

# today's hotelier

June 2021 | todayshotelier.com

A publication of AAHOA

## Drive Recovery Revenue

Best practices in advance of the expected summer surge

**RUPESH PATEL**  
*Owner/Investor and Industry Advocate*

## What's New? What Works?

Experienced hotelier Rupesh Patel offers insights

## Tech Tips

The pandemic's effects on tech and hospitality



# Rediscover Radisson

Inspiring guest experiences.  
Insightful owner support.

**Grow with us**

**Americas Development Team**

📞 +1 (800) 336-3301

✉ [development@radissonhotelsamericas.com](mailto:development@radissonhotelsamericas.com)

# Your guests want quality.



## You want savings.

# WIN/WIN

Everybody wins when you buy a Milnor. That's because Milnor knows industrial laundry better than anyone. Smaller facilities get superior wash quality and a low price from Milnor's compact VRJ washer-extractor. Larger facilities enjoy washing 100, 140 or even 160 lb. at a time in our larger models. Intuitive MilTouch™ controls offer unprecedented insight into your wash, where water can be programmed to any level in one-tenth of an inch increments. And each machine is built with RinSave® water saving technology to save water and time.

**Contact an authorized Milnor distributor or call 504-712-7656 to find out more about washing more linen with less water than ever before.**



[www.milnor.com](http://www.milnor.com)



You're focused on growing your business. So are we.

## Chase Merchant Services

AAHOA members have been choosing Chase for payment processing since 1997.

- Accept debit and credit card payments at the front desk, online or around the property.
- Chase payment processing accounts for AAHOA members have no annual fee, no monthly service fee or minimum fee, no account setup fee, no terminal reprogram fee, no chargeback fee, no batch settlement fee, no online statement fee and no charge for supplies.<sup>1</sup>
- Next business day funding when you deposit into a Chase business checking account.<sup>2</sup>
- Seamless integration into your property management system or the latest in payment terminals.
- Live customer service and technical support 24/7/365.

**Contact us at 1-800-727-1872 or [lodging\\_team@chase.com](mailto:lodging_team@chase.com) for a complimentary account review to see if Chase can improve your bottom line.<sup>3</sup>**



Businesses are required to complete an application and agree to terms and conditions at the time of enrollment. All businesses are subject to credit approval. Merchant services are provided by Paymentech, LLC ("Chase"), a subsidiary of JPMorgan Chase Bank, N.A.

<sup>1</sup> Talk to a Chase Representative for more details and ask to review the Schedule A Pricing Sheet.

<sup>2</sup> Next business day funding is available to eligible Chase Merchant Services customers who deposit into a single Chase business checking account. Visa®, MasterCard®, Discover®, and American Express® OptBlue® credit and debit transactions are eligible. All businesses are subject to business credit approval and all funds are subject to fraud monitoring. In addition, funding is subject to the terms and conditions of the merchant processing agreement. Chase must receive settled transactions by 10:00 pm EST (some businesses may qualify for an 11:59 pm EST settlement; talk to a Chase representative for more details). Funds are deposited on the next business day, excluding weekends and bank holidays. Some exclusions may apply. The listed payment brand(s) are not sponsors of this program. All marks are marks of their respective companies. Deposit products provided by JPMorgan Chase Bank, N.A. Member FDIC.

<sup>3</sup> Cost comparison will be based on a calculation of the overall cost for comparable services, as determined by the processing statements you provide, and will exclude all one-time fees. Cost comparison results are estimates only and do not guarantee savings. In addition, inaccuracies in the comparison may occur due to pricing variances and complexities in the statements provided.

# contents

June 2021 | todayshotelier.com



## 20

### The intersection of tech and guest personas to drive recovery revenues

How to chart a course during an asymmetric hotel-demand surge

by LARRY and ADAM MOGELONSKY

## 18

### How to use technology to make your hotel relevant today

Best practices, tips, and procedures that can affect your bottom line

by RUPESH PATEL

## 24

### Advancing through adversity

The pandemic's effects on tech and hospitality

by IAIN SHAW

## departments

- 8 5 THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT AAHOA THIS MONTH
- 10 LETTER FROM THE CHAIRMAN
- 12 LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT & CEO
- 14 GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS
- 41 AAHOA VENDOR PARTNERS
- 44 PRODUCT WATCH
- 45 AAHOA MEMBERS IN ACTION
- 46 AAHOA CLUB BLUE, PLATINUM & SILVER MEMBERS
- 48 CLASSIFIEDS
- 50 ADVERTISERS INDEX

## columns

- COMMON GROUND: Georgia lawmakers level the playing field with short-term rentals..... **15**  
by SEAN GROSSNICKLE
- THE C-SUITE: Actionable insights for maximizing profits ..... **16**  
by RACHAEL ROTHMAN, CFA
- FINANCE: Is there life after special servicing? ..... **28**  
by RUSHI SHAH
- LEGAL CORNER: Negotiating third-party vendor contracts ..... **30**  
by RAHUL B. PATEL and CYRA A. DUMITRU
- TECHNOLOGY: Five new realities for hotels: a tale of digital transformation..... **32**  
by PAUL PAYETTE
- OPERATIONS: Managing your most controllable expense by embracing hotel technology ..... **34**  
by JOHN ERHART
- DESIGN: Five design changes for a safer hotel environment ..... **36**  
by TONYA DYBDAHL
- FRANCHISING: AAHOA's commitment to franchise relations is tireless..... **38**  
by MICHAEL FORREST
- SMALL BUSINESS: The free market drives innovations and triggers new technology ..... **40**  
by ALFREDO ORTIZ

Today's Hotelier (ISSN 24174062), volume 21, issue 6, is published monthly by Naylor Association Solutions, for AAHOA, 1100 Abernathy Road, Suite 725, Atlanta, GA 30328. Periodicals postage paid at Gainesville, Florida, and at additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to Today's Hotelier, 11350 McCormick Rd #1000, Hunt Valley, MD 21031.

# 2020-2021 AAHOA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

## AAHOA OFFICERS

**Biran Patel**  
Chairman

**Vinay Patel**  
Vice Chair

**Nishant (Neal) Patel, CHO**  
Treasurer

**Bharat Patel, CHO, CHIA**  
Secretary

**Cecil P. Staton**  
President & CEO

## DIRECTORS

**Jagruti Panwala, CHO**  
Past Chair

**Sanjay M. Patel**  
Alabama Regional Director

**Chintu (Danny) Patel**  
Arkansas Regional Director

**Hitesh Patel**  
Central Midwest  
Regional Director

**Rahul Patel**  
Florida Regional Director

**Vikesh (Vik) Zaver**  
Georgia Regional Director

**Naresh D. Bhakta**  
Greater Los Angeles Area  
Regional Director

**Nimesh (Nick) Zaver, CHO**  
Gulf Regional Director

**Sanjay (Sam) Patel, CHO**  
Mid Atlantic Regional Director

**Sunil Patel, CHO, CHA, CHIA**  
Mid South Regional Director

**Akshat Patel**  
North Carolina  
Regional Director

**Bhavesh N. Patel**  
North Central Regional Director

**Kamalesh (KP) Patel**  
North Pacific  
Regional Director

**Dhiren Masters**  
North Texas Regional Director

**Jayesh R. Patel**  
Northeast Regional Director

**Hiten Patel, CHO**  
Northwest Regional Director

**Chetan (Chet) Patel, CHO**  
South Carolina Regional  
Director

**Mike Patel, CHO, CHIA**  
South Central Texas  
Regional Director

**Mike Riverside, CHO, CHA**  
South Pacific Regional Director

**Sawan H. Patel**  
Southeast Texas  
Regional Director

**Imesh Vaidya, CHO**  
Southwest Regional Director

**Kalpesh Joshi, CHO**  
Upper Midwest  
Regional Director

**Sandip Patel**  
Washington D.C. Area  
Regional Director

**Jayesh Patel, CHA**  
Director at Large

**Prashant Patel**  
Director at Large

**Nimisha Patel, CHO**  
Female Director  
Western Division

**Lina Patel, CHO**  
Female Director  
Eastern Division

**Miraj S. Patel, MBA, CHO,  
CHIA**  
Young Professional Director  
Western Division

**Bhavik Patel**  
Young Professional Director  
Eastern Division

**Faheem Khan**  
Industry Partner



FIND THE LATEST AT  
[WWW.TODAYSHOTELIER.COM](http://WWW.TODAYSHOTELIER.COM)

## CONNECT

EMAIL: [todayshotelier@naylor.com](mailto:todayshotelier@naylor.com)

FACEBOOK:  
[facebook.com/AAHOAofficial](https://facebook.com/AAHOAofficial)

INSTAGRAM: [AAHOAofficial](https://www.instagram.com/AAHOAofficial)

LINKEDIN: [AAHOA](https://www.linkedin.com/company/AAHOA)

TWITTER: [@TodaysHotelier](https://twitter.com/TodaysHotelier)

YOUTUBE: [youtube.com/AAHOA](https://youtube.com/AAHOA)

### Today's Hotelier

is the official monthly  
publication of AAHOA  
1100 Abernathy Road, Suite 725  
Atlanta, GA 30328  
P: (404) 816-5759  
[info@aahoa.com](mailto:info@aahoa.com)  
[www.aahoa.com](http://www.aahoa.com)

### AAHOA STAFF CONTRIBUTORS

**Lisa Brown**, Content Coordinator, Copywriter & Copy Editor

### Heather Carnes

Vice President of Marketing & Communications

**Peter Clerkin**, Director, Communications

**Mike Forrest**, VP of Franchise Relations

### Sean Grossnickle

Government Affairs Coordinator

**Dean Heyl**, VP, Government Affairs

**Rachel Humphrey**, Executive VP & COO

**Sheetul Rayeed**, Staff Attorney

### Kati Siconolfi

Director, State & Local Government Affairs

**Cecil P. Staton**, President & CEO

**Kathryn Stone**, Chief of Staff

**Robert Stuckey**, VP of Business Development

### Today's Hotelier

is published by

**NAYLOR**

1430 Spring Hill Road, Sixth Floor

McLean, VA 22102

T: (800) 369-6220

[www.naylor.com](http://www.naylor.com)

[todayshotelier@naylor.com](mailto:todayshotelier@naylor.com)

### NAYLOR STAFF CONTRIBUTORS

**Carter Davis**, Managing Editor

**Austin Dunn**, Marketing Specialist

**Heather Greyling**, Publisher

**Gord Klassen**, Design/Layout

**Adam Ligenfelter**, Project Manager

**John O'Neil**, Advertising Director

**Tracy Venzen**, Project Coordinator

**Chris Zabel and Jason Zawada**,

Advertising Associates



Opinions expressed are those of the contributors and do not necessarily reflect the policy of AAHOA or Today's Hotelier magazine. Publication of an article or advertisement does not imply approval or endorsement by AAHOA.

©2021 AAHOA, all rights reserved. The contents of this publication may not be reproduced in whole or in part without the prior written consent of the publisher.

PUBLISHED MAY 2021/AAHOM0621/2821



# A GAME CHANGING FORMULA

SONESTA PLUS RLH CORPORATION EQUALS UNSTOPPABLE GROWTH AND MOMENTUM.

When you combine the power of Sonesta’s operational expertise with RLH Corporation’s winning technology and franchising models, the results are game changing. By joining forces, we are now one of the fastest-growing and largest companies in hospitality. With nearly 1,200 properties spanning 8 countries, franchisees are poised to reap the benefits.

Discover how our brands can be a game changer for you.

[FRANCHISE.RLHCO.COM](http://FRANCHISE.RLHCO.COM)

HOTEL RL BALTIMORE



RED LION HOTELS CORP. A PART OF SONESTA



# 5 Things To Know About AAHOA This Month

## IMPORTANT AAHOACON21 DEADLINES ARE FAST APPROACHING.



Time is running out to beat several important deadlines leading up to AAHOACON21. Check the list below to make sure you don't miss the chance to nominate a peer for going above and beyond, volunteer for AAHOA, get a great discount or deal, and more!

- **June 4:** Award Nominations, Lifetime Member Refund Eligibility
- **June 7:** Board of Directors Nominations
- **June 30:** Annual Membership Renewal Sweepstakes
- **July 4:** Early Bird Registration, Hotelier Cancellation
- **August 6:** Committee Application, Voter Eligibility

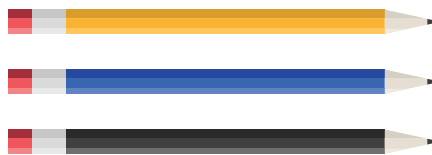
## 3-TIME SUPER BOWL CHAMPION TROY AIKMAN TAKES CENTER STAGE.

AAHOACON21 keynote speaker Troy Aikman has harnessed the drive and dedication that formed the foundation of his Hall of Fame football career with the Dallas Cowboys in numerous successful business ventures since retiring from the game following the 2000 season. Through broadcasting, real estate, and The Troy Aikman Foundation, the three-time Super Bowl champion and MVP of Super Bowl XXVII has quickly discovered numerous ways to keep himself occupied in "retirement."



## OUR EDUCATION SESSIONS WILL HELP YOU NAVIGATE THE ROAD TO RECOVERY.

The road to recovery runs through AAHOA and the education sessions we have lined up for AAHOACON21 will help pave the way for you to bounce back from the pandemic. From revenue strategies and forecasting for success and finding capital to solving the talent dilemma and advancing hospitality through technology and design thinking, we have what you need to get further down the road to recovery.

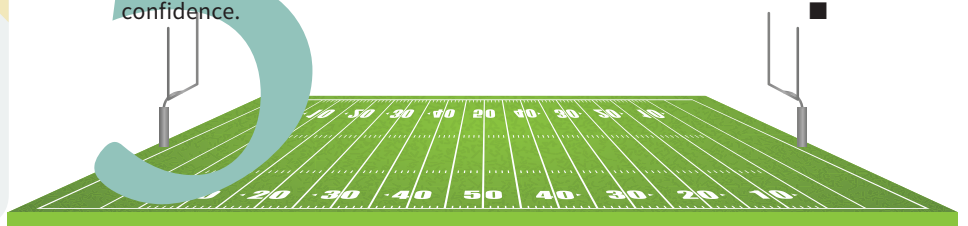


## THIS YEAR'S BLOCK PARTY WILL BE THE PLACE TO SEE AND BE SEEN!

This year, AAHOA will be hosting a Block Party at *Texas Live!* the likes of which you've never seen! On Wednesday, August 4, this event will offer attendees 11 venues to choose from, all offering a wide variety of local cuisine, regional desserts, and fancy beverages for your dining pleasure. You don't want to miss this premier networking opportunity to blow off some steam, catch up with friends old and new, and party like it's 2019!

## PREPARED TO BE AWED BY OUR HUGE TRADE SHOW FLOOR.

If you thought the Trade Show at our 2019 convention in San Diego was impressive – and it was! – you ain't seen nothing yet. This year in Dallas, we will feature more than 417,000 square feet of awesomeness – the equivalent of more than seven football fields! Plus, we've already signed up more than 650 exhibitors eager to make a deal with you and there's still two months to go. All recommended health and safety precautions will be observed so you can feel comfortable to wheel and deal with confidence.





# REDUCE DOWNTIME & DELIVER FIVE-STAR COMFORT



TRITON



## Eliminate Emergencies with Triton®

- Intelligent leak detection and prevention
- Preventative maintenance reminders
- Universal retrofit across brands
- Built to last up to five years longer than the average commercial water heater



Smart Monitoring Technology  
with Integrated Wi-Fi



To learn more, call **866-412-6726** or visit  
**HomeDepotPro.com/Institutional**



**BIRAN PATEL**  
AAHOA CHAIRMAN (2020-2021)

## Technology in the hands of hoteliers

“

We are an association founded on service to America’s hoteliers, dedicated to upholding the American Dream while elevating the needs and interest of our 20,000 members across the country.”

**I**N TODAY’S LANDSCAPE OF TECHNOLOGICAL AND OPERATIONAL TRANSFORMATION IN hospitality, the challenge for the hotelier has never been greater when adapting to the adversity of the pandemic. At AAHOA and beyond, we aim to embrace the promise of new technologies to attract guests and, more importantly, streamline the ways hotels operate. In technology, there are opportunities to harness the seamless features of guest-facing services and back-of-house operations. AAHOA is constantly exploring industry trends so we can equip our members with the tools to meet guest expectations, manage workforce, and keep their doors open.

