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Insider: Do “High Tech” and Hospitality Belong in the Same Sentence?

By Rob Rush, CEO, LRA Worldwide



I have long lived my life (or at least part of it) by a very simple maxim, which I have expounded, ad nauseam, to my wife and children to much “here we go again” eye-rolling. Quite simply, when you enter the vast marketplace of goods and services in search of... anything, make sure that you are getting the very best that the business where you choose to spend your hard-earned cash has to offer.

So don't visit an H&R Block looking for legal advice. And don't slide into a booth at Denny's and order the Seared Day Boat Scallop Special. Certain businesses have areas of strength and expertise, and in order to get the very best that they have to offer, both the business and consumer should recognize and heartily embrace those strengths.

This is why it puzzles me when the hospitality industry sometimes tries to shed the vestiges of... hospitality, all in the name of “high-tech” progress. As my current article in this week's [Hotel Business Review](#), “[Do “High Tech” and Hospitality Belong in the Same Sentence?](#)” elaborates, the hospitality industry needs to embrace its inherent strength – the human touch that it has provided without fail since its inception. Lord knows, other industries – from banking to building – are attempting to co-opt the hospitality industry mojo, incorporating the humanity that's wired into our DNA into every customer interaction. And in hospitality, we order up... more kiosks?

I'm no technophobe. My Blackberry is a constant companion, and once I figured out I could download every set the Grateful Dead ever played onto my iPod, that device has been surgically attached to my hip. (By the way – New Year's Eve 1976, 2nd Set, Cow Palace. Killer.) But in the hospitality industry, the most important role of technology is in the behind-the-scenes role of creating opportunities for higher-quality human touches... never replacing them. So, to my previous point (and to paraphrase Darrel Royal, former head football coach at the University of Texas), dance with who brung ya'. Just as H&R Block has built its reputation on dispensing affordable tax advice and Denny's makes a mean “Moons Over My Hammy,” the hospitality industry has made its bones providing... hospitality, along with all of the meaningful human interaction that term implies. Don't shy away from it or apologize for it – embrace it. Give the article a read and, as always, I enjoy getting your feedback. Feel free to reach out with questions or for discussion – my e-mail box is always open!

Cheers,

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