



Best Ideas

Facilitated by David K. Aaker
Thursday, November 7

“My property is famous for...”

Michael Bickford, Miracle Springs Resort & Spa

- Offers free passes for festival-goers in the area
- His property has 24-hour soaking for hotel guests
- They offer a complimentary 1-night stay in the future after any complaints, in the form of a voucher
- They have come to embrace cannabis — using CBD products and treatments in the spa. Their campaign “The Healing Starts Here” promotes local canna-tourism

Robert Griffith, El Morocco Inn & Spa

- For any positive review that mentions an employee by name, there’s a designated pay increase/bonus

Shanelle Titensor, Green Canyon Hot Springs

- Their property offers swim lessons, which are a hit in the community and are often booked out months in advance

Jonathan Paul De Vierville, Alamo Plaza Spa / BANA

- When cleaning, it’s all about the details; after emptying the wastebaskets, also clean them. Additionally, clean behind dumpsters

Kevin Skates, Hot Springs State Park

- The property has a horticulturist on staff. There are over 11,000 flowers, and the guests love them

Elaine Blumenhein, Joyful Journey Hot Springs Spa

- They have always considered the hot springs to be very sacred. Their goal is to uplift spirits for all who come, which attracts the ideal kind of guests, who also respect the water and the property
- Also, an employee of month program with incentives such as money or a gift card

Janet Abbott, BANA

- Connect libraries with hot springs information, work with librarians to have a section for water/hot springs in one place. Do the same thing with communities, so that the hot springs are more grounded in the identity of the town/city/neighborhood

Tony Allegretti, Ten Thousand Waves

- They make an invest in the staff, putting all of their attention into training one person at a time

Ben Slusser, Quinn's Hot Springs Resort

- Quinn's has a photo contest each year, that both generates online engagement and also gives them free content to use. (**Note from Savannah:** consider looking into [CrowdRiff](#), which makes finding said content super easy!)

Scott Whitaker, Glen Ivy Hot Springs

- "Manage the masses," by pre-booking sessions and considering lowering daily capacities

Mogli Cooper, Iron Mountain Hot Springs

- Iron Mountain allows for re-entry. Not only does this break up soaking time and allow for flow-through of customers throughout the day, it also encourages them to go off-site and spend their money throughout the community

Michael Sommer, Moccasin Springs Natural Mineral Spa

- The ensure that the guests have an experience where they are the entire focus. Their spa package includes a soak, the noise is low, and they are pampered from entry to exit
- Health and wellness are a main priority for the staff, too. They treat the staff to a health retreat every off season, for a few nights away

Pat O'Sullivan, Pro Insurance

- His insurance company sends money back if the policy isn't profitable

Charles Davidson, Peninsula Hot Springs

- Two key things:
 1. Implementing staff engagement programs, such as volunteer work and community gardens
 2. Local community engagement: World Bathing Day, local activities like yoga in the pools, sunrise activities, wellness weekend, mud baths, no shave November, fundraisers, celebration of Indigenous people through a week of culture, etc.

Garry Umbrich, Takhini Hot Springs

- They have a fun, community-based competition that lifts spirits and (out of luck) went viral. Key takeaway: it's important to know how to handle/navigate the extra attention

Nancy Welliver, BANA

- Have a naturopathic therapist for hydrotherapy questions and help
- A piece of advice: use the phrase, "the traditional use of our waters is –" so you don't make any medical claims

John Carp, Yellowstone Hot Springs

- When someone makes an inquiry about a misplaced item at the lost and found, they make sure to have the guest fill out their contact info. When found, they are then able to send things back to them as soon as possible

Brandon Price, Medicine Springs

- Talking to elders and indigenous people to gather info for the brand and tie in the connection to your business. When you do so, take the time to listen. Later, take your bags of hot springs to the Native Americans as a sign of appreciation, and also so they can enjoy

Matt Sykes, Peninsula Hot Springs

- Putting a focus on cutting down food waste, by reducing single-use items or making them out of composted material rather than plastic. Another example is using branded water bottles, which are both promotional and eco-friendly

Schawna Thoma, Hot Springs Association of America

- Advice: join the Association for the entire year, get involved in a closed FB group
- First order of business, tackling the new California legislation regarding contract positions for employees

David K. Aaker, Aaker and Associates

- Be kindness card-carrying members for life