A variety of technology trends in our industry have risen to prominence in the past year. Contactless services, mobile-device integration, and data analytic services, to name a few, are becoming ever more essential. Keeping a tab on the latest tech is not easy, especially when many hoteliers are working tirelessly to retain and hire team members. It is in times like these when AAHOA membership truly delivers. We are an association founded on service to America’s hoteliers, dedicated to upholding the American Dream while elevating the needs and interest of our 20,000 members across the country. Through our vendor partnerships, we facilitate exclusive access to leading technology and services so hoteliers can adapt to the now and set a roadmap for the future.

AAHOA recently partnered with myDigitalOffice to bring forward-thinking hotel analytics to our members free of charge. The Market Analytics, Pace and Performance (MAPP) tool developed by myDigitalOffice crowdsources anonymized hotel data to offer real-time insight into revenues, forward-looking indicators, and insights into market potential recovery. The MAPP Report is just one of many resources from AAHOA Vendor Partners designed to help you and your business stay informed on hotel operations and ahead of the market competition.

During the past few months, AAHOA has been working diligently to execute our 2021-2023 Strategic Plan. In line with our pursuits, the official AAHOA website is undergoing substantial improvements, both in design and functionality. AAHOA Members will now have more integrated access to membership benefits, news, resources, and more, whether accessed from a desktop computer or mobile device. As we look toward the months ahead, AAHOA and our community of hoteliers are here for you. Overcoming our industry’s challenges is made easier when you make technology work for you. We are here for you every step of the way, and it is my hope that you and your businesses find unparalleled value in our offerings. ■



A brand new way to extended stay™

Not all the news  
in 2020 was bad.



HISTORICALLY HIGH  
OCCUPANCIES  
**81.5%**  
IN SECOND QUARTER, 2020\*

PROTOTYPE DESIGNED FOR  
*maximum efficiency,  
longevity  
and guest appeal.*

OUT-PERFORMED THE ECONOMY  
TRACT SCALE REVPAR  
**129.7%**  
IN SECOND QUARTER, 2020\*

All backed by Red Roof, known for Genuine Relationships. Real Results.®

To get in on a new way to extended stay Contact Matthew Hostetler, Chief Development Officer,  
mhostetler@redroof.com, 713.576.7426 / redrooffranchising.com



\*Average performance figures based on all-affiliate-owned HomeTowne Studios by Red Roof hotels open and operating throughout the entire period of April 1, 2020 - June 30, 2020. 53 hotels. This is not an offer. No offer or sale of a franchise will be made except by a Franchise Disclosure Document first filed and registered with the applicable authorities. For New York: An offering can only be made by a prospectus filed first with the Department of Law for the State of New York. Such filing does not constitute approval by the Department of Law. For Minnesota: #F-5824. HomeTowne Studios by Red Roof, 7815 Walton Pkwy New Albany, Ohio 43054. © 2021 HomeTowne Studios by Red Roof



**CECIL P. STATON**  
AAHOA PRESIDENT & CEO

“  
At a minimum,  
the hotel  
industry must  
consider that  
business  
travel will not  
return to pre-  
pandemic rates  
in the near  
future.”

## Look to technological innovations to outlast the business travel drought

**R**EMOTE-WORK SOFTWARE AND TECHNOLOGY HAVE PROLIFERATED IN THE CORPORATE sector during the pandemic. The prototypical workplace has changed and work-from-home policies are the new paradigm. The communications technology market, now dominated by the likes of Zoom and Microsoft, grew immensely as businesses closed their offices and sent their workforce home in compliance with lockdown measures. Hybrid and remote working arrangements have proven flexible and efficient stand-ins for the in-person corporate office. This telework technology has changed the calculus for commercial travel, and hoteliers must look to technology and consumer confidence to dictate the new normal in hospitality.

As all hoteliers know, the remote-work model does not apply to our industry, which has continued to operate on the frontline. We are a service industry, one that requires an onsite workforce to host guests, clean rooms, and perform other tasks essential to day-to-day operations. Revenue is only generated when heads are in beds. For many AAHOA Members, business travel is a vital source of income. The paradigm shift to remote work adds another speed bump on the road to recovery. What can hoteliers do to get business travelers back on the road?

Our members are doing their part to ensure traveler comfort and peace of mind on their properties by taking the Pledge to Protect initiative and adopting industry best practices. Franchisees and independent owners alike have taken on additional operational standards to promote their properties' enhanced protocols and new COVID-19-conscious features. State and local restrictions have eased or lifted in some cases, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention announced that fully vaccinated adults have low risk to their health when traveling domestically. These are encouraging signs for our industry.

In late April, STR was reporting nationwide occupancy rates above 50%, marking pandemic highs. However, their reporting notes that weekend leisure and summer vacation travel overshadow business travel as weekday occupancy rates lag behind. At a minimum, the hotel industry must consider that business travel will not return to pre-pandemic rates in the near future. The worst of the pandemic is behind us, yet there are many challenges ahead.

The proof is in the data, and the solution is in the tech. With the combination of technology and market insights, hoteliers can analyze their local market, capitalize on potential demand, and recruit and train new team members. Our industry cannot dictate when companies and branches of government reinstate their travel policies. The timeline for business travel to return remains uncertain and at the whim of local restrictions and corporate policies. There is no “catch-all” solution for markets that depend heavily on business travel. From job listings to virtual training to strategic marketing, hoteliers need to make the technology and insights work for them. ■

# Give your guests the best in entertainment with the DIRECTV Residential Experience

Get up to \$10,400 in equipment subsidies<sup>1</sup> for your property.



Plus, offer includes:  
(Conditions apply)

## The DIRECTV Residential Experience offers premium entertainment benefiting your hotel and guests.

- Access to over 100 HD channels<sup>2</sup>
- Technology that's easy, flexible and compatible with most TVs and wiring
- No Pro:Idiom TVs required
- Simplified, anti-microbial remote
- Customizable Guest Welcome Screen allows you to share information with guests Available with DRE Plus. Ask how.



**2021 NFL SUNDAY TICKET**  
at no extra cost.<sup>3</sup>

**ASK HOW!**

Offer ends 1/2/22.

**HBO**  
&

**CINEMAX**

**Package**

Starting at  
**\$2.25** per  
room per  
month<sup>4</sup>

Offer ends 12/31/21.

ADD  
**SHOWTIME**  
AS A SECOND  
PREMIUM

**99¢** per room  
per mo.<sup>5</sup>

13 channels of premium entertainment including original series, movies, sports, documentaries and more.

Offer ends 12/31/21.

New or renewing approved H&I customers only. 5-year programming agreement req'd. Credit card required (except MA & PA). Early Cancellation Fee may apply.

Call **ALVI SATELLITES** today at **877-233-1787**.



<sup>1</sup>DIRECTV RESIDENTIAL EXPERIENCE (DRE) OFFER: Offer ends 12/31/21. Offer is available to new or renewing Hospitality and Institutions customers with a 5-year programming agreement. Properties must subscribe to the ENTERTAINMENT Pack (\$899/room/mo.) or above. ENTERTAINMENT Pack promotional bundle price includes the ENTERTAINMENT Pack, local channels and technology fee. Bundled rate will be listed as two separate line items on customer bill. Maximum HD equipment subsidy of \$10,400 for DRE and/or DRE Plus System. 15-room minimum is req'd per property. Properties with 130+ rooms are eligible for an additional \$25 per room per month credit. Customers will begin receiving credits within two billing cycles. To access DIRECTV HD programming, HD equipment req'd. **IN THE EVENT YOU FAIL TO MAINTAIN YOUR SUBSCRIPTION TO THE REQUIRED PROGRAMMING PACKAGES YOU AGREE TO PAY AN EARLY CANCELLATION FEE EQUAL TO THE FULL SUBSIDY AMOUNT YOU RECEIVED PRORATED BY THE NUMBER OF MONTHS YOU PAID FOR THE REQUIRED PROGRAMMING PACKAGES DURING THE COMMITMENT PERIOD. Payment is due within thirty (30) days of receipt of a notice of failure to complete the commitment period. INSTALLATION:** Custom installation charges apply, and installation fee is based on property size. Applicable use tax adjustment may apply on retail value of installation. Availability of DIRECTV service may vary by location. In certain markets, programming/pricing may vary. Make and model of system at DIRECTV's sole discretion. Offers void where prohibited or restricted. Programming available separately. Receipt of DIRECTV programming subject to terms of the DIRECTV Terms of Service for Hospitality Establishments and the DIRECTV Terms of Service for Institutions; copy provided with new customer information packet. Taxes not included. DIRECTV programming, hardware, pricing, terms and conditions subject to change at any time. <sup>2</sup>To access DIRECTV HD service, HD equipment req'd. Number of HD channels varies based on package selection. <sup>3</sup>2021 NFL SUNDAY TICKET OFFER: Offer ends 1/2/22. 2021 NFL SUNDAY TICKET will be delivered at no extra cost in all guest rooms for the 2021 season for all new DIRECTV Residential Experience (DRE) customers, COM System customers and DIRECTV Residential Experience Plus (DRE Plus) customers must subscribe to FAMILY™ Pack (\$499/room/mo.) or above, with a 3-, 5- or 7-year programming agreement. Other conditions apply. **Subscription will automatically continue in the 2nd year at a special renewal rate of \$99 and renew at regular rate thereafter provided that DIRECTV still carries these services at the time of renewal and unless customer calls to cancel prior to start of the season. Subscription cannot be canceled (in part or in whole) after the start of the season and subscription fees cannot be refunded.** Commercial locations require an appropriate license agreement. Offer excludes University accounts. NFL, the NFL Shield design and the NFL SUNDAY TICKET name and logo are registered trademarks of the NFL and its affiliates. <sup>4</sup>HBO® AND CINEMAX® PACKAGE (New Customers): Offer ends 12/31/21. Only available to new customers that have not received or subscribed to DIRECTV for 12 months prior to activation. Monthly rate is (\$225/room/mo.) and requires a 5- or 7-year programming agreement. Customer must also subscribe to SELECT™ Pack (\$799/room/mo.) or above (with DRE or COM) or ENTERTAINMENT Pack (\$899/room/mo.) or above with the Advanced Entertainment Platform. University accounts excluded. <sup>5</sup>HBO AND CINEMAX PACKAGE (Existing Customers): Available to existing DIRECTV subscribers with a 5- or 7-year programming agreement. Monthly charge is (\$2.25/room/mo.). University accounts excluded. **IN THE EVENT YOU FAIL TO MAINTAIN YOUR PROGRAMMING AGREEMENT, YOU AGREE THAT DIRECTV MAY CHARGE YOU AN EARLY CANCELLATION FEE. CANCELLATION FEES ARE BASED ON PROGRAMMING PACKAGE SELECTION AND COMMITMENT PERIOD.** In certain markets, programming/pricing may vary. Offers void where prohibited or restricted. Hardware and programming available separately. Taxes not included. DIRECTV programming, hardware, pricing, terms and conditions subject to change at any time. HBO®, Cinemax® and related channels and service marks are the property of Home Box Office, Inc. <sup>6</sup>SHOWTIME OFFER: Offer ends 12/31/21. The SHOWTIME programming offer (\$0.99/room/mo.) is available only as a 2nd Premium add-on. Offer available to qualifying new or existing Hospitality accounts with a 3-, 5- or 7-year programming agreement and must not have received SHOWTIME programming from DIRECTV or any other distributor during the 24 months prior to activation. Offer is available for accounts activated on or before 12/31/21. After the applicable promotional period (3-, 5- or 7-years) ends, then-prevailing rate for SHOWTIME applies unless canceled or changed by customer prior to end of the promotional period. Offer may not be combined with any other SHOWTIME offer. SHOWTIME and related marks are trademarks of Showtime Networks Inc., a ViacomCBS Company. Premium Channel subscriptions are only available for Private Viewing or Lodging & Institution customers. <sup>7</sup>©2021 AT&T Intellectual Property. All Rights Reserved. AT&T, Globe logo, DIRECTV and all other DIRECTV marks included herein are trademarks of AT&T Intellectual Property and/or AT&T affiliated companies. All other marks are the property of their respective owners.

You are  
=NOT=  
Alone

## AAHOA's state and local advocacy update

by KATI SICONOLFI and ERIC REINARMAN

**A** YEAR HAS PASSED SINCE THE Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act was signed into law, providing a first round of federal aid to state and local governments, individual taxpayers, and businesses impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. AAHOA has been advocating for policies and laws that will directly benefit hotel owners. Below are just a few of our successes at the state and local levels.

- **Hotels Designated As Essential Businesses.** Working with governors, legislators, and local officials we stressed the critical role that hoteliers play in their communities during the COVID-19 crisis. These business owners have provided housing for health care professionals, supply chain workers, and vulnerable populations.
- **SBA Disaster Declarations in Every State.** To apply for the SBA Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL), each county in every state had to file a declaration showing economic harm, which allowed

the governor to file a SBA disaster declaration. We encouraged governors to expedite the process in their own states, and AAHOA remains committed to working with the SBA to expedite the process.

- **Protection from COVID 19-related Lawsuits (Passed in 24 States, Legislation Introduced in 16 States<sup>1</sup>).** AAHOA Members' highest priority has always been keeping guests and employees healthy and safe, and following the highest cleaning standards for your properties. We want to prevent a new wave of drive-by lawsuits as states reopen. So far, at least 24 states have taken action to protect your hotels from frivolous COVID-19 lawsuits, and 16 states have introduced legislation to do the same.<sup>2</sup>
- **Direct Financial Relief.** At least 21 states (and counting) have offered direct financial relief, such as grant and loan programs, for small business owners. Florida's bridge loan program for small businesses is a great example for other states to follow. One trend we are seeing

is loan programs specifically designed for the hospitality industry, such as the Delaware Hospitality Emergency Loan Program. Additional examples include the District of Columbia's \$30-million bridge fund for hoteliers and the Maryland Lodging and Accommodations COVID Relief Grant Program.<sup>3</sup>

- **Tax Treatment of Forgiven PPP Loans.** The SBA's Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) provided a crucial lifeline to help keep hotels open and workers employed during the pandemic. Many borrowers will have these loans forgiven; eligibility for forgiveness requires using the loan for qualifying purposes (such as payroll costs, mortgage interest payments, rent, and utilities) within a specified amount of time.

As the foremost resource and advocate for America's hotel owners, AAHOA and its Government Affairs team remain committed in our efforts to advance and protect your business interests. ■

### REFERENCES

1. At the time of this publication, at least 24 states have taken action on COVID-19 liability protections, either through legislation or executive order: Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas (COVID-19 liability protections sunsetted in January 2021), Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, Mississippi, Montana, Nevada, North Carolina, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Tennessee, Utah, West Virginia, Wisconsin and Wyoming. Furthermore, at least 16 states have introduced legislation on COVID-19 liability protections: Alaska, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Illinois, Maryland, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, New Jersey, New York, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Texas and Virginia.
2. At the time of this publication, at least 24 states have taken action on COVID-19 liability protections, either through legislation or executive order: Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas (COVID-19 liability protections sunsetted in January 2021), Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, Mississippi, Montana, Nevada, North Carolina, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Tennessee, Utah, West Virginia, Wisconsin and Wyoming. Furthermore, at least 16 states have introduced legislation on COVID-19 liability protections: Alaska, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Illinois, Maryland, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, New Jersey, New York, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Texas and Virginia.
3. <https://www.cbre.us/COVID-19/COVID-19-Business-Financial-Relief-Hub/State-Local-Relief>



# Georgia lawmakers level the playing field with short-term rentals

Common Ground profiles members of opposing parties who are working together to advance issues important to hoteliers.

by SEAN GROSSNICKLE

## THE ISSUE

Since 2015, hoteliers in Georgia have been required to remit a \$5 flat rate to the state for every night a room is booked. It is common for states to levy a lodging tax, yet Georgia is the only one to impose a flat dollar-based tax statewide. In addition to this fixed-rate fee and the 4% statewide sales tax applied to hotels, local authorities can levy an excise tax ranging from 3% to 8%. The hotel-motel tax puts Georgia's hotels at a disadvantage to short-term rental platforms, especially economy and select-service properties, which pay significantly more

proportionally compared to properties with higher nightly rates. Short-term rentals have evaded the hotel-motel tax for years due to the vague definition of an "innkeeper" under Georgia law.

