

VOICES

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WHAT'S INSIDE:

- Honors and Awards
- HVMG Corporate Staff Profile
- Featured Hotel
- Highlights of HVMG's 2013 Conference
- Recent General Manager Appointments
- Exciting News From Corporate Offices

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CEO's Corner

'BE EXCELLENT!' MORE THAN A SLOGAN AT HVMG



Robert Cole
President & CEO

We've all seen catchy taglines that companies of all shapes and sizes employ to try to characterize who they are and what they do, but what do they really mean? And more importantly, what is the company actually doing to incorporate it and make it a part of their culture?

At HVMG, recently we've adopted **Be Excellent!** as our call to action to instill a Culture of Excellence throughout every single area of our company. Much deeper and broader than a strategic initiative or guest service training program, we believe it is critical that excellence be a mindset of every individual working at our hotels or our corporate offices; that it must be embedded in our DNA and in how we do business

with all of our various stakeholders. Frankly, we believe that failure to cultivate this culture will be life-threatening to our organization.

Just how serious are we about this? In May, we revised our Mission Statement to incorporate the importance of excellence in everything we do. It now reads:

"To maximize the value of our hotels in any business climate by cultivating a Culture of Excellence with each of our stakeholders."

We believe that cultivating this Culture of Excellence at HVMG is very consistent with our Vision Statement, which is:

"To be the most sought-after employer, operator and partner in the hotel industry and the leading solution provider for under performing properties."

continued on page 2

HVMG Recognized for Growth with Prestigious Awards

HVMG's impressive growth in recent years has not gone unnoticed by the Atlanta business community. In June, HVMG was named one of Georgia's 40 Fastest-Growing Mid-Market Companies by the Atlanta chapter of the Association for Corporate Growth. To be eligible for the 2013 Georgia Fast 40 Award, Georgia-based companies must have three years of verifiable revenue and employment growth.

In April, HVMG also was named one of Atlanta's fastest-growing private companies as part of the Atlanta Business Chronicle's 2013 Pacesetter Awards, an annual award program that recognizes the city's top 100 fastest-growing private firms.

The award marked the second consecutive year HVMG has appeared on the Business Chronicle's Pacesetter list of Atlanta's fastest growing private companies. Pacesetter winners had to have experienced a two-year growth in sales of more than 50%.

continued on page 3

HONORS AND AWARDS EARNED BY OUR HOTELS AND ASSOCIATES

The **Country Inn & Suites Athens** has won the 2012 President's Award for exceptional guest satisfaction and brand engagement at the annual Carlson Rezidor Corp. Business Conference. Less than 10% of Carlson Rezidor's 1,300+ hotels worldwide receive the President's Award. This is the third straight year the Athens team has won this prestigious award from Carlson Rezidor!



Patti Steele, Food & Beverage Server at the **Embassy Suites Troy**, received the Embassy Suites Spirit of Pride in May for her outstanding guest service. The Spirit Award is the highest form of Team Member recognition

that Embassy Suites offers. Winners receive brand-wide recognition, a plaque, congratulatory call from a brand executive, and a \$350 gift. Patti has worked at the Embassy Suites Troy for 23 years!



Tom Enscoe, Chief Engineer at the **DoubleTree Pittsburgh-Meadowlands**, received the Spirit of Care award from DoubleTree by Hilton Hotels. As part of the honor, Tom received a personal letter from

John Greenleaf, Vice President, Global Brand Performance, for DoubleTree.



Terri Boehm (left), Head Chef for the **Embassy Suites Tulsa**, won the People's Choice Award-Best Chef at the Metro Tulsa Hotel & Lodging Association's annual Food FESTival Fund-raiser. Terri wowed the judges with her delicious coffee rubbed tenderloin of beef!

Enis Tezcan, Front Office Associate at the **International Palms Cocoa Beach**, was nominated for the Space Coast Tourism Person of the Year, for his outstanding guest service. Enis assisted a couple staying at the resort that was supposed to be married on a cruise they just took when unforeseen circumstances prevented the happy day. Upon hearing the news, Enis took it upon himself to arrange a beachfront wedding chapel complete with a justice of the peace so the guest couple could be married at the resort!

The **Embassy Suites Brunswick** has been ranked in the top 6% of the entire Embassy Suites U.S. brand scores for Service and top 11% for Cleanliness.

