
CEO interview

CEO interview

William D. Talbert, III, CEO Great Miami Convention & Visitors Bureau

71

What current events, trends or issues do you feel our industry is facing right now?

Research shows travelers are looking for authentic and personalized experiences through art, culture and nature – ultimately looking for ways to improve personal wellness and reach their highest personal potential. This is why the Greater Miami Convention & Visitors Bureau (GMCVB) has invested in marketing programs that promote the destination's diverse multicultural neighborhoods and strong arts and culture offerings. In the near future, the GMCVB will be unveiling a brand marketing campaign designed to leverage Miami's natural assets and capitalize on travel trends that promote nature-based activities. Our destination is rich in offerings that line up seamlessly with some of the industry's most prevalent travel trends.

What do you consider to be the driving forces of change for the hospitality industry in the near future? What changes do you expect our industry to see in the next five years?

Change, as we know, is a constant. The hospitality industry in particular is familiar with the never-ending fluctuations of seasonality, changing economies, updated infrastructure, technology disruption, environment, weather events, supply and demand; there are endless ways that our industry continues to evolve in the face of market variations. There is no question that technology will continue to evolve our industry in the next five years and beyond. But while technology opens doors for streamlined and highly efficient processes, it is important that we not forget the importance of personalized and humanized customer service. We are after all in the hospitality business. Around here we like to say “high-tech and high-touch.”

What competencies do you feel are necessary for an individual to succeed in the hospitality industry? What are your expectations for hospitality students?

The competencies necessary for an individual to succeed in the hospitality industry are not that different from what is required for success in other industries. Students who understand global trends and can translate it to their local community will do well in hospitality because they will remain relevant to the customer. Understanding what is happening in and out of your zip code is fundamental in developing travel programs that will resonate with customer both in leisure and business travel.



© Jinlin Zhao. Published in *International Hospitality Review*. Published by Emerald Publishing Limited. This article is published under the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY 4.0) licence. Anyone may reproduce, distribute, translate and create derivative works of this article (for both commercial & non-commercial purposes), subject to full attribution to the original publication and authors. The full terms of this licence may be seen at <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/legalcode>

International Hospitality Review
Vol. 33 No. 2, 2019
pp. 71-72
Emerald Publishing Limited
2516-8142
DOI 10.1108/IHR-12-2019-025

IHR
33,2

What message would you like to give to hospitality educators?

Educators have the unique opportunity to spot the future leaders of our industry in their classrooms. I would encourage educators to emphasize the human side to our business. While foundations in accounting, statistics, sales and marketing are important, too often the customer-service portion of our industry is taken for granted and it is truly vital in distinguishing yourself from the competition. All things equal, people will remember how your company or hotel made them feel – becoming repeat customers and remaining loyal when customer service is superior.

72

Is there anything else you would like to share?

Remain life-long learners – especially in our industry as we interface with people and cultures from all over the world. When we stop learning and evolving, we will lose our competitive edge.