



BY MARK BOCCIA
HM COLUMNIST

Hotel buildings exist as living, breathing organisms, with complex engineering and structural systems that work in tandem. GMs are responsible for keeping the building well-maintained, but most GMs

are laypeople who lack the technical knowledge and skills on specific asset-protection and maintenance topics.

Innovative learning technologies, such as virtual reality, can help. At Marriott, we recently launched How Your Hotel Works, a new virtual reality training series that

engages GMs' senses to identify potential engineering and structural issues using high-level graphics and animation, video, actors on screen explaining technical concepts using everyday language and virtual reality practice exercises.

Not only is the training short, compelling and practical,

GMs gain a greater sense of confidence around these topics and a better understanding of their responsibility for asset management. The integral components of the virtual training program are:

Learning portal: Featuring a 14-part suite of engineering concepts, such as water infiltration, HVAC, façades, roofs, building air pressure, parking lots, plumbing systems, exterior irrigation, fire-control systems, electrical systems, windows, energy conservation and lighting.

Issue-spotting exercises: GMs can view 360-degree images and identify problem areas. Their engineering leader is equipped with a virtual reality headset so he or she can partner with the GM for an enhanced experience.

Quiz and certification: Quarterly deadlines are established for the requirements to be completed in segments. Participants take a quiz for each module to obtain credit.

Property inspection: After each episode, the GM completes a custom property inspection and results may generate work orders for the engineering team to investigate further.

Analyze user data: The robustness of virtual technology allows engineering and regional leadership to easily track participation and quiz scores and follow up accordingly.

Though it has been a short time since the rollout, it is creating a lot of "buzz" internally. The return on investment seems clear: Increasing asset-management awareness through virtual training can reduce long-term expenses associated with higher repair costs, decreased guest satisfaction, owner dissatisfaction and greater capital expenditures. The (virtual) reality—a healthy, well-maintained hotel means happy guests! **HM**

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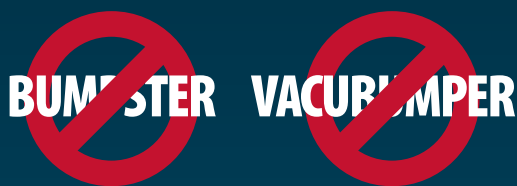
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