

straight

Talk

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The Westin Galleria Does Its Part in Providing Work for Russian Immigrants

by Arlene Riesenfeld
(reprinted with permission of the Jewish Herald-Voice)

The Westin Galleria Hotel in Houston, which has always had a policy of hiring employees of diverse nationalities and languages, has recently added four new immigrants from the former Soviet Union to its work staff. Using an outside agency that provides hotel personnel, three of the employees were found through the Jewish Family Service's (JFS's) Job Placement Program for newly arrived Jews from the former Soviet Union. One of the biggest challenges for both JFS and new immigrants has always been a desire to find employment for immigrants soon after arrival in Houston. The Westin Galleria not only welcomed these new men and women, but is looking forward to using JFS recommendations again as a job placement source.

Mark Pexelshteyn came to the USA from Kiev in the Ukraine one year ago, choosing Houston as his family home, since he has relatives here. Although he had a degree in engineering and worked in that field for a time in the Ukraine as a ship engineer, he started a painting business while still in his native country. When he had the chance to come to this country, he knew he could fall back on his new profession. Sure enough, he worked here first for a small painting business, but just recently began his employment with The Westin Hotel as a painter.

Zena Zhebrak, who is from the Ural



(Left to right: Mark Pexelshteyn, Zena Zhebrak, Gairy Akapdzhanovi, and Natasia Danilenka.)

Mountains area of Russia, also possessed a college degree in engineering. Because of language difficulties, she is unable to work in her chosen field, since she is still learning English. For the past five months, she has been fortunate in finding work in housekeeping at The Westin. She says although it is hard work, she is glad to have a job — given the language barrier.

Gairy Akapdzhanovi, from Baku, Azerbaijan near Armenia, is the only one of the four who was not placed through the JFS. He is not Jewish, but found out about the opportunity through his friend, Mark. Gairy left his country because his area was at war with the Armenians. He felt that it was a dangerous place for his children. He has been in the States a little over a year, and after working with a local painting company for the first year, is now happy to be with the Westin as a painter.

Natasia Danilenka, formerly of the Ukraine, has been here for one year. She was a secretary in her native country and now is working in housekeeping at The Westin. She is glad to have a good job. She came to this country for a better standard of living and for better opportunities.

The Westin Galleria Hotel, according to Director of Marketing Mark Shafer, employs people from 45 different countries who speak 29 different languages. Sandy Deal, who does public relations for The Westin Galleria, added that the hotel does this so it can best represent the international diversity of its guests.

The Westin Galleria is to be commended for giving these newcomers a chance to succeed. □

TOTAL QUALITY CORNERSTONES...

Top Management Ownership

(This is the sixth in a series of articles highlighting the seven Total Quality Cornerstones committed to by WNA.)

The sixth TQ Cornerstone is "Top Management Ownership." Every senior manager is personally empowered, visibly involved, and held accountable for developing, leading, and sustaining an environment that supports Total Quality Management.

- ✓ Senior managers are accountable for processes and process performance.
- ✓ The number of ways managers leverage their investment in Total Quality Management is limited only by the extent of their personal commitment.

- ✓ Senior managers lead by example and model excellence in satisfying or exceeding the needs of internal and external customers.
- ✓ Senior managers dedicate adequate resources to the quality improvement effort and focus on removing barriers to TQM implementation.
- ✓ Senior managers are held accountable for the long-term, bottom-line results of continuous improvements. □

executive column

"Straight Talk from Jim Treadway"



1994 is behind us, and we all can take great pride in our ability to have met, and in some cases exceeded, most of our company's financial and growth objectives. Industry experts will no doubt attribute much of our improved performance over 1993 to the strong recovery the travel industry experienced in 1994. But when you factor in the "for sale" status Westin endured in 1994, often necessitating a tactical approach to marketing and operations vs. a strategic one, I give us all top marks for successful performance during adverse circumstances.

