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DRIFTWOOD HOSPITALITY MANAGEMENT HITS 70 HOTELS, SHARES NEW INSIGHTS INTO INDUSTRY TRENDS FROM PROPERTY MANAGER POLL

Digital Engagement, Culinary Experiences and Sustainable Practices Among Mid-Year Trends to Note

North Palm Beach, Fla. – July 24, 2019 – [Driftwood Hospitality Management](#) (DHM), a North Palm Beach-based hotel management company that operates 70 hotels throughout the United States and Costa Rica, recently surveyed its general managers, seeking to understand this year’s growing hospitality trends and the evolving needs of travelers.

“We are constantly looking for ways to improve the guest experience, which is why we prioritize keeping a pulse on emerging industry trends,” said Michael Diaz, chief operating officer for Driftwood Hospitality Management. “Today, our property teams are noticing more and more conversations and inquiries that reflect the importance of connectivity and environmental responsibility, factors that have a direct impact on customer loyalty.”



Trends noted by Driftwood Hospitality Management general managers as part of this survey, looking specifically at Q1 & Q2 2019, include:

- **Digital Engagement**

Technology continues to transform the hospitality industry, allowing guests to have more autonomy over their stay. New programs such as KIPSU, a text-based messaged service where guests can communicate in real-time with the front desk via their smartphone, are positively impacting the guest experience by providing a more convenient and efficient communication tool. Travelers can now view room locations, select a room and even check in and out without standing in line at the front desk. Additionally, the hotel marketplace has seen a major shift towards the adoption of mobile keys, a new form of accessibility allowing tech-savvy guests to open doors via a smartphone that would normally require a key card, including guestrooms, elevators, fitness centers, or parking garages.

“We’ve seen a significant rise in guests communicating needs to the hotel frontline team via text or the Marriott app,” said Justin Gammon, general manager of San Diego Marriott Mission Valley. “In response to this new wave of innovation, we have

implemented effective brand standards to ensure timely responses to all requests. Our team is committed to delivering personalized customer service and this tool has helped enhance the way we interact with guests.”

- **Culinary Experiences**

Today’s travelers are showing an increased interest in personalized and unique food experiences as part of their stay, which can sometimes be a major driving factor behind travel decisions. Adapting to this growing trend, hotels are now incorporating food and drink options into the guest experience from serving local craft beers to providing a more inclusive menu that accommodates all dietary needs. Rob Auman, general manager of Sheraton Dallas Hotel by the Galleria, shared that his team recently returned to its Texas roots by transforming the on-site restaurant, formerly known as the Front Yard, into Red Eye Restaurant and Bar, infusing the menu with well-known barbeque favorites. Further, hotels without a restaurant component look to outside vendors as partners.

“We work with DiningList, a platform that provides local restaurant recommendations, that we promote at time of check-in,” said Karrie Jaeger, general manager of Staybridge Suites Orlando Airport South. “We also promote Grub Hub to our loyalty members. For example, each time they order while at the property they receive 500 IHG reward points as well as points for each dollar they spend.”

- **Sustainable Practices**

With travelers becoming increasingly sensitive to environmental and social issues, many large hotel corporations have implemented a variety of initiatives to redefine and advance sustainable practices. Most recently, Hilton has pledged to cut its environmental footprint in half by 2030 and Marriott International announced its plan to remove disposable plastic straws and stirrers from its properties worldwide. IHG implemented the Green Engage system, an innovative online environmental sustainability system that allows hotels to choose from over 200 “green solutions” designed to help reduce their energy consumption and water usage.

“As part of the IHG Green Engage system, our property embraces new measures to gauge and manage our environmental impact. Some of our best practices include tracking monthly consumption data, installing energy efficient lighting, and participating in recycling efforts and waste management,” said Philesa Edwards, general manager of Holiday Inn Express Boca Raton West. “We also offer our guests an opportunity to earn 500 IHG Rewards Club points if they decline housekeeping. This initiative has helped us address guest feedback and work together on a common mission to better conserve our resources.”

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

About Driftwood Hospitality Management

Driftwood Hospitality Management is a leading hotel management company currently operating approximately 70 hotels with more than 13,000 rooms throughout the United States and Costa Rica. The company’s portfolio includes a broad cross-section of branded hotels ranging from large full-service to mid-size, extended stay and limited-service properties, as well as independent hotels, boutiques and resorts. Members of the company’s senior management team have an average of 20 years of experience in all segments of the lodging industry and have proven highly successful in the development of new hotels and hotel takeovers, as well as re-positioning and optimization of hotel operations. Driftwood has extensive management experience and relationships with most major brands, including Hilton Worldwide, Marriott International, Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide, InterContinental Hotels Group, Inc., Choice Hotels International, Inc. and Wyndham Worldwide, and has successfully cultivated long-

term relationships with some of the most renowned institutional investors and banking institutions in the world.

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Media Contact:

Hemsworth Communications

954.716.7614

DriftwoodPR@hemsworthcommunications.com