Wendy Priesand, National Sales Manager at **The Shores Resort & Spa**, was named the Society of Government Meeting Planners-Tallahassee Supplier of the Year at SGMP's annual meeting. Susan Keaveney, the resort's Marketing Manager, has been appointed Chairwoman of the State of Florida Tourism Department's (Visit Florida) Promotions Committee. Susan also serves as Chairwoman of the Daytona Beach Convention & Visitors Bureau's Advertising Committee.

CEO's Corner continued from page 1

'BE EXCELLENT!'

To achieve our vision in a highly competitive industry and take HVMG to the next level of growth and operational success, we've got to continue to differentiate ourselves.

To do that, we've got to be excellent in everything we do, from how we conduct ourselves over the phone and follow through on promises to waking up in the morning with a determined mindset that it's not enough to be good, we've got to **Be Excellent!**

How are we, specifically, going about cultivating this Culture of Excellence at HVMG? Here are some of the highlights:

- In June, all corporate associates in Atlanta participated in a comprehensive, two-day Be Excellent! Celebration where we discussed what it means to be excellent,

tactics and strategies to make it happen, and how each one of us plans to achieve excellence. The Celebration was designed to have everyone walk out of the event with what Matt Woodruff, our Vice President of Guest and Brand Excellence, calls your AHA! moment. We know that if we're going to ask our field associates to strive for excellence, it must begin with us in Atlanta.

- Matt and his team have begun conducting Be Excellent! Celebrations at our hotels, with plans to have celebrations at every hotel in our portfolio by the end of the year.
- Knowing that excellence starts at the hiring level, we have incorporated new ways to assess candidate personalities to help ensure they will eagerly embrace our Culture of Excellence.
- To recognize and celebrate the excellent guest service our hotel associates deliver

every day, we recently launched www.ExcellentServiceStories.com. The new website contains hundreds of individual comments from guests who received excellent service while staying at our hotels.

- We are determining new ways to measure excellence in every phase of our operations, not just guest satisfaction scores. In other words, we are defining what excellence looks like in each department, and mapping strategies to achieve it.

Be Excellent! Two simple words that can be a powerful, transformational force for both individuals and organizations if fully embraced. At HVMG, we will strive to do just that every day.

Robert Cole
President & CEO

RICHARD JONES

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT AND
CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER



Richard Jones
Senior Vice President and
Chief Operating Officer

It's a good thing Richard Jones enjoys taking on different challenges because in his new position as Senior Vice President and Chief Operating Officer for HVMG, no two days are alike. "The hotel industry is fast paced and dynamic and HVMG is one of the most dynamic companies in

the business, so I am enjoying the challenge of being involved in so many different aspects of the company and being able to work with so many talented general managers and leaders," says Richard, who joined HVMG in March to oversee the firm's Operations, Revenue Generation and Capital Projects.

"It's a very diverse role and I thrive on the level of energy and activity that it requires."

Richard discovered early on that the diversity which characterizes hotel management and operations was something he enjoyed. He grew up in the New Orleans area and was an economics major at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge when he took a part-time job at the Embassy Suites. He quickly learned all he could about the hotel and he soon earned a reputation as a "jack of all trades."

"I started working at the front desk and that evolved into a little bit of everything, from night auditing to bartending to cooking breakfast and eventually, I was promoted to a manager on duty position," he says.

"I was given opportunities by my general managers to take on a lot of responsibilities

very early in my career, and it exposed me to all the various aspects of the business. I really enjoyed it, I was challenged by it, and quickly realized I wanted to make a career of it. One of my goals at HVMG is to help provide the same type of career growth and development opportunities that I enjoyed to our associates. Not only is it rewarding and positive as an associate, but it is necessary to help support our growth strategy and to ensure the HVMG culture is instilled in all of our hotels."

Richard's work with Robert Cole dates back to 1997 when he joined Impac Hotel Group as GM of the Courtyard by Marriott in Buckhead. He later became a Regional GM and Vice President of Operations at Impac. After 20+ years of leadership positions in hotel operations and asset management, Richard still finds the satisfaction of effective teamwork that he discovered at his first industry job to be the most enjoyable part of his new career at HVMG.

