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Surviving the Tough Times — and Emerging Stronger

By **Rajiv Trivedi, EVP Franchising**

To say that our industry is cyclical is not news to anybody.

These are challenging times - we can all see and feel it.

But when times are tough, "the tough get going," as the saying goes - and La Quinta franchisees are the best-equipped in the industry to not only survive the challenging times, but in fact, emerge stronger. Here is how.

#1 - Keep quality and services high

Just because the economic environment provides challenges, does not mean your guests are focused any less on having a clean, comfortable room and an experience that meets and exceeds their expectations. In fact, quite the opposite. Now more than ever, they want and demand a quiet, pleasant and friendly retreat when they travel. Give it to them. Cutting back on quality or service to save a few pennies on the bottom line is not only short-sighted, but harmful to your long-term business prospects. If you make your property sparkle and shine, add extra services and amenities, you will create a delighted customer . . . he or she will become a return guest, spread the word about your property, and you will add not pennies but dollars to your account - short term and long term.

#2 - Make the best use of our brand resources - You have invested significantly in the La Quinta brand. Take maximum



advantage of that investment! This is absolutely critical. There is no time like the present

to apply appropriate revenue management strategies, participate in brand wide training programs, sales blitzes and cooperative marketing opportunities. If you have not already done so, get to know your regional franchise team, and consult with them to draw upon their expertise and national perspective. Stay informed of brand developments, and seek out opportunities to benefit from new programs, special offers and incentives. Also important: maximize your participation in the brand's loyalty program, *Returns*, by enrolling as many guests as possible and rewarding their patronage. There is no substitute for partnering with a strong, innovative brand like La Quinta - and especially in tough times such as these, you must use that brand affiliation to your fullest advantage.

#3 - Employ the tools of prudent revenue management

Focus on the "macro" picture for your hotel, as well as the micro. Play close attention to the dynamics of the local market and set rates accordingly. Maximize your participation in our national reservation system. Utilize and leverage your posi-

tion on the La Quinta website. Take full advantage of GDS and third party sales efforts, on the basis of competitive analysis. By paying attention to the "big picture" as well as the micro-details of revenue management, you will not just get a better understanding of your business relative to your competitive set, you will also rise to the top of the competitive set - quickly. Many of you are already there!

#4 - Pay attention to important national issues - and let your voice be heard!

Elsewhere in this newsletter, you will find an article written by Tom Corcoran, the Chair of the American Hotel and Lodging Association (AHLA) - and we will publish a letter from Ash Patel, our long-time friend, AAHOA Chairman, and a very successful La Quinta franchisee in the next issue. I urge you to read these communications carefully, and consider the implications for your business. The Employee Free Choice Act, and the ADA Amendments Act and Card Check Rule have serious implications for how you run your hotel, and your long-term success. I recommend in the strongest possible terms that you consider becoming involved with the AHLA PAC and the AAHOA PAC to support our industry's efforts in these areas - make contributions, and contact your representatives in Congress to make your voice heard!

#5 - Come visit with us at Upcoming Regional Meetings

- It is that time of year again, and beginning next month, I, the entire franchising team and

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Operations Center

By Jeff Palla, VP Franchise Operations

As Raj mentioned in his article, these are some challenging times that we are experiencing. How we confront these challenges, through the choices we make and the actions we take, define us as leaders. You have the opportunity to lead your managers and staff toward continued improvement. The choice is yours. Now is the time to focus on what you can control and seek improvement each and every day from your hotels. Focus on the fundamentals of your business; with revenue by growing your market share versus your competitive set in RevPar Index; deliver the highest product quality and superior guest satisfaction.

You are not in it alone. La Quinta is here to support you. Utilize the resources we have to benefit your business. Are you fully utilizing the resources available to you? Listed below are just a few of the resources that you have through our brand.

Franchise Team – You have a dedicated support team who, in addition to your service director, are all accountable for the performance of your hotel. We are committed to your success. Your service director has years of experience in operating hotels and the ability to access all of our brand resources. In addition to your service director we have an executive and administrative support team that takes tremendous pride in the success we have experienced and seeks continued improvement for our program. Are you fully utilizing this committed team?

INNSite – Our intranet site INNSite is available to all properties either open or under development. On this site we have a complete database of resource materials to help your day-to-day operations, brand manuals and training programs. Most importantly, we have reports that will help you manage your revenues. There is a great deal of information available to you. The opportu-

nity is yours to utilize our 40 years of tools and resources and reports for your revenue.

AH&LA Training – La Quinta has paid for one year of on-line training programs from the American Hotel & Lodging Association to better prepare your management and staff. The opportunity is yours to utilize this training to enhance the skill level of your team.

NetRez – With NetRez you have the ability from any computer in the World to log-in and modify rates and control discounts and truly maximize your revenue opportunities based on demand in the market. We have conducted many training sessions and webinars to enhance your individual skill level. The opportunity is yours to utilize this tool to make more money for your hotel.