This column is intended to do nothing more than to thank you for your good efforts these last 20 months, during which we have been officially for sale. Our customers in our properties weren't affected by this process, with the exception of a few of our properties having some unfulfilled capital needs. Our properties' owners were in most instances pleased with Westin's efforts to hold things together while the prospect of an ownership change lingered for an extended period of time. Our occupancy, rate, RevPar, operating ratios, GOR and GOP on a system-wide basis improved. Job well done! Thank you.

At the time of the writing of this column, our sale to the Goldman Sachs/Starwood partnership has not closed. It looks like it probably will. Aoki Corporation will transition from Westin owner to Westin customer, being the largest multiple unit

owner Westin will serve as operator. We're on the verge of a new era with Westin, which we believe will be characterized by dramatic growth and a strong commitment to improved owner and guest satisfaction. The pressure to do more with less will continue, and the promise of reward and recognition for those rising to the challenges put forth by the buyer group is great.

Here in Seattle there is a certain amount of uncertainty and therefore anxiety caused by the prospect of some significant change. But there is also anticipation of great things to come for Westin and a strong desire by most to be a part of Westin's bright future. I hope you all share this enthusiasm.

Best wishes for a prosperous, happy and healthy 1995. □

CORRECTION: Jim Treadway's column in the Autumn issue of Straight Talk incorrectly stated Westin's Diversity policy. It should have read, "Westin and its hotels have nondiscrimination policies and policies prohibiting retaliation against any associate who brings to management any situation" We regret the error. --Ed.

Moving On, Moving Up

Matt Berg, convention services manager, The Westin Hotel, Seattle to front office manager, The Westin Maui.

Sue Borg, promotions specialist, CRO Omaha to reservations supervisor, The Westin Resort, Hilton Head Island.

Melissa Burk, sales manager, The Westin South Coast Plaza to sales manager, The Westin Hotel, Tabor Center.

Theodore Carroll, director of housekeeping, Century Plaza Hotel & Tower to assistant front office manager, Walt Disney World Swan.

Judi Eckley, outlet manager, The Westin Galleria and Oaks to Service Express manager, The Westin Hotel, Santa Clara.

Michael Fischer, human resources manager, The Westin Hotel, Seattle to director of human resources, The Westin Hotel, Indianapolis.

Richard Harper, national sales manager, The Westin Mission Hills Resort to front office manager, The Westin Hotel, Seattle.

Molly Lavik, director of public relations, The Westin Mission Hills Resort to public relations manager, Westin Corporate.

Edward Martinez, lead reservations agent, The Westin Hotel, SFO to reservations supervisor.

Russell Mitchell, sales manager, The Westin Hotel, Santa Clara to national sales manager, The Westin South Coast Plaza.

Dan Morelock, building superintendent, The Westin Hotel, SFO to director of property management.

(continued on page 4)

Westin Properties in North America Get a Facelift in '95

All Westin hotels and resorts in North America are focused on continuous improvement — but in the following 10 cases, the focus is on enhancing their physical plants.

The Westin William Penn

The Westin William Penn looks forward to completing a variety of renovation tasks in 1995. Projects include new carpeting throughout the main lobby and ballroom and new entrances to the restaurant and lounge. In addition, the hotel will install an electronic guest room locking system, a new Front Office System and new exterior lighting. A number of projects related to Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance and energy conservation are also in the works for 1995. And finally, a guest room renovation is in the design phase and will be completed by year-end.

The Westin Hotel, Chicago

The Westin Hotel, Chicago has proudly announced its long-awaited and much-anticipated \$6.5 million guest room and public space renovation that began in December and includes all 580 guest rooms.

Significant public space renovation is also planned. The front desk will be completely redesigned and will include an area accessible for people with disabilities. Both the Lion Bar & Grill and Chelsea Restaurants will receive completely new looks through brighter space, refurbishing and refinishing woodwork and mill work, and will provide greater accessibility for all guests. The hotel's 29,000 square feet of function space will soon have new carpet, wall covering and lighting.

The Westin Hotel, O'Hare

The Westin Hotel, O'Hare began its guest room renovation in 1993 and has completed half of its plan. The remainder is expected to be completed by the end of 1995.

