



Risk Management

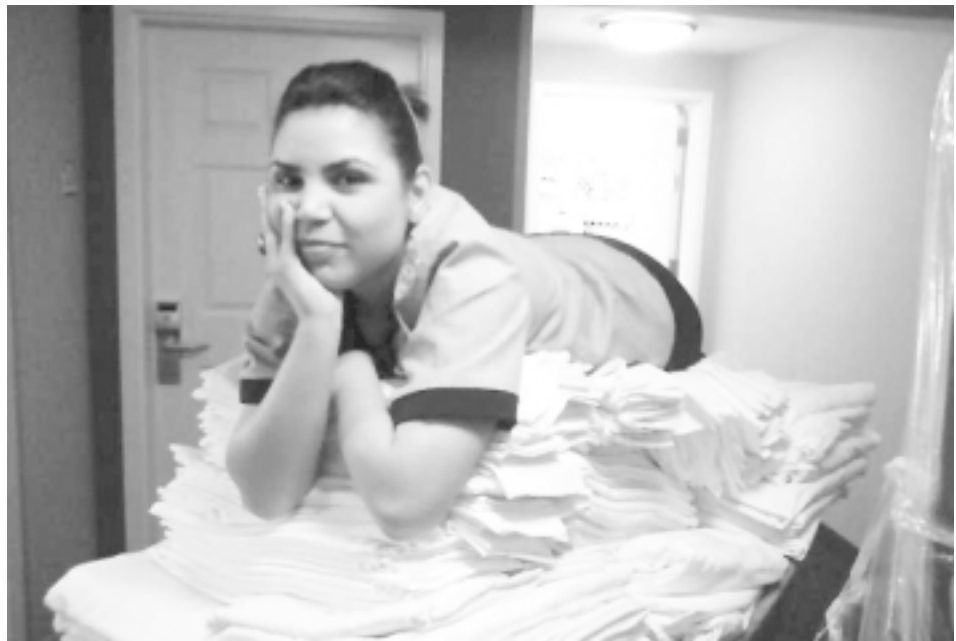
by Jesse Denton

Behavior ignored is behavior accepted...Behavior rewarded is behavior repeated

*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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Several years ago I found an article with a similar name on the HospitalityNet.org website by Lizz Chambers, Vice President - Sales and Organizational Development for Newport Hospitality Group. She stated several examples where managers observed associate performance with obvious shortcomings and ignored the shortcomings. Her examples were related to operational and sales situations such as the front desk letting the phone ring while checking in a guest, a sales manager answering an inquiry about the hotel without encouraging the caller to visit the hotel or giving them a reason for wanting to stay there, a pair of uniformed associates holding a conversation in a place where a guests must walk between them to access the elevator. These are all situations the associates should have known the correct thing to do but were absent mindedly not doing it. The next time a similar situation presents itself the associate will be more inclined to repeat the behavior; after all the last time the managers did not coach them to behave differently.



In her article, Ms. Chambers emphasized 'Behavior Ignored Is Behavior Accepted...Behavior Rewarded Is Behavior Repeated.' She encouraged managers to shape behavior by praising appropriate and exceptional behavior whenever observed. However, she emphasized that if you wish your associates to develop bad habits, all you have to do is ignore inappropriate behavior. Hoping your associates will realize their behavior is inappropriate or unacceptable and will take measures to correct it without coaching is just unrealistic.

While Ms. Chambers gave examples of customer services, sales and operations situations, my mind immediately jumped to safety and security issues. The same principles apply for unsafe behavior as for an inappropriate response in a guest service situation. When a department manager walks by an associate standing on a chair and says nothing, the employee will see no reason to take the time to get the step ladder the next time they need to reach higher. Even worse, when an associate sees a manager or supervisor commit an unsafe act or behavior, they are sure it is okay to repeat the action. Managers who commit unsafe acts will probably have associates who commit unsafe acts reporting to them.

Unsurprisingly, unsafe behavior repeated frequently will eventually result in an injury. There are thousands of unsafe acts committed for every injury incurred and hundreds of minor injuries for every serious injury. What determines whether an incident results in a minor injury or a major injury often seems to be a matter of luck.

Luck is something most safety professionals do not like to talk about; it cannot be measured or controlled. But we have all seen the accident where someone slips and falls. We may have been that person. Often, we hop up and look around to see who saw us fall, check our clothes and go on with our business; we aren't really hurt.

Years ago I slipped and fell at a client's meat packing facility and hit my head on the brick floor burying my glasses frame in my forehead. After enduring a dozen stitches above the eye and three days of fuzzy thoughts, and a week or more of teasing about the black eye, I was okay. You may remember that the famous Dr. Atkins, the founder of the "low carb" diet plan, slipped and fell, hit his head and died. While many of us will take a chance on losing a few dollars in a casino or on the lottery, our health and well being is too important to wager on luck. Too frequently actions seeming to offer only a small exposure will result in major injuries. Don't trust luck with your or your employee's future.



Ms. Chambers' intent was on improving the service of associates but this translates very well to the loss prevention side of the lodging industry. As she encourages us, "Let your mantra be, *Behavior Ignored Is Behavior Accepted...Behavior Rewarded Is Behavior Repeated.*" Then ask yourself, "What behaviors have I been accepting or encouraging by my silence?"

I encourage you to ask that question today and everyday concerning the safety of your associates and the security of your business. Set the example by doing things the right way and utilizing the correct safety equipment and procedures. Your employees are watching! ✧

(Jesse Denton is an independent loss prevention consultant based in Atlanta, GA. He possesses over 40 years of experience, the last 24 years with major hotel and insurance companies in the hospitality industry. Jesse was honored in February 2009 by HospitalityLawyer.com with the Thomas G. Davis Loss Prevention Lifetime Achievement Award. He is available for consultation and may be reached via e-mail at: jldentonjr@bellsouth.net or by phone at 770-257-8363.)