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Ecole hôtelière de Lausanne

The Ecole hôtelière de Lausanne (EHL) is the co-publisher of The Hotel Yearbook. As the oldest Hotel School in the world, EHL provides university education to students with talent and ambition, who are aiming for careers at the forefront of the international hospitality industry. Dedicated to preparing tomorrow’s executives to the highest possible level, EHL regularly adapts the contents of its three academic programs to reflect the latest technologies and trends in the marketplace. Since its founding in 1893, the Ecole hôtelière de Lausanne has developed more than 25'000 executives for the hospitality industry, providing it today with an invaluable network of contacts for all the members of the EHL community. Some 1'800 students from over 90 different countries are currently enjoying the unique and enriching environment of the Ecole hôtelière de Lausanne.

Boutique DESIGN New York

Boutique DESIGN New York, a new hospitality interiors trade fair, will coincide with the 94-year-old International Hotel/Motel & Restaurant Show (IH/M&RS). Designers, architects, purchasers and developers will join the hotel owners/operators already attending IH/M&RS to view the best hospitality design offerings as well as explore a model room, exciting trend pavilion and an uplifting illy® networking café.

Hospitality Financial and Technology Professionals (HFTP)

HFTP provides first-class educational opportunities, research and publications to more than 4'800 members around the world. Over the years, HFTP has grown into the global professional association for financial and technology personnel working in hotels, clubs and other hospitality-related businesses.

Bench Events

Bench Events host premier hotel investment conferences including the International Hotel Investment Forum; the Arabian Hotel Investment Conference and the Russia & CIS Hotel Investment Conference. Bench Event’s sister company, JW Bench, is a benchmarking company that has launched the Conference Bench and the Productivity Bench. An industry first, the Conference Bench, measures performance data for conference space in hotels throughout Europe.

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Founded in 1922, Cornell University’s School of Hotel Administration was the first collegiate program in hospitality management. Today it is regarded as one of the world’s leaders in its field. The school’s highly talented and motivated students learn from 60 full-time faculty members – all experts in their chosen disciplines, and all dedicated to teaching, research and service. Learning takes place in state-of-the-art classrooms, in the on-campus Statler hotel, and in varied industry settings around the world. The result: a supremely accomplished alumni group-corporate executives and entrepreneurs who advance the industry and share their wisdom and experience with our students and faculty.

Hsyndicate

With an exclusive focus on global hospitality and tourism, Hsyndicate.org (the Hospitality Syndicate) provides electronic news publication, syndication and distribution on behalf of some 750 organizations in the hospitality vertical. Hsyndicate helps its members to reach highly targeted audience-segments in the exploding new-media landscape within hospitality. With the central idea ‘ONE Industry, ONE Network’, Hsyndicate merges historically fragmented industry intelligence into a single online information and knowledge resource serving the information-needs of targeted audience-groups throughout the hospitality, travel & tourism industries… serving professionals relying on Hsyndicate’s specific and context-relevant intelligence delivered to them when they need it and how they need it.

WATG

Over the course of the last six decades, WATG has become the world’s leading design consultant for the hospitality industry. Having worked in 160 countries and territories across six continents, WATG has designed more great hotels and resorts than any other firm on the planet. Many of WATG’s projects have become international landmarks, renowned not only for their design and sense of place but also for their bottom-line success.
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While there is no question that economic concerns will continue to be a factor in 2010, the hotel industry is already looking ahead to positioning itself for recovery, innovative operations, and growth. Although hoteliers are certainly focused on making the best of a difficult economic situation, the economy seems in many ways to be just a backdrop for the issues that concern hoteliers. In short, they are focused on doing and improving business no matter where the economy is going.

Perhaps the key message in a recent study that we conducted among hotel industry executives and managers is that they are ready to move ahead. In this Internet-based survey of over 1,200 hotel executives from across the world, the issues they cited most frequently related to:

- improving profits through increasing revenues and cost controls;
- improving sustainability (also known as green operations); and
- building better relationships with guests, especially by improving service.

Let us expand on these major categories, as we touch on issues raised by hoteliers for 2010.

The overriding issue for 2010 involves the quest for profitability, which includes building revenues, controlling costs, and improving service to meet guests’ needs. Few issues received more interest than did revenue management. For hotels, this multi-faceted issue involves far more than merely setting room rates, although that remains the heart of the process. Instead, hoteliers clearly see revenue management as integral to the sales process, culminating in ensuring guest satisfaction and loyalty.

