



# CHECK-IN

Focusing on issues important to all members of the Hospitality Industry

## Check This Out

- ✓ **The future is now!** It's time to get ready and get onboard with some of the latest trends in hospitality. An industry trend monitor lists the following guest services as already in use in some hotels or coming soon to the rest of the industry: digital concierge and check-out services via iPad; iPad menus and wine lists; and virtual check-in through your smartphone. And if you haven't made room for a fitness center, the time is now. A lot of travelers will not even book a hotel that doesn't have one. And 24-hour access and entertainment options are a must for busy physical fitness buffs.
- ✓ **You won't have trouble sleeping on this plane!** Stay at the Jumbo Stay and a restful night will be yours. The actual 747 is outfitted with a bar, café, private rooms, dorm rooms and even a luxury suite in the cockpit. It is parked at the entrance to Stockholm's Arlanda Airport and the rates are quite affordable. In the summer, you can even stand on the jet wing in an observation deck!
- ✓ **Showering in style.** In the race to differentiate themselves from the competition, many upscale hotels are offering their guests a luxury shower experience. Some showers are cavernous and spa-like, with multiple showerheads; some feature chandeliers or deluxe tilework; and still others have hammocks that guests can lounge in! For travelers looking for romance, there are even two-person showers, with separate showerheads on opposing walls. As this race heats up, the bathtub's popularity is going down the drain as more and more properties are opting out of installing them.

## Ideas for Your Hotel Blog & Newsletter – Part 1

Last year, a friend of mine moved to New York. I always enjoy reading her emails describing her new life. She never seems to be short of things to write home about. Why is it then, that when it comes to writing our blog or articles for newsletters that we dry up on ideas? Though much of the content of my friend's emails wouldn't be suitable for sharing with customers, the concepts would. She uses catchy titles that makes us want to open up and read them right away. She only writes when she has something to report; she doesn't just write for the sake of it. Her personality shows through with humor and a lighthearted touch. She maintains our interest with anecdotes and stories that her readers and friends can relate to. When she's been introduced to a new experience, she explains it without insulting our intelligence. She also includes photos to bring it all to life. These days there's no excuse not to capture things on camera, and your hotel is no exception. At times she even leaves us waiting for the next installment before she tells us the outcome. All these principles can be applied to your own writing, but if you are still struggling for content, here are a few ideas:

### Recognize and reward loyalty

Start to build the relationship with your customers or guests as soon as they have booked by thanking them and providing additional information. You can use any of the topics below to whet their appetite and get them looking forward to their visit.

- ♦ As their arrival date approaches, send more timely information about specific events, travel updates and opportunities for upgrades or free services.
- ♦ Once someone has stayed or dined with you, a simple thank you note is a great way to build rapport and elicit feedback, too.

### Theme your articles and blogs

Establish different themes for your newsletters. If you segment your list (which I recommend), you can then target different topics to different segments to keep things relevant. Some examples:

- ♦ Breaking news: Set up Google Alerts for topics relevant to your target audience (e.g., what's going on in your town or whatever topic is relevant to your unique selling point or of interest to your target audience).
- ♦ Answer your most frequently asked questions.
- ♦ An A-Z series of your "expert" topic or special interest (providing your prospects and customers share the same interest).

### Show your personality

One thing that will always make you unique is you and your team.

- ♦ Describe a day in the life of your chef, housekeeper, sommelier, receptionist or events organizer.
- ♦ Ask staff for their top tips to share with customers.
- ♦ What's happening in your world both on-site and out and about?
- ♦ Get your staff to tell their own story – their background, experience and how they came to be working at your property.

### From the kitchen

If you want to build your dining business:

- ♦ Introduce your new menu and how it's been created.
- ♦ Talk about your sustainably sourced foods and other stories.
- ♦ Ask your chefs and other staff for their views on holiday and new recipes/flavors to try out.
- ♦ Laugh at your own mishaps or recipe failures with a funny story.

Source: *Caroline Cooper*,  
[www.HotelNewsNow.com](http://www.HotelNewsNow.com), 05/11

## One Size Doesn't Fit All

When selecting entrance matting, sometimes it's better to think "outside" the box.

Whether you own or are doing the purchasing for a hotel, motel, hospital, senior living facility or educational institution, one thing many facilities have in common is they often do not have enough matting or properly sized matting in place to effectively stop and hold soil and moisture.

Common matting is only typically available in 3-, 4- or 6-foot widths and is often not the best choice when trying to protect larger areas, but roll goods are often the ideal choice for large facilities with lots of foot traffic.

### Roll Goods Versus Mats

Roll goods are nothing more than oversized mats designed to protect large entrance areas and have the ability to remove more soil and moisture than smaller, more standard-sized mats.

Roll goods are typically available in 6-foot widths and can be seamed together, creating a mat up to 12 feet wide and 50 feet long.

Other roll good products will allow customers to cover areas up to 18 feet wide by 100 feet long.

