

OWNER

BACK TO *School*

THE VALUE OF **CONTINUING EDUCATION**
IN THE HOTEL INDUSTRY

CLEAN PLATE
REDUCING FOOD
WASTE WITH AI

HOTEL UPDATE
REOPENING WITH
A NEW FLAG

ISSUE THREE 2019



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For hoteliers and their teams, continuing education often proves a powerful tool for taking careers and properties to the next level. In fact, as the hospitality environment continues to evolve, those who invest in ongoing training and insist on staying up to date on the latest technologies and operational best practices will be most likely to succeed.

KEVIN HILCHEY

President
Lodging Host Hotel Corp.



NEW LIFE WITH A NEW BRAND

Setting the Holiday Inn & Suites Dallas Addison up for success

The Holiday Inn & Suites® Dallas Addison officially opened its doors this May. Only 10 of the property’s 102 guestrooms were available to travelers, but it was a huge milestone considering the hotel, which was previously a Holiday Inn Express®, had been vacant for more than a year. What was also impressive was that the property’s conversion really started in earnest only a few months prior in February, at which point our company, Lodging Host Hotel Corp., was brought on as a third-party manager to help with the transition. Deepak Gandhi, our director of development, told me, “This one is a real challenge.” He wasn’t wrong, but this also wasn’t our first experience with an IHG®-branded hotel—we currently have six in our portfolio. We have been managing properties since I founded the company in 1984 and developing hotels since the late 1990s. The second generation is now taking over, and Patrick Hilchey, our director of operations, moved into the hotel with the team until it opened. We were excited to be pulling from our deep well of experience to move the project forward.

Because the property had been closed for more than a year, getting it guest-ready was like opening a new hotel. The team decided early on that we would only make rooms that were 100 percent finished and available for guests—now, we’re up to 75 guestrooms and fully expect to have the rest open shortly. The hotel is proving to be quite popular for the area, and there have already been nights where demand has outpaced our capacity. Before we took any bookings, we made certain the public spaces offered the full Holiday Inn® experience. When we did have to make small changes, we were careful to ensure they were made without guests knowing we were still fine-tuning.

Throughout the renovation process, Lodging Host worked closely with the hotel’s ownership, as well as IHG’s design team and property improvement plan (PIP) department. We never would have been able to pull off such an extensive renovation in such a short period of time without these strong relationships and a supportive and collaborative environment.

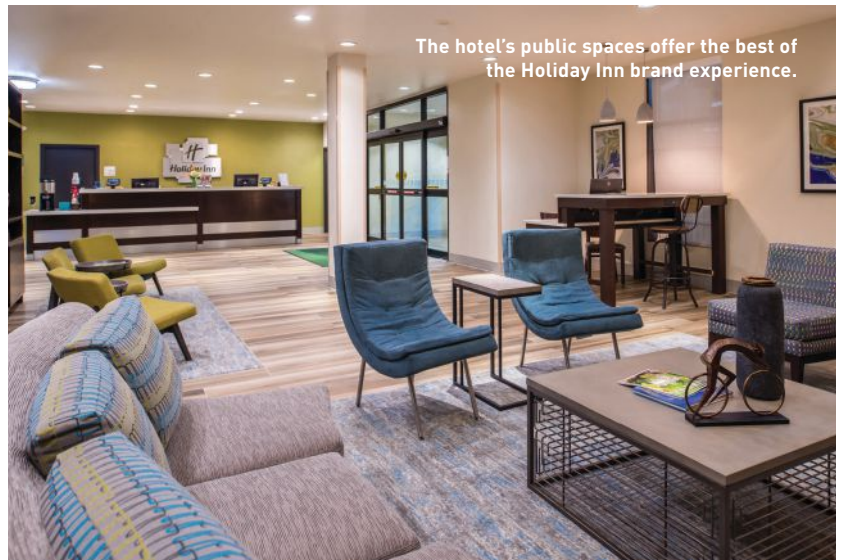
One of the biggest changes we made to the property was installing a kitchen. I have to give credit to our F&B expert, Steve Armbrecht, the hotel’s manager, Abram Despain, and the IHG F&B



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startup assistant, all of whom were essential in liaising with the local health department and meeting its requirements.

This focus on F&B has more than paid off. Guests love our operation, and our scores for F&B are tremendous. Beyond the food itself, we also often receive compliments regarding our service. You can get great food in a lot of places, but it's hard to find a place where you get great food and great service at the same time. When we were onboarding our staff, we endeavored to hire only people who had a real passion for hospitality and trained them to put the guest experience first. This has been a very successful approach, and the experience the guests have in our restaurant is one of the biggest reasons they keep coming



back. Further, our team's enthusiasm for this property is contagious, leading to high morale that continues to positively affect our service.

Without the buy-in of the ownership and IHG, this property would not be where it is today. IHG's teams went above and beyond to get this property where it needed to be without compromising quality or the guest experience. This collaborative environment allowed us to do what was best for the property, best for the owners and best for the guests.