Time and again, the managers mention revenue management in the context of sales and marketing, and, indeed, all hotel departments. Hoteliers will seek to apply this « global » approach to revenue management to each hotel revenue stream. The following is a representative comment that takes this broad view: « Examine revenue management on areas other than the hotel’s rooms division, and extend it to F&B, banquets and catering, and conference facilities or events. »

Thus, at one end of the spectrum, the industry is concerned with how to apply revenue management to luxury hotels (given their specific approach to rate integrity) and, at the other end, how revenue management will work for small hotels. With regard to rate integrity, there is a considerable concern about the possibility of « rate wars. » Operators want to know how to respond when a competitor cuts rates, and whether engaging in a rate war makes sense.

The hoteliers are particularly interested in relating revenue management issues to electronic commerce and interactions with online travel agents. We found that operators are intrigued with learning what factors bring customers to a specific Internet site, and then determining when, where, and how customers make the decision to book a particular hotel. Hotel operators also wanted to know how the cyclical downturn affects customers’ purchasing decisions and hotels’ brand initiatives.

The concern with distribution channels was interwoven with both revenue and customer service issues. Hotel operators are interested in finding ways to optimize their websites to improve sales. In that regard, they also wish to make better use of online booking engines. Anticipating improvement in sales as the economic recession abates, hoteliers are interested in developing a « radar » that will give them advance notice of market changes with sufficient time for them to make appropriate rate and marketing decisions.

Although hoteliers never ignore cost control, issues relating to costs will be felt most keenly in 2010, in view of the need to respond to what they expect will be a challenging environment for revenue, let alone profit. In particular, operators see information technology as a boon for determining where and how to cut costs. The hoteliers will focus on ways to use technology-based innovations to cut costs and improve service.

It’s impossible to discuss cost cutting without examining human resources, but hoteliers realize that any discussion of
human resources is a two-edged sword. On one hand, they are concerned about controlling labor costs, but on the other hand, they are well aware of the importance of employees in maintaining service levels and ensuring guest loyalty. Thus, a key issue in the next few months will be finding ways to improve the customer experience in the context of maintaining a reasonable expense structure. One source of customer loyalty stems from employee loyalty, and hoteliers will be concerned with the continued effects of the industry’s straitened circumstances on employees’ attitudes – as well as employee retention in the wake of reduced work hours.

Of particular interest in this regard next year will be front-desk operations, given the front’s role as key interface between guests and employees. Many service-related issues focus on the front desk, including fulfilling guest expectations, ensuring a positive customer experience, and service recovery, when necessary. Hotel operators will be focusing even more tightly on which technologies are most effective for guest satisfaction and how those technologies are being used. Most particularly, the industry will seek to make full use of social media as a means to serve guests as efficiently as possible. They will be assessing ways to use technology for customer relationship management programs, including how to address the differential needs of various customer segments and how to determine the value of various customers, again given the need to make the most efficient use of resources. Moreover, hoteliers will be carefully watching for any changes in guests’ desires or travel patterns.

Because of the importance of human capital, managers will be interested in locating the industry’s future talent, whether in their own country or internationally. A large issue for the next year is maintaining operations while short-staffed.

Despite economic concerns, the industry has not overlooked its growing commitment to sustainability. However, a priority for the next several months will be to define sustainability in the context of financial limitations. That is, hoteliers will be seeking green technology and sustainability processes that make sense for the current operating reality. They will be looking for more than just window dressing, but instead want to be able to assess genuine progress toward sustainability.

Because this is an overall assessment of industry issues for the next year, we have not touched on the many concerns that relate to hotel operations in one country or one region. Many hoteliers in the United States, for instance, are focused on the renewed strength of unions and on illegal immigration. Other issues are how revenue per available room and average daily rate apply in developing markets, such as India or Pakistan; medical tourism to the many spas and sanatoriums in the CIS nations; developing tourism models for the Indian Ocean nations (Madagascar, Maldives Mauritius, and Seychelles); and how revenue management applies to such rapidly growing economies as Brazil’s. Likewise, the recovery of the gaming industry raises numerous issues for hoteliers to consider in 2010.

Perhaps the key conclusion from this review of industry concerns is that its many practitioners continue to look toward future improvement, rather than dwell on present setbacks. Without doubt, the industry’s push toward greater sophistication and improvement of management methods will continue in 2010 and beyond. ■
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