

BRAIDWOOD'S VIEW



HOSPITALITY MANAGEMENT, INC

Partners in Hospitality



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FROM THE DESK OF:

John Garden, President, BHM

A warm body in a bed... *sounds easy doesn't it?* Build it and they will come... *sounds like a solid business strategy... what could be easier than that?* Market segmentation, yield management and a seasonal rate strategy is for the big chains... *isn't it?* I only have 95 rooms; this approach doesn't pertain to me or my hotel... *does it?* Optimizing my website, raising its ranking in the search engines, establishing seasonal rates and a yield management strategy has never been necessary before, so why bother now... I can't afford it; I've never needed these strategies before...and besides, I simply don't have the time, I am already too busy looking for business as it is! Sure, there is new competition in the city... so what... besides; my guests are loyal... *aren't they?* So I won't lose market share... *will I?* My occupancy is down over last year but it will bounce back... *won't it?* I don't need to improve my website it's too expensive... *isn't it?* Besides my guests will find me... *won't they?* My guests have always found my hotel in the past so why do I need an internet strategy or a reservation engine... they will email or phone if they need a room... *won't they?* I have weathered tough times before and survived... things always get better, *don't they?*

Owners and operators of small and medium sized hotels struggle to compete in the face of what would appear to be a new and tough economic reality... *but is it?* Many hoteliers are anticipating a drop in revenues as the rising cost of travel causes business and leisure travelers to cut back, to curtail travel all together, or take shorter trips closer to home, and the media is full of dire predictions that it will get a whole lot worse before it gets better... and it will get better... *won't it?* If this sounds vaguely familiar, it's because it is. Many of us have been around long enough to have seen this before and experience has taught us that now is not the time to start cutting back in the areas of sales and marketing but rather to stay the course and stick with the plan... there is a plan... *isn't there?*, to build fences around our existing customers, while looking for new markets and innovative ways to retain and grow our business.

I believe the late Sir Edmund Hillary said it best when speaking of adversity..."it is not the mountain that we conquer, but ourselves." See you at the top everyone!

AH&LA 2008 LODGING SURVEY

The **Lodging Survey** released by The American Hotel & Lodging Association (AH&LA) revealed the following trends of responding properties for 2008:

- **Wireless Internet** access represented 91% of responding properties, up 35 % from just four years earlier. The number of hotels that charge for in-room Internet use is on the decline. (16 % of hotels charge for this service, down from 19 % in 2006 and 22 % in 2004).
- 35 % of properties offer **iPod docking stations** in-room.
- 79 % of properties have an **exercise room and/or fitness facility**.

TRAVELERS BEHAVIOURS

Business Travelers are changing their Behaviors in the Current Economy

68% are now staying at less expensive Hotels, 79% feeling pressure to cut travel expenditures. With a lagging economy causing many travelers to change their ways, more than two-thirds (68%) of those surveyed this month by Orbitz www.orbitzforbusiness.com and **Business Traveler Magazine** say they are now staying at less expensive/lower star-rated hotels to save on travel costs.

Additionally, a large majority of business travelers and corporate travel managers, 79%, are feeling some degree of pressure to cut travel expenses, leading to myriad changes in traveler behavior in the corp. travel marketplace.

While the report shows that many business travelers are in fact traveling differently, they are not necessarily cutting back -- as more than half (60%) say they are conducting as much, if not more business travel in 2008 compared with 2007.

ART 2008 STUDY

The American Hotel & Lodging Association released its 2008 **Average Room Taxes** and the Economic Impact on the Industry, analyzing the full impact on hotel tax changes on sales, jobs, and government revenue.

Smith Travel's, Charles W. de Seve, Ph.D., conducted this study.

Among the major findings of the survey, the survey revealed - Room taxes average 13.4 percent, about \$13.57 per night nationwide, in addition to the average room rate of about \$94.69 for 2008.

The national average of these combined bed taxes is up from an average of 12.4 percent in 2003.

WHAT'S ON

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 provides a great networking opportunity and 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.

THE VIEW ARTICLES

The editors at Braidwood's View welcome submission of articles pertinent to the hospitality industry.

Tell us; **what you think**, industry information, tips on the industry, what's going right, what's going wrong, or simply what's going on!

Submit to
articles@braidwood.ca

WHAT OUR GUESTS SAY

One of the principal appeals of using such Web sites as **Tripadvisor**, which boasts over 1.6 million user reviews and multi-millions of surfer reads, is that travelers no longer have to rely solely on agents, guidebooks or brochures to book their vacations and business trips.

In fact, the guiding principle seems to be that no one is more qualified to help you plan a vacation **than your fellow explorer**, and it is a compelling notion.

Travelers using such Websites use the advice given by fellow travelers. Unlike a guidebook, which has a year or so of shelf life, many of these Websites are up to the minute. Traditionally, travel information - especially information about hotels, came from friends, books, brochures or advertisements, all of which was one-sided, spotty and often misleading.

Cutting through all the public relations spin of the travel industry, the **latest addition to Tripadvisor** provides your prospective guest a rare, candid opportunity to view your hotel through the eyes (really the camera lens), of a previous paying guest.

Hotel collateral shows, **all the very best**, clean, fresh, along with pages of happy people showcased in experiential photography designed to lure the most skeptical of surfers. Now previous guests can show 'their view', **on line**, using photos taken with their cell phone or digital camera.

Is this new guest '**photo-op**' truly keeping the hotel honest? On the other hand, could it allow a guest to over-exaggerate their case? These are interesting questions.

A smart hotelier visits **Tripadvisor** www.tripadvisor.com routinely, as it provides an excellent, personal and sometimes sobering source of guest feedback. It is a '**one guest - by guest**' look at your hotel, for the entire world to see and read, so it is well worth the visit.

'OTA' LURES 'VICC' GUESTS

The Parksville and Qualicum Beach region has launched a new incentive to capitalize on the recent opening of the **Vancouver Island Conference Centre** (VICC) in Nanaimo, BC.

The Oceanside Tourism Association (OTA) developed the Group Travel Assistance Fund (GTAF) to offset transportation costs and make Qualicum Beach and Parksville Hotels an attractive option for Vancouver Island Conference Centre groups.

GTAF will give priority to groups that actualize a minimum of 150 room nights in Parksville and Qualicum Beach accommodations during a Vancouver Island Conference Centre event. The extent to which groups take advantage of attractions, activities, and other local Parksville and Qualicum Beach businesses will also be considered in the GTAF grant approval process.

"Parksville is only a **20 minute drive** from the Vancouver Island Conference Centre, making it a viable option for delegates to overnight here. This fund demonstrates we are serious about capturing meeting and event business in the Oceanside region and it will positively and directly impact a meeting planner's bottom-line," said **Jenn Houtby-Ferguson** CMP, of Parksville's Tigh-Na-Mara Resort.

The Parksville and Qualicum Beach www.VisitParksvilleQualicumBeach.com region has long been a favourite conference and meeting destination and recent media recognition has built upon its reputation. Better Homes and Gardens recognized Parksville among the top beaches in North America.

Vancouver Island Resorts such as Parksville's **Quality Resort Bayside** was named #1 Quality Hotel in Canada, by Choice Hotels International.

Tigh-Na-Mara Seaside Spa Resort & Conference Centre received a number of awards including #1 Spa in Western Canada by Spas of America.

Milner Gardens & Woodland was also recognized by Canadian Geographic magazine as one of the top ten gardens in the country.