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OPINION ARTICLE

9 August 2011

Answers and Practical Solutions from Readers on The Value of Hoteliers Helping Hoteliers

KEYS TO SUCCESS[™]

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Hospitality Tip of the Week[™]: Focus on Confidence Building

*Education is the ability to listen to almost anything
without losing your temper or your self-confidence.* -

Robert Frost



Two weeks ago, I shared a bit of my background in my various roles as an educator and hospitality executive and discussed the value panelists who are peers to the group. These kinds of panels can dramatically increase interaction, audience participation and achieve the end result of communicating the desired message.

In that recent column, I included a sampling of questions I used at a very successful program on Guest Service for an international organization. The panelists were either experienced operating general managers and/or owners of properties of different sizes, locations, service levels and prices.

I asked readers if interested in the answers to these questions, and I am pleased to include some of the panelist and reader responses in the recap below.

1. How do you define excellent Customer Service?

- *Personalized attention*
- *Staff that is trained to actively anticipate guest needs by watching and listening*
- *The WOW factor that is felt by every guest and every staff member*

2. How do you compete with the brands or chains that offer a 100% guarantee? (Looking for specific examples)

A guarantee program must be from the heart to make them work; a brand cannot teach attitude

- *We review every guest comment card, letter and Trip Advisor posting at both department head meetings (in recap form) and with hourly associates so everyone understands their role and how important they are as individuals*
- *Every hotel should strive for 100% satisfaction of every guest*
- *Even if there are problems, the response of a caring staff can often build repeat business*

3. We often hear that line level employees feel they do not have enough empowerment to succeed at their jobs. What do you do at your hotel?

- *Some big box brands allow their staff up to a certain cash amount to refund or credit – that may or may not build loyalty or satisfaction. It's not always about refunds, but addressing concerns.*
- *We train our staff to actively listen – it has made a huge difference.*
- *Staff must be empowered, especially on the desk.*

4. Who follows up at your hotel if there is a problem? What about the guest who has already left and you learn about a problem?

- *The GM or a very senior manager should be the one to follow up*
- *Follow-up needs to be better defined; at our hotel, the GM literally calls the guest as an example of concern, sends a handwritten note and the guest will literally receive a monthly reminder of our interest in giving them the best. It has a great record of success.*
- *Safety and security issues are always considered priority areas in our training and this focus can resolve a situation before it becomes something that goes into the legal system.*

5. Can you share some examples of providing excellence in service in areas outside of the front office?

- *Van drivers can play a huge role in meeting unexpected guest challenges*



hospitalitynet™ to greet every guest they see- even if the smiles are contagious

- Our banquet servers have found ways to make even large groups feel they are being attended to as if at a smaller table, by more interaction, small table touches and team service that allows more personalized attention.

As mentioned in the first article, these **HOTELIER HELPING HOTELIER** panels can have a major and positive impact on an overall program, but they must be well moderated and the panelists set at ease, especially if this is their first time to participate. I will cover some other topics next month – reader input is always appreciated.

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John Hogan is a successful hospitality executive, educator, author and consultant and is a frequent keynote speaker and seminar leader at many hospitality industry events. He is CEO and Co-Founder of HospitalityEducators.com, which has more than 2000 resource pages and has become the #1 independent website for hotel owners and managers. He is also the Principal of HoganHospitality.com, which

offers hotel expert witness services and hospitality consulting. **WE USE COOKIES TO ENSURE YOU GET THE BEST EXPERIENCE ON OUR WEBSITE** X

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