



CHECK-IN

Focusing on issues important to all members of the Hospitality Industry

Check This Out

- ✓ **What's your password?** Most people choose common character combinations that are easily hacked. So, how can you avoid fraudulent activity? Add numbers and symbols to your passwords. A hacker typically takes 15 minutes to figure out a 6-character password using only lowercase letters. Adding numbers and symbols takes about 18 days. A password of nine characters with a mix of letters, numbers, and symbols is nearly unsolvable.
- ✓ **Get away from it all in a prison hotel?** Yes, believe it or not, you can lock yourself into the beautiful, renovated multi-cell rooms in the Liberty Hotel in Boston, the Malmaison Oxford Hotel in Oxford, England, and Hotel Katajanokka in Helsinki, Finland.
- ✓ **Girls just want to have fun.** And they really can now, with the wide variety of women-only vacations available. From cowgirl bootcamp to Parisian tours to spa weekends and photographic safaris, girl getaways are one of the most popular travel packages on the market today. Massage, anyone?
- ✓ **He's back!** The vacationing lawn gnome has returned to the front porch in Oak Park, Illinois, where he was residing comfortably until he disappeared over a year ago. The gnome bore a sign which read: "You may think you own me, but I didn't appreciate the chain you had around me [to keep him from being stolen!], so I decided to take a vacation." Stapled to the note were pictures of the gnome standing on a beach, wearing sunglasses while reclining on a towel, perched near a waterfall, and more. Talk about a nice, long trip...maybe he'll be visiting your property soon!

Do's and Don'ts of Hotel Technology: Part 2

DO...

- ◆ Check your TV channel reception in every room from time to time and make sure it's nice and clear
- ◆ Try and make a booking from your own website
- ◆ Make sure your guest room safe is bolted down to a floor or wall and cannot be easily removed
- ◆ Have some always-on power sockets in the guest room, by the desk and bed
- ◆ Test motion detectors in the guest room to make sure they really work efficiently and don't turn off the power prematurely
- ◆ Monitor the TV volume in the guest room so that it can go down very low, and not too high. Some guests like to leave the TV on all night but at a very low background volume
- ◆ Have a very low level night-light in the bathroom
- ◆ Offer free boarding pass printing in business centers
- ◆ Provide Mac computers in your business center, not just PCs
- ◆ Encourage your staff's use of laptops in meetings for note taking versus using paper pads
- ◆ Have a smartphone-compliant version of your property's fact sheet available for download on your website
- ◆ Make sure excess cables are neatly tied or cut to size
- ◆ Have easily accessible [international] power sockets in meeting rooms
- ◆ Have a person monitor social networking sites for mentions of your hotel

DON'T...

- ◆ Put a hair dryer in the bathroom that is underpowered
- ◆ Allow iPods or MP3 players in the workplace to be connected to your computers
- ◆ Make it complicated for guests to use your technology – they may only stay one night
- ◆ Lend guests headsets for use in the gym unless they have been pre-sterilized
- ◆ Allow social networking connections on workplace computers unless used for work
- ◆ Have water pipes inside your computer room or data center
- ◆ Use Flash on your website unless you really have to – not all smartphones can handle Flash
- ◆ Automatically believe that by putting loads of technology into your hotel that the guest experience will be enhanced
- ◆ Have electronic curtains/drapes unless they can be opened/closed from the bedside as well as from a wall switch
- ◆ Clutter the desk with collateral and printed materials – make them digital and multilingual

Source: Terence Ronson, Pertlink Ltd., www.pertlink.net

Hotel Technology
**Do's &
Don'ts**



Bill Pickens

Maintenance Editor

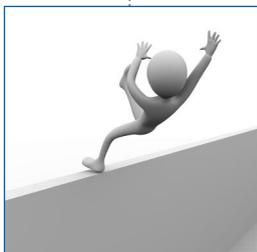
Pedestrian Safety: Defending Against Slips & Falls

According to the U.S. Department of Labor, slips, trips and falls are the most common occupational accidents and the second leading cause of injuries and deaths after car accidents (OSHA). A disproportionately high number of them happen to guests of restaurants, hotels, motels, fitness centers and other public buildings. In fact, over one million Americans suffer from slip and fall injuries each year.

Warning guests and employees of potentially dangerous areas is key to preventing injuries and avoiding expensive lawsuits.

