

Nobody Asked Me, But... No. 8

Bathtubs, Smokefree Hotels, Maps, Saving Water, Nevada Revenues, H.P. Rama, Ritz-Carlton, Statler Service Code, Mother's Day

by Stanley Turkel, MHS, ISHC

1. After my one-man crusade to eliminate unused bathtubs from hotel guest bathrooms, Marriott is building shower-only rooms for its new Marriott and Renaissance hotels. Tubs also have no place in Indigo, the new boutique brand by the InterContinental Hotels Group. When LXR Luxury Resorts took over Fort Lauderdale's Hyatt Regency Pier 66, it left the tubs out of most of the 100 rooms it modernized. Robert McCarthy, president of Marriott's North American lodging operations said, "The research shows many women won't take a bath in a hotel because of concerns about cleanliness." Instead, emphasis is being placed on bigger showers with multiple shower heads and small tile benches.

2. Just last month, I reported that Westin Hotels had converted all their 77 hotels to an all-smoke-free format. Now FreshStay TM has launched the www.freshstay.com online directory of hotels offering smokefree interiors and clean indoor air products. So far, 200 properties have joined the network. Now, we're waiting for a major franchise company to provide a safe, healthy and free of secondhand smoke environment for all. What say you Hilton, Marriott, InterContinental, Choice, Best Western and Cendant?

3. Here's a "wow". The Subway Navigator site offers maps and travel instructions for every subway in the world including Philadelphia, Helsinki, Caracas and, of course, New York City.

4. Why don't all hotels save millions of gallons of water and the energy to heat it (as well as detergents and bleach)? All it takes is a printed card placed in the guestroom and bathroom which says

- Linens: We will make your bed every day. Your linens will be changed only when this card is placed on the bed in the morning.
- Towels: Leave towels you wish to reuse hung up on the rack. Towels you place on the floor will be washed.

Now that Holiday Inn Express has initiated triple sheeting and four pillows, wouldn't it be Simply Smart (TM) to offer guests the choice to save water, BTU's and detergents?

5. What is the world coming to? The state of Nevada reported that for fiscal 2005 revenue from hotel rooms, food and beverage in hotel casinos was greater than revenue from gaming.

6. Did you see where Ritz-Carlton edged out Peninsula as most prestigious luxury brand in the 2006 Luxury Brand Status Index survey of luxury hotels conducted by the New York City-based Luxury Institute? Four Seasons tied for third with Small Luxury Hotels of the World. What a come-down for Toronto-based Four Seasons.

7. In a welcome (if belated) recognition of the Asian American Hotel Owners Association, H.P. Rama, Chairman and CEO of JHM Hotels received the International Society of Hospitality Consultants (ISHC) Pioneer Award. A former chairman of AAHOA and the AH&LA, Rama was recognized for his outstanding contributions to the lodging industry. Recently, Rama delivered one of the most prescient speeches I've heard in a long time. He said,

“We heard statistics here that industrywide, only 65% of our guestrooms are occupied most of the time. What that means is, on an average day, 1.5 million rooms are vacant. What are we going to do about that? Furthermore, 55 % of American travelers do not stay in hotel rooms. Of that amount, about 35 percent stay with friends and family when they travel. What are we going to do to capture that 35 percent? They are potential customers. They are already on the road but they are staying with someone else.”

Rama said that harnessing just 5% of that potential business would add billions of dollars in revenue to the industry.

What a great research project for study by the AH&LA and/or the Cornell Center for Hospitality Research.

8. Did you know that Mother's Day owes it all to Julia Ward (Battle Hymn of the Republic) Howe? In 1870, after witnessing the horrible bloodshed of the Civil War, Howe (poet, social

reformer, and abolitionist) called for an international gathering of women to abolish war. In words that remain tragically relevant today, Howe said: “In this day of progress, in this century of life, the ambition of rulers has been allowed to barter the dear interests of domestic life for the bloody exchange of the battlefield.... From the bosom of the devastated earth a voice goes up with our own. It says, ‘Disarm. Disarm... Blood does not wipe out dishonor, nor violence indicate possession.’” When Howe returned from Europe in 1872, she called for June 2 to be set aside as Mother’s Peace Day, a national day dedicated to world peace. In 1915, President Woodrow Wilson authorized Mother’s Day as a national holiday.

9. Long before “empowerment” became a human resource cliché, hotel pioneer Ellsworth M. Statler created the Statler Service Code in 1908. Every Statler employee signed off on the following pledge:

- to treat our patrons and fellow employees in an interested, helpful and gracious manner, as we would want to be treated if positions were reversed.
- to judge fairly- to know both sides before taking action
- to learn and practice self-control
- to keep our properties, buildings and equipment in excellent condition at all times
- to know our job and to become skillful in its performance
- to acquire the habit of advance planning
- to do our duties promptly
- to satisfy all patrons or to take them to our superiors

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