Department Internet – This internet team can assist you in updating your property information on all electronic channels. With the continued increase in electronic bookings it is important to make sure your property information is fresh and competitive. Guests rely on the photos and descriptions you have on-line to make their booking decisions. Do you have your best foot forward? While you are conducting your competitive rate shops, make sure to look at the on-line content as well. The internet team can also assist you in loading packages on Iq.com. The opportunity is yours to utilize this team to your benefit.

National Sales – We have one of the largest sales teams in the industry looking to book rooms for the brand. The sales team has established contacts with the decision makers within companies for booking rooms. Utilize these relationships to your benefit by communicating through your franchise service director what businesses are in your



area and any new businesses under development. The sales team can utilize their relationships to help fill your rooms. In addition, we conduct quarterly sales calls with the National Sales Team to keep all properties aware of new initiatives from the team. The opportunity is yours to make sure you are aware of the business in your backyard and leverage the resources to help you make contacts with decision makers for rooms.

Training – The La Quinta training department received the distinguished honor of placing in the annual ASTD (American Society of Training & Development) BEST Awards competition. This global competition recognizes enterprise-wide success through employee learning and development. This is the only lodging company to receive such distinction. We conduct owners orientations which can help new owners understand the resources of the brand available to you and have a one-on-one meeting with our design team to help remove any roadblocks to construction and reduce the number of costly change orders during construction. In addition to our comprehensive opening training, our trainers are available to conduct property specific training events to improve your performance. 120 days after opening, the general manager is required to attend our Integration training program which is a 5 day training program to enhance the knowledge and skills of your general manager in operating your business. The opportunity is yours to take full advantage of these training opportunities.

We are fully committed to your success. By working together and fully utilizing the resources available we can achieve continual improvement and grow your business. We look forward to seeing everyone at our upcoming Regional Meetings. The opportunity is ours to work toward continual improvement.

Fall Regional Meetings Dates Announced

Save the date! Our Fall Regional Meetings are just around the corner. We look forward to spending time with you at the following meetings. The meetings will begin in the afternoon on the first day with brand updates and the second day will be training. Stay tuned for more details to come soon. The dates and locations are:

Geoff Tucker - Region 83 / Southeast
September 30th & October 1st in Atlanta, GA

Craig Brantl – Region 73 / North Texas & Oklahoma
October 2nd & 3rd in Dallas, TX

Steve Clinkenbeard – Region 62 / Central
October 7th & 8th in Memphis, TN

Rita Burch – Region 72 / Central Southwest
October 14th & 15th in Denver, CO

Rod Gorman – Region 81 / South Texas
October 16th & 17th in Houston, TX

Ziad Gharib – Region 61 / Northeast Midwest
October 21st & 22nd in Chicago, IL

Alan Ames – Region 63 / Southwest
October 29th & 30th in Las Vegas, NV

Russell Hayes - Region 71 / Northwest
November 4th & 5th in Vancouver, WA

Going Green

By Geoff Tucker, FSD Region 83

On July 18th, the La Quinta Inn and Suites - Panama City Beach was recognized as a "Green" hotel by the State of Florida — Florida Green Lodging Program. This is an excellent achievement by the hotel and creates not only a competitive advantage for the property, but it is the responsible action to take to help the environment. Our congratulations go out to Matt Griffiths and his team at 875 – Panama City Beach.

"Going Green" is not just a trend in our industry. It is a change of lifestyle that is affecting every aspect of our lives. I highly suggest that each property do what they can do to help run a cleaner, more energy efficient facility and promote recycling on the facility. Included below are the requirements needed to become a member of the Florida program.

➤ Communication with guests, employees, and local media explaining our

programs and a way to receive feedback from those people.

- Water conservation towel reuse program, linen reuse program, low flow faucets, low flow toilets, water efficient washing machines.
- Energy Efficiency-Energy star products, programmable thermostats, high energy efficient lighting, computerized energy management system.
- Waste reduction provide opportunity for guests and staff to use recycle bins for paper, plastic, glass and cans, purchase 30% postconsumer paper, bulk purchasing, reduced packaging, recycle ink cartridges.



Disposable breakfast supplies have been replaced with plastic plates, bowls, and wrapped silverware. There was an initial investment of about \$250 and they are saving that nearly every two weeks on foam, cups, bowls, plastic forks, etc. They are also running a 88% breakfast score on Medallia, the guests love it.

➤ Clean air practices — use environmentally friendly cleaners, MERV 8 air filters, and annual contract maintenance of air handlers.

Spring Enrollment Blitz Winners

Every FDSR / Night Auditor who enrolled 10 or more new members into La Quinta Returns during La Quinta Returns *Join, Stay Win!* promotion held in February and March was eligible to win one of five \$1,000 Best Buy gift cards.



Roxanne Steward, La Quinta Inn & Suites #6173 Eastland, TX.



FSD Craig Brantl, Jignasha Patel and GM V.K. Patel, La Quinta Inn & Suites #6154 Cleburne, TX.



Jennifer Walker, La Quinta Inn & Suites #282 Federal Way, WA.



Amie Palma and GM Debbie Kaufmann, La Quinta Inn #462 Portland.



Greta Paris, La Quinta Inn & Suites #6269 Salem, VA.



Rebecca Noyola, La Quinta Inn & Suites #737 The Woodlands, TX.