Here are the top hazardous situations for pedestrians:

- ◆ Walking on wet hard floors
- ◆ Walking from wet carpet to a hard floor
- ◆ Walking off elevators and onto wet hard floors
- ◆ Stepping off escalators and onto wet hard floors
- ◆ Entering a building with wet shoes onto hard floors
- ◆ Tripping over power cords



- ◆ Wet restroom floors
 - ◆ Wet stairwells
 - ◆ Spills on hard floors
- According to *Personal Injury and the Hospitality Industry*, JVR 2000, guest slips and falls can cost hotels millions of dollars per case if, "a jury determines that the guest's injury was caused by the innkeeper's negligence. Innkeepers must take reasonable measures to keep their guests safe from foreseeable dangers."

What are reasonable measures? A property's first line of defense against expensive litigation is the installation, documentation, and use of a comprehensive pedestrian safety system. Most slip and fall cases lack direct evidence to prove the innkeeper's liability. Injured guests, therefore, frequently rely on circumstantial evidence to prove their case. An innkeeper's failure to have a written pedestrian safety system in place with basic records and inspection logs may support the injured guest's claims in the eyes of a jury.

These steps may help reduce exposure to this type of liability:

- ◆ Implement and use a commercial pedestrian safety system, train employees on the system, and

maintain accurate training records.

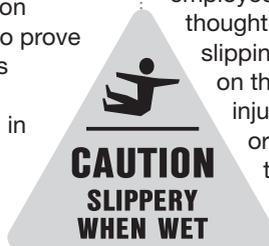
- ◆ Immediately investigate any incidents or occurrences and document your findings.
- ◆ Ensure that the injured guest obtains proper medical evaluation and care.
- ◆ Take photographs as soon after the accident as possible.
- ◆ Obtain witness statements.
- ◆ If appropriate, seek legal counsel.

The main areas of safety concern in regard to guests are the entrance and lobby, front desk area, restaurants, recreational areas, elevators, and stairwells. On guest floors, the vending/ice machine area is hazardous because guests frequently drop ice cubes that melt and become slip hazards.

Don't forget service areas — workplace injuries are a real problem for employers. Most employees don't give much thought to the prospect of slipping, tripping or even falling on the job. Yet many of these injuries can be disabling... or even fatal. It's estimated that costs, including medical bills and missed wages, add up to about \$28,000

per incident. Properly notifying employees of safety hazards is essential to maintaining a safe workplace.

Source: *U.S. Dept. of Labor, OSHA*



We Love Hearing From You!

Here's a great marketing idea from one of our readers.

Dee Plucinski, owner of The Spruce Lodge in South Fork, CO, wrote to us regarding two seminars she is conducting for aspiring innkeepers on April 8-10 and May 13-15. Her property is now listed on The National Register of Historic Places and The State Register of Historic Places in

Colorado, and features 17 rooms in a mountain lodge setting. If you have guests asking you about your experience as an owner/operator/manager, you might consider conducting a seminar yourself, or attending one of Dee's. As it says in the seminar brochure, it's an intensive weekend of real-world innkeeping. Contact Dee at www.sprucelodge.com for more information.

Who Visits the U.S.?

According to the U.S. Travel Association, the following countries top the list of international visitors:

Canada...18 million
Mexico...13.2 million
United Kingdom...3.9 million
Japan...2.9 million

Each overseas traveler spends more than \$4,000 when he/she visits the U.S. and stays on average more than 16 nights.



Katie Snider
HR Editor

Post-Recession Retention Strategies

As the title of this article optimistically implies, there will be a time when this recession transforms again. It's been reported now for some time that we are already well into the recovery, although a new term has been coined: a "jobless recovery."

While some indicators suggest there is job growth and others suggest job growth is slow, the reality is that some organizations are seeing employee movement to other opportunities and organizations and some organizations are experiencing product or service demands that require hiring.

There are many predictions as to when the job market will truly open up, but the key question is do you have a retention strategy to deal with the competition for your talent? Is your organization in a position of readiness for the new market conditions?

When we look at the issues employees are most concerned with, MRA's research and experience show that employee concerns vary by organization, business unit within an organization, job type, and conditions outside of the organization, like – most recently – the recession.

Over the last 18 months, observations from MRA's exit interviewing projects, in particular, have varied greatly. First, they have seen employee exit volume

reduce as reorganizations of businesses resulted in few opportunities for employees, and employees seemed content to stay where they were. Then, employee responses shifted. While still concerned with advancement and employment opportunities, the concern with management decisions and communication from management grew. At the height of the recession, the reasons for leaving related to personal issues. Any career move was seen as risky and would only be considered as a last resort.