[continued on page 6](#)

[Continued from page 1](#)

HVMG RECOGNIZED FOR GROWTH

"We're especially excited about receiving the ACG Atlanta Fast 40 award because it's based on a three-year pattern of both revenue and employment growth," says HVMG President & CEO Robert Cole.

"Coming on the heels of receiving the Atlanta Business Chronicle's Pacesetter Award for the second consecutive year, the Fast 40 award is further proof that HVMG is enjoying an era of sustained growth and operational success that is helping us achieve our Vision of being the most sought-after employer, operator and partner in the hotel industry—and the leading solution provider for underperforming properties."

HVMG has more than doubled the size of its portfolio since 2010. It has added 12 hotels and two conference centers to its portfolio



since January 2012 after adding eight hotels in 2011 and seven hotels in 2010. HVMG has added two hotels in 2013 and currently operates 42 hotels and two conference centers.

Several members of HVMG's senior leadership team were on hand to receive the firm's "Fast 40" award from the Association for Corporate Growth. Pictured from left to right are: Maria D'Alessandro, Robert Cole, Mary Beth Cutshall, Sue Sanders, Karan Narang, and Roger Miller.

Featured Hotel

HVMG NOW MANAGING LANDMARK SHERATON READ HOUSE IN CHATTANOOGA



Sheraton Read House – Chattanooga.

HVMG added a historically significant jewel to its portfolio when it assumed management of the elegant **Sheraton Read House Hotel** in downtown Chattanooga, TN earlier this year. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the Read House was built in 1927 and has hosted a long list of dignitaries and celebrities including Winston Churchill, Ronald Reagan, Al Capone and Oprah Winfrey.

A hotel has occupied the site where the current Read House resides in the heart of downtown Chattanooga since 1847 when the Crutchfield House opened. When the Civil War engulfed the city in 1863, Union forces occupied the hotel and converted it into a hospital. The Crutchfield House survived the ravages of the war only to burn to the ground in 1867. A new hotel built by local doctor John T. Read opened in 1872 as the Read House, which was eventually replaced by the current property.

The landmark, 10-story brick and terra cotta hotel was built in the Georgian Style and adorned with lavish appointments such as carved and gilded woodwork, and Waterford

chandeliers. Meticulously restored to its original grandeur, the Sheraton Read House Hotel Chattanooga features renovated guest rooms with the luxurious Sheraton Sweet Sleeper™ bed and Drexel Heritage furniture, 19,000 square feet of meeting space including the majestic Silver Ballroom, new state-of-the-art exercise facility, new indoor heated pool, 24-hour valet parking, private Club level/lounge, 24-hour business center, the upscale Porter's Steakhouse serving breakfast, lunch and dinner, a Starbucks® Coffeehouse, and room service.

“HVMG recently was approved to third party manage Starwood brands including Luxury Collection, Westin, and Sheraton so we are poised to add more upscale full-service Starwood properties to our portfolio like the Sheraton Read House Chattanooga,” says HVMG President & CEO Robert Cole.

Ben Prpich, CHA, is the general manager of the Sheraton Read House.

Annual HVMG Hotel Awards Recognize Peak Performance

In support of HVMG's strategic initiatives to drive general manager retention and recognition, top performance is recognized each year with the **Hotel Performance Awards**.

Here are the 2012 award winners in the following categories:

Highest RevPAR % Increase

Ramada Miami Airport North: 31.9%

Highest RevPAR Index

The Shores Resort & Spa: 157.4

Highest RevPAR Index Increase

International Palms-Orlando: 31.7%

Largest House Profit Increase (\$)

International Palms-Orlando: \$1,504,810

Largest House Profit Increase (%)

International Palms-Orlando: 4,861%

Highest Flow to Budget

Mayan Inn: 413.2%

Highest Flow to Last Year

DoubleTree by Hilton-Nov: 397.3%

Highest Overall House Profit Margin

Hampton Inn & Suites Meadow Lands: 50.1%

Highest Guest Excellence Scores

Residence Inn by Marriott, Rocky Mount: 83.8%

Most Improved Guest Satisfaction Scores Year Over Year

Embassy Suites Brunswick: +10.3 points

DOS of the Year

Jayne Tannenbaum, Country Inn & Suites Athens

Sales Team of the Year

Embassy Suites, Dallas

General Manager of the Year

Ron Mader, Hilton Houston Southwest

Hotel of the Year

Ramada Miami Airport North

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES UNVEILED AT HVMG 2013 CONFERENCE

The general managers and directors of sales from every hotel in HVMG's portfolio gathered in Atlanta recently with corporate leadership for a 2.5-day conference that was highlighted by the introduction of the company's four new strategic initiatives for the coming year. The theme for the 2013 conference was "Soaring to New Heights," and the program included detailed training sessions designed specifically for general managers and sales directors that were conducted by HVMG senior leadership and various experts in the hotel industry.