## COMMON GROUND

A group of Representatives in the Georgia General Assembly, led by Rep. Ron Stephens (R-164), proposed House Bill 317 in the recent legislative session. This bill revises "the definition of 'innkeeper' to include marketplace facilitators" so that "all rooms, lodgings, and accommodations" are required to remit the \$5

hotel-motel tax. H.B. 317 passed in the Georgia Senate by a vote of 31 to 5 and in the Georgia House by a vote of 142 to 22. In late April, Gov. Brian Kemp signed the bill into law. The law will go into effect on July 1.

AAHOA applauds Georgia lawmakers for their support of this bipartisan law which is a step to. For years, AAHOA Members in Georgia have engaged with their Representatives and Senators, sending letters and attending meetings to raise awareness on the issue. This is a great step toward a more level playing field between hoteliers and short-term rentals.

### Georgia Rep. Ron Stephens (R-164), Sponsor of H.B. 317

*"H.B. 317 deals with Vacation Rentals by Owner (VRBO) and other long-term accommodations advertised by third-party marketing organizations. This legislation will require that innkeepers collect and bill customers for all taxes levied or imposed by this legislation on transactions facilitated by any marketplace innkeeper. This clamping down on VRBOs and other short-term rental accommodations will even the playing field of our many innkeepers and hoteliers in the greater Savannah area as they try to keep up with pandemic losses."*

### Georgia Rep. Spencer Frye (D-118), Co-sponsor of H.B. 317

*"Local residents can lose control of the housing market in an otherwise good economy if speculation takes hold, pricing families out of their own neighborhoods. And in areas where populations are becoming less dense, a decrease in available tax dollars can mean the town has to resort to increasing traffic fines and all sorts of fees." ■*

**GRADUATED FROM A COMPETITIVE** New York City high school nearly 35 years ago. I can still remember that feeling in early April when I and my fellow classmates received our college acceptances. For better or worse, it was over. We collectively breathed a deep sigh of relief, possibly for the first time since middle school, and got busy celebrating and being grateful for the community and friendships we had built.

As I got my first COVID-19 vaccine in late March, the two experiences felt oddly similar to me – if not relief, at least a deep breath. In the span of a little more than a year, we have whipsawed from, “No reason to panic,” to washing frozen food boxes from the store to #RevengeTravel, all with the speed and force of a mechanical bull.

Every day now, we see positive headlines marching past like a ticker tape in Times Square. Record stimulus. A landmark infrastructure package. Millions of vaccine doses administered in a day. The stock market at all-time highs. Rebounding employment, consumer sentiment, business investment, TSA traveler counts, and year-over-year RevPAR growth percentages in the hundreds.

## IS IT OVER?

These headlines suggest the worst of the industry’s challenges are behind us. For those of us with the good fortune of navigating past cycles, we know that profits bottom after RevPAR and, with many properties struggling with cash flow, debt maturities, and expiring covenant relief, there still is significant work to be done. Fortunately, the industry’s toolkit is more advanced than ever. Here are 10 things select-service hotels can do to take the raging bull (market) by the horns and make the most of the recovery.

**1 Build your advisory board; leverage your network.** No one is expected to have all the answers. If you own a hotel, there is no doubt you have a network of lenders, consultants, brokers, thought leaders, and peers – all of whom you can leverage to brainstorm ideas, access funds, restructure a deal, or optimize performance.

**2 Benchmark, benchmark, benchmark.** One unique aspect of this recovery is the abundance of real-time data available to make more effective decisions. Hotel owners and operators can now benchmark their channel mix, customer acquisition costs, GRI index, and full P&L statements against a comp set of their choosing. Understanding how your hotel is operating is a starting point, but understanding how the most profitable peers in the market are operating is better.

**3 Push rate, even if you are hesitant.** Upsell. Make sure your channel mix is optimized. Know your demand generators. This year’s summer travel season is likely to see a spike in demand like none we have experienced in recent times. Delayed weddings, pent-up regional SMERF events, continued work-from-anywhere arrangements, and limitations on international travel will benefit local, regional, and highway hotels. Trepidation is normal, but occupancies are building, and potential guests cannot wait to celebrate like it’s 2019!

**4 Decide if a hotel is the best use of your property.** Pivot if necessary. Be realistic about your financial situation and competitive position in the market, and be open to bold change. If an asset was marginal prior to COVID, or the market is experiencing competitive encroachment, or capex needs are substantial, work with your advisors to consider the asset’s highest and best use. With demand from investors for alternative-use assets as high as ever, it may not be a hotel.

**5 Commit capital only in markets and assets where it makes sense.** View brand-mandated capital investments as somewhat flexible across your entire portfolio where possible. With cash at a premium, it’s important to analyze the market outlook and the forecast for your specific property within that market. For example, if your subject hotel is already over-indexing substantially in a market that is forecast for slow or no recovery, the return on that capital investment likely is low. Where possible, work with your brand partner to identify a market or asset where targeted reinvestment, even off-cycle, is more likely to generate a return, creating a win/win for both the owner and the brand.

# Tricks of the Trade

by RACHAEL ROTHMAN, CFA

Actionable insights for maximizing profits

**Forecast diligently.** Proactively work with your lenders. Once you are certain a property has long-term value above its cost of capital, make sure you and your team take the time to do a weekly P&L forecast, through the balance of the year, then monthly in 2022, then quarterly. Proactively approach your lender if there are constraints. Identify pain points. Solicit feedback and suggestions from your advisory board.

**Get creative with labor.** Prior to the pandemic, hotel wages were increasing 4% to 5% annually. Since then, many national retail chains have set new minimum wage thresholds, increasing competition for labor, and pushing wages higher across the board. Generally, it can be hard for select-service hotels to compete with the flexibility and wages that a national retail chain can provide.

**Sweat the small stuff; ratings do matter.** Pre-pandemic, properties with online reputation scores above 80% had the strongest rates and pricing power. They were taking market share. The renewed focus on cleanliness has made online reviews even more important. For those properties with strong reviews relative to competing supply in the market, we suggest pushing through rate increases above your initial comfort level.

**Cut costs.** Use your customized P&L benchmarking data and ask your network of advisors where they see opportunities you may not see. Working at a large global organization, we have teams solely dedicated to helping owners uncover opportunities for accelerated depreciation, meaningfully lowering telecommunications costs at no cost to owners, conducting building-efficiency audits, targeting guests based on length of stay and NOI potential, cleaning rooms on checkout, and grab-and-go hot breakfasts where brand standards allow.

**Fight for every dollar.** File your insurance claims. Petition to have your property taxes adjusted to reflect current business trends. Explore alternate sources of funding. Ensure you have explored qualification for EIDL grants, and used the PPP expense deductibility when possible. There are experts who work on these issues daily, and nothing would make us happier than to celebrate your success. ■

*Rachael Rothman, CFA, is Head of Hotels Research and Data Analytics at CBRE Hotels. She can be reached at rachael.rothman@cbre.com. To learn more about CBRE Hotel's forecast and benchmarking reports, please visit: [pip.cbrehotels.com](http://pip.cbrehotels.com).*

“If you own a hotel, there is no doubt you have a network ... you can leverage to brainstorm ideas, access funds, restructure a deal, or optimize performance.”



Rachael Rothman, CFA, Head of Hotels Research and Data Analytics, CBRE Hotels

# How to use technology to make your hotel relevant today

by RUPESH PATEL

**H**OW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN IN THE hotel industry? If you can remember reg cards and cutting metal keys in the maintenance room, you've seen all that's revolutionized hotels today and how technology has transformed every aspect of the hotel business.

Today, hotel guests can get questions answered by chatbots, book their favorite floor and room number, and check in without talking to a single person. And for us old-school motel owners, we can even lock out a guest with a simple push of a button. (My dad used to make me physically go change out the doorknob/lock when someone didn't pay.)

## WOULD YOU CONSIDER YOURSELF TECH SAVVY?

I would venture to say a majority of people today are tech savvy. They have the latest-and-greatest gadgets in their homes and daily lives. They're getting instant gratification with everything on demand and asking for it when they travel.

Along the way, the hotel industry has integrated tech ideas from the corporate and startup worlds. We're taking advantage of data to make smarter business decisions and using tools to create stronger teams.

Almost everything we do today revolves around technology. This means we as hotel owners must adapt, integrate, and be ready for the future, today.

Here are five hotel technologies to make your hotel relevant today.



## GUEST COMMUNICATIONS

A well-communicated hotel is a successful hotel. That means staff and guests must be tightly connected! To make that connection stronger, we must be using the tech that our guests are using. For many guests, their cell phone is their office. They conduct all their business from it, including booking travel.

In a recent poll I conducted with hotel professionals like you, I asked “How do in-house guests like to be communicated?” A staggering 57% preferred text messages, followed by 28% for phone calls, 10% for email, and 4% selecting “other.”

So why is texting the clear favorite? Guests like it because it’s quick, convenient, and they don’t have to trudge down to the front desk to request extra towels. The hotel staff loves it because it frees up their phones and the long lines at the desk. Plus, it’s an opportunity to create a positive guest experience.

## OPERATIONS AUTOMATION

In the past, managing hotel operations meant physically writing everything down on paper or typing it into a slow, ancient system. Creating manual reservations and guest requests were always time-consuming, cumbersome, and often bulky. (Did you have that DOS-based computer in the back office? I did!)

Today, many new cloud-based systems help hotels become more operationally efficient.

These new technologies can seamlessly talk to each other and make faster decisions. What parts of your hotel business can you consider automating?

## IN-ROOM ENTERTAINMENT

According to TechJury “82% of U.S. adults streaming internet TV claim it’s more entertaining than cable.” Today, the average hotel guest travels with multiple devices, including their phone. They want a superfast internet

connection to create a personalized experience by casting or streaming from their phones, including music, movies, shows, reality TV, sports, news, photos, and of course, YouTube!

A forward-thinking hotel operator understands the importance of guest satisfaction, and keeping up with the latest in in-room entertainment makes guests happy.

## SMART REVENUE MANAGEMENT

Looking to increase revenues? Sure, we all are. Gone are the days you can set rates and forget it. Today, your rooms have the potential of being sold on hundreds of different booking channels. Many of these channels come with a hefty commission and are difficult to manage individually.

This is where technology comes into play. You can now take advantage of tools to make smarter revenue decisions and maximize revenues. These tools help your hotel analyze, forecast, and optimize RevPAR, sell channels, business mix percentages, and so much more.

Imagine having an assistant automatically manage your rates and inventory for you and then alert you when there are additional opportunities to grow revenues. This is what many new and sophisticated hotel revenue-management tools are capable of doing. Don’t guess; use technology to improve your revenues.

## HOTEL LABOR TECH








Payroll has now become the highest cost center for most hotels. With the rise of minimum wage and government benefits, hotels today are challenged with managing their budgets while maintaining proper operations.

Gone are the days when we guessed how much our labor costs would be. Today, a well-managed hotel team needs to be dead accurate on labor costs. To accomplish this, new hotel labor tools have helped managers optimize their hourly employee schedule, reduce incidents of over scheduling, eliminate wasted overtime, and make quick, informed, data-driven decisions.

As you can see, hotel technologies have come a long way. Which technologies will you adapt to make your hotel relevant today? I would love to hear your feedback; please message me directly on LinkedIn: [linkedin.com/in/rupeshpatel1/](https://www.linkedin.com/in/rupeshpatel1/). ■

*Rupesh Patel is an AAHOA Member, hotel owner/investor, and industry advocate. He shares his passion for the hotel industry with daily insights and inspiration to a following of 50k+ hospitality professionals on social media. With 20-plus years of experience, Rupesh hosts a live weekly hospitality show, showcasing the top industry leaders, and has been featured in magazines, podcasts, and media outlets. Today, Rupesh continues to grow his network and businesses through genuine and authentic relationships. Learn more at [www.rupesh.co](http://www.rupesh.co).*

# When upgrading in-room entertainment options

-  Offer a secure and reliable high-speed internet connection.
-  Provide an option to easily and safely stream from phone to in-room TV.
-  Give options to stream from YouTube, Netflix, and Hulu.
-  Offer solutions to stream music from phones or tablets.
-  Make sure the guest’s information is cleared from the TV prior to departure.
-  Provide enough outlets to charge multiple devices.
-  Consider adding a mirror option for Apple Airplay.

# The intersection of tech and guest personas to drive recovery revenues

by LARRY and ADAM MOGELONSKY

**W**HEN IT COMES TO THE EXPECTED TRAVEL recovery throughout the latter half of 2021, a rising tide doesn't necessarily raise all ships. Yes, revenge travel is very much a real entity, and it will cause many hotels that fit a certain profile to experience maximum occupancy as confidence is restored following widespread inoculation. Others, unfortunately, won't be so lucky.

What's critical in the months ahead is to examine what type of customers – often called 'guest personas' – will be more likely to travel then pivot your operations and marketing efforts to meet their specific demands. All the while, there are still numerous opportunities to deploy technologies that were advantageous to help stop the spread of COVID-19 but can now help a hotel become hyper-efficient.

## LEISURE GUEST PERSONAS

As unfortunate as it is to say, Wall Street no longer reflects Main Street, and many pre-pandemic jobs aren't ever coming back. Sadly, when the stimulus checks run dry, some malls will close as more

businesses shift to online shopping and many restaurants will dog it out against lower-cost ghost kitchens for orders on food-delivery apps. Caught in the middle are the countless waiters, retailers, and store owners – the service sector that composed a substantial portion of the working class.

The first implication is that the demise of this sector means less disposable income for vacations, influencing primarily those properties in the economy, select service, and economy-scale tiers that catered to this demographic. Conversely, the professional class has only been temporarily affected by the various lockdowns. Once vaccinated, they are ready to resume

their 2019 levels of travel. Understanding this macroeconomic shift will help you to adjust accordingly.

First, you must understand the lingering influences of this terrible virus. People are seeking out 'private', 'secluded,' and other types of spacious accommodations. What isn't so obvious is the new sense of introspection that's grown within us. While everyone enjoys a great dining experience, we've nevertheless become accustomed to cooking tasty meals at home; promoting your kitchenettes is thus an excellent differentiator. Speaking of in-room features, even with inoculation, many customers will be reluctant to utilize shared facilities and will opt for those properties that

# How to chart a course during an asymmetric hotel-demand surge

offer guestroom exercise programs, more elaborate bathroom or spa amenities, and other wellness-oriented upgrades.

On the technology front, contactless convenience has moved from a value-add to an expectation. As a legacy from the pandemic, your guests now demand mobile check-in and checkout, as well as the ability to book all manner of services from their phones. Developing the proper integrations to allow for a seamless connection between online requests right through to the department that renders that deliverable will increase both revenue per guest and labor productivity. Further, contactless payment solutions should be a foremost thought to this end, bearing in mind that a secure, PCI-compliant one is crucial to help minimize the rising trend of friendly fraud and blooming chargebacks.

## PRE-ARRIVAL REVENUES

Given all the new hurdles travelers must go through, they will tend to pay more

attention to the planning stage for any upcoming trip. Given the requirements for contact tracing and booking all experiences in advance, guests will want to ascertain the bulk of their itineraries from their own homes, making those tech-savvy hotels ripe for increased revenue. This can greatly enhance the accuracy of labor projections to lower costs and ensure that underservicing customers doesn't become a detriment after the fact.

Consider, for instance, an in-house dining outlet. As a start, guests will want to know before arriving the new hours of operation and all the new safety measures that are in place. This alone means you need to have effective pre-stay messaging in place – either directly through your PMS or via the CRM – to decrease the burden on your guest-services agents.

Next, given the reduced number of dining tables available due to social-distancing mandates, it behooves you to prompt guests to make reservations as far ahead

of time as possible so they aren't left out once onsite and so you don't overstaff. This requires you to investigate platforms and booking engines that can enable dining (as well as spa and other activity) purchases immediately following the room reservation. As a runner-up to this, segmented prearrival emails containing a link to an online booking portal for dining will help along with any systems that allow you to coordinate reservations entirely within the guest's preferred SMS platform.

