

Nobody Asked Me, But.... No. 34

IHG's Great Idea, Sound-Proofing Hotels, Best Western Enters the Upper Midscale Segment, How to Convert Confusion Into Order, Sign at a Tarrytown, NY Inn, 1798

By Stanley Turkel, MHS, ISHC

1. IHG's Great Idea- InterContinental Hotels Group extended-stay brand, Candelwood Suites diverted nearly 260 tons of material from landfills during bedding renovations at 55 hotels this summer. Candlewood Suites worked in partnership with the National Furniture Bank Association (NFBA) to refurbish box springs and linens to benefit approximately 4,300 families in need across the U.S. An additional benefit was a cumulative savings of more than \$100,000 in disposal fees. The NFBA is a non-profit organization with the mission to increase the service capacity of existing furniture banks so that no child in America should have to sleep on the floor. Contact the NFBA at www.Help1up.org.

2. Sound-Proofing Hotels- At last some hotel companies are paying attention to reducing the noise levels in guest rooms. These are generated by one or more of the following: noisy guests in the corridor, blaring televisions, a loud snorer, on-off air conditioner controls, minibar, a shower or alarm clock in the adjacent room, flushing toilets, etc.

Here are some of the hotels which are finding acoustical solutions:

- AmericInn- uses a new sleeping amenity called SoundGuard which is a construction material. Instead of wood-frame construction, AmericInn uses masonry blocks filled with sound-deadening foam in addition to drywall that is 5/8 inch thick instead of the customary 1/2 inch.
- Le Parker Meridien, New York has eliminated the connecting doors between adjoining guestrooms

- Fairmont Vancouver Airport Hotel created a “quiet zone” for daytime sleepers like airline crews. Between 8AM and 8 PM housekeepers are prevented from vacuuming carpets and bellmen must carry luggage by hand.
- The Benjamin Hotel, New York has guestrooms that begin on the fifth floor with special soundproof windows.
- Shephard’s Beach Resort, Clearwater Beach, Fl. has a large and popular nightclub on the ground floor which installed Acoustiblok to soundproof walls, ceilings and floors. Acoustiblok, Inc. is located in Tampa, Florida and is installing its sound-insulation products for Trump Tower hotels in Chicago and Las Vegas, for an InterContinental Hotel in Pakistan and a Hampton Inn near a busy rail-freight line in Kingston, N.Y.

My own personal experience has taught me to ask for a room as far as possible from the elevators and the ice machines.

3. Best Western Enters the Upper Midscale Segment- At long last, Best Western announced the new 100-room Atria Prototype. David Kong, BW president and CEO said, “Best Western’s business strategy is to allow developers to build products that best fit their markets. The Atria Prototype is flexible, functional and extremely cost-effective, so it will succeed in a variety of markets. We expect the first Best Western using Atria Prototype plans to be open in the next year.”

Best Western in the world’s largest chain with 4,200 independently-owned member hotels in 80 countries and territories worldwide. Founded in 1946, BW is host to approximately 400,000 guests each night. For years many members resisted the creation of an upper midscale Best Western which could command a higher average daily rate. Now with the BW Atria in the United States and the BW Premier in Europe, Best Western will be able to replace to the 300 under-performing properties whose owners refused to bring them up to minimum standards.

The Atria Prototype has several major features, including:

- Guestrooms designed around a loft concept with a frosted glass half-wall that separates sleeping areas from living areas. Guest bathrooms feature the comforts of home, including stone-topped vanities.
- Colors and building materials that appeal to multiple generations. The neutral color palette mixes textures, patterns and tone-on-tone coloring to create visual interest and a sense of warmth.
- Features for multi-media travelers, including multi-functional bed lighting that created an additional workspace for laptop users.
- Modular design that allows developers to adapt the building to meet a local market's needs, whether through a coffee shop, sweet shop, bar, or expanded food operation. The Prototype layout features 100 rooms in five stories on a two-acre site.

4. How to Convert Confusion into Order- The American system of weights and measures is a jumbled and confusing collection of inches, feet, ounces, pounds, and a whole host of assorted units. For instance, have you ever tried to divide a yard into ten equal parts? Or figure out the price per pound of five ounces of food? In fact, the same unit can mean either volume (as the number of ounces in a quart) or weight (as the number of ounces in a pound). Just the thought of these calculations is enough to make any one of us turn and run.

Order- But in the metric system, calculations aren't any problem at all. Because the system is based on 10, you can change from one unit to another by multiplying or dividing by 10—which requires no more than a moment of mental math. And if you know how to use decimals, these problems are simpler still, for all that needs to be done to multiply or divide by 10 is to move the decimal point. Best of all, you only have to remember the name of one basic unit of measure for each category (e.g., meter); the names of any other units have a built-in way of telling you how many times they are multiples or submultiples of the basic unit (e.g., centimeter, millimeter).

Of course, you are probably using the metric system more often than you realize. Sports reporters of international swimming and track events describe length measurements in meters rather than in yards or feet. When our astronauts landed on the moon near a certain lunar hill,

they reported the distance in meters. Servicing an imported car, or a domestic car with a metric-designed engine, requires the use of metric end wrenches and metric socket wrenches rather than the customary tools.

The basic metric measurements are very logical:

- The metric system is a system of weights and measures based on the number 10.

- The basic units used in the metric system are:

The meter for length

The gram for weight (mass)

The liter for volume

The degree Celsius for temperature

- The most important abbreviations to keep in mind are:

Kilometer km

Meter m

Centimeter cm

Millimeter mm

Kilogram kg

Gram g

Milligram mg

Liter l

Milliliter ml

5. Sign at an inn in Tarrytown, near Hudson, New York, 1798:

“Lodging and clean sheets- 3 cents; dirty sheets- 1 cent”

Stanley Turkel, MHS, ISHC operates his hotel consulting office as a sole practitioner specializing in franchising issues, asset management and litigation support services. Turkel’s clients are hotel owners and franchisees, investors and lending institutions. Turkel serves on the Board of Advisors at the NYU Tisch Center for Hospitality, Tourism and Sports Management. If you need help with a hotel franchising problem such as encroachment/impact, termination/liquidated damages or litigation support, don’t hesitate to call 917-628-8549 or email stanturkel@aol.com.

If you would like to reserve an autographed copy of Mr. Turkel’s new book “Great American Hoteliers: Pioneers of the Hotel Industry” (to be published at the end of 2007), send an email to stanturkel@aol.com.