The other indicator that varied greatly was employees who were actively seeking new jobs versus those who were approached about changing jobs. Early on in the recession very few employees – less than 20 percent – were approached about taking a new job. However, with each quarter, this ratio has grown as more employees are being approached about new opportunities and employees seem now more willing to take a risk and move to a new opportunity.

Currently, we are nearing pre-recession norms for this measure.

So, when will we see the hiring boom that many have indicated is on the verge of occurring?

When do you, as a business owner, need to be concerned with retention?

The time to act is before there is a mass exodus. For those industries where the ramp-up has not yet occurred, positioning your business to be ahead of the curve, equipped with information and action plans focused on retention, should be a critical consideration

now. An effective method to determine your vulnerability is to go to the source – your employees.

MRA encourages member retention practices that address organizational readiness at critical points of the employee lifecycle – when employees join the organization and when employees move away from the organization.

Employees new to your business have observations that may vary from those who are leaving.

An effective complement to retention services is to incorporate the lifecycle point when an employee is a contributing team member, through employee engagement and opinion surveys.

Being equipped with employee insights can better prepare your business for success, whether related to the recession or other business practices, and the incorporation of actions that just make good business sense.

Managing risk is an integral component of strategic planning, and gathering data to make effective management decisions should come from a variety of sources. Engagement surveys, employee opinion surveys, new hire surveys and exit interviews are all effective methods of data gathering. Whatever tool or combination of tools used to gather data, the time to act is now.

You should have a robust plan for retaining talent as well as acquiring talent.

Source: *HR Digest*, MRA–
The Management Association, Inc.,
July 2010



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

Do you have a suggestion box for guests?

What changes have you made as a result of a guest suggestion?

E-mail us & include your full name, property name, and address.

Spring/Summer 2011 Calendar

Find out what's new and what's happening in the industry by attending a trade show or conference. Here are some events scheduled in the coming months.

The 21st Annual Hospitality Industry Symposium

April 1; San Francisco, CA; www.usfca.edu/bps/hospitality/

HSMIA's Affordable Meetings Mid-America

April 13 - 14; Chicago, IL; www.hsmia.org

Go Green Expo

April 15 - 17; Los Angeles, CA; www.gogreenexpo.com

Hospitality Design Expo & Conference

May 18 - 20; Las Vegas, NV; www.hdexpo.com

National Restaurant Association (NRA) Show 2011

May 21 - 24; Chicago, IL; www.restaurant.org

AH&LA Summer Summit

June 14 - 15; Atlanta, GA; www.ahla.com

AAHOA Annual Convention & Trade Show

June 15 - 18; Las Vegas, NV; www.aaoha.com

HITEC 2011

June 20 - 23; Austin, TX; www.hftp.org/HITEC

Quick Quotes

***One's destination is never a place,
but a new way of seeing things.***

— Henry Miller

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.

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Jim Leahy

Letter from the Chairman

Dear Friends,

Many years ago I attended a presentation that taught me one of my most crucial talents for changing myself and enjoying life more. What I learned made a difference in my personality and happiness. The speaker focused on our attitudes. He said that each of us has attitudes on over 1,000 things. We have attitudes about money, death, men, women, the roles of wives and husbands, fairness, political parties, sex, policemen, cats, teens, old people, old music, race cars, blondes, people of other religions, dirty jokes, Cadillacs, bosses, dentists, sports teams, wine, whether God is a loving presence or a merciless judge, and so many other things.

Most of the attitudes we learned in our youth and consider them to be "fact." They're not necessarily right or wrong, but they're important to us because they enable us to make sense out of an unfamiliar – and sometimes scary – world. Attitudes become so much a part of us that we don't even question where they came from or if they're valid any more.

Whatever our attitudes, the speaker pointed out that they become our reality. We respond to life with them as our "truth." And generally we're not consciously aware of them.

The speaker was a college professor of psychology for whom I have great respect. He pointed out that as we become aware of our attitudes, we're able to change them. Our personality also changes and we grow more open or closed to life.

In growing older and facing uncomfortable situations, I tried to bring my attitudes to my conscious mind and question their validity. As I've met people who I thought were different from me and as I've gone into unfamiliar surroundings, I've examined my attitudes, and often changed them. That which I dreaded could become something I looked forward to.

It has been one of the most powerful things I have gone through in changing my comfort zone, "growing up," and dealing with the unfamiliar! This process has made me calmer, more tolerant of others, more forgiving, and more open to new ideas. It makes loving others more natural.

Questioning my "truths" has worked for me; give it a try yourself! Life has so much beauty, wisdom, and grandeur to offer us as we examine our attitudes and become more open and tolerant!

Love,

Jim

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