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The Potential and Pitfalls of a Hotel Management Takeover

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By Gary Hogan

Taking over an underperforming property can seem like a daunting task. After the excitement of being awarded a management contract, the transition period that follows can be filled with roadblocks — from distrustful employees, to outgoing management diverting their bookings to other hotels, to owners placing unrealistic expectations on performance.

While it takes time to rebuild a property to its full potential, leveraging the right opportunities can help you establish quick wins that may ease the transition and create a solid foundation for success.

Communicate with your employees

Be prepared to encounter rumors, gossip and low morale among staff once the takeover is announced. Employees may be wondering about their job security, or they may resist the adoption of new policies and procedures. Establish a culture of open communication in order to foster positive internal relationships.

Your staff is one of your most valuable assets, so be sure to communicate with them often. During the transition, make it a point to let your employees know how much you value their knowledge of the property and assure them that their jobs are safe (if you do intend to keep everyone on board). Be clear about expectations and changes you'd like to implement in the near future, so your staff will know what to expect.

Look for low-hanging fruit

Take advantage of the fresh perspective you bring to a new property and see what can be improved upon immediately. When Hogan Hospitality Group took over Kauai Shores Hotel, we saw that business had primarily been driven by the past management company's website and OTAs, with limited wholesale contracts. Bringing on a number of new wholesale partnerships right off the bat created an immediate and significant increase in revenue.

The same approach can be applied to any area of operations. Conduct a thorough inspection of the property and fix any issues that may cause a negative guest experience, such as moldy bathrooms or shabby linens. Invest in guest services training for front-of-house employees. Even minor improvements can make a difference in guest experience, which will help restore the overall perception of your property.

Don't impose a cookie-cutter approach

If you manage multiple properties, it can be easy to fall into the old way of doing things. However, what's worked for one hotel may not perform as well in other markets. Gain a thorough understanding of your competitors and the guests you'd like to attract, and tailor your business strategy to fit.

Additionally, the property you've taken over may have unique characteristics or a great location. Don't fall victim to a standardized approach — market the strengths and differentiators of your hotel to your target audience. Create events that highlight your property's prime beachfront location or world-class tennis ranch.

Coming into a new property is challenging, but with the right approach, you can move the needle and achieve growth in a relatively short period.

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About Gary Hogan



(<http://www.hoganhospitalitygroup.com/>)

At the helm of the Hogan family legacy, Gary Hogan leads the strategic and growth-oriented vision of Hogan Hospitality Group. With over four decades of industry experience, Gary is intimately involved with every property in the group's portfolio. A dedicated and collaborative leader, Gary has successfully integrated his deep-rooted family values throughout the hospitality enterprise by focusing on its employees, guests and community.

Contact: **Geoff Graf**

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