Lastly, to further decrease the time spent by your live agents in managing all these requests, you may want to consider utilizing a hotel-trained call center to outsource the voice channel so you don't incur any abandonment issues – those where guest phone calls aren't answered and the customer opts for an off-property alternative.

## REMOTE WORKERS

One prominent guest persona to emerge from the pandemic is that of the digital



Given the requirements for contact tracing and booking all experiences in advance, guests will want to ascertain the bulk of their itineraries from their own homes, making those tech-savvy hotels ripe for increased revenue.”

nomad or person whose job allows them to work from anywhere (provided there's good Wi-Fi). Heavily overlapping with the aforementioned professional class, your first task in trying to appeal to this growing cohort is to put yourself in their shoes to discern what specific services they would want to better facilitate a working-while-traveling situation.

In the room, these guests will want an ergonomic office setup – think comfortable chairs, second monitors or other inspirational business spaces available on-demand. Ideally, you would have connected rooms available or a reasonably priced suite upgrade so a worker can attend a videoconference meeting without disturbing their significant other. Readily available nearby daycare services may also be a huge plus.

This is where describing the recovery as asymmetric comes into play, as many hotels may not have the right guestroom amenities, on-premises features, or location to appeal to this group. If a pivot into this market is desired, then budget must be allocated right away for a minor PIP that will help tick all the boxes, which would otherwise be dealbreakers for these digital nomads.

Such upgrades should also encompass a keen eye toward technology. Every work-from-a-hotel or business-oriented service should be on-demand so guests can get what they want directly off their phones, with the property connecting the dots behind the scenes by having the appropriate operations management software and perhaps even a chatbot application to manage the guest

communications without the need to burden a staff member.

Above all, remember that members of this hybrid travel segment will help you to build midweek occupancy, so it behooves you to develop a rate plan that will incentivize a longer length of stay. Moreover, the flexibility of remote work enables you to explore extended-stay packages. While these likely will represent lower RevPAR guests, you're still filling rooms that may otherwise stay vacant.

#### **SMALL GROUPS SURGE**

The post-pandemic swell of transients and bleisure guests are two of the more predictable trends, but we're all still wondering how groups will fare. Yes, numerous companies have recognized the uselessness of unending videoconferences for



MYDIGITALOFFICE

**FORWARD-LOOKING  
FREE MARKET DATA.  
IT'S A BIG DEAL.**

The MAPP Report from myDigitalOffice provides free daily market insights that leverage future business on the books data. Learn more at:  
[www.mydigitaloffice.com/mapp](http://www.mydigitaloffice.com/mapp)

both collaboration and sales efforts. Everything is more effective in person, but there are now many more barriers to congregating, which can render large groups drastically more expensive and potentially infeasible.

Despite any perceived productivity losses, the reduced footprint of less rent (via remote-work policies) and fewer conferences (through the use of teleconferencing solutions such as Zoom) will continue to drive the bottom line for numerous companies. Thinking optimistically, though, revenge travel also applies to groups in that it's been so long since many executives have assembled and they are well past due for a corporate retreat, whether that be simply for a reunion or strategic planning. Then, there are all the social events that were canceled in 2020, with members just itching for the chance to get together once the all clear is given.

“Bringing groups back won’t be easy, and you must already have a solid group program set up before demand picks up in this segment,” commented Vikram Sood, VP of Operations at Hostmark Hospitality, a hotel management group in San Diego. “Negotiations in the recovery group are going to move fast. You need to have a full sales team already in place with all the necessary demand-monitoring tools and electronic signature platforms to react in an instant or else the business will go to your competitors.”

Another significant term to understand is the hub-and-spoke nature of business meetings going forward. That is, rather than risk a national or multinational conference, companies will instead opt for hosting a smaller, televised event from the headquarters (hub) with hotels in designated markets selected as gathering points for regional offices (spoke). Such an approach requires properties to have exceptional audio-video support to smoothly run hybrid events to make multiple offices feel as one unit despite their physical separations.

Taken together, the overall argument is that the world has moved online. Those properties that thoroughly embrace technology while also developing programs to meet the post-pandemic changes in behavior will prosper while others may be left out of the money. ■



Together, Larry and Adam Mogelonsky represent one of the world’s most published writing teams in hospitality, with more than a decade’s worth of material online. As the partners of Hotel Mogel Consulting Limited, a Toronto-based consulting practice, Larry focuses on asset management, sales, and operations, while Adam specializes in hotel technology and marketing. Their experience encompasses properties around the world, both branded and independent, ranging from luxury and boutique to select-service. Their work includes six books: *Are You an Ostrich or a Llama?* (2012), *Llamas Rule* (2013), *Hotel Llama* (2015), *The Llama is Inn* (2017), *The Hotel Mogel* (2018), and *More Hotel Mogel* (2020). You can reach Larry at [larry@hotelmogel.com](mailto:larry@hotelmogel.com) or Adam at [adam@hotelmogel.com](mailto:adam@hotelmogel.com).

WATCO
®  
™  
IDEALLAV



## Introducing IdealLav™

- Only lav drain to include replaceable grid strainer and internal stopper.
- No more clogs! Removable grid strainer keeps jewelry and hair out of drain.
- Internal stopper holds water overnight.
- Also available without internal stopper for public restrooms, etc.
- One-piece tube drops in for easy installation.



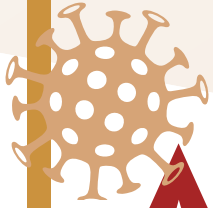
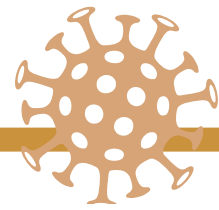



Always a step ahead

816.796.3900 ■ [watcomfg.com](http://watcomfg.com)

Patent [www.watcomfg.com/patents](http://www.watcomfg.com/patents)





# ADVANCING THROUGH ADVERSITY

The pandemic's effects on tech and hospitality

by IAIN SHAW

**E**VEN AT 2021'S HALFWAY POINT, MANY OF COVID-19's consequences are yet to fully emerge. Some changes won't be apparent for years, but technological shifts precipitated by the pandemic are paving the way for the industry and guests to embrace technologies that will remake hospitality, from contactless and cleaning tech to back-office operations and beyond.

Amid the pandemic, contactless tech was transformed from an exciting emerging trend into a business necessity. Momentum had been building around contactless guest experiences for several years pre-pandemic, with a number of the major players in the industry already in the space. Hilton, for example, had bedded in a number of contactless features and services via the Hilton Honors app, including Digital Check-In and Check-out, Digital Key (to unlock rooms and other facilities) and Connected Room, which allows guests to control the in-room environment and watch TV using a number of top streaming platforms.

Pre-pandemic, some of Hilton's contactless offerings were only available to Hilton Honors members who booked through specific channels. That situation had to change swiftly as COVID-19 swept the world. "Recognizing the

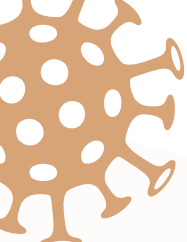
safety aspects of contactless technologies and the interest guests had in being able to go straight to a guest room, we expanded the availability of these technologies to guests regardless of where they booked," said Mike Gathright, Senior Vice President, Customer Experience, at Hilton.

Hilton also intentionally emphasized its touch-free services, folding Digital Check-in and Digital Key into a singular Contactless Arrival package. Gathright said that new hotels entering the Hilton portfolio now "almost always" offer Digital Check-in and Digital Key from day one. Meanwhile, Digital Key has opened more than 111 million room doors to date.

## INVISIBLE TOUCH

The pandemic's arrival put cleaning and hygiene policies – and the technology used in their execution – front and center like never before. Much of the early focus was on sanitizing surfaces, as hotels invested in electrostatic sprayers, but hotels also began to take air quality in their properties more seriously. In the past, air quality has been an afterthought for most hotels. "The hoteliers were 100% underequipped to deal with air," says Charlie Szoradi, CEO of Purge Virus.





## USING **TECH** TO KEEP WORKERS SAFE

While the COVID-19 pandemic largely centered the importance of safe, hygienic working conditions, it also has helped facilitate broader conversations about what hotels need to do to create a safe working environment.

Sexual harassment and the risk of workplace injuries are major areas of concern. “There are two things we’ve learned,” said Yasmine Mustafa, CEO and Co-founder of Philadelphia-based ROAR For Good. “One is that 58% of housekeepers experience sexual harassment on the job, and hotel workers in general are 40% more likely to be injured than any other service worker.”

For housekeeping staff, each room door opened presents a new risk. “They never know what’s on the other side,” Mustafa said. These women – and 80% of housekeeping staff are female, often immigrants and/or people of color – carry a burden that takes a toll. “It doesn’t just stay in the workplace when you work in a very anxiety-ridden environment,” Mustafa said. “You can actually take it home with you as well.”

That’s where safety-monitoring technologies like panic button systems come into play. Most systems are based on a wearable panic button and a series of beacons installed in locations throughout the hotel, including in-room. When triggered, the panic button pings the nearest beacon, relaying the employee’s location discreetly to a colleague or manager who can send assistance.

To be effective, this type of tech must monitor safety in real time, thus ensuring the employee’s call for help is heard and quickly dealt with. And Mustafa says this type of tech can have a deterrent effect when it comes to would-be harassers. For example, one hotel is placing signs in rooms to inform guests that AlwaysOn is in operation.

Of course, hotels have to build robust security and safety policies around useful tools like panic buttons. “We work with management on how they want to respond to incidents to make sure that they have a clear plan on what they do, because every hotel is different,” Mustafa said. “What we look to do is not replace their existing safety protocols but supplement them.”

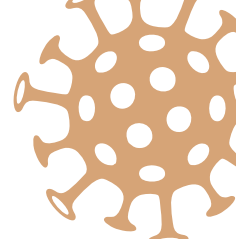
Even in the early days of COVID-19, many in the business expected the crisis to be over in a few months. Szoradi describes mitigation tactics like hand sanitizers, masks, and social distancing as “surface-level mediation” – useful and necessary, yes, but papering over the real issue. “They didn’t go to the system, the core problem of COVID, which is air,” he said, adding that the CDC’s guidance could have put more emphasis on the importance of improving indoor air quality. “It’s the air, stupid,” he said, paraphrasing Bill Clinton advisor James Carville’s famous quip about the economy.

Purge offers hotels indoor air quality (IAQ) solutions based primarily on using UV light or bipolar ionization, both of which improve indoor air quality by neutralizing the threat of pathogens like COVID-19. “Ultraviolet is excellent at irradiation, preventing the COVID from replicating, and the bipolar [ionization] is preventing it from attaching [to human cells],” Szoradi said.

UV and ionization devices can be installed on individual in-room PTAC units or on central heating and cooling systems to increase IAQ throughout hotels. According to Szoradi, the technology also reduces energy waste, creating savings that Szoradi said can offset the cost of installing the devices within a year or two. The economies of scale are also huge. “The same team that spends a couple hours doing one or two rooms can spend three hours instead of two, and they can do an air handling unit that might handle 10,000 square feet,” he said.

### **HIT ME WITH YOUR BEST SHOT**

Advances in the clean tech space also will lighten the load for housekeeping staff. EV Hotel Group is using robotic solutions to relieve housekeeping staff of the burden of cleaning bathrooms and vacuuming. Company CEO Ken Patel said the new



“

Amid the pandemic, contactless tech was transformed from an exciting emerging trend into a business necessity. Momentum had been building around contactless guest experiences for several years pre-pandemic, with a number of the major players in the industry already in the space.”

technology has slashed MPRs that have held stubbornly in place for a generation. “The industry average has been 26 to 28 minutes for 10, maybe 20 years,” Patel said. “We’ve brought that amount down to 18 to 19 minutes.”

By grinding hospitality to a halt, the pandemic also exposed broader flaws in the industry’s use of technology. “It wasn’t that the hotels stopped making money, it was Airbnb was *making* money. They said ‘How is Airbnb making money and the hotels are not making money in a pandemic?’” Patel said. “And it was very simple. It was one thing. It was technology.”

Patel believes hotels have often rested on their laurels as companies like Airbnb have harnessed technology and data to streamline hospitality and guest experience with “click-and-go” services. “We’re in 2021, and people still have to go to the front desk and sign a document,” he said.

All that is about to change if Patel gets his way. In June, EV Hotel Group will launch EV Human, which Patel calls “the world’s first-ever all-in-one software in hospitality.” The platform will launch in four phases, using AI and other technologies to deliver an unprecedented array of features, including guest-facing services (bookings, check-in, room selection, tipping, scanning items from shops) and back-office operations (revenue management, CRM, contactless supply orders). Patel is particularly excited about an autonomous valet service that will be launched in phase four in collaboration with a car manufacturer. “If the car itself has LiDAR technology (used in many

autonomous vehicles), they would be able to call the car from the app, it’ll pull right up to the vestibule,” Patel said.

Patel believes that by freeing hotel staff to focus on guests, his company can tackle long-standing frustrations with the ways hospitality work is organized. He said micromanagement has dominated the industry for too long, and noted that many workers have left the hospitality business since the beginning of the pandemic. He points to the project management models used by big tech firms like Apple and Amazon as the direction toward which the industry should move. “We want to make sure the employees don’t have this large task-driven system with log books, logs with this and with that, and now they forget about the guests,” Patel said.

Patel believes companies like EV Human will revolutionize hospitality, both for guests and hotel employees, and it won’t be long before the hoteliers have the chance to see how these technologies work in practice. For example, Patel expects to have somewhere between 5,000 and 6,000 hotels signed up to the system by the end of the year, and other companies in the space are moving at a similar pace.

#### **MORE THAN A FEELING**

Even as vaccinations allow the industry and consumers to shift out of the heightened vigilance that defined 2020, safety, cleanliness, and hygiene are still going to be priorities for many guests. “The pandemic rapidly changed guest behavior,

and concerns – and those needs continue to evolve,” Gathright said.

Those sentiments around health and hygiene will certainly be one driver of adoption of contactless services going forward, but hoteliers can also begin to re-emphasize the convenience and personalization that were the original promise of many touch-free services. Most recently, Hilton has introduced contactless payments, allowing guests at more than 2,000 properties to complete transactions using mobile devices, smartwatches, and contactless credit cards.

At Purge Virus, Szoradi believes we’ll be living with COVID “in some form” for the medium to long term, as we do with influenza. “It’s a survivor; it makes Rocky Balboa look like a little high school kid in the playground,” he said. Szoradi also referenced the billions of dollars in health care costs and lost productivity due to the effects of manmade toxins and sick-building syndrome, as well as the risks of future pathogens and COVID-19 variants emerging.

Szoradi sees a future where indoor air quality solutions will be as commonplace in hotels as seatbelts are in cars today. “The standard for new construction is that this is going to be built into the equipment,” Szoradi said. “They’re not going to have a choice. Of course they’re going to get clean air – it’s going to be the standard.”

Whatever new technologies come along, they’ll have to live up to the essential promise of hospitality. As Gathright said, “We’re in the business of people serving people – and we always will be.” ■



# Is there life after special servicing?

by RUSHI SHAH

**B**ATTERED BY THE PAN-  
demic, hoteliers continue to face unprecedented cash flow challenges, with a history-making number of their loans entering into special servicing. Fortunately, most CMBS special servicers have been advised by their lenders or controlling class holders to automatically award a forbearance on debt service payments until second quarter of 2021. This means borrowers with CMBS loans that have demonstrated good character and have a healthy payment history with very few outstanding issues may get a little much-needed breathing room. Servicers aren't always inclined to grant deferrals, and CMBS loan holders that failed to secure the servicer's authorization prior to getting a PPP loan may find themselves in the proverbial doghouse. No matter the situation hoteliers and other commercial real estate owners are facing, everyone wants to know what will happen in June 2021 when time runs out.