Roll goods can be placed on the floor like traditional mats and can include logos, or they can be permanently installed around columns or revolving doors for better functionality and aesthetics.

"The main problem with large facility entrances is that people seldom walk straight ahead and always take the shortest path to their destination," says Gary Rubin, president of PCA Industrial and Paper Supplies Inc., located in Philadelphia.

When Rubin visits a facility, the first thing he does is observe the traffic coming into the building.

"This gives me a better idea for my recommendations and allows me to suggest alternatives," Rubin adds.

To effectively capture 85% to 95% of soil and moisture at the door, The Carpet and Rug Institute (CRI) recommends a minimum of 8 to 10

footsteps on a mat before stepping off onto the floor in any direction.

"That typically represents at least a minimum of 12 feet of matting across large entrances," says Rubin.

### Consider Safety

An important consideration when choosing effective roll goods is that they should have a permanent bi-level surface to effectively hold



and hide soil and moisture to prevent them from migrating further into the building; they should also be reinforced with rubber to prevent crushing.

In comparison to smaller mats, roll goods are heavier and less likely to move on the floor, creating a safer surface with less risk of guests tripping.

The use of smaller mats creates more cleaning as a result of soil being tracked further into the building. Also, facilities that use multiple small mats to cover large areas often create a tripping hazard, as mentioned, and expose the facility to potential liability problems.

### Environmental Responsibility and Savings

The use of green products continues to be an important consideration for many facilities; roll goods are no exception as manufacturers now offer products that have surfaces produced from plastic drink bottles and rubber backings produced from recycled car tires. This reduces landfill waste by over 400 tons annually and also conserves natural resources and energy that would normally be required for their production.

A Worldwide Cleaning Industry Association (ISSA) study found that

it costs several hundred dollars to find and remove one pound of dirt. Having enough properly sized matting in high-traffic areas makes the cleaning job easier for your maintenance staff, keeps floors shiny longer and extends carpet cleaning or floor stripping cycles in other parts of your building.

The result is that you can reduce the time your maintenance staff spends on floor cleaning and care by an estimated 44%, and you'll use less cleaning products, energy, etc., all of which makes for a greener property.

Cleaning roll goods is easy too, because they are typically treated just like carpet and cleaned in place. Roll goods should be vacuumed daily and water extracted as needed to maintain a like-new appearance.

So, the next time you need to consider matting for your entrances, sometimes it's better to think "outside" the box.



**Send us your ideas –  
we'll send you \$25!**  
*The best amenity my hotel  
offers is...*

*Email us at [check-in@americanhotel.com](mailto:check-in@americanhotel.com)  
& include your full name, property name,  
and address.*



**Katie Snider**  
HR Editor

## Human Resources News

### Multi-Generational Communication Fast Facts

This is the first time in history that a generation has entered the workplace using technologies so far ahead of those adopted by the organizations that are hiring them.

Technology has unleashed masses of young workers who are used to connecting with their social networks for information, feedback, and collaborative work. Successful organizations are embracing and capitalizing on the highly developed technical expertise these newer workers bring to the workplace.

As alien as Gen Ys (Millennials) may seem to Boomers at times, think about how alien the top-down hierarchical workplace must seem to Millennials. They are used to the transparency of social networking sites and web collaboration. Then they enter the workforce with chains of command, silos, and even knowledge hoarding.

In contrast, if Millennials think someone else has information that can help them, they will ask them (or text them) regardless of whether that person is a peer, subordinate, or

even the CEO. As young workers, the protocol-following Boomers would never have thought of going over a manager's head directly to the CEO!

With technology, it is now possible to speed up knowledge-sharing and production by answering questions over a network in a short window. Some older managers may need to learn about the efficiency of things like wikis and instant messaging. And conversely, some younger workers may need to learn when an actual meeting is necessary.

#### Communication Tips

A diverse and inclusive workplace requires open communication and an awareness of generational differences.

Build awareness that the four generations bring different ideas, challenges and opportunities to the workplace. The goal is not to make everyone fit into one mold, but to effectively communicate differences in a way that promotes creativity and innovation. This is done by offering generational training and facilitating open dialogue about how to leverage the unique skills of each generation.

Flex your preferred style to speak and communicate in ways that motivate each generation. If we only operate within our own comfort zone and view of the world, it can lead to misperceptions and a less-

than-engaged and productive work environment. Misunderstood comments can have long-lasting repercussions, especially among less experienced employees.

#### Generational Differences Increase Productivity

Lest we despair about the possibility of building bridges between the generations, here is some extremely encouraging news. A global study of 100,000 employees found that nearly 50% reported that adapting their communication to better understand the perspective of a different generation actually improved productivity.

To begin an open dialogue within your department or organization, discuss these questions:

- ◆ What are some of the challenges created by having multiple generations within your organization?
- ◆ What misunderstandings have you seen occur and how are they dealt with?
- ◆ What successes have you seen?