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many senior executives at La Quinta will be visiting your region, to discuss the current state of franchising, industry-wide developments, the economic situation, what the brand is doing to help – and of course most important, any and all specific issues on your mind.

Please see above article for information on when and where your regional meeting will be held, and make it a point to attend, bring your staff and management, and take full advantage of the resources being presented to you. I assure you it will be not only educational – but profitable, as well.

I look forward to seeing you soon at the meetings and at our annual conference in early 2008 in Hawaii – I wish you all the best for a successful fourth quarter.

La Quinta Returns: The Fastest—Rewarding Program in Hospitality

By Mike Case, VP Returns

The La Quinta *Returns* program has reached a milestone during 2008. The program has the largest number of active Members who have stayed with La Quinta during the last 18 months.

Keys to Growth: 2008 Enrollment Blitzes have Unequaled Success

2008 has seen us achieve the strongest *Returns* program growth in La Quinta's history. The March enrollment Blitz resulted in over 50,000 new Member enrollments. This is the most new *Returns* Members enrolled during a single month in La Quinta's history.

Upping the Enrollment Rewards: Summer Blitz II

In addition to winning \$1,000 Best Buy gift cards in both the spring and first summer enrollment blitzes, FDSRs who enrolled at least 10 new Members between July 4 and August 31, 2008 were entered for a

chance to win over \$20,000 in cash prizes. Because of the success of the first summer enrollment blitz, Returns held a Summer Blitz II. Details included:

- One FDSR in every La Quinta region won an \$850 American Express gift card – that's 24 FDSR winners.
- The Franchise Service Director of the region with the most overall enrollments earned a \$850 gift card to spend on their region in any manner they choose.
- Over \$20,000 in American Express gift card prizes for La Quinta employees.

Amex gift cards can be used for purchases just like cash anywhere America Express is accepted. But new Members enrollments were only one piece of the puzzle. Both the program and marketing Members had to be compelled to generate both increased preference and greater revenue for every La Quinta franchise.

A Superior Program Structure

Recent changes to the program have made *Returns* the fastest-rewarding hospitality program in America. During 2008 we are telling Members about these changes as well as offering them rich Point bonuses for continuing to stay with La Quinta. *Returns* Member revenue is up over 19% year to date vs. 2007 and it continues to climb. A summary of key program benefits compared to our competitors is below. Please be sure the FDSRs at your property have proper log-in IDs to enroll new Members. With your help we will continue to growth both the program and increase La Quinta Franchise revenue for Members. If you have any *Returns* related questions or issues do not hesitate to contact myself at Michael.Case@laquinta.com or Rob Taylor at Rob.Taylor@laquinta.com.

2009 La Quinta National Conference — HAWAII!! February 15—18, 2009

Please save the dates for the 2009 National Conference in Hawaii. Hosted at Oahu's most prestigious place to mix business and pleasure – The Hilton Hawaiian Village is Waikiki's only true resort destination, offering the perfect mix of exceptional resort accommodations and classic Hawaiian hospitality.

Imagine the widest stretch of white sand on Waikiki, a serene beachfront lagoon, lush tropical gardens with exotic wildlife and cascading waterfalls, majestic views of Diamond Head and stunning seaside sunsets. Discover 90 shops and boutiques and a diverse, international selection of restaurants.

La Quinta National Conference Rate: \$265 per night by calling 800-445-8667. This rate is valid four days pre and post conference based on availability.

Book Your Airline Tickets Early

Through agreements with several of the major airlines, La Quinta is pleased to offer attendees information on how to book airfare discounts. These discounts are 2% to 15% off published fares or Zone Fares to Honolulu, Hawaii (HNL).

Northwest Airlines (www.nwa.com)

Under the "Flights" tab click on "More Airfare Search Options"
Under "Additional Search Options" check the "Yes" box under "E-Cert"

On the "Select Type" drop down menu select "Meeting Agreement (WorldFile Number)"

Enter the Meeting Agreement (WorldFile Number): NM2CJ



American Airlines (www.aa.com)

Under "Book Flights" in the box under "Promotional Code" enter: A3829AH

Continental Airlines (www.continental.com)

Under the "Flights" tab in the box under "Offers Code" enter: ZEK3CD2YYH

Training—Ask Buddy

By April Carey, Director of Training

Have you ever wondered what your SIR score would be if every guest experienced a problem-free stay?

Medallia survey results for franchise hotels show that guests who do not experience a problem during their stay, rate La Quinta a 90.84 in SIR! That's more than 7 points above the franchise average! Conversely, guests who do experience a problem during their stay, rate La Quinta a 62.82! Wow! Almost a 30 point difference! With busy season upon us and more than 26% of guests experiencing a problem during their stay, now is the time to focus on "Whatever It Takes" service to increase profits at our hotels! Sounds like a job for Buddy!

Buddy offers a comprehensive training solution at no cost to your hotel to include:

- Bi-weekly e-mail Communications on INNSite
- Front Desk Training Resources page
- Front Desk eLearning courses
- Sales & Service training materials

Draw on Buddy's expertise to help you and your FDSRs face the challenge of providing superior guest service during the summer months.

