

# John J Hogan of HoganHospitality & HospitalityEducators Blog

Making Your Hotel More Profitable! Your Resource for Hotel Owners, Innkeepers, Managers and Hospitality Associations

## Hotel Common Sense – 7 Practical Steps on MBWA

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#### HOSPITALITY PRINCIPLES OF SUCCESS

A previous article used one of Tom Peters and Robert Waterman's fundamentals from their groundbreaking book on changing the ways we do business. *IN SEARCH OF EXCELLENCE* introduced a formal name for what the more successful hospitality managers already knew about motivating their staff. The phrase "**Management by Walking Around**" was based on Hewlett-Packard's commitment to their staff with interaction – not micromanagement, but ongoing listening and responding to staff ideas.

**Hotel Common Sense – Philosophy #2** , Or, *why the Open Door policy no longer works...* article outlined how today's workforce wants and needs to be considered as individuals who can contribute to the success of their organization.

Reader feedback showed the growing awareness to that need for additional management and leadership "active listening" and this follow-up message on MBWA offers some concrete ways to notch up that effort of positive involvement.

1. **Allow your staff to share complete stories and messages.** Many hospitality companies are trying to improve their customer care programs, yet how often do leaders and managers actually ask an hourly staff member to share a story about either an unhappy or very satisfied guest? Listening to the entire story could provide best practices that might be substantially more effective and less expensive than hiring a consultant.

2. **Avoid the tendency to interrupt.** General Managers are results oriented people who are looking for the bottom line. I know from personal experience the tendency to “hurry” people along is there, but allowing people to share the entire experience will encourage them to be more open.
3. **Remember eye contact in conversations.** One of my first mentors taught me a great deal about hospitality, but his habit of looking over my shoulder when we were talking always made me feel I was missing something. Give confidence to people with your eyes.
4. **Collect and communicate these stories of success (and failures).** Sharing these stories (appropriately) at meetings of all staff, at training sessions, in newsletters and more provides an incentive to people to want to contribute because they have learned that you really do care. I have seen some outstanding examples of “you tube” like testimonials from a number of hospitality companies of all sizes.
5. **Remember this is not a game of “one-up.”** As General Managers, we have likely been in the business longer or heard more stories and it is important to recognize that we should not try to offer one “better” story than the one we are hearing. Remember, MBWA is about “active listening.”
6. **Credit the source.** When we add a new resource, form or best practice to our hospitality membership site, we obtain permission first and then always make certain we credit them fully. Each of us has unique approaches, messages and talents and sharing the credit with our associates and guests is essential to moving forward.
7. **Build trust by honestly listening.** Some (correction, many) of the best suggestions I have ever heard as a manager or executive came from the people who are performing the job. I learned more about laundry sorting, washing pots and up-selling from people who were proud to be successful at what they were doing. Some of those suggestions needed clarification and some were not told as quickly as I might have preferred, but building teams means using all the team members’ strengths.

I normally update the **Hospitality Tip of the Week**, but as this is an immediate follow-up message, I am going to maintain it, as I believe the point needs to be repeated until it becomes a habit.

**Keys to Success Hospitality Tip of the Week:** [Focus on MBWA](#)

**A challenge to every manager who is responsible for 5 or more people: measure your in and out of the office time and at the end of the week, see how much time you spent ACTIVELY INTERACTING with your team.**

**The goal is 70% of your time out of the office – how did you do?**

**What will you do next week?**

KEYS TO SUCCESS is the umbrella title for my speaking programs, hospitality services and columns. This year’s writings will focus on a wide variety of topics for hotel owners, managers and professionals including both my “HOW TO” articles and HOSPITALITY CONVERSATIONS. My segments Lessons from the Field, Hotel Common Sense and Principles for Success will be featured at appropriate times in the year as well.

***Success does not come by accident or chance.***

***Contact us for assistance.***



John J. Hogan CHA CHE CHO and Kathleen Hogan MBA CHO are the co-founders of [HospitalityEducators.com](http://HospitalityEducators.com), which was created in 2010 to be a resource for hotel owners and professionals as they sought to improve market share, occupancy, operational efficiency and profitability.

The husband and wife team are transitioning the original membership site concept and evolving the business model today to a focused resource offering consulting, training, and individualized support to both hospitality and other service businesses. Services include keynote addresses workshops, online support, metrics measurement, marketing and customer service from a group of more than a dozen experienced professionals. While continuing to serve hospitality, the demand for these types of services is growing and can be personalized.

John Hogan is also the principal of [HoganHospitality.com](http://HoganHospitality.com), which provides a range of expert professional services for hotel owners, including professional development for organizations, training, consulting and expert witness services.



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There will always be an ongoing debate on the comparative merits of experience versus the knowledge acquired in formal educational settings. The best lessons anyone can learn from hotel schools include an awareness of what really occurs on the front line in the actual hospitality setting. This keynote transitions the academic message to the real world of running a profitable hospitality business.

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