The hotel's Benchmark Restaurant will also receive a new look this winter with new carpeting, chairs and a new entrance.

The Westin Hotel, Tabor Center

From January through May all 420 guest rooms will be renovated at The Westin Hotel, Tabor Center. The final design for this \$4.7 million renovation came from data gathered during a series of focus groups comprised of meeting planners, hotel guests, hotel staff and the hotel's design firm. The combined goal was to give the hotel a luxurious, yet residential feel designed for the discriminating leisure and business traveler.

In addition, the hotel's award-winning fine dining room, Augusta, has recently undergone a renovation to soften the art deco look and give it an overall finished feel of traditional furnishings in a contemporary setting.

The Westin Resort, Vail

The Westin Resort, Vail proudly announced the recent completion of 118 newly-renovated terrace wing guest rooms, the 1,055 square foot Jerry Ford Suite, the 880 square foot Presidential Suite and 19 suites in the main building. In addition, specific rooms will undergo a complete renovation in compliance with the ADA.

A \$500,000 exterior landscape renovation was also completed last fall with the addition of over 90 trees to the resort property. The garden level of the terrace wing has also been improved with the addition of perennials, annuals and potted plants.

Century Plaza Hotel and Tower

The Century Plaza Hotel and Tower recently celebrated the opening of its newly renovated 24,000 square foot Los Angeles Ballroom. The \$6 million renovation also upgraded the Ballroom's spacious, 12,000 square foot pre-function area and the hotel's 30,000 square foot

California Showroom. And, last spring, a \$2.2 million refurbishing was completed of the 322 Tower guest rooms.

The Westin St. Francis

A \$50 million restoration of the 90-year-old Westin St. Francis began December 12. An initial \$30 million expenditure will be used over the next two years, with the majority of the expense going to redecorate all 1,200 guest rooms. All tower rooms will be converted to "business class" rooms, featuring in-room amenities requested by frequent business travelers.

Construction of a three-meal-a-day restaurant replacing the Dutch Kitchen breakfast restaurant is also included; a Mediterranean Cafe will open in 1996.

The Westin Maui

The Westin Maui is planning a \$2.1 million renovation of the 761-room resort's Beach Tower guest rooms and corridors that will be completed by spring, 1995. The guest rooms will be appointed with new carpeting, lamps, lanai furniture, chair and chaise lounge upholstery, wood molding, curtains and valances, bedspreads, throw pillows, artwork, and new bathroom lighting, wallpaper and marble. The corridor renovation includes new carpeting, wallpaper, furniture, lighting and marble.

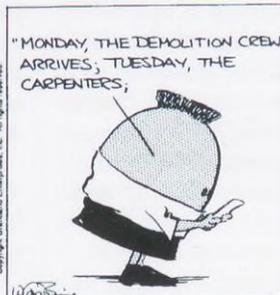
The Westin Hotel, Calgary

The Westin Hotel, Calgary is in the midst of a \$4 million renovation. The majority of this expense is allocated to main building rooms. These rooms will take on a classic country look, depicting a feel for the heritage of Calgary and surrounding areas. Following the renovation, the main building will feature a full sprinkler system and an electronic key card locking entry system.

The Westin Mont-Royal Hotel

By mid-1995, a renovation program estimated at \$2 million will be completed at The Westin Mont-Royal in Montreal, Quebec. This program includes a plan to rejuvenate the lobby area, install a new state-of-the-art sprinkler system and renovate the corridors. A new computer system will also be installed throughout the hotel. □

GRANTBAND®



Managing and Understanding Diversity

by Nancie O'Neill, Manager, Training, Development & Performance Systems

Westin's commitment to workforce diversity was renewed during the month of October. Thirty-four Diversity Administrators, selected WNA associates who are responsible for implementing the property's diversity plans, attended a Train-the-Trainer Session, "Diversity & Sexual Harassment: Realities of the Workplace." This three-day session was the first "certification" program sponsored by Westin University, Westin Hotel & Resorts' Corporate Training Program. They were hosted by The Westin Tabor Center, The Westin O'Hare, and The Westin Bonaventure Hotel and Suites.