## IT'S GOOD TO HAVE OPTIONS

Borrowers anticipating the need for additional relief when the deferral timeframe ends have a few resolution alternatives to consider. One option is to pay off the loan early at a discounted price, which is known as a discounted payoff or DPO. This offer may be on the table when the value



“

Any lender (no matter if CMBS or not) willing to work with a borrower is going to kick the can down the road in the form of more debt or aggressive payback terms.”

of an asset has dropped to the point where the current appraised value is likely to be below the loan balance. In exchange for the early payoff, the special servicer may be willing to take the loss on the principal and let the borrower walk away with a DPO price close to the new appraised value. The servicer may even waive any defeasance still owed on the loan.

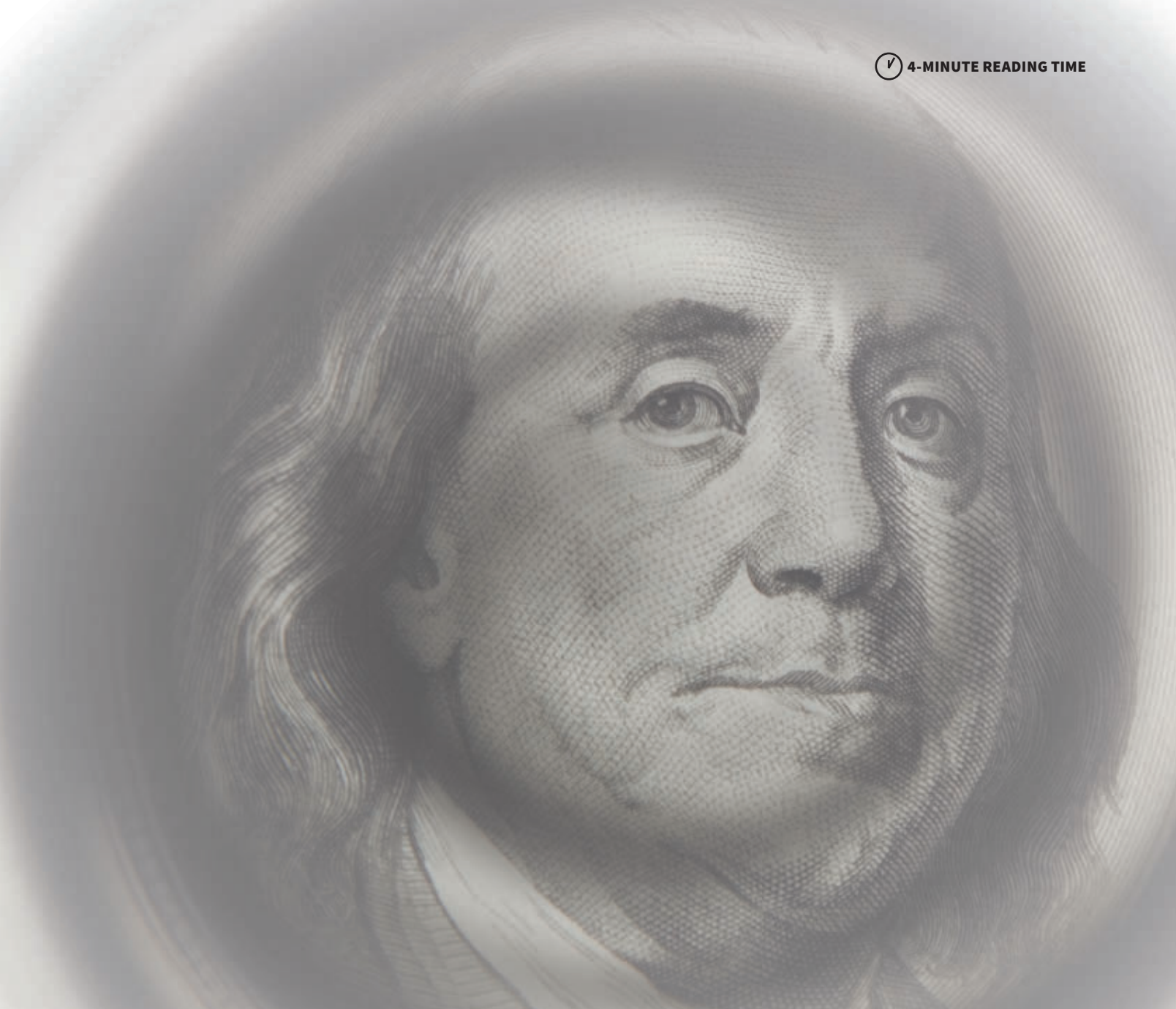
This solution, however, comes with a strict enforcement mechanism and a finite

timeline. Once the borrower and special servicer come to agreement, the borrower usually only has 60 to 120 days (with no room for extension) to close the transaction. If the borrower fails to perform and pay off the loan as negotiated, he or she agrees to move forward with foreclosure proceedings. As a result, it's critical that borrowers arrange financing for the DPO before they sign the agreement with the special servicer.

To demonstrate their continued commitment to the property to the new lender, borrowers going down the DPO path should be prepared to infuse a small amount of equity into financing the transaction and/or pay a higher rate and upfront fees for a shorter loan term.

## ALTERNATIVE CHOICES

If paying off early isn't feasible, borrowers may choose to continue the current loan but allow it to move into full cash management via a lender-controlled lockbox. In this situation, any excess cashflow after the property's expenses and debt service are paid would be applied towards the owed deferred interest. Special servicers may also ask borrowers to personally guarantee a portion of the interest payment in exchange for additional relief. Lenders such as debt funds and life-insurance companies are also dealing with troubled loans in a similar fashion. Conventional banks



and credit union lenders are generally giving one more three-month extension on the payment deferral. In exchange for this concession, they typically add the accrued payment to the loan amount, which raises the principal balance. They may also ask borrowers to put additional capital into the asset.

All in all, the only time lenders are willing to take a loss on the principal loan balance is if there is a path to a negotiated DPO that resolves the problematic loan on its balance sheet. On a rare occasion, a lender may temporarily reduce the interest rate on the loan to help the borrower get

through the hardship. Once again, there is no free lunch. Any lender (no matter if CMBS or not) willing to work with a borrower is going to kick the can down the road in the form of more debt or aggressive payback terms. Depending on the asset and sponsor quality and the market in which the property is located, borrowers can expect to pay interest rates from 7% to 10% for a typical DPO financing. The stakes are high in DPO situations, and borrowers will benefit from working with an expert who understands and has successfully navigated these types of transactions in the past. ■



*Rushi Shah is Principal and CEO of the commercial mortgage and real estate investment banking firm and AAHOA Allied Member Mag Mile Capital. As a leader in*

*hospitality financing, Shah specializes in structuring and placing high-leverage, nonrecourse bridge and permanent debt with cash out for full- and limited-service hotels nationwide. Since joining the firm's predecessor, Aries Capital, in 2015, Shah has structured and closed hundreds of millions in financing for all property types. Shah has held previous positions at Northern Trust and has an MBA from the University of Chicago's Booth School of Business.*

# Negotiating third-party vendor contracts

by RAHUL B. PATEL and CYRA A. DUMITRU

**H**OTELIERS CONSISTENTLY face new challenges to accommodate their guests in an increasingly competitive market. Whether the challenges come from a global pandemic, evolving technology, or rising costs, hoteliers are encountering a growing need to review their business practices to ensure their brand remains current. One way hoteliers can foster a competitive edge is by negotiating their third-party vendor contracts.

## WHAT IS A THIRD-PARTY VENDOR CONTRACT?

A third-party vendor contract is an agreement between a hotelier and an entity or person to provide products or services to the hotelier's guests on the hotelier's behalf. Some examples include transportation, a fitness room, a bar lounge, concierge services, and amenities, such as breakfast.

Prior to selecting third-party vendors, hoteliers should review their franchise agreements to determine if the brand is requiring the use of any particular third-party vendor, and if so, for which item(s) or service(s). Alternatively, may the brand require prior approval of third-party vendors? As such, the first step in negotiating third-party vendor contracts is to review your franchise agreement to ensure you don't commit a default right off the bat.

After determining which type of third-party vendor is permitted and/or required, it may be advisable to seek out referrals or references to "friendly" third-party

vendors from other hoteliers to help narrow the field regarding which third-party vendor to actually hire.

## COMMONLY NEGOTIATED CONTRACT PROVISIONS

After determining what the franchisor requires as far as third-party vendors, the next step is to ensure the vendor in question can provide goods or services that comply with brand standards and your franchise agreement.

Prior to entering into a vendor contract, a hotelier should request samples of the vendor's product and confirm if the vendor has provided the same or similar item or service to the hotelier's brand before. For example, a common service that hoteliers need is a property management system (PMS). When selecting an appropriate vendor, hoteliers should inquire whether a potential vendor has provided and managed a PMS system for the brand in question before. The next step would be to conduct initial research into the vendor itself regarding any positive or negative reviews.

After performing this essential due diligence, and if the vendor can meet brand requirements, the next step is to request a copy of the vendor's contract and read the document in full. It's crucial to understand and comprehend what the contract will and will not cover prior to signing. Depending on the contract, it may be advisable to engage legal counsel to ensure you are properly protected and understand your obligations under the contract in question. Keep in mind, the worst thing that can happen during a negotiation process is asking for certain edits to the contract and the vendor simply says "no." Don't be afraid to negotiate your contracts, it is important to protect yourself and your hotel.



Importantly, regardless of the product or service provided, hoteliers should ensure they have friendly termination provisions in their vendor agreements. It isn't uncommon for brand standards to change and evolve, so hoteliers should ensure they have the ability to terminate a vendor contract if a service or product becomes obsolete or if the vendor can no longer meet brand standards. The termination provision should be without penalty and upon notice from the hotelier.

### PROTECTING YOURSELF FROM LIABILITY IN THIRD-PARTY VENDOR CONTRACTS

In addition to reserving the right to terminate a vendor contract, a hotelier should attempt to limit its liability as much as possible. For example, negotiate for an

indemnification provision. Hoteliers should additionally require their third-party vendors to maintain liability insurance.

### CONCLUSION

When selecting third-party vendors, it's important to ensure the vendor can provide goods and/or services in accordance with brand standards and the hotelier has recourse in the event the vendor fails to do so. ■



*Patel Gaines has represented 200-plus hotels, working with brands such as Hilton, Marriott, Choice Hotels, IHG, and Wyndham, ranging from franchise, transactions, banking, and more.*



IRINA STRELNIKOVA/SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

# 5 new realities for hotels:

## a tale of digital transformation

by PAUL PAYETTE

**D**IGITAL TRANSFORMATION has been touted as the holy grail of modernization in other industries during the past decade. For hotels, though, it's been a slow process as the guest journey is covered with personal touchpoints from hotel staff. But if 2020 taught us anything, the unexpected can and will happen, and transformation can be measured in days and weeks instead of years. Let's take a look at the five new realities hotels are embracing due to the transformational impacts of 2020 to offer returning guests that "future" experience now.

Let's embrace the new realities. An estimated 56% of Americans say they are likely to travel for leisure or vacation in 2021. Hotels need to continue evolving their processes and technology implementations to keep guests and staff safe and boost efficiencies to keep up with new requirements of travelers, from leisure travelers on summer vacation to business travelers on work trips. Digital transformation doesn't have to be a big overhaul, but meeting guest expectations now can save money and optimize staff's time.

I look forward to connecting with my hospitality friends and network in person at this year's AAHOACON21 in August. It's been a long 15-plus months, but we are hopeful for a solid and safe recovery.

# Knowledge is **POWER**



## A LOYAL GUEST IS AN EMPOWERED GUEST

As guests look forward, hotel rewards programs and apps are helping reshape modern conveniences through contactless measures. In a survey by Criton, 80% of guests said they would download a hotel app to allow them to check in, check out, and get information about the property to let them control when and how they engage with the hotel and staff. While social distancing and safety are beneficial, sometimes guests just prefer to book their own amenities, digitally request services, and bypass common touchpoints. This is regularly seen in the first part of the guest journey at airports with e-tickets and kiosks.

Brands need to quickly adopt this opportunity to retain and increase membership and loyalty. In fact, attracting new customers is five times more costly than retaining an existing customer, and loyal customers spend 67% more than new ones. Greater usage and increased memberships equal more direct bookings and higher propensity for future stays.



## IOT IS THE KEY TO UNLOCKING EFFICIENCY AND EXPERIENCE

Technology is changing the game when it comes to a great guest experience coupled with real operational efficiencies. There's been a big shift to integrate door locks and room keys, TV, thermostat controls, lighting, room service, and guest requests via voice through virtual assistants or mobile devices. In addition to adding that "wow factor" for guests and more conveniences, this also increases efficiency in vacant rooms by closing curtains, shutting off lights, and setting room temps at optimal levels to maximize cost savings. Technology also can effectively fulfill requests and remove drop-bys and calls to the front desk, speeding up processes and offloading already-stretched staff.



## HOTELIERS HELP COMBAT HUMAN TRAFFICKING

The Global Slavery Index estimates 45.8 million victims of human trafficking worldwide, and the hospitality industry is particularly vulnerable to this crime. However, with an increase in guests using mobile technologies to interact with the hotel, hotels have an opportunity to remove the anonymity that helps this operation thrive. Mobile entry requires guests to have smartphones and unique phone numbers linked to their keys, and the hotel can be alerted upon each entry and exit. With improved visibility into room access, both hotel staff and the latest tech can be on the lookout for unusual behavior.

Artificial intelligence is also playing a vital role when it comes to security. With the use of an E911 compliant virtual assistant in the room, guests can ask for help. The voice-assisted device automatically calls the police and identifies the room number from which the call originated. When emergency calls are placed, technology also can notify the front desk that there is a problem that needs attention.



## OVERCOMMUNICATE EVERYWHERE WITH A FOCUS ON DIGITAL

A limited amount of touch points with staff doesn't mean limited communications, and overcommunicating is the new norm. Hotels need to ensure they include their latest updates on their website, on third-party booking engines, and via hotel reward programs. Confirmation and welcome emails should also include up-to-date hotel and local information and offer tips for new processes like how to schedule an hour at the pool or workout room.

Upon arrival, digital signage plays a key role in communicating cleaning standards, changes in common protocols, and social-distancing guidelines. Even with less contact, there are ways to push information to guests, such as QR codes for restaurant menus, push notifications with special offers, or virtual assistants that give local recommendations.



## CLEAN, GREEN, HYGIENE MACHINES

In a recent survey by Booking.com, 70% of travelers reported they would only book a particular accommodation if it's clear what health and hygiene policies it has in place. Chemical-spraying or ultraviolet-disinfecting robots have proven effective for sanitizing lobbies, hallways, meeting spaces, and other social areas. Smaller UV-sanitation devices for remotes or room keys and robotic vacuums are a more affordable option that can still help staff keep up with additional duties. Although hotels will see an increase in costs in the short term, the benefits of this technology will go a long way to ensuring safety of guests and staff. ■



*Paul Payette is Vice President, Strategic Relations for Nomadix and is a hospitality veteran with more than 20 years of experience growing global business and leading sales, strategic partnerships, marketing, and strategic planning. He also is a U.S. Air Force veteran and was decorated for heroism.*

# Managing your most controllable expense by embracing hotel technology

by JOHN ERHART

**A**S HOTELIERS, WE ALL KNOW that one of the largest controllable expenses in the hotel industry is labor. Unfortunately, this is where we have seen massive fluctuation in 2020. According to a recent *U.S. News* article, nearly four million hospitality jobs were lost last year, and at least 2 in 10 hotel employees who were working before the pandemic have still not returned to work.

While hotels want to retain their talent, it's critical they manage their staff in a way that protects their bottom line. Operating leanly and capitalizing on opportunities for reducing costs will be the name of the game this year. The best way hotels can recover is by embracing technology tools that help control expenses.

But why should hotels (and franchisees, owners, etc.) embrace management systems to relieve financial strain? Because implementing such an approach can:

## INCREASE EFFICIENCY AND ROI

Technology should always remove barriers, and cloud-based solutions do it best because they are accessible from anywhere. But this doesn't guarantee a significant ROI. Efficiency is the key to success, so hoteliers should look for management systems that reduce the time spent on redundant tasks like manual data entry. This leads to fewer errors and streamlines the analysis of hotel-specific metrics. We see the most positive impact when software can reduce stress, eliminate the guesswork, and allow for top-to-bottom transparency. The best solutions will produce real-time metrics, keep budgets in check, and set clear expectations for hotel staff.