Effective communication is the linchpin of success when dealing with multiple generations in an engaged workplace environment.

Source: *HR Digest, MRA – The Management Association, Inc., 08/11*

## We Love Hearing From You!

If there is one thing we know – it's that the personal touch works when dealing with guest problems. **Roslyn Villalpando, Hampton Inn & Suites in Yuba City, CA**, has this advice and a story to relate: "I always abide by these words: 'It's not what you say, it's how you say it.' In my particular case, I did not follow my own advice and it had repercussions: A woman and her children were checking in. I had stepped away from the desk for a brief moment to use the restroom. She called me on the cordless phone demanding immediate service since she had a funeral to attend. I told her I would be there in a moment. When I returned to the desk, she said she had

been waiting for ten minutes. I said, 'Really, because I just left the desk!' Afterward, I realized my mistake and wrote her a personal email in which I apologized for my rude comment. She was very pleased that I took time out to make her feel appreciated, and she will be returning to our hotel soon."

**Tracy Shemchuk, Operations Manager, The Lane Hotel, Keene, NH**, writes about her solution to a guest problem: "We had a guest who moved rooms twice the previous night – once because she didn't want to be on Main Street and again, because the room just 'wasn't for her.'"

She was upgraded to a suite and, in the morning, was disappointed with the breakfast we offered because it lacked a protein option. Instead of mentioning her concerns to us, she came to the desk and asked for recommendations of places to dine for breakfast. I asked her why she wasn't having breakfast with us. She told me about her issue, so I gave her ten dollars to go out and get herself breakfast. She couldn't believe it, but to me, ten dollars is just a drop in the bucket when compared to the cost of member points, room charges, tax adjustments, etc. And, most importantly, she was happy when she left the hotel that day."

## 2012 Spring/Summer Calendar

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

### **HSMAI's MEET Mid-America 2012**

April 3 - 4; Navy Pier, Chicago, IL; [www.hsmaimeet.com](http://www.hsmaimeet.com)

### **8th Annual Hotel Technology Forum**

April 18 - 20; Las Vegas, NV; [www.hospitalitytechnology.edgl.com](http://www.hospitalitytechnology.edgl.com)

### **The 22nd Annual Hospitality Industry Symposium**

April 27; San Francisco, CA; [www.usfca.edu/management](http://www.usfca.edu/management)

### **2012 AAHOA Annual Convention & Trade Show**

May 2 - 5; Atlanta, GA; [www.aahoa.com](http://www.aahoa.com)

### **National Restaurant Association (NRA) Show 2012**

May 5 - 8; Chicago, IL; [www.restaurant.org](http://www.restaurant.org)

### **Hospitality Design Expo & Conference 2012**

May 15 - 17; Las Vegas, NV; [www.hdexpo.com](http://www.hdexpo.com)

### **AH&LA Summer Summit**

June 12 - 13; Houston, TX; [www.ahla.com](http://www.ahla.com)

### **HITEC 2012**

June 25 - 28; Baltimore, MD; [www.hftp.org/HITEC](http://www.hftp.org/HITEC)

### Quick Quotes

**A journey is like marriage. The certain way to be wrong is to think you can control it.**

— John Steinbeck, American Writer, 1902-1968

### ✓ **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 Friend,

Are you the person you were created to be? Are you the person you want to be? Or are you becoming someone else?

We all face pressures to conform, to "fit in," to like what others like and to be what others want us to be. Yet we're all "wired" to be someone unique. There's a specialness in each of us that no one else will ever have.

Within each of us there's a silent "voice" calling us to some form of greatness. We're called to be happy, to be at peace, to be honorable and much more.

Sometimes we surround ourselves with people who want to pull us down, who may not respect us, who discourage us, and who have no goals for their own lives. Sometimes we have to find better companions on life's journey.

Others may tell us what we should be in life – wanting to choose our careers, our future and our recreation. Perhaps they're right, but maybe not. Others' life journeys will not be yours.

It's important to listen to that silent inner voice, to the fear and the anxiety or the thrill and excitement we feel inside.

Regardless of the opinions of others, we have to honor that inner voice. In some mysterious way, it's a truth teller.

We each owe it to ourselves to be the best we can be. We won't get a second chance to live our lives. This isn't a dress rehearsal.

If you're not becoming the person you want to be, make decisions! You've gotten into comfortable routines and habits that aren't in sync with who you really are.

Spend some time in silence dealing with these questions: What would you like to be if you could be anything? What are you doing when you feel completely alive? What in life exhausts you? What and who do you admire most? And why?

Listen to the answers that surface. You'll be aware of feelings, maybe hope and excitement around some ideas, maybe despair around others. Explore this way. You'll discover who you are on a deeper level.

From there, look for activities and people that support your hopes and aspirations. Build your dreams. Create a future that's "you." Become the person you were destined to be!

Love,

If you want to read any of Jim's previously published letters, go to [www.americanhotel.com](http://www.americanhotel.com) ▶ Check-In.

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