ASK BUDDY Bi-Weekly E-mail Communications

Would you like to provide on-going training and communication to your FDSRs in 60 seconds or less? Ask Buddy is the solution!

ASK BUDDY is a quick and simple way you can communicate to and train your FDSRs. Every other week, you'll receive an e-mail message from Buddy offering FDSRs reminders, system tips and tricks and other important information. All you have to do is print and provide to your Front Desk team. Voila! There you have it...training in 60 seconds or less!

ASK BUDDY...Front Desk Training Resources INNSite Page

Have you shown your FDSRs the new ASK BUDDY...Front Desk Training Resources page on INNSite? This new site features:

- Weekly Ask Buddy communications
- The latest NiteVision Job Aids
- Forms, such as Front Desk the Problem Resolution log, Welcome Call Back log, plus many more helpful tools.

To access the ASK BUDDY...Front Desk Training Resources page from your Front Desk terminals,

- Minimize NiteVision on the Remote Desktop
- Click the Start Menu
- Click Buddy's Cute Little Head
- Login using the front desk username and password

Example: Username: LOCORP\lq9999fd1 & Password

BUDDY'S VIEW eLearning CD

In January 2008, every hotel received the new Buddy's View eLearning CD, which features six new courses designed to help FDSRs provide "Whatever It Takes" service to our guests throughout their stay.

These interactive 15-minute courses include real-life guest scenarios FDSRs encounter during their shift. If an FDSR uses the right tone and service behavior, their SIR scores increase. If the FDSR does not do "Whatever It Takes", their SIR score goes down.

Have your team complete the courses and watch your SIR scores soar! ELearning CDs may be accessed on any computer or laptop that has a CD drive, ability to play audio, and Macromedia Flash Player version 6+.

If you need assistance using the CD or would like to purchase an additional copy, please contact your Franchise Service Director or LQ University team member.

BUDDY'S VIEW...Sales & Service Training Could your team use training on (1) Selling the Best Available Rate, (2) Living the "Whatever It Takes" Service Philosophy, and (3) Using Problem Solving to Apply Sales and Service Strategies?

BUDDY'S VIEW...Sales and Service, an FDSR classroom training program which features a "wake up on the bright side" Knowledge Map, engages FDSRs in a group discussion to create a renewed understanding and shared knowledge of our Sales and Service philosophy.

If you would like to train your staff on **BUDDY'S VIEW**...Sales & Service, program materials and facilitator's guide may be printed free of charge from the General Managers Training Resource page on INNSite.

AH&LA News

By Tom Corcoran, Chairman, AH&LA

Hotel franchise owners across the nation should be aware of two current federal issues that have serious consequences for our industry if they become law. The American Hotel & Lodging Association (AH&LA) is following the "Employee Free Choice Act," a misnamed bill in Congress that would eliminate private ballot union elections in the workplace and replace them with a process of signing authorization cards in public. If enacted into law, this "card check" legislation could turn your non-union hotel into a union-run shop overnight. AH&LA was in the forefront of delaying this legislation's passage last year,



but in an election year this issue is surfacing again, pushed by unions as their number one issue.

Washington bureaucrats are also tinkering with the American with Disabilities Act. In June, the Department of Justice proposed new regulations that apply to places of lodging. The rules would impose a number of burdensome new requirements for guest reservation practices and in hotel areas such as swimming pools, windows, and exercise rooms. These changes, if enacted, will have a significant impact to our industry and force all existing properties to pay for

expensive retrofits, regardless of prior ADA compliance.

We are lucky in that we have an association in Washington, D.C. to fight these battles for us. But a national organization is only as strong as its membership.

How can you help your business fight these challenges? It's easy: join AH&LA today. All the information to join can be found on the Web at www.ahla.com/newmember, or you can call (800) 252-2462 or email membership@ahla.com. It's an investment in your hotel that you can't afford to be without.



NetRez — System Training Tips

By Joe Avera, Director, Electronic Distribution



Wow, where has the year gone? I know it's been a challenge for us all, but the great thing about working with La Quinta and all of you is your willingness to take on any challenge and turn it into an opportunity. So what's the greatest opportunity in front of us as we finish off 2008? 2009! To make sure we can capture every possible reservation at the best possible rate, we need to make sure we have the systems set up optimally and we are using them as effectively as possible.

Rate Check-Up

Here's a quick checklist to help make sure you haven't missed something that could impact your reservations and rates for 2009.

- Are you participating in every consortia and special rate program? FIT, LOTEAM, GROUP, TXSTAT, etc? If not, you're limiting your distribution opportunities. Not everyone needs a reservation booked at a 30% discount every day. But if you aren't sold out, would that room increase your RevPar? Yes it would and so would every other room you sold in one of the special rate programs. So if you haven't submitted your consortia and special program rates it might not be too late. If you are solicited for participation, please ensure you review the program, understand the participation requirements and work it into your rate strategy program.
- Do you have rates loaded for all rate levels for the next 365 days? NetRez holds availability for the next 365 days. If your rates aren't loaded through 12/31/10, you're fast approaching a date when you guests won't be able to find a rate a year in the future. Don't let this get overlooked in the year end flurry. Load your rates now and avoid the rush.
- Have you set your rate levels and SRP groups to the appropriate levels? Make sure you're selling at the right rate on the right date by setting your rate levels to the correct price point for each date in the future. Make sure you

use your discount controls too, to turn on or turn off those deeply discounted programs that can help or hurt your RevPar depending on the demand for the specific date.

