

Message from the Chairman of the Board





As 2005 winds to an end, I would like to wish you all a very happy holiday season and a happy, healthy and prosperous 2006. This is also an appropriate time to talk about the CITQ's remarkable achievements in 2005 and thank all those who contributed to them.

This year the CITQ successfully carried out its second complete classification

tour, with excellent co-operation from all operators and unflagging hard work by its own staff. The operation, spread out over two years, covered the entire province of Quebec and meant processing upwards of 7,000 classification visits.

Along with its regular activities, in 2005 the CITQ also completed a major update of its current classification criteria. This review had been requested by the tourism community, and called for input from dozens of establishment operators, industry representatives and associations and experts of all kinds, as well as consumers. The recommendations from this vast consultation were submitted to Tourisme Québec, and we certainly hope to see them implemented in the near future.

Finally, on the strength of these many accomplishments, earlier this year the CITQ renewed its agreement with Tourisme Québec until November 2009. My colleagues on the Board and I are delighted with this mark of confidence in the CITQ's expertise and we plan to continue our efforts to make sure that all the years to come are equally successful.

Have a good winter!

Jean Authier

Chairman of the Board



ARE YOU on the WEB?

The Tourism Intelligence Network recently published the findings of a survey conducted in fall 2004 by the Travel Industry

Association of America, of 5,000 American tourists who had taken a trip of one or more nights in the previous year.

One of the findings of this wide-ranging survey was that establishments' Websites are the second most important source of information when planning a trip, right after the traditional word of mouth.

All in all, 40% of respondents who had taken a trip for pleasure or combining business and pleasure during the previous year had consulted accommodation establishment Websites. This proportion dropped to 26% among outdoor vacationers and to 20% for those travelling to visit relatives and friends.

But what about Canadian travellers and, most important, what about Ouebec tourist establishments on the Web?

Continuated on page 2 ▶

Source: Péloquin, Claude (2005). Comprendre les décisions de voyage. Le globeveilleur, October 26, 2005, http://www.veilletourisme.ca

JOIN THE CITQ AND HELP ELECT THE 2006 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The CITQ reminds you that only member associations in good standing on January 31, 2006 will be eligible to vote in elections for the 2006 Board of Directors. For details on membership eligibility criteria, see the "Membres et partenaires" section of the www.citq.qc.ca Website or call (450) 679-3737 or 1 866 499-0550.

PLEASE NOTE

The CITQ is not responsible in any way for the information in our contributors' advertorials and advertisements, and they are in no way to be considered endorsements. Although these articles and advertisements are intended to provide you with useful information on operating tourist accommodation establishments, we recommend that you shop around and make the appropriate comparisons before choosing a product or service.





PROPORTION OF TOURIST ACCOMMODATION ESTABLISHMENTS IN QUEBEC WITH NO WEBSITE OR E-MAIL ADDRESS

CATEGORY	NO WEBSITE	NO E-MAIL ADDRESS	NO WEBSITE OR E-MAIL ADDRESS
Hotel establishments	35%	32%	26%
B&B establishments	28%	23%	15%
Tourist homes	45%	31%	24%
Resorts	24%	16%	14%
Hospitality villages	40%	13%	13%
Youth hostels	20%	18%	12%
Educational institutions	18%	9%	3%
ALL ESTABLISHMENTS	35%	28%	21%

Source: Our calculations, from the Tourisme Québec database, October 27, 2005

Insurance

ADVERTORIAL

Be careful when it comes to information and communications technologies

Insurance coverage for information and communication equipment is generally divided into two main categories, i.e. "hardware" and "software." Amounts must be stipulated for each category, and it is best to talk with your broker to find out what your insurance will cover if your equipment is damaged or lost.

It is also a good idea to contact your broker and update the insurance amounts in your contract every year. The insurance on your hardware should normally provide for its replacement by equivalent items – and since computer prices are constantly declining, the replacement cost is often less than the price of the original equipment.

Coverage for software and data recovery is generally subject to clauses calling for special vigilance when it comes to backing up your data. Setting and respecting corporate policies is usually the best insurance for a tourist accommodation establishment. For widely available software, it is often possible to obtain a replacement at no cost. The same is not true for customized programs and home-made programs requiring that you go back to the drawing board.

Lastly, any discussion of new technologies naturally leads to the topic of viruses and how they can stop your system dead. Insurance contracts unfortunately do not cover this situation, for the simple and good reason that it is the responsibility of the business to protect itself against such risks with an efficient firewall. The same applies for any establishment offering Internet access for its visitors.

In short, vigilance, caution and a good understanding of the risks can help avoid much frustration if ever part of your computer system is lost.

Jean-François Trudel, Vice-President, Operations (514) 382-6560 1 800 561-6560



ARE YOU ON

Continued from page 1

A study commissioned by the Canadian Tourism Commission revealed that "One quarter of Canadian and 35 per cent of American households recently used the Internet to research and/or book travel and are therefore classified as iTravellers."