## AVOID WASTEFUL SPENDING

Management systems can curtail many of the operational challenges that hotels face every day, especially those with financial implications. It's critical for hoteliers to find a software solution that helps them see, understand, and control all their expenses – from cleaning supplies to labor. You should expect your platform to relate these expenses to hotel-specific metrics like POR and allow cost comparison across your portfolio. Robust forecasting and budgeting play a significant role in avoiding wasteful spending and projecting the bottom line.

### GET STAFF BACK TO WHAT THEY LOVE TO DO

Getting your hotel staff away from spreadsheets and heavy data entry allows them to do what they do best – take care of guests. Using a management system will reduce the labor needed for this type of work, allowing front desk staff and general managers to focus their time on creating a meaningful guest experience. This is needed more than ever as nervous or anxiety-ridden travelers start to venture back out this year.

### MAINTAIN ACCURACY, SCALABILITY, AND EASE OF USE

There are three main benefits to consolidating hotel accounting: accuracy, scalability, and ease of use. You gain accuracy when you eliminate the number of systems you're using for operations and reporting. Then, as your operations grow, management systems must be able to scale to keep up as the portfolio expands. An ERP solution allows owners to streamline operations for accounting, labor management, payroll, sales, procurement, and more. Using one centralized platform creates benchmarks across properties and can help identify new opportunities for improvement.

While it's difficult to try and find a silver lining, the good news is the hospitality industry has always found a way to rebound and thrive. It's important to be strategic and embrace different modes of technology that will help the industry stay on the steady road to recovery. ■

*John Erhart is the CEO and Founder of Inn-Flow, a hotel management platform that consolidates all hotel operational needs into one comprehensive solution. For more info, visit [www.inn-flow.com](http://www.inn-flow.com).*



# 5 design changes

## for a safer hotel environment

by TONYA DYBDAHL

**A**S WE MAKE OUR WAY through 2021, the guest experience doesn't look anything like it did just one year ago. As vaccines continue to roll out, states relax their regulations, and hotels begin to increase capacity, there's a new set of rules and best practices that dictate shared spaces in every hotel.

And for the same reasons, margins are narrow and a full-scale redesign might not be possible. By working with your existing floorplan and adding a few essentials for the "new normal," you can ensure that your guests stay safe throughout their stay.

### 1 DIRECT TRAFFIC FLOW

Managing the flow of traffic throughout your space is difficult in the best of times. Now? This has become a paramount challenge. While there's no shortage of floor-mounted, wall, or standing signage solutions, there's a direct benefit in physical, tangible barriers. Look for ways to keep guests moving in one direction, employing crowd control bands that can be repositioned and reused as needed, or find ways to rearrange furniture so that pathways are easier to follow, particularly in large spaces.

This also applies to spacing in stagnant areas. Ensure guests remain 6 feet apart while waiting to check in and impose limits on elevators, restricting the number of unfamiliar parties who are riding at the same time. While these guidelines should be clearly posted, ensure they're easily communicated during check-in and other interactions with guests.

### 2 WHAT CAN STAY

Take a good, hard look at your furniture. From the entryway to the lobby, through dining areas and halls, there's no shortage of short-use seating. Now, think about your storage space and where you can put excess furniture for the time being. By reducing the quantity of seating, you quickly restrict guests' behaviors.

Start by arranging your space with the recommended 6-foot distance between sets of seating. For those who travel in groups, you'll still have clusters of seats, however, it's best to keep clusters restricted to just four seats each. Using end tables and coffeetables helps keep seats physically well spaced also.

### 3 NEW ADDITIONS

After seeing what can stay and what can be stored, there still will be a few new necessities to keep guests and employees safe, such as sneeze guards, wayfinding tools, and sanitizer stations. These movable tools are easy to install in accessible spaces near entrances and high-traffic areas within the lobby and beyond. Many of these are contingent on your existing layout, while others are available as universal solutions that can be ordered or tailored to fit your exact needs.

As you select furniture, make sure your upholstery and finish choices are designed to stand up to the harsh solvents needed to sanitize every surface. Choose durable vinyl over porous fabric and scratch- and stain-resistant laminate over wood or veneer. This further ensures that your pieces will last well beyond the pandemic.

## USE PLEXIGLAS

Whether called Plexiglas or acrylic, this product has one purpose: to provide total transparency while maintaining a physical barrier. These see-through panels have always been a staple of the food industry, resulting in the name “sneeze guards,” but their popularity has skyrocketed during COVID-19.

There’s a guard for every need. As the pandemic has progressed, manufacturers have created a wealth of solutions in a variety of sizes, some of which have cutouts for transactions, some wrap around for 3/4 personal coverage, and others may be connected together to form much larger (yet still-sturdy) partitions. Front desks, valet stands, security stations, and any point of interaction between employees and customers should employ these helpful solutions.

## FOOD AND BEVERAGE CONSIDERATIONS

Bars and restaurants have been subjected to some of the tightest COVID-19 restrictions, and no matter what, it’s imperative you follow all local, state, and national regulations, as well as best practices that are released by authorities such as the CDC. In accordance with these rules, in-house bars and restaurants found creative ways to make their service safe for everybody.

- **All-Weather Outdoor Areas:** If you have an outdoor patio, consider exploring one of many ways to make this work during inclement weather, such as small yurts or huts that can be heated through the coldest of days or covered during intense sun.
- **Leverage Unused Spaces:** Because of COVID regulations, halls or banquet spaces have gone unoccupied. These expansive spaces can easily

be transformed into significantly distanced dining areas with ample airflow throughout.

- **Keep Patrons Separated:** Particularly at bars, ensure that there’s limited seating at the bar itself. To go the extra mile, seek out movable dividers that can be positioned between groups of patrons and quickly cleaned between service.
- **Enhance Room Service:** You may already have a program in place that provides room service from your kitchen, but in this climate, it’s worth enhancing this benefit. Highlight this service in printed material, online, and

at check-in to increase awareness and promotion.

As we continue to navigate this wild, new frontier, we can only manage what’s right in front of us. Keeping on top of changing regulations, ensuring that employees are taking personal precautions, and maintaining a professional and sanitary environment is what we can do for now. Doing our best now will ensure that tomorrow is an even brighter, stronger future. ■

---

*Tonya Dybdahl is a Space Planning and Design Assistant Manager for National Business Furniture ([www.nationalbusinessfurniture.com](http://www.nationalbusinessfurniture.com)) and she can be reached at [TonyaD@nbf.com](mailto:TonyaD@nbf.com).*



**WORK IN PROGRESS**

AAHOA's  
commitment  
to franchise  
relations is

# tireless

by MICHAEL FORREST



**A RECENT STR U.S. MARKET RECOVERY** Monitor report noted that RevPAR had risen to, at that time, \$65.34. This represented a 4.2% increase week over week and the industry's highest level of the past 56 weeks when indexed to 2019. RevPAR mostly increased week over week so far this year. The report also showed RevPAR performance with 73 markets either in the Recovery or Peak categories.

So everything is OK and back to normal, right? Not exactly.

**MANY QUESTIONS REMAIN**

Though the report marks an upward trend, which is great news, there are still many challenges to overcome. And thanks to recent feedback from many AAHOA Members . There are many questions, including:

- What will the hotel business model look like coming out of COVID-19?
- Will standards change?
- How can I reduce my fixed costs?
- Where can I find good candidates to help run my operations?

These are just a few of the questions raised by AAHOA Members.

AAHOA continues to stay connected with brands on a regular basis, sharing your feedback and advocating on behalf of our members. We continue to engage in conversations on challenging topics and provide feedback on what AAHOA Members are experiencing every day. This open dialogue is crucial as brands begin to imagine new frameworks and pilot ideas on what that new hotel business model in a post-pandemic world may look like. We strive to fulfill our vision of becoming the foremost resource and advocate for America's hotel owners. In AAHOA's Strategic Plan, you will see franchise relations is poised to continue its role as a primary focus for the association. We will be subject-matter experts, provide more education on franchise relations, strengthen advocacy on

collective interests for hoteliers with their brands, and be a known resource for owners and for brands.

**CONNECTING OUR WORK TO A STRATEGIC VISION**

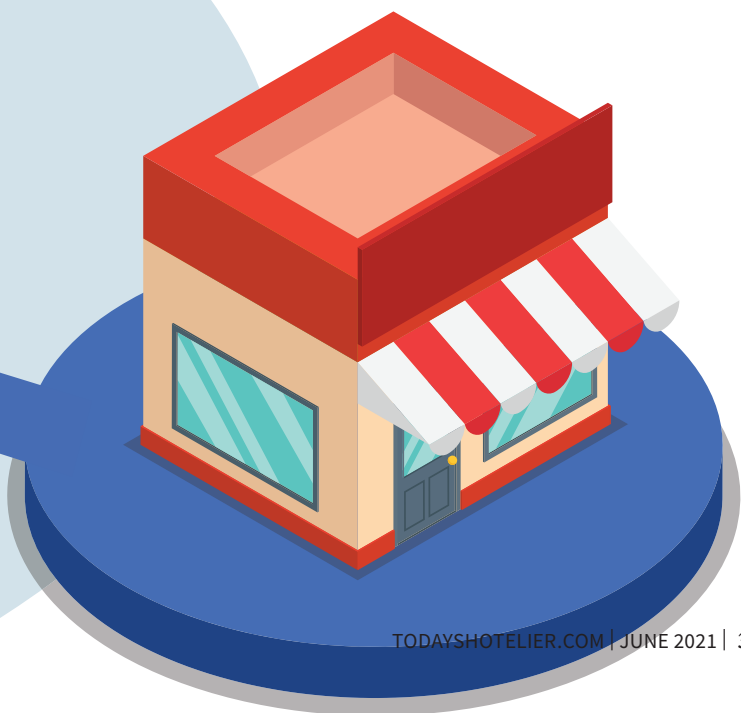
As we make our way past the pandemic, we know there will be changes. Changes in business, changes in politics, and changes in the way we look at things in general. As changes are being made and thoughts come to fruition, know that AAHOA has a seat at the table with those organizations impacting our members, and we will remain there.

**AN UNWAVERING COMMITMENT TO YOU**

Our commitment to AAHOA Members and franchise relations remains strong. Franchise relations are an important and deliberate part of our Strategic Plan, and our commitment is unwavering. Our success is best achieved when we are united. As always, we encourage your feedback, ideas, and solutions. Your input is crucial to building tomorrow's industry, so please remain active within this great association. ■



*Michael Forrest is AAHOA's Vice President of Franchise Relations. You can reach him at [franchise@aahoa.com](mailto:franchise@aahoa.com).*



# The free market drives innovations and triggers new technology

by ALFREDO ORTIZ

**M**UCH OF AMERICAN progress is rooted in the ability of individuals and businesses to innovate and create new technology that improves the lives of everyone. It's a progression of advancement inherent in the U.S. economy's structure, which is best characterized by a free market. But the U.S. isn't perfect. Politicians have made power grabs that have crowded out the private sector from most effectively providing a product or performing a service. Government creep can have a depressing effect on innovation and shrinks gains in the standard of living.

The modern U.S. Postal Service (USPS) is a good example. Although its historic necessity during the early days of the country – when a mail delivery system was too costly to carry out privately – is without question, it does nothing today that couldn't easily be performed by FedEx or UPS. In fact, not only could USPS operations be replaced, but its services could be provided more efficiently. Instead of turning a profit, the USPS lost \$9.2 billion in 2020.

Unfortunately, the pandemic has accelerated this trend. The economy has grown increasingly reliant on government as trillion-dollar legislative packages passing Congress become the norm, rather than the exception. Some of the spending during the pandemic was necessary.

Hotels and other businesses needed a financial lifeline to weather government-induced lockdowns. In fact, I supported these components. But so much of the appropriations went to pet projects and other sources unrelated to the health emergency.

Subsequently, “infrastructure” packages – which puzzlingly have components that have nothing to do with roads or bridges – are being used as a vehicle to once again sidestep the free market. Price controls on certain products, nonsensical environment regulations, and provisions that take away worker autonomy could dampen future advancement.

But even with our defects, compared to the rest of the world, the U.S. is historically sitting pretty. Zoom in on any industry to find proof. Hotels are no exception.

Hotels are now able to provide guests with more in-room technology and amenities at lower costs. A 50-inch flatscreen TV in 2007, for example, had a price tag of \$6,000, while you can pick one up today for less than \$500. Multiply those savings for the more than five million guest rooms in the U.S. and companies have saved a fortune while providing customers with a better experience.

The rise of the internet and smartphone apps have also revolutionized the industry. Not only is it easier than ever for guests to book a trip, but the various online portals give hotel businesses the option to actively attract customers through social media, or even fill empty rooms by offering discount pricing through travel websites.

It's a universe that would have been unrecognizable just a few decades ago.

Moving forward, the business community and individuals need to pressure our elected government leaders to safeguard the free-market system that has benefited the U.S. so much. That means fighting against tax hikes, pushing back against more regulatory red tape that will strangle innovation, and advocating for policies that will restore the economy to pre-pandemic levels.

The free-market economy and the innovation it triggers has worked wonders for all Americans. To continue on the same path, we just need to make sure Uncle Sam doesn't get in the way. ■

*Alfredo Ortiz is the President and CEO of the Job Creators Network.*



# AAHOA Vendor Partners

**A**AHOA is pleased to provide this list of its Club Blue, Platinum, Gold, Silver, and Allied members as a resource for members. AAHOA, however, does not endorse these companies or the products or services they offer, or any of the discounts, deal terms or other offers related to the price that any of these companies may advertise, market, or promote to AAHOA members. AAHOA strongly encourages all of its members and any users of this list to conduct all reasonable and necessary due diligence and research prior to selecting a company with which to do business.

Gray shading denotes Platinum (Dark Grey) & Silver Members  
Blue shading denotes Club Blue Members