Travel Agent Bookings via the GDS Systems

How many of you are actively courting travel agents and looking for their business? With all the focus today on the third party websites and internet bookings, we can lose sight of the travel agents and how much they can contribute to our success. Travel agents still book the majority of the business travel booked in the US and they are still a major resource for each of us, if we use them. One of the quickest and most effective methods of getting in front of the travel agent is through GDS marketing promotions.

Every GDS system offers point of sale marketing to their travel agents. All of these are for fee programs. But every La Quinta receives a 10% discount on top of the normal pricing or promotion. Through our partnership with TravelClick, we can tailor a program for your property to maximize your exposure. SABRE has over 50% of the market in the US and their PromoSpots program is the single most effective method of positioning your property for the travel agent community. PromoSpots displays your property in the first 25 properties an agent views when searching your location. Placement is random but you're definitely on the screens where over 80% of the bookings are made.

Each of your Franchise Service Directors has full details on SABRE PROMO SPOTS and all other GDS marketing opportunities. Please work with them to see how we can maximize your revenues.

Opening and Closing SRP Groups and Rate Levels

If you made it to the regional meetings in the spring, you heard me discuss the best practices for opening and closing SRP Groups and Rate Levels. For everyone who didn't make it to the meetings I'll provide you with a quick recap of the recommended best practice.

- NiteVision stores only the last rate level or SRP group availability change you submit.
- Always close the rate levels starting with the lowest open level and working up to the level you want to sell for the date affected.

- When opening rate levels, always open each level from the top down to the level you want to sell for the date in question.
- Soft closes can result in different rate levels sold in NiteVision and NetRez.

As an example, To Open a Level

For September 5-8, you are currently selling LV2.

Because of demand, you choose to lower the Level sold to LV5.

Best Practice is:

- Open LV3; Open LV4; Open LV5

This will send the Open LV5 as the last message to NiteVision. LV5 will be available in NiteVision and NetRez.

If you open the levels out of order, for instance,

- Open LV5; Open LV4; Open LV3

You will sell LV5 in NetRez but NiteVision will sell LV3 because that is the last message you send to NiteVision.

To Close a Level

For September 10-14, you currently sell LV6.

Demand has increased and you want to move your rate level to LV2.

Best Practice is:

- Close LV6; Close LV5; Close LV4; Close LV3; Open LV2

This will explicitly close out LV3-5 and set LV2 to Open in NiteVision and NetRez. If you use a soft close and only close LV3, you'll set LV2 to Open in NiteVision and NetRez, **BUT**, you have created a potential trap that could cost you money!

If you now open LV3 for this date again some time later, you'll sell LV3 in NiteVision, BUT you'll open up all the way down to LV6 in NetRez.

So always open UP your levels and close UP the levels. And when you close levels, it only takes a couple of more seconds to explicitly Open the Rate Level you want to sell for the date in question.

Following the steps above will avoid making unintentional errors that could take money out of your pocket.

La Quinta's Stars of the Industry Awards

During the American Hotel & Lodging Association (AH&LA) Stars of the Industry Awards luncheon the Albuquerque Midtown property celebrated two employees who won National awards. Chosen for their outstanding accomplishments and exceptional service in the lodging industry. The awards, sponsored by U.S. Foodservice, were presented during the AH&LA Summer Summit at The Skirvin Hilton in Oklahoma City.

Julie Allred, La Quinta Inn & Suites Albuquerque, New Mexico won second place for Front Office Employee of the Year. Allred does "Whatever it Takes" when it

comes to her hotel, living our motto in her daily duties as front office manager. She constantly strives to improve every guest's stay by helping out with a variety of jobs. Whether it is "pet sitting" for guests, or searching for nasal canellas for a guest who needs oxygen, Allred's commitment to the hotel and its guests leaves a lasting memory with everyone she encounters.

Noemy Monsivaiz won second place for Housekeeping Employee of the Year. Noemy is a key player in continued increase in SIR scores and guest satisfaction.



Pictured from left: Deborah Castillo, GM, Julie Allred, Noemy Monsivaiz and Deepesh Kholwadwala, owner, #423 Albuquerque Midtown, NM.

LQ.com Update

By Ted Schweitzer, VP of E-Commerce

2008 is another banner year for LQ.com. Through June, the site has had 11 million visits, up 35% over 2007. Those visitors have produced over \$156 million dollars for our brand – growth of 41% over 2007. We are very excited with the performance of the website and, of course, are continually improving both the site and our extensive marketing campaigns to help drive traffic that is more qualified to the site. Very soon you will see some more changes on LQ.com including a more enriched brand display of the La Quinta Inn and La Quinta Inn & Suites to help new customers understand the different styles. We are adding some great photography to help really showcase the brand and products. Additionally, we have also added enhancements to the property information pages. These pages will now have a slide show available to view all of the photography of the hotel along with thumbnails of each graphic so the customer can see them all at one time. This along with a real time lead rate added to the page, will better merchandise each hotel.