The participants left the three day session with increased awareness, knowledge and skills that will help them conduct positive and impactful sessions at their individual properties. Following the sessions, they commented, "It made me aware of some real sensitivity training that needs to happen. I also came to recognize that Diversity is a rich and valuable resource in our workforce..." "the program was well prepared and will be a good tool for presentation and further training..." "I can now address sensitive issues with confidence..."

The Diversity Administrators experienced and learned positive ways in which to train the two major programs that will serve as the "Westin Standard Baseline Training" activity and will be conducted at all North America properties and at Corporate throughout 1995 and 1996.

The first of the programs, "A Winning Balance," highlights three basic principles of working in a diverse workforce:

1. The important role that each associate plays in creating a workplace in which people of all cultures and backgrounds have a chance to succeed,
2. The need to identify our personal attitudes and behaviors toward differences and recognize how they influence our interactions with others, and
3. The need to create a respectful workplace, with all of us acting as

"Diversity Change Agents."

The second program, "Subtle Sexual Harassment," will be offered as a baseline training opportunity for all Westin associates. The program's objectives are:

1. To prevent sexual harassment in the workplace by developing a clear understanding of what sexual harassment is and how it impacts people,
2. To explore the responsibility of each employee in helping maintain an environment free from harassment by being aware of behaviors that can offend people and by clearly communicating that this offensive behavior must stop,
3. To understand the role of the supervisor and manager of human resources in addressing sexual harassment in the workplace, and,
4. To develop an environment where employees respect and value each other as individuals. □

"I came to realize that diversity is a rich and valuable resource in our workforce."

Three Westin Associates Receive Chairman's Award of Merit

Bobby Retz, Marco Varela and Eric Hoffman received the distinguished honor for their heroic life-saving efforts last summer at The Westin La Paloma. Retz, Varela and Hoffman worked together to restore the life of a resort guest who suffered a complete cardiac arrest in the hotel's lobby.

Marco Varela and Eric Hoffman, two Service Express attendants working in the lobby, noticed the guest was in trouble. Both men immediately responded to the situation along with Bobby Retz, the resort's Service Express manager. Bobby and Eric each performed CPR while Marco cushioned the guest's body with his own. As the three associates initiated the life-saving efforts, the resort's emergency response team was called as well as Rural Metro paramedics. The

Moving On, Moving Up

(cont'd from page 2)

Jeffrey Noga, Service Express supervisor, The Westin Hotel, SFO to Service Express assistant manager.

Gary Pugatch, director of marketing, The Westin Resort, Hilton Head Island to director of marketing, The Westin Hotel, Copley Place.

Lisa Salazar, reservations manager, The Westin Mission Hills Resort to manager, hotel reservations systems, Westin Corporate.

Thomas Shaw, convention services manager, The Westin Hotel, Copley Place to convention services manager, The Westin Hotel, Waltham.

David Thompson, chef, The Westin Hotel, Renaissance Center to sous chef, Century Plaza Hotel & Tower.

Beckley Van Cleave, director of housekeeping, The Westin Hotel, SFO to food and beverage operations manager.

Information on promotions and transfers is supplied by Corporate Human Resources and represents personnel changes from September 26, 1994 to January 1, 1995. Additional information has been provided by hotel personnel.



(Left to right: Marco Varela, Bobby Retz, and Eric Hoffman)

resort's safety and security manager, Bob Shorr, along with senior security officer Vito Arena and security officer Marc Hoflin continued the CPR effort until paramedics arrived. The guest was then transported to Tucson Medical Center and is currently at home in Phoenix awaiting a donor heart.