## ADVERTISING/MARKETING

### Zonetail Inc

Mark Holmes  
416-994-5399  
mark@zonetail.com

## APPRAISERS

### O'Connor & Associates

Andrew Choy  
713-375-4224  
achoy@poconnor.com

## BED + BATH ACCESSORIES/ SUPPLIES

### Avendra

Mara M. Radis  
mara.radis@avendra.com

### Guest Supply A Sysco Company

Justin Haggart  
732-868-2200  
jhaggart@guestsupply.com

## BEDSPREADS/DRAPERIES/ PILLOWS

### Serta Simmons Hospitality Bedding

Mike Ryan  
404-307-3909  
mryan@SertaSimmons.com

## CABLE/SATELLITE TV SERVICES

### ALVI SATELLITES

Prashant Ajmera  
678-957-8700  
alvisatellites@gmail.com

### Dish Business

Tyler Floyd  
303-723-1854  
Tyler.floyd@dish.com

### Home Box Office

Michelle Mahoney  
347-610-1081  
Michelle.Mahoney@warnermedia.com

### Just In Time Communications

Justin Jones  
909-985-3777  
justin@justintime.tv

### MVM Technology

Michele Blanton  
704-776-5940  
Mblanton@mvmtechnology.com

### Showtime Networks Inc.

Doug Markott  
770-698-6937  
doug.markott@showtime.net

### Spectrum Enterprise

Stephanie Pitts  
212-379-5826  
stephanye.pitts@charter.com

### TV Asia

Pradeep Hegde  
732-650-1100 26  
info@tvasiausa.com

### USA Digital Inc

Aaron Gomez  
888-388-1531  
aaron@usadigital.tv

## CARPET FLOOR CARE

### Shaw Hospitality

Paul Young  
404-556-4110  
paul.young@shawcontract.com

## CARPET/CARPET CUSHION

### Shaw Hospitality

Paul Young  
404-556-4110  
paul.young@shawcontract.com

## CASEGOODS

### Foliot Furniture

Mahesh Parekh  
702-278-7380  
marketing@foliot.com

## CHEMICALS

### DIVERSEY, Inc.

Deniz Alpaslan  
262-994-7158  
deniz.alpaslan@diversey.com

### Ecolab, Inc.

Tori Hollaway  
1-800-352-5326  
Tori.Hollaway@ecolab.com

### P&G Professional

Rohan Varty  
609-933-2925  
varty.r@pg.com

## COMPUTERS – HARDWARE

### Cox Business

Alea Riley  
404-269-3057  
alea.riley@cox.com

## COMPUTERS – SOFTWARE

### AutoClerk, Inc.

Kevin Velez  
623-780-6362  
kevin.velez@bestwestern.com

## CONSULTING

### myDigitalOffice

Matt Curry  
270-993-1197  
matt@mydigitaloffice.com

## CREDIT CARD PROCESSING

### American Express

Rebecca Carron  
800-528-5200  
courtney.robins@aexp.com

### Chase

Faheem Khan  
972-324-5510  
faheem.khan@jpmorgan.com

## ELECTRONIC LOCKING SYSTEMS

### Acculock

Dan Brown  
866-222-8562  
dan@acculock.com

### Onity, Inc.

Mark G. Lewitt  
800-248-6189  
mark.lewitt@onity.com

## EMPLOYEE BENEFITS/ EMPLOYEE LEASING

### ADP, Inc.

Thomas Bell  
770-238-4405  
Thomas.Bell@ADP.com

## ENERGY MANAGEMENT

### Amana PTAC

Byron Cortez  
800-647-2982  
bcortez@amana-ptac.com

## EQUIPMENT/ APPLIANCE PROVIDERS

### GE Appliances

Amy Kaiser  
502-452-3073  
amy.kaiser@geappliances.com

## FINANCING

### Access Point Financial

Rhonda Loerzel  
404-382-9599  
rloerzel@accesspointfinancial.com

### American Express

Rebecca Carron  
800-528-5200  
courtney.robins@aexp.com

**Marcus & Millichap**

Brian Hosey  
202-536-3750  
Brian.Hosey@marcusmillichap.com

**PMC Commercial Trust**

Lewis-Kristi Hodge  
972-349-3200  
loans@pmctrust.com

**State Bank of Texas**

Melissa Butler  
469-200-8245  
sandpatel@statebnk.com

**FLOOR COVERINGS****Atlas Concorde**

Michael Sautner  
615-661-7200  
m.sautner@atlasconcorde.com

**FOOD/BEVERAGE****Avendra**

Mara M. Radis  
mara.radis@avendra.com

**Focus Brands**

Rani Bhatt  
404-978-4829  
rbhatt@focusbrands.com

**Guest Supply A Sysco Company**

Justin Haggart  
732-868-2200  
jhaggart@guestsupply.com

**FRANCHISING****Best Western Hotels & Resorts**

Michelle Zajac  
800-847-2429  
michelle.zajac@bestwestern.com

**Choice Hotels International**

Tim Shuy  
301-592-5000  
development@choicehotels.com

**Extended Stay America**

Linda Trexler  
980-345-1600  
ltrexler@esa.com

**Focus Brands**

Rani Bhatt  
404-978-4829  
rbhatt@focusbrands.com

**G6 Hospitality Franchising, LLC**

Lauren France  
972-360-9000  
FRANCE\_Lauren@g6hospitality.com

**GreenTree Hospitality Group, Inc.**

Scott A. Pokorny  
480-626-9257  
scott.pokorny@greentreeinn.com

**HILTON, Inc.**

Bill Fortier  
703-883-1000  
bill.fortier@hilton.com

**Hyatt Hotels Corporation**

Jason Gregorek  
james.tierney@hyatt.com

**IHG Hotels & Resorts**

Karen Rogow  
770-604-5379  
karen.rogow@ihg.com

**Marriott International**

Eric Jacobs  
703-473-6606  
eric.jacobs@marriott.com

**My Place Hotels of America**

Terry Kline  
605-229-8684  
terry.kline@myplacehotels.com

**OYO Hotels Inc**

Stephen Jarrett  
+91-981-872-4954  
Stephen.jarrett@oyorooms.com

**Radisson Hotel Group**

Phil Hugh  
800-336-3301  
Phil.Hugh@radissonhotelsamericas.com

**Red Roof**

Stephanie Pina  
888-473-8861  
spina@redroof.com

**RLH Corporation**

Harry Sladich  
509-777-6330  
harry.sladich@rlhco.com

**Wyndham Hotels & Resorts**

Kevin Brickner  
973-753-7158  
kevin.brickner@wyndham.com

**FURNITURE/FIXTURES****Foliot Furniture**

Mahesh Parekh  
702-278-7380  
marketing@foliot.com

**HARDWARE****Lowe's ProServices**

Earl Madison  
404-640-8657  
Earl.Madison@lowesprosupply.com

**HEATING/AIR CONDITIONING****Amana PTAC**

Byron Cortez  
800-647-2982  
bcortez@amana-ptac.com

**Friedrich Air Conditioning Company**

Dave McDonald  
800-399-7822  
dmcDonald@friedrich.com

**GE Appliances**

Amy Kaiser  
502-452-3073  
amy.kaiser@geappliances.com

**Prem Supply, LLC**

Deepak I. Panchmia  
806-745-6651  
deepak.panchmia@premsupply.com

**HOTEL/MOTEL BROKERS****G6 Hospitality Franchising, LLC**

Lauren France  
972-360-9000  
FRANCE\_Lauren@g6hospitality.com

**Marcus & Millichap**

Brian Hosey  
202-536-3750  
Brian.Hosey@marcusmillichap.com

**HOUSEKEEPING/  
JANITORIAL SERVICES****DIVERSEY, Inc.**

Deniz Alpaslan  
262-994-7158  
deniz.alpaslan@diversey.com

**Ecolab, Inc.**

Tori Hollaway  
1-800-352-5326  
Tori.Hollaway@ecolab.com

**Ferguson**

Solutions Center  
1-888-334-0004  
Facilities.supply@ferguson.com

**P&G Professional**

Rohan Varty  
609-933-2925  
varty.r@pg.com

**The Home Depot Pro™**

Yogeshkumar Patel  
866-412-6726  
yogeshkumar\_a\_patel@homedepot.com

**IN-ROOM AMENITIES****Dish Business**

Tyler Floyd  
303-723-1854  
Tyler.floyd@dish.com

**HD Supply Facilities Maintenance**

Bree Lewis  
800-431-3000  
bree.lewis@hdsupply.com

**Hospitality1**

Babita Patel  
714-343-5875  
babitapatel@hospitality1.net

**Showtime Networks Inc.**

Doug Markott  
770-698-6937  
doug.markott@showtime.net

**INSURANCE****MassMutual**

Ana Lucia Divins  
980-293-8124  
analuciadivins@massmutual.com

**Worldclaim**

Russell Heath  
404-875-5866  
rheath@worldclaim.net

## INTERACTIVE TV SERVICES/ TELEVISIONS

### ALVI SATELLITES

Prashant Ajmera  
678-957-8700  
alvisatellites@gmail.com

### Just In Time Communications

Justin Jones  
909-985-3777  
justin@justintime.tv

## INTERNET SERVICES

### Spectrum Enterprise

Stephanie Pitts  
212-379-5826  
stephanye.pitts@charter.com

### Zonetail Inc

Mark Holmes  
416-994-5399  
mark@zonetail.com

## LOAN CONSULTANTS

### Access Point Financial

Rhonda Loerzel  
404-382-9599  
rloerzel@accesspointfinancial.com

### State Bank of Texas

Melissa Butler  
469-200-8245  
sandpatel@statebnk.com

## MAINTENANCE SUPPLIES

### Ferguson

Solutions Center  
1-888-334-0004  
Facilities.supply@ferguson.com

### HD Supply Facilities Maintenance

Bree Lewis  
800-431-3000  
bree.lewis@hdsupply.com

### Lowes's ProServices

Earl Madison  
404-640-8657  
Earl.Madison@lowesprosupply.com

### The Home Depot Pro™

Yogeshkumar Patel  
866-412-6726  
yogeshkumar\_a\_patel@homedepot.com

## MANAGEMENT COMPANIES

### IHG Hotels & Resorts

Karen Rogow  
770-604-5379  
karen.rogow@ihg.com

### Radisson Hotel Group

Phil Hugh  
800-336-3301  
Phil.Hugh@radissonhotelsamericas.com

### RLH Corporation

Harry Sladich  
509-777-6330  
harry.sladich@rlhco.com

## MANAGEMENT CONSULTANTS

### AutoClerk, Inc.

Kevin Velez  
623-780-6362  
kevin.velez@bestwestern.com

## MATTRESSES/BOX SPRINGS

### Serta Simmons Hospitality Bedding

Mike Ryan  
404-307-3909  
mryan@SertaSimmons.com

## OFFICE PRODUCTS

### Coast To Coast Computer Products, Inc.

Kyle Kurtz  
800-231-4553  
kkurtz@coastcoast.com

## PAYROLL PROCESSING

### ADP, Inc.

Thomas Bell  
770-238-4405  
Thomas.Bell@ADP.com

### INFINITI HR

Daniel Mormino MBA, CFE, CMHS®  
623-455-6234  
daniel.mormino@infinitehr.com

## PLUMBING SUPPLIES

### Rinnai

Dipesh Parekh  
1-800-621-9419  
engineering@rinnai.us

## PRINTING/DESIGN/PRODUCTION

### Coast To Coast Computer Products, Inc.

Kyle Kurtz  
800-231-4553  
kkurtz@coastcoast.com

## RISK MANAGEMENT SERVICES

### Worldclaim

Russell Heath  
404-875-5866  
rheath@worldclaim.net

## SBA LENDER

### PMC Commercial Trust

Lewis-Kristi Hodge  
972-349-3200  
loans@pmctrust.com

## SECURITY CONTROL/ SAFETY PRODUCTS

### Onity, Inc.

Mark G. Lewitt  
800-248-6189  
mark.lewitt@onity.com

## TAX CONSULTANTS

### O'Connor & Associates

Andrew Choy  
713-375-4224  
achoy@poconnor.com

## TELECOMMUNICATION SERVICE EQUIPMENT

### Cox Business

Alea Riley  
404-269-3057  
alea.riley@cox.com

## TELEVISION/ IN ROOM ADVERTISING

### DirecTV Hospitality

Mica Matvia  
310-964-4470  
AH417N@att.com

### Home Box Office

Michelle Mahoney  
347-610-1081  
Michelle.Mahoney@warnermedia.com

### USA Digital Inc

Aaron Gomez  
888-388-1531  
aaron@usadigital.tv

## TELEVISIONS/ELECTRONICS

### Hospitality1

Babita Patel  
714-343-5875  
babitapatel@hospitality1.net

### MVM Technology

Michele Blanton  
704-776-5940  
Mblanton@mvmtechnology.com

## WALL COVERINGS

### Atlas Concorde

Michael Sautner  
615-661-7200  
m.sautner@atlasconcorde.com

## WATER HEATERS

### Rheem Manufacturing

### Water Heating Division

Dave Hanley  
770-225-7194  
Dave.Hanley@Rheem.com

### Rinnai

Dipesh Parekh  
1-800-621-9419  
engineering@rinnai.us

**Chase Merchant Services**

14221 Dallas Parkway, Building Two  
Dallas, TX 75254  
Ph: (800) 824-4313  
Web: [merchants.chasepaymentech.com](http://merchants.chasepaymentech.com)

*Chase Merchant Services is the global payment acceptance and merchant acquiring business of JPMorgan Chase & Co. and a leading provider of payment, fraud management and data security solutions capable of authorizing transactions in more than 130 currencies. Customers benefit from custom rate pricing that helps save you money, fraud prevention tools to help keep your business secure, 24/7/365 in-house customer support and over 30 years' of experience in payment processing.*

**myDigitalOffice**

4330 East West Highway, Suite 975  
Bethesda, MD 20814  
Ph: (206) 438-9957  
Email: [brenna@mydigitaloffice.com](mailto:brenna@mydigitaloffice.com)  
Web: [www.mydigitaloffice.com](http://www.mydigitaloffice.com)

*myDigitalOffice is an end-to-end information management platform for sourcing, processing and storing hospitality data in the cloud. Our SaaS solutions help hotel owners, operators, franchisees and hospitality REITs automate the hotel back office and manage property portfolio performance to a tee. The visibility, connectivity, and control delivered by our award-winning cloud-based dashboards, document management software and integrated data feeds allow teams to reach greater levels of productivity, ensure regulatory compliance, and reduce environmental impact while optimizing profitability. Learn more at <https://mydigitaloffice.com>*

**Pellerin Milnor Corp.**

P.O. Box 400  
Kenner, LA 70063-0400  
Ph: (504) 467-9591  
Fax: (504) 468-3094  
Email: [milnorinfo@milnor.com](mailto:milnorinfo@milnor.com)  
Web: [www.milnor.com](http://www.milnor.com)

*Pellerin Milnor Corporation is a leading manufacturer in the commercial laundry machinery industry. Milnor equipment ranges in size and purpose and serves a spectrum of markets. Featuring washer-extractors from 25-700 lb capacity (11-317 kg), automated tunnel washing systems for processing 7,000 lb (3,175 kg) per hour or more, dryers, material handling systems, and laundry computer networks, Milnor machines have a proud legacy of durability. For more information, please call (504) 467-9591, e-mail [milnorinfo@milnor.com](mailto:milnorinfo@milnor.com), or visit [www.milnor.com](http://www.milnor.com).*

**Radisson Hotels**

701 Carlson Parkway  
Minnetonka, MN 55305  
Ph: (763) 212-1327  
Web: [www.radissonhotelsamericas.com/en-us/development](http://www.radissonhotelsamericas.com/en-us/development)

*With eight individual brands and more than 1,500 hotels internationally, Radisson Hotel Group Americas is one of the largest, most dynamic hotel groups in the world. Our portfolio includes Radisson Collection, Radisson Individuals, Radisson Blu, Radisson, Radisson RED, Park Plaza, Park Inn by Radisson, and Country Inn & Suites by Radisson. Each of our distinctive hotel brands embodies our modern vision of hospitality in its own way. Connect with us at <https://www.radissonhotelsamericas.com/en-us/development>*

**Rinnai**

103 International Drive  
Peachtree City, GA 30269  
Ph: (404) 434-2750  
Fax: (916) 315-3947  
Web: [www.rinnai.us](http://www.rinnai.us)

*Rinnai offers worry-free hot water for any size business. More North American businesses rely on Rinnai for hot water than any other tankless manufacturer. It's because we won't waste your time: We promise a 48-hour return on our quotes and 100% guaranteed accuracy on each custom system sizing. Count on worry-free ownership with the industry's most complete set of commercial services and the industry's leading warranty.*

**WebRezPro Property Management System**

115 - 1925 18th Avenue NE  
Calgary, AB T2E 7T8  
Ph: (800) 221-3429  
Email: [info@webrezpro.com](mailto:info@webrezpro.com)  
Web: [www.webrezpro.com](http://www.webrezpro.com)

*WebRezPro is a powerful and easy-to-use cloud property management system designed for independent hotels, motels and inns. The fully integrated and automated system maximizes operational efficiency and revenue by modernizing front desk and back office operations. Bringing the benefits of the cloud to 1,500+ properties in 40 countries, WebRezPro is a product of World Web Technologies Inc., an internet marketing and software company for tourism and hospitality businesses since 1994.*

**ALL PROPERTY SIZES**  
**HOTEL MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE**  
[WWW.WEBREZPRO.COM](http://WWW.WEBREZPRO.COM)

**RUN YOUR PROPERTY IN THE CLOUD**  
Join the 1500+ properties that use WebRezPro to maximize direct bookings and streamline hotel operations.