It is also important to understand how La Quinta is promoting the brand and your hotels on-line. We have a very broad and in-depth on-line marketing strategy. This strategy includes applied research, industry experts and continual measurement for improvements. We represent La Quinta in Search Engine Marketing on sites like Google and Yahoo and dozens more. We also aggressively work with Advertising Networks, generating hundreds of millions



of impressions with banners each month. These banners advertise our brand promise, amenities and even lead rates in some cases.

E-mail is another critical success factor we have enhanced over the last 24 months. With over 3.9 million customers, we talk to this group between three and four times per month with a successful response rate. We will be introducing a new e-mail-marketing program along with a very concise e-mail marketing policy. Watch for these both very soon!

While corporate marketing manages all on-line marketing along with the brand marketing you see, we are revisiting some ways below for you to help increase your revenues on-line.

Top 5 Ways to Sell More Rooms On-line

- **Sell your property benefits:** Make sure your hotel listing and photography on LQ.com has the most up to date information. Talk about renovations, newness, what is in the area or anything that may be appealing to guests. Contact dept-internet@laquinta.com for any and all changes relative to your property representation on-line. We'll ensure changes are entered correctly in Lanyon and we stay consistent on the third-party sites that require manual updates via e-mail.
- **Increase your exposure:** Drive demand through the "Weekend Deals" program. Simply open the "LMD" rate

plan for any of the three upcoming Friday-Sunday date ranges and you'll automatically appear in the participation list on LQ.com and in the 3 million e-mail newsletters we send per month. If you do not have an LMD rate loaded in NetRez, contact your Franchise Service Director to start the loading process.

- **Sell more inventory:** Cultivate your Third Party Market Managers. Let them know you are motivated to work with them to sell more inventory.
- **Improve third party placement:** Don't be afraid to adjust margins on Third Party package rates. You can improve your placement by offering more to the Third Party provider. Just remember to maintain rate parity.
- **Get incremental room nights:** With the Priceline and Hotwire SRPs in three different SRP groups, you can now manage the rate you accept and adjust allocations as needed to fill up those rooms that would otherwise sit empty.

***NEW*:** Check your local listings. Make sure you are listed in local search engines. You can manually add your property into their system. An example is superpages.com.

***NEW*:** Corporate marketing manages all paid search terms relative to your property, if there are any that you think should be included that aren't showing up, please e-mail them to dept-internet@laquinta.com.

New Openings

We will soon be opening hotels in the following locations:

- W. Long Branch, NJ
- Indianapolis, IN
- Rome, GA
- Olathe, KS
- Lexington Park, MD
- Russellville, AR
- Memphis, TN
- Madison, AL
- Yukon, OK
- Casper, WY
- Tucumcari, NM



Alvarado, TX



Port Charlotte, FL



Slidell, LA



Fultondale, AL



Hobbs, NM



Marble Falls, TX

RFP Time Again! 2009 Rate and National Corporate Account Solicitations

By Feliz Jarvis, EVP Sales

Wow, can the year pass any more quickly? It's hard to believe it is time to start the renegotiation process with our corporate accounts for 2009. In fact some of our accounts have already sent us their Request for Proposal (RFP) and at Pow Wow we were ready with FIT and Tour Rates for 2009/2010 for the wholesale and tour operators.



We are already hearing rumblings from corporate accounts looking for no rate increases from last year, two year deals, and including value added amenities. And industry experts certainly expect less demand growth than the last couple of years, but overall RevPar gains are still expected in the 2 - 4% range in our segment. With so many new or recently renovated properties, free breakfast and high speed internet access La Quinta should be well positioned for gaining its share of corporate accounts. This will create great value for our brand during a time when some corporate accounts are prime for trading down.

As a service to each of its franchise owners, La Quinta utilizes its National Sales Team and support staff to manage the RFP process centrally for all of our hotels. So as a GM or owner you don't have to worry about filling out reams of documents, missing deadlines or even trying to figure out how to get IBM to send you their RFP. We do it for you!

Here are some of the services the La Quinta RFP team will provide:

- Solicitation of RFP's for the company's major accounts and Consortia.
- Solicitation of rates for major business segments including group rates, athletic or team rates and also Motor Coach and FIT rates to be used in 2009/2010 by our Group and Tour department.
- Automation of the rate solicitation process for brand-wide programs utilizing Lanyon.
- Management of the process to include timely and accurate completion of all required forms.

- Negotiation of 2009 rates, with approval of GM as required for any set rates or deep discounts.
- Negotiation with corporations as needed to ensure we win the bid!
- Loading of accepted accounts and hotels in our CRS and GDS systems.

Each week we will post information about RFP's we have received on INNSite. Here you will find which companies have requested rates from La Quinta, due dates and status on acceptance or rejection. Feel free to contact the account owner or our RFP Administrator to assure your hotel is included in an RFP if you think we have missed an opportunity.

