not stand up to normal hospitality use in the long run, and can actually be more expensive to

operate if you factor repair costs into the equation.

Commercial vacuums are definitely the right choice for most properties, so keep these product advantages in mind when making a purchase:

1. Heavy-duty commercial motors designed specifically for years of problem-free use
2. Grounded 3-wire plugs or 2-wire double-insulated plugs

3. Heavy-duty, longer cords (28- to 50-feet) allow housekeepers to clean larger areas
4. Meet OSHA requirements
5. UL-listed for commercial use
6. 90-day to 1-year (or more) commercial-use warranties
7. Warranty service at an established service center



Julie Baker
HR Editor

Plan Now for the Right Talent

Getting the right talent in the right place at the right time is an ongoing challenge, and knowing your talent makeup is more important than ever. An effective process to review talent will engage your leaders in identifying and preparing individuals for leadership and other critical roles for achieving business goals. Regular talent review meetings can help you target learning and development opportunities, improve retention and employee engagement, and move from reactionary replacement activities to proactive talent and succession management.

Planning for talent reviews includes answering these key questions:

- Based on your business strategy and plans, what knowledge and skills are needed in the next one to five years?
- What competencies are used to make selection decisions, and to conduct performance appraisals, talent reviews and development planning?
- Are job descriptions accurate and up to date?
- How do you define high potentials and high performers?

- What assessments could be used for additional measures of skills and potential?
- Are stretch assignments or special projects available for targeted development?
- What other resources are available for development?
- Do you have a structure for talent review meetings to discuss current talent as well as short- and long-term needs?

If your property or organization is already completing talent reviews, be sure to make the most out of them. A successful talent review process includes three key components:

- Make sure there is alignment between business strategy and

talent management. Leaders need to focus discussions on positions, competencies and capabilities necessary for driving your business strategy.

- Use a consistent process that is shared across your business. Use reliable talent data and help your leaders develop a common language for understanding talent needs.
- Get the right people involved in the talent discussions. Planning for the right talent requires a partnership between HR and department leaders.

The war for talent is fierce. Are you preparing the way through effective use of talent reviews?

Source: *HR Digest*, 4/13



We Love Hearing From You!

We had a couple interesting responses to our question about unusual or interesting interview questions asked of prospective employees.

Darleen Gist of the Kinderloun Inn in Valdosta, GA, writes: "Here is a question I ask everyone I interview: Give me one example of when you went above and beyond the call of duty during your workday?"

Patricia Wallace, House Manager at the Clara McLean Hospitality House, FirstHealth of the Carolinas, Pinehurst, NC, offered this: "Here's what I always ask, 'If I were to ask your

best friend what your best qualities are, what would he or she say?' No one is ever prepared for this. Most people immediately smile when they hear "best friend" and give a well-thought-out answer. I find it helps to put them at ease during the interview process."

Thank you, Darleen and Patricia, for your questions. Now here are a few more unusual ones, courtesy of Glassdoor.com:

"If you could throw a parade of any caliber through our office, what type of parade would it be?"

"If you could sing one song on *American Idol*, what would it be?"

"If you were a box of cereal, what would you be and why?"

"If you were 80 years old, what would you tell your children?"

"You're a new addition to the crayon box, what color would you be and why?"

"What was the last gift you gave someone?"

"If there were a movie produced about your life, who would play you, and why?"

And last, but not least: "If you were on an island and could only bring three things, what would you bring?"

2015 Spring/Summer Calendar

Find out what's new and what's happening in the industry by attending these upcoming trade shows or conferences:

11th Annual Hotel Technology Forum

4/22 - 4/24; Puerto Rico; hospitalitytechnology.edgl.com

2015 AAHOA Annual Convention

4/22 - 4/25; Long Beach, CA; aahoa.com

2015 SPATEC Spring North America

4/26 - 4/29; Miami, FL; spatecna.com

Hospitality Design Expo & Conference 2015

5/13 - 5/15; Las Vegas, NV; hdexpo.com

National Restaurant Association (NRA) Show 2015

5/16 - 5/19; Chicago, IL; show.restaurant.org

HOTEC Design

6/8 - 6/11; San Diego, CA; hotecna.com

HITEC 2015

6/15 - 6/18; Austin, TX; hftp.org

Quick Quote

Like all great travelers, I have seen more than I remember, and remember more than I have seen.

Benjamin Disraeli, b. 1804, British writer and Prime Minister

✓ Check Out

We hope you've enjoyed this issue.

Your feedback, suggestions, stories, and ideas make our newsletter interesting and useful. Please take a moment to send us your thoughts.

Email: check-in@americanhotel.com

Mail: American Hotel Register Company

Attention: Check-In

100 South Milwaukee Ave., Vernon Hills, IL 60061

Please note: Submitted photos and information are not returnable. Submissions may be edited.

Check-In is published four times a year by American Hotel Register Company.

Editor: Lynda Jeppesen



Jim Leahy

Letter from the Chairman

Dear Friend,

Be special today!

Become the sort of person you'd want your parents, your children or your best friend to be.

Listen, truly listen to others. Rather than plan your response while others talk, listen with curiosity and interest. Practice courtesy and kindness. In dealing with others, the "little things" are BIG.

Be responsible for your thoughts and actions. When you make a mistake, be willing to say "it was my fault, I'm sorry," just as you take credit for your success. They're simply words, but they have remarkable power.

Change the things you don't like about yourself, the negative attitudes, the mental "tapes" that pull you down. Eliminate those mental messages by forgiving yourself for past failures and disappointments. Say to yourself: "I forgive you for..."

Give yourself the right to feel good. Stop and be proud of your successes. You have had successes.

Set some goals for yourself – choose to become the person you were created to be. You are "wired" with talents, skills, creativity, interests and abilities that are different from everyone else on the planet. Listen to where your heart is calling you.

We all like to blame our parents, our circumstances, our lack of education or our lack of opportunities for who we are. It's time to stop blaming and take charge, creating the future you want. Your future begins today!

Today is a day like many others. But it will never be repeated. You were created to be a gift to the world – your world – your family, friends and work family. Be that gift to your world – today!

Love,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jim".



Send us your ideas – we'll send you \$25!

How does your hotel forecast occupancy? Share your strategies with your fellow readers.

Email check-in@americanhotel.com & include your full name, property name and address.

Read Check-In online at americanhotel.com/check-in