The GMs and sales directors also received updates on HVMG's performance as well as a glimpse into developments coming in the near future. General sessions included a fascinating presentation on the Herrmann Brain Dominance Instrument that helps professionals better understand how they think strategically and relate to others. There also was a partners showcase and luncheon where 18 key industry partners were able to speak with the GMs and sales directors about their products and services.

"The conference certainly was a celebration and recognition of our growth, but it also was an opportunity to re-ground everyone in our strategic plan and launch our four strategic initiatives," says Susan Sanders, HVMG Vice President, Strategic Planning & Human Resources.

The four strategic initiatives introduced at the conference are:

- 1. Talent Development:** having the systems and processes to develop talent internally and promote them to the next level.
- 2. Excellence Culture:** HVMG's unique belief in excellence in everything the firm does at the corporate and hotel level is what differentiates it from other hotel companies (Note: read Robert Cole's column on the front page for more about HVMG's Culture of Excellence). As part of this initiative, HVMG revised its Mission Statement to read: "To maximize the value of our hotels in any business climate by cultivating a culture of Excellence with

each of our stakeholders." Also introduced at the conference was a new website that highlights examples of excellent service at HVMG's hotels: www.ExcellentServiceStories.com.

- 3. Revenue Innovation:** several of the conference training sessions addressed revenue innovation including a program on Search Engine Optimization (SEO) and HVMG's online presence.
- 4. Process Improvement:** this initiative was highlighted by the introduction of Profit Sword, an innovative tool HVMG is using to manage the annual budgeting and weekly forecasting processes (see Exciting News From Corporate Headquarters for more information on Profit Sword).

Of course, it wasn't all serious business at the conference, as several teambuilding exercises were incorporated into the agenda. Participants were divided into "Super Hero" teams that earned points through several fun competitions. HVMG senior leaders even dressed up as super heroes for a closing presentation and panel discussion!

Recent General Manager Appointments

Beth Tufekci has been named GM of the DoubleTree by Hilton Mahwah in Mahwah, NJ. Prior to joining HVMG, Beth was an Area GM for Hersha Hospitality and oversaw operations at both the Sheraton JFK Airport Hotel and Hilton Garden Inn Queens JFK Airport.

Keith Dunker has been named GM of the Plaza Ocean Club Hotel Daytona in Daytona Beach, FL. Prior to joining HVMG, Keith was a Task Force GM for GF Management and GM for the Radisson Hotel in Branson, MO.

Marianne Linder has been named GM of the Hampton Inn & Suites Pittsburgh-Meadowlands in Washington, PA. Prior to joining HVMG, Marianne was GM for the Hampton Inn & Suites Shelby, NC.

Mark Gundlach has been named GM of the Hyatt Regency Albuquerque in Albuquerque, NM. Prior to joining HVMG, Mark was with John Q. Hammons as GM for the Embassy Suites Hotel and Spa in Albuquerque, NM.

David Rijos has been named GM of The Shores Resort & Spa in Daytona Beach, FL. David was most recently GM of the Hyatt Regency Palm Springs in Palm Springs, CA.



The *Be Excellent!* logo is part of the Excellence Culture strategic initiative introduced at HVMG's "Soaring to New Heights" 2013 conference. Read more about HVMG's *Be Excellent!* initiative in Robert Cole's column on page 1.

RECENT PROPERTY ENHANCEMENTS AND OTHER NOTABLE NEWS



Associates from all departments at the **Hilton Houston Southwest** celebrated Arbor Day in a big way by sprucing up the property's appearance. The "Blue Energy" team rolled up their sleeves and planted several trees while also refreshing several flower beds. The hotel staff also celebrated Youth Day by hosting area children interested in learning more about the hospitality industry. The future hoteliers, aged 10-18, spent the day in every department learning the details of how to operate a first-class hotel.