We are asking that you assist us by being sure that your property data is accurate and up to date and help us meet deadlines by doing the following:

- Review your property description in Lanyon and update as needed. Most of our RFP's are generated out of Lanyon, so that is the information that will ultimately get to the client. Make sure all amenities, services and hotel contact information are up to date and accurate. Add any nearby restaurants and entertainment venues that make your location attractive. Safety and security are very important, carefully review these areas and fill in any blanks. *Of note, blanks in any information, can cause us not to be able to complete the RFP. The system basically won't let you go forward without it.*
- If you receive an RFP, please send it to the corporate office to the attention of Valerie Doyle (valerie.doyle@laquinta.com.) It's best to open, review due dates with Valerie and then send it, so we don't lose any time in getting it processed. Even if it mistakenly sits on your desk and you think the due dates have passed, please send it in anyway. Sometimes we can get due dates extended. Often times we will also get a copy of the RFP in addition to the property.
- Respond quickly when you get a call from the La Quinta National Sales team. They are looking for the 2009 rates you want to offer a specific account. They cannot quote set rates or discounts above 10% without your

approval. Help this process by always returning a call or e-mail from the sales team as quickly as possible.

- Once the bid is won, your property is selected and the revenues start flowing in, please make sure the account is tracked to the correct national account company history. This captures the correct production and helps us all negotiate for the following year. Also please abide by the terms of the agreement. Most of our RFP's require last room availability.
- Each year we have successfully increased the revenue contribution from our National accounts. We have more companies looking for more La Quinta hotel options. Our great service, distribution of product and good value drive corporations to seek out La Quinta. Our ability to offer national discounts has created a much larger revenue contribution from corporate accounts to the brand.

Important dates

Now - Review Lanyon and get your property up to date.

Early August - Rate solicitations - rate requests for group, team, and some state rates were sent via Lanyon.

Now - NBTA in Los Angeles - RFP season officially starts.

August to mid-November - RFP season in full swing. Answer your e-mails and phone calls from the Sales team.

December - January - notification of acceptance.

January and February - load accepted accounts.

Important Contacts

Valerie Doyle, RFP Administrator, valerie.doyle@laquinta.com. Phone (214) 492-6856.

INNSite - www.INNSite.com.

Best Practices From the Regions

Best practices is an area dedicated to best practices from the field to help all properties with operational issues.

Steve Clinkenbeard – Region 62

There are many opportunities for us to control our energy costs. As the heat of the summer is underway, here are several reminders that we should be practicing to help control not only our energy costs, but also prevent costly repair bills from failure to follow up.

Guest Rooms

- Ensure room PTACs are set to low cool with the thermostat at a medium setting.
- Ensure PTAC filters are cleaned monthly. One floor per week is a good guideline. Do not forget roof top units if you have them!
- Ensure PTAC condenser coils are kept clean.
- Ensure housekeepers turn off all lights, radio's and televisions in vacant rooms.

Laundry

- Consider a night laundry eliminating the day shift. It is not only cooler, energy rates are lower and you can have an extra person on hand to handle any last minute guest room needs.
- Only run full loads. The same water and chemicals are used on full loads as well as partial!

Exterior

- Set your sprinkler system to operate every other day. It is a good idea also to ensure heads are positioned correctly and not spraying on the building as well as ensuring that watering is done in the early morning or evening hours to prevent evaporation.
- Check your timers to ensure they are set correctly.

Rita Burch – Region 72

How can you make the Pet Policy work for your property?

EMBRACE IT!

This growing, loyal group of travelers can be your best guests – the more you make them feel welcome, the more you will find them a welcome addition to your hotel. In making a big deal of welcoming pets, you will find their owners are much more open and will disclose their presence to your team. We have several properties that take unique approaches to showing pet “hospitality” and prove that these guests

become the most loyal and best advertisements for your hotel.

- Create a pet scrapbook - take Polaroid photos of the guests with their pets, date and place in a scrapbook. These guests will make a point to come back and see their photos!
- Create a pet billboard – monthly, post photos of in-house pet guests. Have your guests vote on the “cutest” pet. At the end of the month, mail the photos to the owners and invite them to come compete again. Send the winner a gift or free-night certificate.
- Provide washable pet beds to loan at no charge. When your guests don't travel with their own beds, this is a great way to provide accommodations that will help keep pets off your furnishings.
- Keep pet snacks at the front desk. Guests who might not normally advise of their pets will feel comfortable disclosing.
- Provide “poop” bags for your pet-walk areas. This encourages guests to clean up after their pets.

By introducing some of these ideas at your hotel, you can provide excellent opportunities in both marketing and operations.

By embracing the guests with pets market, you create a loyal group of customers that will be your best advertisement!

Craig Brantl – Region 73

Have you been thinking of converting some of your smoking rooms to non-smoking?

Are you tired of not being able to rent those last few smoking rooms every night? Would you like to decrease or eliminate your smoking room inventory?

Here are some easy steps to follow to convert those rooms:

- Strip the room completely.
- Remove all bed linen, and send pillows, bedspreads, mattress pads, and blankets to be laundered.
- Remove sheers and wash them in the guest laundry with liquid soap, delicate cycle on warm water. Dry them in warm temperature for 5 minutes and 2 minutes cool for to avoid wrinkles.
- Send drapes to dry cleaners.
- Use a moist cloth with your odor neutralizer to clean the mattress.