The Chairman's Award of Merit is Westin Hotels & Resorts' highest accolade presented to associates who have performed an outstanding act of valor. □

Hotel Staff Checks In For a Tune-Up

by Bert Hill
(reprinted with permission of The Ottawa Citizen)

When Nicole Larabie turned on the shower in her 11th-floor room of The Westin Hotel, she knew things were really different. After 11 years of emptying ashtrays, vacuuming and cleaning tables at the downtown Ottawa luxury hotel, she was a guest for the first time.

Out of the corner of her window across the rooftops of Lowertown she could see the green of Gatineau where she lives.

Larabie and about 100 other Westin employees spent two days and nights at the hotel at a staff-run conference. The goal was to see their work through customers' eyes so they can do a better job in the future.

"It was a strange feeling standing in the shower turning the tap like any other guest," Larabie said. "But I know there is a tendency for anybody to slack off after

all those years. We have to remember that keeping our customers happy is important because they provide us with everything we have."

The Westin staff, officially dubbed associates, participated in workshops on sales, team-building across departments, serving meals, labor relations, handling complaints and using humor to deal with tired and impatient guests.

While the hotel picked up most of the \$15,000 cost of the event — with help from an Ontario government training trust fund and 50 hotel business suppliers — the planning was in the hands of junior managers and rank-and-file staff.

General manager Jim Hill, a participant in the event, said "this isn't a role-playing exercise. It is a real life experience. Our associates were guests of the hotel and they saw what could go wrong."

There were complaints about hot and

cold water in some rooms after the hotel had trouble with the water pressure. In one conference room switches took a frustratingly long time to adjust lights. And at the afternoon wind-up speech, psychologist Dr. Lauren Woodhouse had to contend with a microphone which had worked well at a lectern but garbled her speech when she tried to move around the room.

Cindy Novotny, a Los Angeles-based trainer on hotel management, told Westin employees that business travelers are very different today from the fat days of a decade ago. "They are working in organizations where the frills have been cut and they are expected to do more with less and on tighter timetables."

She said companies are constantly comparison shopping for better deals and making special demands to meet particular needs. "If you mess up, it is strike one. But the customer may not come back for strike two."

Larabie said Hill has changed labor relations in the two years he has been general manager. "He expects a lot of us but communication is much more open now. If one of my people is having a problem I can go talk to human resources and get some results." □

"My First CARE Package"

Editor's Note: CARE is celebrating its 50th anniversary in 1995 and Westin Hotels & Resorts is proud to be serving as a Corporate Sponsor for this important milestone. We thought you would enjoy a look into the impact CARE has had on individuals. Sabine Quitslund, now a Seattle resident, shares her story on the difference CARE made in her life during World War II.

One day in school — I must have been in first grade — our teacher called me to the front of the class along with a handful of other students, and began a little ceremony. She praised our good work, and as a reward we each were to get a package that had come all the way "from the other side of the world." I was delighted to be singled out and enjoyed the special attention. But what was this mysterious package all about? What magic did it contain? When we were finally allowed to investigate, there was nothing in the package that I recognized. For one thing, there was a funny looking brush with a long handle. We were told it was for our teeth. Imagine a special object just to clean your

teeth! Along with it came a brightly colored tube. I carefully spelled out the label, "Col-ga-te," and knowing only German, I placed the stress on the second syllable, a pronunciation I stubbornly use to this day. There was also a large cube of intensely yellow stuff, yielding slightly to my poking fingers, and a variety of soft packages in unfamiliar, somber wrappings. I knew this was all very important, but was it really food?

Home was a 19th-century army barrack that had been converted into refugee living quarters. I rushed up many staircases, down long corridors, burst into our rooms and thrust my booty into my mother's hands. She gave me a fierce hug. I finally had made her happy and proud again! So why did she have to cry? Why did this package make her tell me stories of unimportant days, long before I was born, all of them beginning with the same words "Before the war..."? Was this the magic from the other side of the world?

