

BRAIDWOOD'S VIEW



HOSPITALITY MANAGEMENT, INC

Partners in Hospitality



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FROM THE DESK OF:

John Garden, President, BHM

"On the road again..." is a refrain that has been running through my head lately having attended three hospitality trade shows in as many weeks in such diverse places as Lake Louise, Winnipeg and Saskatoon. I am frequently told by friends and others that they envy my lifestyle of travel; staying in fine hotels, eating exotic foods, getting waited on hand and foot and best of all; never having to make my own bed!

Those who travel frequently know that business travel has become a "contact" sport where the business traveler increasingly feels like a rat in a maze or on a treadmill to nowhere. The reality of business travel is the need to arrive unnecessarily early at airports, negotiating airport security while attempting to look innocent of the heinous crimes they suspect you have committed. It's about bad weather, delays, long layovers, missed connections, lost luggage and inflated airport prices. It's the certainty of knowing that your airline food in coach class will be either a bag of salted peanuts or ice-cold turkey on a soggy roll served with stale coffee and indifferent service. It's the joys of sleeping in over-heated hotel rooms in unfamiliar beds while re-learning to use the remote control and watching late night TV shows one would never watch at home. It is about institutionalized food and too much coffee, and tuning out cab drivers who feel compelled to share their life stories and the moments of sheer boredom spent in unfamiliar surroundings.

What can be done to make business travel more bearable? Pre-book your seats; never put your laptop in your checked luggage, - buy a light travel bag that holds a change of clothes, - take your own Ethernet cable with you, - carry a couple of USB memory sticks, - pack paper and pen - they have a longer battery life than your laptop and are more multi-functional, - don't carry more than you need, - eat healthy, - move to the destination time zone as soon as you take off and remember the most effective way to avoid travel problems is to stay at home. On the other hand, attendance at the tradeshow was beneficial, rewarding and an excellent opportunity to network with industry colleagues and potential customers.

A BUSY MODERN LIFESTYLE

According to research by Holiday Inn, average modern parents manage to squeeze in just **15 minutes a day** enjoying each other's company amid their hectic family life. Most parents are able to relax and chat for just five minutes together before the kids wake up, and 10 minutes at night before going to sleep and, on one precious night of the year, they will call in other family members to look after the children to allow them an overnight stay in a hotel together.

Chris Hale, spokesman for **Holiday Inn**, which commissioned the study, said: "It's quite shocking how little time couples have together when their children are young. The poll of 4,500 people revealed that parents only get 235.25 hours a year together without the children. Busy couples call on a babysitter once a month giving them a much-deserved opportunity of four hours in a pub, club or restaurant.

HOSPITALITY- & the NET

Vacation Package Sales on the Web are forecast to reach \$3.3billion by 2009. That is more than double the \$1.6 billion booked in 2006. Is your hotel's website structured to meet these online consumer needs?

"He, who reduces his rate, is the only one who knows what his product is really worth". In the absence of first-hand knowledge of your facilities and service, your rates define your hotel in the marketplace. If you reduce your rates, you could be reducing consumer perception of your hotel.

Most travelers are looking for the best value, not, necessarily, lowest rates.

REVENUE MANAGEMENT

The Brief History of **Revenue Management**: The airline industry launched revenue management practices after government deregulation in the early 1980s.

Although yield management techniques became a common practice among airlines during that time, revenue management may reasonably be assigned an inception date of January 17, 1985 when **American Airlines** launched its Ultimate Super Saver fares in an effort to compete with the low cost carrier PeopleExpress.

Revenue management was born out the need to fill at least a minimum number of seats without selling every seat at discount prices; the idea was to sell enough seats to cover fixed operating expenses.

Once fixed expenses were covered, and there were now fewer remaining seats to sell, they could then sell the remaining seats at higher rates to maximize revenue and profits. Routinely practiced and adopted by hotels

WHAT'S ON

May 27-28, 2008

Canadian Hotel Investment Conference

City: Toronto, Ontario
Phone: 416-924-2002
Website: orieberlasso@bigpictureconferences.ca

Description: From its inception in 1997, the Canadian Hotel Investment Conference has provided the opportunity for senior executives and other lodging industry experts to gain timely insights into the hotel investment market. This Conference is a vehicle for delegates to reflect on the various issues that impact the industry and discuss future opportunities and trends through in-depth, interactive sessions that are uniquely Canadian.

A portion of the proceeds from the conference are donated to the Canadian hospitality and tourism education programs to promote the long term commitment to education and well trained hospitality industry professionals. Over the past eleven years, the conference has raised more than \$850,000.