- Using a large sponge and all purpose cleaner, wash all the walls paying extra attention to any marks or stains.
- Vacuum and shampoo all the upholstery items.
- Clean the HVAC unit and replace the filter.
- Change shower curtain.
- Clean exhaust vents.
- Clean and shampoo the carpet.
- Use an ozone machine to eliminate the odor.
- Spray room with odor neutralizer.

Russell Hayes—Region 71

Sales Best Practice Leads Incentive Program

Our FDSRs are often the first point of contact for many of our new corporate guest. They have the opportunity to help with our sales process by being that contact. We can train our FDSRs to do a Sales Lead Sheet on this new corporate guest company. They would gather as much information on the guest company and their travel needs along with a business card prior or upon check-in. This information would then be input on the sales lead sheet for the GM or Sales team. If they have internet available they would also look up information on the company to add to the lead sheet. The FDSR would receive an incentive for each fully completed lead sheet. The incentive could be money paid out per lead or a point system that could be used toward an extra day off.

Rod Gorman—Region 81

As you look at your market do you see change? Is there new competition in your market? Or is your hotel the new product in the market? In either case the question remains the same; how do I get my fair share of the market so that I can pay the expenses and turn a profit?

Start with the basics – a clean well maintained hotel that is warm and inviting, coupled by outstanding customer service and selling at a competitive rate. Once you get to this point you are in the game but this does not guarantee that you are winning your market.

Now you have to sell your success. You need to let the community and market know that you are in the area, that you and your team will do a better job than any other hotel at servicing the guest that stay with you and that you would like to have there business. You do this by being active **(continued on next page)**

Regional Highlight—Region 63

My Name: Rodger Forni

Childhood Ambition: To work in my family business.

Proudest Moment: Becoming a father three times.

Most Important Aspect of a Business: Taking care of people!

Favorite Travel Destination: Italy

First Job: Sorting bottles in a grocery store.

Favorite Movie Star: Jim Carrey

Good Book I Read Recently:

Streetfighter Marketing by Mark & Jeff Slutsky

My Service Director: Alan Ames



Rodger Forni



Alan Ames

My Name: Alan Ames

Childhood Ambition: Always wanted to work in hotels. Loved to travel as a kid.

Proudest Moment: Birth of my four children.

Most Important Aspect of a Business: Creating the WOW factor for each and every guest. Empower every employee to immediately do "Whatever it Takes" in serving our guests!

Favorite Travel Destination: Family cabin in Utah mountains.

First job: Pizza cook. I could really toss that dough in the air!

Favorite Movie Star: Denzel Washington

Good Book I Read Recently: *Step on a Crack* by James Patterson

My Advisory Board Member: Rodger Forni

(continued from previous page)

with your local Chamber of Commerce, Convention and Visitor Bureau, and any other networking groups in your area. By making the time to be involved you are developing relationships that promote your hotel. Think how many times you get a guest that was referred to you from someone that knows of your hotel either through direct experience or because they remembered that you are in town. The same applies when you develop these relationships. Just ask Mike Bhakta at property #259 Conroe, TX, he is active with his chamber the results speak for themselves.

Direct sales are the key to any successful business. It would be great if we could open our doors and be at a 100% occupancy and \$150.00 ADR all the time. Unfortunately, it does not work that way. We have to work at it and taking a planned out approach leads to more successful results.

The first and ongoing step is to know how the market is priced and how your hotel is priced within the market. You want to know what rates the competition is selling

on weekdays and weekends. Start by looking several weeks in advance and work back towards your current week. By taking this approach you get a better picture of your pricing to the competitions.

Two properties in my region that have done great jobs in addressing this issue are Amit Patel at #780 Webster, TX and Gracie Foster at #6135 Katy, TX. Both of these properties were below the competition in ADR and by being proactive in researching what rates are being sold in the market they both discovered that they were selling below the competition. By researching and making changes to the rate levels in NetRez they have increased their ADR to that of the comp set and improved RevPar by more than \$10.00.

Selling your hotel, this is different than marketing your hotel in that you are targeting specific companies that produce rooms in your market. Start by identifying what companies are staying where and at what price, this can be done by driving the competitions parking lots to identify company vehicles or by spending time in their lobbies during breakfast or check-in. Use the

weekly sales tasks to research the market. Giovanni Sedita at #258 Kingwood, TX has completed each of the weekly tasks and found several new companies that have started using the hotel. I will bet there are businesses in your area that you did not know where there. Now that you have gathered the information; establish an action plan that you and your team can execute.

As your hotel fills up and you are getting more than your market share; be willing to maximize rate as the rooms you have left to sell shrinks. You have 8 rate levels in NetRez so use them when the demand is there. Why would you not increase rate by \$5.00 or \$10.00 on your remaining rooms if you know that the hotel is going to fill? The additional rate that you get is pure profit.

As each of us know this business is constantly changing; in order to stay at the top requires constant attention. Continually use the tools and steps above to make this a habit and not a one time only event.

