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DRIFTWOOD HOSPITALITY MANAGEMENT SHARES INSIGHT INTO HOTEL, RESORT TRENDS AFTER POLLING PROPERTY MANAGERS

Digital Concierge and Smart Room Technology Among Trends of First Quarter

North Palm Beach, Fla. – April 16, 2018 –

There is a shift happening in the hospitality industry, as a digital transformation and a desire for personalized experiences set the stage for a new era of travel. [Driftwood Hospitality Management](#) (DHM), a North Palm Beach-based hotel management company that operates 48 hotels throughout the United States and Costa Rica, surveyed its general managers recently, seeking to understand the trends they're seeing for the year ahead, and gathered insights into the evolving needs of travelers.



“The hospitality industry strives to keep pace with trends, to bring travelers what they crave – personalized and meaningful interactions,” said Michael Diaz, chief operating officer for DHM. “The trends we are seeing at our properties today reflect the importance of connectivity and authenticity throughout the travel experience.”

Trends noted by DHM general managers as part of this survey include:

- **Digital Concierge**

Gone are the days of calling the front desk, or even going to the concierge with a request. John Marko Jr., general manager at the Hampton Inn by Hilton Chicago Downtown, shared that his team is embracing new technologies such as KIPSU, a text-based message service where guests can communicate in real-time with the front desk via their smartphone. Hotel frontline teams across the nation are using programs like KIPSU to fulfill housekeeping requests, valet, dinner reservation requests and more.

“When implementing new technology, it is important for the staff to go through proper training, so that they can understand the benefit to the guest and themselves,” shared Marko Jr. “Making a change may come easier to some than others, but as we’ve seen at our property, once the team is excited, that is contagious and really does carry over to

guests. We are also focused on the message that while advancing our technology is important, nothing will ever replace great customer service with a personal touch.”

- **Smart Rooms**

As travelers implement smart home tech, automating and simplifying their living spaces, they will begin requesting high-tech amenities that go beyond Wi-Fi access during their travels. David Truesdale, general manager at Hilton Durham, shared that in the near future, his property will be introducing the Hilton Connected Room, a first-of-its-kind, high-tech guestroom that enables travelers to personalize and control every aspect of their stay from one central point - their mobile device. Currently, Hilton Honors members can enjoy the use of a Digital Key in select properties, bypassing the front desk completely upon check-in. Truesdale has seen an uptick in this throughout the first quarter.

- **Local Experiences**

Travelers want authentic travel experiences, allowing them to live like locals. And with events like the Festival of Colors in Spanish Fork, Utah bringing in an estimated 70,000 travelers over two days, properties such as the Sheraton Salt Lake City can now provide just that. Marriott International invested in PlacePass, a pioneering provider of travel technology solutions offering travelers a leading online meta-search platform for in-destination experiences. Properties can now leverage PlacePass to offer all its guests unrivaled and memorable experiences when they travel, choosing from 100,000 plus authentic local experiences in 800 destinations worldwide.

“Whether guests are here on business or pleasure, they want to maximize their time away from home and return to their friends and family with a story to tell,” said Jason Ford, General Manager, Sheraton Salt Lake City Hotel. “As a result, they are seeking truly local experiences – from hot air balloon races to a trip to the world-renown Bonneville Salt Flats – and we are not only obligated, but also delighted to respond to these requests both in-person and with the latest technology.”

For more information on DHM, please visit www.driftwoodhospitality.com.

About Driftwood Hospitality Management

Driftwood Hospitality Management (DHM) is a leader in providing solutions-based services to the domestic and international hotel industry. With headquarters in North Palm Beach, Florida and offices in Miami, Arizona and Costa Rica, Driftwood works with award-winning franchises, nationally recognized hospitality brands and major resort destinations in top markets around the world. The Driftwood Hospitality executive team delivers over a century of combined hospitality experience with expertise in hotel operations. The company’s primary goal is to capitalize upon growth opportunities, form strategic partnerships, and work with under-performing hotels in various markets to ensure long-term growth. With a focus on acquisition, development, repositioning, renovations, and hotel operations, Driftwood brings a tailored approach to each property and market, ensuring clients receive the highest level of service and are well-positioned for growth.

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