The **Holiday Inn Cleveland-Strongsville** celebrated Service Week by hosting various fun-filled events for the Front Line Team including afternoon breaks with root beer floats, Jack Frost Donuts (infamous in Cleveland!) and specialty coffees; managers washing associates' cars, and a pizza party and hotel 'Olympics' where teams competed in bell cart obstacle races, towel folding, and a T-P mummy wrap!

The **Courtyard by Marriott-Mt. Arlington** recently completed a property-wide refresh including new carpet, wall coverings, artwork, and paint as well as expanded meeting space and an updated fitness center.

The **International Palms Resort & Conference Center Orlando** recently opened "Alligator Alley," a live gator exhibit featuring shows and interactive educational programs where guests can get up close and personal with some of Florida's most famous residents. A natural habitat was built that houses over 10 gators, some over 4 feet long!

The **International Palms Resort Cocoa Beach** enjoyed a record-breaking March with over \$1 million in room revenue!

The **Shores Resort & Spa** recently hosted Target Stores iMobile launch with 200 attendees over a 5-day period. The group represented 783 room nights with room revenue exceeding \$130,000 and catering revenue of \$170,000. It was the largest group the hotel has hosted in total revenue. The hotel's sales team was able to pick up this important piece of short-term business in less than 30 days!

HVMG Adds Two Hotels to Portfolio

HVMG recently added two hotels to its portfolio representing 496 total guest rooms. The properties are located in excellent markets that are new to HVMG.

The hotels are:

- Hyatt Regency Albuquerque (395 rooms, 30,000 square feet of function space).
- Residence Inn Stillwater Oklahoma (101 rooms, 245 square feet of function space).

EXCITING NEWS FROM HVMG HEADQUARTERS

New Property Data Management Tool Introduced

A new information management tool, ProfitSword, was introduced at the recent GM-DOS conference as part of HVMG's strategic initiative "Operations Planning and Reporting Excellence." ProfitSword consolidates information from various sources such as SalesPro, PMS/POS, Accounting, and Time and Attendance into one central location, allowing the general managers and their teams to view and

analyze information in a timely and efficient fashion. "With the ProfitSword tool, general managers will have more accurate forecasts, which enables them to respond more quickly to what's going on at their properties," says Maria D'Alessandro, HVMG's Vice President of Finance & Accounting. "It's not stale information. Just as important is having all the critical information in one place will facilitate the forecasting process, freeing up the general managers to focus on ensuring that every guest has an excellent stay at each of our hotels."

RICHARD JONES, SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT AND CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

Continued from page 3

"This is absolutely a team sport," he says. "Being successful in the many disciplines of our business requires teamwork at every level of the organization. For me, being part of HVMG is a real privilege. When you look at the strength of our general managers, the depth of the leadership team, and the track record of results you will quickly see that HVMG is a leader in the industry. More importantly, we have a huge opportunity to expand our leadership position by executing on our strategy, vision, mission, culture, and—above all else—delivering results. Our operating results as a team are the result of the individual performance of our players, and our players are the general managers and associates that make it all happen in each and every one of our hotels. Every hotel's performance is critical to our success, and is what will ultimately determine how we grow and the future opportunities that we will all enjoy. The measure of our success will always be in the results, and I look forward to working with all of our hotel teams and contributing whatever I can to that success."

Richard is excited to be part of the HVMG team during a time of sustained growth and operational success, and he's confident that his diverse experiences in the hospitality industry will prove to be an asset. "We're adding resources and leadership from an operations and revenue perspective to drive results today as well as to develop strategies that will enable us to continue to perform at peak levels as we add more properties to our portfolio," he says.

"It's a very challenging business right now with all the change that's taking place in technology, sales, reservations, e-commerce, brand standards; I could go on and on. Everything changes at a rapid pace and we've got to stay out in front of the change, adapting and innovating to succeed."

When he's not juggling the demands of his job, you're likely to find Richard playing tennis or spending time on Lake Lanier with his wife Cynthia and two teenaged daughters. Caroline is entering her senior year of high school and Emily is entering her freshman year. "Everyone hears that and says 'Oh boy! You are really in for it,' but so far so good," he says. "We have not been hit by the dreaded 'teenage daughter curse' and I could not be more fortunate or be more proud of my daughters. They are wonderful young ladies, but we are prepared for anything and everything this year!"