



From the Editor

by William D. Frye, Ph.D., CHE

*Another great article from The Rooms Chronicle®. the #1 journal for hotel rooms management! ***Important notice: This article may not be reproduced without permission of the publisher or the author.*** College of Hospitality and Tourism Management, Niagara University, P.O. Box 2036, Niagara University, NY 14109-2036. Phone: 866-Read TRC. E-mail: editor@roomschronicle.com*

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The Summer travel season is upon us in the midst of a recession that has adversely hit the pocketbook of every traveler and the bottom line budget of every hotelier. To say that a state of perplexity reigns would be an understatement. Gasoline prices that peaked last Summer bottomed out at year's end, only to rise again as the vacation driving season arrives. Airfare prices however have dropped to record low rates and seemed entrenched there for the moment. Low hotel occupancy rates continue to drive down average daily rates and RevPAR.

The Summer season is when many hotels seek to make their profit. Whether this will become a reality this year is still unclear. At least the stock market is showing signs of life, though it continues to deliver a turbulent ride. And just what will the country do when the stimulus money runs out?

This issue of *The Rooms Chronicle®* delivers various topics to our readers. Most of the articles are centered on the theme of "preserving the investment" during these tough economic times; not just ownership's investment in the physical property but also the hotel's investment in its human capital, both employees and guests. As part of this theme, please be sure to visit Peter Ricci's article about cutting back on guest amenities. I am positive that his article and those from our other contributing authors will give you much to consider.



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Additionally, many managers are realizing the potential of these social media networks and are also opening accounts on Twitter and LinkedIn. They both provide viewers with updated information with the “What are you doing now” and “Away status” options where members can update their status with any kind of marketing message! Recent statistics state that there are more than 3 million “tweets” a day! Both of these sites are great for networking within your geographic locale and can provide cutting edge information on what is happening in today’s marketplace.

Advertising through online videos

Another social media site, YouTube, is also being used for much more than just funny home videos. According to Social Media Statistics, YouTube drew 5 billion U.S. online video views in July, 2008, representing a 44 percent share of the online video market. Surprisingly, 75 percent of the total U.S. Internet audience viewed online videos during this same period. Indeed, online videos have gone mainstream in society and many businesses are seeking to capitalize on this craze.

Lodging companies and individual hotels have embraced YouTube as a present-day media outlet to share television advertisements touting corporate stay programs, hotel grand openings, property refurbishments, new bedding and ergonomic furniture, Christmas cards, and even specific instances of excellent service delivery. Many of these videos have been viewed thousands of times. Currently, the American Hotel & Lodging Educational Institute is asking AH&LA members to submit homemade videos of poor operational practices to be highlighted on YouTube. These videos will assuredly be entertaining and educational. AH&LA also posts their Stars of the Industry Award Winner videos on YouTube.

So, what is it that hoteliers can do to assist their hotel or management company in today’s struggling economy? It’s time to change the way we think, and reach more customers by utilizing all of the social media tools that are available at our fingertips. ✧

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