Of course, there was joy, and there was magic all right. What could be more



confounding than a spoonful of grainy yellowish powder turning into a glass of milk? Or yet another powder transforming itself into fluffy omelets? The intensely yellow cube was Kraft cheese, its consistency a challenge to my mother's cruel habit of slicing everything as thinly as possible, so that it would last us a long time. □

shop *Talk*

President Clinton welcomed 33 democratically-elected leaders of the Western Hemisphere to The Biltmore Hotel in Coral Gables on December 9 to take part in the Summit of the Americas, the largest gathering of Western Hemisphere leaders in history and the largest summit ever hosted by the United States.

The Biltmore also played host to the First Ladies' Symposium on Children of the Americas, led by First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton, in the hotel's Country Club Grand Ballroom.



While celebrating their 100-year anniversary at The Westin Hotel, Copley Place in November, the Epicurean Club of Boston named Christoph Leu, the hotel's executive chef, Chef of the Year.

Chef Leu, a native of Switzerland, has been at The Westin Hotel, Copley Place since 1989 and with Westin Hotels

& Resorts since 1981. He was trained in Switzerland, Canada and the U.S. and speaks four languages. At The Westin Hotel, Copley Place, Chef Leu is responsible for banquet meals and four restaurants/lounges, including the award-winning Turner Fisheries.

The Epicurean Club is the oldest association of its kind in the country. Current members represent some of the very best culinarians in the Boston area.



At the 120th annual Canadian Professional Sales Association (CPSA) dinner held in Toronto, Denis Forristal, general manager of The Westin Bayshore, was presented with the 1994 Hotel of the Year award for best serving the needs of the business traveler.

Over 1,000 randomly selected CPSA frequent business travelers returned surveys indicating their preference of services and features, from selection of restaurants to room decor, offered by the hotels they visit during the year. For

1994, "location" edged out "rate" as the most important feature. Also on the rise for preference is the level of importance of a computer hook-up in hotel rooms.



Former U.S. President George Bush was recently sighted in three properties:

1. In October, The Westin Regina Resort, Cancun and hotel owner Bancomer hosted a cocktail reception and private dinner during the 58th Annual Banks Convention of the Mexican Bank Association. Approximately 1,000 persons attended the cocktail reception, and 80 selected guests were invited to the private dinner with special guests former President Bush and Pedro Aspe, U.S. Secretary of the Treasury.
2. The former President and First Lady also visited the Camino Real, Guatemala to deliver \$1.5 million worth of medicine and food to assist more than a 100 public institutions in Guatemala.
3. During the 64th American Society of Travel Agents (ASTA) World Congress held in Lisbon, Portugal in November, the former president and Mrs. Bush attended a private dinner co-hosted by Westin and American Express and held at the Caesar Park Penha Longa Golf and Resort.

It's All In a Name at the Century Plaza

It was the late 1960's, and Robert Harrington was working as a valet at the Century Plaza Hotel. A member of the Executive Committee happened to notice young Robert without his mandatory name plate one day and asked him where it was, to which Robert explained that he had misplaced the name tag and that Human Resources had ordered another.

The very next day, Robert still had not received his new tag and the same Executive Committee member found him on the drive nameless and demanded this time that he get a new tag — any tag. Because Robert's own name tag was not ready, he marched down to Human Resources and went through a bag of old name tags, looking for the most unusual



(From left to right, the Century Plaza's four doormen who represent 100 years of service, James Lee, Robert "Lincoln" Harrington, Bill Melton, and Jack Milos.)

name he could find to make a joke out of the matter. He found the name "Lincoln" among the many castaways and chose it as his temporary alias.

Well, as soon as he put the name tag on, guests found him very difficult to forget. A woman who had forgotten to tip Robert was able to track him down later because she remembered him as "Lincoln." When Robert's own name tag finally arrived, it was too late — "Lincoln" had stuck. □



Westin Corporate associates showed their giving spirit this holiday season by helping 14 disadvantaged families have a better holiday. Partnering with the Dept. of Social and Health Services and Children & Family Services, associates acquired food, clothing, toys, housewares, and many more special items to help Santa Claus give these families a holiday to remember.

Pictured from left to right: Don Whittaker, MIS, and Nancie O'Neill and Julie Styer from Human Resources. □



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