Oct 25 – 28, 2008

International Tourism & Travel Show

City: Montreal, Quebec
Phone: +(44)-(1737)-768611/768111
Website: biztradeshows.com

Description: International Tourism & Travel Show is an opportunity to introduce new products and services to thousands of targeted consumers. This three day event offers will help generate valuable contacts, make immediate sales, increase visibility and make solid connections that will translate into year round sales.

Nov 17-19, 2008

CTHRC 7th Annual Tourism HR Forum

City: Winnipeg, Manitoba
Phone: 613.231.6949
Website: <http://www.cthrc.ca/eng/index.aspx>

Description: Take advantage of this national event that brings tourism human resource executives, managers and corporate trainers from all industries of the tourism sector together with industry association representatives and educators. The discussion will center on the challenges, issues and opportunities faced by human resource professionals in the sector with a clear focus on sharing ideas and solutions – its an opportunity you won't want to miss!

MAR 8 – 10, 2009

Hostex Canada

City: Toronto, Ontario
Phone: 416-923-8416
Website: <http://www.biztradeshows.com/trade-events/hostex-canada.html>

Description: HostEx Canada is Canada's largest hospitality trade show that combines restaurant and accommodation operators from across the country, with the leading suppliers producing a dynamic once-a-year event. This national stage is an ideal environment to understand the key trends influencing consumer tastes that will attract more customers and operational efficiencies that reduce costs. More than 9,900 foodservice professionals attend this show every October.

WEB OPTIMIZATION

Web site optimization is the process of specifically designing your site's web pages to rank high within search engines.

Hoteliers, who are satisfied with the 'look' of their web sites, but not satisfied with the site's Page Rank and reservation production often think that all they need is Search Engine Optimization (SEO) to improve production. However, in the majority of cases, the actual designs of their sites are hindering production and popularity because they are not compatible with **search engine optimization** requirements; this makes any efforts to market the site very ineffective.

Unless your site ranks in the top 10 or 20 results in a keyword search, face the fact that your target audience won't be able to find your site. Listing near the top and grabbing the attention of your target audience should be your top priority when having your site developed or improved. The Internet is a search-driven medium with more than 80% of hotels found only through searching on the Internet making search compatibility the most important element in hotel site design.

Search elements, including **Meta tags, keywords, title tags, image alt text**, properly written sales text and overall design play an important role in determining how high your web site will rank or if it gets ranked at all. There are several components of a web page which affect its performance in search engines.

The first step towards improving your site is selecting **keywords**, which reflect your site's pages and having your web site developed properly by a web site developer with hotel marketing experience. For hotels, the Internet is primarily a location-driven medium, your web site must be designed to accommodate search, and, the sales content (text and images) on your site really matters. Then, and only then, is your site ready for SEO and marketing.

TRADE SHOW TIPS

The following are trade show tips and suggestions on how to get the most out of trade show participation.

Pre-show Preparations: The effort and time that is dedicated to pre-show preparation may impact your success during and post show. The greater the understanding you have of the show in general, the greater the potential for superior results. Set goals that compliment your marketing objectives and overall business strategy: Your goals can pertain to display theme and appearance, down to the number of quality leads you hope to generate. Establishing a range of goals gives a target to work towards and encourages action while at the event. Inform current and potential clients of your participation: Contact current business partners; use trade shows as a forum to not only generate new business but solidify and build on current business. Likewise, notify potential clients of your participation.

The Booth: Your display or booth must be attendee friendly. Counters or free standing displays should not block the view of back drops or inhibit visitors from entering the booth. Avoid confusing displays, within a few seconds a passerby will appraise your booth and decide on approaching.

The Staff: Limit the number of booth staff; space can be overcrowded and unapproachable with too many people. A pro-active, friendly and well trained booth staff member is often more effective in attracting attendees than a free sample or giveaway.

Post show: In most cases trade shows are about generating qualified leads and not conducting final sales. Therefore, professional follow up within a recommended 30 day period helps to ensure your business reaps the most benefit from trade show participation; otherwise the effort and time invested in participation can be lost.

Lead follow-up: The longer one leaves leads unattended the less likely they are to evolve into business. Prior to a show ensure there is time and man power already allocated to post-show lead follow-up. Initial follow up can be made by a simple phone call within a few days of the show, while more intensive follow up should be made within the span of a month.

It is important to remember in all of this that there is no definitive approach to trade show participation, only suggestions as to how to better approach this valuable marketing method. It is important that participation fulfills your business goals and provides some form of return on your time and financial investments.