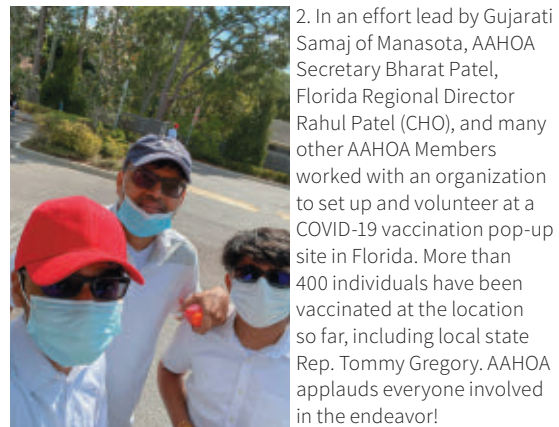
- ✓ CONTACTLESS CHECK-IN
- ✓ NO-FEE BOOKING ENGINE
- ✓ GROUP MANAGEMENT
- ✓ HOUSEKEEPING
- ✓ CUSTOM REPORTS
- ✓ INTEGRATED ACCOUNTING
- ✓ POS PURCHASES
- ✓ EMV CERTIFIED
- ✓ PCI COMPLIANT
- ✓ 125+ INTEGRATIONS

**1-800-221-3429**  
[WWW.WEBREZPRO.COM](http://WWW.WEBREZPRO.COM)

# AAHOA MEMBERS IN ACTION



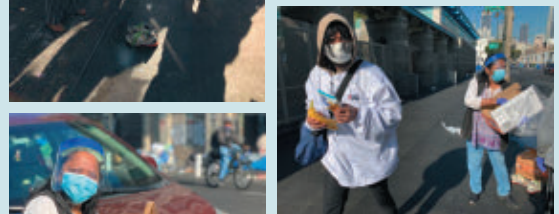
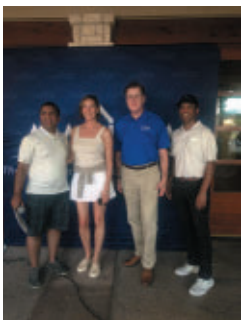
1. Southeast Texas Regional Director Sawan welcomed Neal and many other members, sponsors, and friends of AAHOA to the Southeast Texas Inaugural Charity Golf Tournament on April 6 in Houston. The event was a smashing success, with 86 players raising more than \$40,000 for charity and ongoing COVID-19 relief efforts.



2. In an effort lead by Gujarati Samaj of Manasota, AAHOA Secretary Bharat Patel, Florida Regional Director Rahul Patel (CHO), and many other AAHOA Members worked with an organization to set up and volunteer at a COVID-19 vaccination pop-up site in Florida. More than 400 individuals have been vaccinated at the location so far, including local state Rep. Tommy Gregory. AAHOA applauds everyone involved in the endeavor!



3. Best Western's Ron Pohl joined (from left) AAHOA President & CEO Cecil P. Staton, Southwest Regional Director Imesh Vaidya, Vice Chair Vinay Patel, and Chairman Biran Patel at the Southwest Region Charity Golf Tournament on April 8 in Chandler, AZ. A great day was had by all, players and sponsors alike, as more than 96 players raised more than \$56,000 for local charities and ongoing pandemic relief efforts.



4. South Pacific Lifetime Member Lopa Patel gave back to her community recently by spending the afternoon passing out food to the homeless. AAHOA salutes Lopa for her generosity of spirit in reaching out to help those less fortunate.

## AAHOA CLUB BLUE, PLATINUM & SILVER MEMBERS

The following companies provide generous ongoing support to AAHOA and its members. A heartfelt and sincere thank you is extended to every one of our vendor partners for their contributions to AAHOA and the industry at large. When searching for a provider, consider doing business with the following members.



### AAHOA CLUB BLUE MEMBERS



**ADP, Inc.**  
Thomas Bell: (973) 510-0196



**Chase**  
Faheem Khan: (800) 727-1872



**Lowe's ProServices**  
Earl Madison : (404) 640-8657



**AutoClerk, Inc.**  
Mohammed Hansia:  
(925) 284-1005



**Ecolab, Inc.**  
Michael Pfister: (317) 250-5189



**WorldClaim**  
Russell Heath: (518) 456-8523



**Avendra**  
Mara Radis: (301) 825-0311



**Home Box Office**  
Michelle Mahoney: (347) 610-1081



**Zonetail**  
Mark Holmes:  
(416) 583-3773 x228



### AAHOA PLATINUM MEMBERS



**Amana PTAC**  
Byron Cortez: (800) 647-2982



**G6 Hospitality Franchising, LLC**  
Mike McGeehan: (972) 360-9000



**International WELL Building Institute**  
Peter Scialla: (212) 464-8907



**Red Roof Inn**  
Matt Hostetler: (713) 576-7426



**Best Western Hotels & Resorts**  
Michelle Zajac: (800) 847-2429



**GE Appliances**  
Amy Kaiser: (502) 452-3073



**Marriott International**  
Christie Patterson:  
(301) 380-3200



**RLH Corporation**  
Harry Sladich: (866) 437-4878



**Choice Hotels International**  
Tim Shuy: (301) 592-5000



**Guest Supply – A Sysco Company**  
Justin Haggart: (732) 868-2331



**Merchaneer**  
Bob Ekman: (630) 240-4747



**TV Asia**  
Pradeep Hegde:  
(732) 650-1100 x26



**Diversey**  
Deniz Alpaslan: (980) 221-3235



**Hilton**  
Bill Fortier: (703) 883-1000



**Onity, Inc.**  
Mark Lewitt: (800) 248-6189



**Wyndham Hotels & Resorts**  
Kevin Brickner: (973) 753-7158



**Extended Stay America**  
Linda Trexler: (980) 345-1600



**IHG Hotels & Resorts**  
Karen Rogow: (770) 604-5379



**OYO Rooms & Technology, LLC**  
Stephen Jarrett: (423) 426-3148



**Radisson Hotel Group**  
Phil Hugh: (800) 336-3301



**Focus Brands**  
Rani Bhatt: (404) 978-4829



## AAHOA SILVER MEMBERS



**Access Point Financial**  
Rhonda Loerzel: (404) 382-9592



**AccuLock, Inc.**  
Dan Brown: (866) 222-8562



**Alvi Satellites**  
Prashant Ajmera: (678) 466-7868



**American Express**  
Merchant Services:  
(800) 528-5200



**Atlas Concorde**  
Michael Sautner: (615) 661-7200



**BeneChoice**  
Petrina Skiles: (717) 490-6313



**Brand Standard Furnishings**  
Ansley Sanderson: (404) 697-8578



**Coast to Coast Computer Products, Inc.**  
Kyle Kurtz: (800) 231-4553



**Cox Business**  
Alea Riley: (404) 269-3057



**Curve Hospitality**  
Sargent Khan: (713) 819-7296



**DIRECTV, Inc.**  
Jeff Fox: (310) 560-0323



**DISH Business**  
Tyler Floyd: (303) 723-1854



**Ferguson**  
Brian Winterble: (954) 597-3163



**Foliot Furniture**  
Mahesh Parekh: (702) 278-7380



**Friedrich Air Conditioning Company**  
Dave McDonald: (210) 546-0500



**GitGo**  
Amy Infante: (312) 636-7384



**Groups360**  
Tim Floors: (615) 972-5519



**HD Supply Facilities Maintenance**  
Stratton Michaels: (800) 431-3000



**The Home Depot Pro**  
Susan Wright:  
(866) 412-6726 x105540



**Hospitality1**  
Dhar Patel: (714) 473-9813



**Hyatt Hotels Corporation**  
Jim Tierney: (617) 803-4489



**INFINITI HR**  
Daniel Mormino: (623) 455-6234



**Marcus & Millichap**  
Alexis Hummel: (630) 570-2225



**Mass Mutual**  
Ana Lucia Divins: (800) 835-8612



**MSI Surfaces**  
Anil Palasamudram:  
(281) 794-6261



**MVM Technology, LLC**  
Michele Blanton: (800) 596-5080



**myDigitalOffice**  
Matt Curry: (270) 993-1197



**My Place Hotels of America**  
Terry Kline: (605) 229-8684



**NextGen Hospitality Consultants**  
Sean Patel: (210) 478-2734



**O'Connor & Associates**  
Andrew Choy: (713) 375-4224



**P&G Professional**  
Rohan Varty: (609) 933-2925



**PMC Commercial Trust**  
Kristi Lewis-Hodge:  
(972) 349-3200



**Prem Sales**  
Deepak Panchmia:  
(806) 745-6651



**Rinnai**  
Dipesh Parekh: (800) 621-9419



**Shaw Contract**  
Sean Finn: (404) 863-7685



**Showtime Networks, Inc.**  
Doug Markott: (770) 698-6937



**Simmons Hospitality Bedding**  
Andrea Hochworte:  
(770) 353-0122



**Spectrum Enterprise Solutions**  
David A. Fitts: (212) 379-5826



**State Bank of Texas**  
Sand Patel: (678) 520-7263



**USA Digital, Inc.**  
Aaron Gomez: (909) 200-5445



- 100% Waterproof -  
**LUXURY VINYL PLANK**

**PREFERRED MANUFACTURER** OF HOSPITALITY  
FLOORING FOR OVER 35 YEARS

**FREE SAMPLES:** CALL US AT 1-800-225-2948 OR  
ON OUR WEBSITE: [WWW.KINSLEYCARPETS.COM](http://WWW.KINSLEYCARPETS.COM)



- Modern & Affordable -  
**HOSPITALITY CARPET**



KINSLEY CARPET MILLS UNDERSTANDS THE IMPORTANCE  
OF AFFORDABLE AND RELIABLE FLOORING.

JOIN THE 750+ HOTELS THAT HAVE UPGRADED THEIR  
FLOORING WITH KINSLEY CARPET MILLS IN 2020.

**AAHOA MEMBERS RECEIVE AN EXCLUSIVE DISCOUNT!**



**TIME TO REPLACE? VISIT US AT [WWW.KINSLEYCARPETS.COM](http://WWW.KINSLEYCARPETS.COM) OR CALL 1-800-225-2948.**



**GLOBALSAFE**  
21 YEARS

Hotel Safes from \$89

7 Year Warranty



Our Safes are in Every Major Hotel Brand in the U.S.A.

Custom Colors Available



OUR SAFES HAVE BEEN INSTALLED IN THESE HOTELS.

HILTON DAYTONA BEACH, FL	HYATT MCCORMICK PLACE CHICAGO, IL	MARRIOTT BUFFALO, NY
HILTON EAST BRUNSWICK, NJ	HYATT RESORT & SPA GUAM	MARRIOTT LOS ANGELES, CA
HILTON HARTFORD, CT	HYATT ROSEMONT, IL	MARRIOTT RIVERSIDE, CA
HILTON TORONTO, ON	HYATT VINEYARD CREEK, CA	MARRIOTT NORTH CHARLESTON, SC

**800-545-4947**

GlobalSafe Corporation [WWW.HOTELSAFES.COM](http://WWW.HOTELSAFES.COM)



5 Years Warranty  
Easy Financing

5000+ HOTELS-MOTELS WORLD-WIDE TRUST

**MATRIX COMMUNICATION & SECURITY SOLUTIONS FOR EFFICIENT FUNCTIONING**

- Hospitality IP Phone System
- Time-Attendance and Access Control
- HD IP Security-Camera System



**MATRIX**  
TELECOM | SECURITY

Call: 1-(800)-283-0539  
Fax: (888) 717-7472  
[sales@matrixhotelpbx.com](mailto:sales@matrixhotelpbx.com)  
[www.matrixhotelpbx.com](http://www.matrixhotelpbx.com)

**SLG**  
Saltzman Law Group

A law firm focusing in all matters hospitality and franchise.

Contact us for a free consultation.

Richard Saltzman, Esq.

973.933.2418

[rs@saltzmanlg.com](mailto:rs@saltzmanlg.com)

@SaltzmanLawGroup

- Liquidated Damage Settlements
- Dispute Resolution
- Franchise Agreement Negotiation
- Franchise Registration

[www.saltzmanlawgroup.com](http://www.saltzmanlawgroup.com)

**FRANCHISE LITIGATION**

**P&A**  
PATEL & ASSOCIATES

Legal assistance in reviewing/ negotiating franchise agreements and liquidated damages settlements.



Mahesh I. Patel  
Patel & Associates, Attorneys at Law  
Phone: 972-643-1813  
Fax: 972-231-0104  
Email: [mpatel@patellaw.net](mailto:mpatel@patellaw.net)

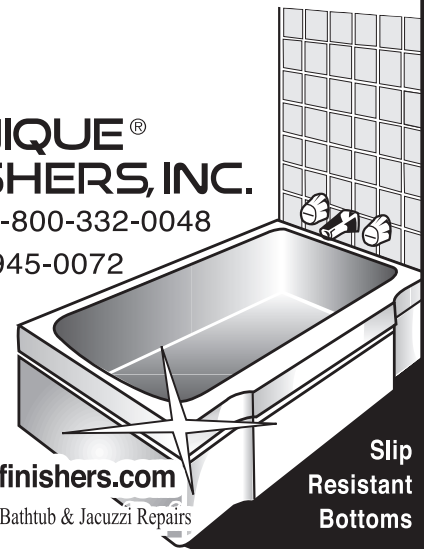
**BATHTUBS RESTORED**

Don't Let Amateurs and "Fly-By-Nights" Ruin Your Bathtubs!  
Unique Refinishers is the nation's oldest and largest bathtub repair, reglazing and restoration company. You can be assured of the highest quality workmanship and materials. Coast to Coast.

**UR** **UNIQUE®**  
**REFINISHERS, INC.**

Nationwide 1-800-332-0048

Atlanta 770-945-0072



[www.uniquerefinishers.com](http://www.uniquerefinishers.com)

We specialize in fiberglass Bathtub & Jacuzzi Repairs

Slip Resistant Bottoms

# THANK YOU TO OUR ADVERTISERS

for your ongoing support of *Today's Hotelier* magazine and AAHOA.

## ADVERTISERS INDEX

Alvi Satellites .....13 www.alvidirect.com	myDigitalOffice.....22 www.mydigitaloffice.com
Chase Merchant Services.....4 merchants.chasepaymentech.com	Patel & Associates.....49 www.patellaw.net
Global Safe Corporation .....49 www.hotelsafes.com	Pellerin Milnor Corp.....3 www.milnor.com
Home Depo Pro / Supplyworks .....9 www.HomeDepotpro.com	Radisson Hotels .....Inside Front Cover www.radissonhotelsamericas.com
Kinsley Carpet Mills ..... 48 www.kinsleycarpets.com	Red Lion Hotel Corp - Sonesta.....7 franchise.rlhco.com
Matrix Telecom .....49 www.matrixhotelpbx.com	Red Roof Inn .....11 redrooffranchising.com
	Rinnai .....Outside Back Cover Rinnai.us
	Saltzman Law Group, LLC.....49 www.saltzmanlawgroup.com
	Unique Refinishers .....49 uniquerfinishers.com
	Vanities International.....50 vanitiesinternational.com
	Watco Manufacturing Company.....23 www.watcomfg.com
	World Web Technologies ..... 44 www.webrezpro.com

FORMERLY  
**HOTEL VANITIES  
INTERNATIONAL**





**VANITIES  
INTERNATIONAL**

SINCE 1999,  
GLOBAL LEADER  
IN HOSPITALITY  
PRODUCTS

Vanity Tops & Bases  
Shower Surrounds & Pans  
Granite & Quartz  
Domestic & Import Options

Visit our website to download our Catalog  
[vanitiesinternational.com](http://vanitiesinternational.com)

**888-457-7465**  
sales@VanitiesInt.com

# AAHOAC<sup>21</sup>N

If Your Business Is the Hotel  
Business, This Is the Place To Be

## *THE ROAD TO RECOVERY RUNS THROUGH AAHOA*

**Register Today at [AAHOA.com/Convention!](https://AAHOA.com/Convention!)  
Early-Bird Pricing Ends July 4.**

Dallas, Texas  
AUGUST 3-6, 2021





# The best of both worlds: tank + tankless.

## Every. Detail. Matters.<sup>SM</sup>

The innovative Demand Duo<sup>®</sup> H-Series combines tank and tankless technologies to give you the very best of both systems. Featuring a durable storage tank, this super-efficient system provides all the hot water you need and is backed by the industry's best warranty. Featuring new preassembled natural gas and electrical connections, it's easy to install and ideal for emergency replacements. It's another way we're Creating a healthier way of living.<sup>®</sup> **See how at [Rinnai.us/demand-duo](https://www.rinnai.us/demand-duo)**

# Rinnai<sup>®</sup>

Copyright 2021. All rights reserved. Rinnai<sup>®</sup> and creating a healthier way of living<sup>®</sup> are the registered trademarks of Rinnai Corporation used under license by Rinnai America Corporation. Every. Detail. Matters.<sup>SM</sup> is the trademark of Rinnai America Corporation.