The study also showed that close to 80% of iTravellers visit the sites of tourist accommodation establishments, particularly in the early stages of their online research.

When it comes to tourist accommodation establishments in Quebec, nearly 35% have no Website, 28% have no e-mail address and 21% have neither a Website nor an e-mail address. (See table opposite.)

ONLINE RESERVATION

Although the telephone is still widely used for making reservations, more and more travellers, and particularly business travellers, are inclined to reserve online.

The study by the Canadian Tourism Commission emphasizes, however, that:

"Canadian and American iTravellers are more likely to book online if:

- The site is in their own language
- Customer service is available via a 1-800 number
- Real-time bookings and immediate confirmation exists (particularly so in the U.S.)
- The site accepts all credit cards
- The site offers pictures, videos and virtual tours
- There is a recognizable/familiar brand name
- Familiar brand names, government or official sites, live chats with customer service and traveller testimonials also help." ¹

1. Canadian Tourism Commission (2002). Role of the Internet in the Vacation Travel of North Americans: Summary of Findings, spring 2002, 16 p.

THE WEB?

Displaying your classification

on the Internet

Many operators display their classification signs on their Websites. Even better, many of them include a link to the CITQ Website.

These operators feel, and rightly so, that their classification sign is a good indicator

of the level of comfort visitors can expect, as well as a guarantee for visitors that their establishment has been officially evaluated. By including a link to the CITQ Website, they also give iTravellers ready access to detailed information on Quebec's official classification program.

Your classification sign adds to your establishment's image. Why not take advantage of it and display it on your Website?

You can visit www.citq.qc.ca right now and download it with just one click.

Technologies

ADVERTORIAL

Customer service, a key consideration in choosing hotel management software

Choosing hotel management software can be a real headache, for there are so many factors to consider. Aside from managing your inventory and rates, you have to take into account all the many applications that can be carried out directly from the software: automated management of debit and credit cards, multiple packages, rebates for travel agents, online reservations, exporting accounting data, interfaces with the telephone system, point-of-sale software, call management, etc. All these many interfaces and the ability to integrate the software into other systems will save you time and money, sooner than you might think.

To support all these applications, a good hotel software package must be designed using solid architecture, meet industry standards (*Open Travel Alliance*) and be flexible enough that it can adapt to changes.

You should look for software that will simplify life for users, while providing you with all the reports and information you need for decision making. Rapidity, simplicity, flexibility and user friendliness are other very important features.

All that being said, the best software in the world will never be entirely satisfactory if it doesn't come with fast and effective technical support and training. This is why customer service, in an industry like yours, is a key factor in choosing the right hotel management software. You and your supplier must establish a business partnership – for as you know only too well, the hospitality industry is evolving quickly and we have to keep up with it or even, dare I say it, stay ahead of it! Call us if you would like any further information.

Normand Latreille, Vice-President, Sales and Marketing (514) 935-5345 nlatreille@mingus.biz

Hotello

ADVICE FROM CLASSIFIERS

INTERNET:

Wireless Internet service is more and more popular with business travellers, but it does call for a substantial investment. Limiting its use to your business customers and, if your budget allows, to executive bedrooms, can be an effective compromise. Make sure to provide alternative arrangements for customers with incompatible computer equipment, however.



85522225

wired or wireless?

Equipping executive bedrooms with a desk telephone or portable telephone and easily accessible telephone and Internet jacks near the desk can make customers' life easier. Having to shift furniture to plug in a laptop computer is not only inconvenient, but can damage walls and furniture, not to mention one's back!

To reach planners of meetings, conventions, weddings and all kinds of corporate events

WWW.CONFERENCEPLANNING.CA

The bilingual portal for today's business people
Accommodation – Meeting rooms – Corporate products – Packages and promotions – On-line quotations – Weekly columns



Training

ADVERTORIAL

Training: an investment that pays off

In the hotel business, if you're going to make a property investment, it must be well planned to meet customers' needs and at the same time ensure the best return on investment. Training is like any other investment and must be properly thought out.

Before investing, you need to take stock of the strengths and weaknesses of your organization and staff, determine the objectives to be met and, finally, establish training priorities.

Once you have defined and communicated your objectives, you can measure the effectiveness of the training program using quantitative and qualitative criteria. For example,

- Customer-service training can boost both customer satisfaction and sales
- Training in work methods will improve work performance and reduce work accidents.

Depending on your objectives, the return on investment can be evaluated over a period of several months or years. It goes without saying that supervisors need to follow up regularly on training to ensure an optimal return, just as there are preventive maintenance schedules for equipment.

A continuing education program is a measure of quality that contributes not only to effective customer service but also to employee loyalty and the profitability of the business. Given the difficulty of recruiting employees, it is key to invest in training. Having loyal, qualified staff is the best way to avoid headaches and provide quality service for customers who are more and more demanding every day.

Lise Baillargeon, Consultant, Industry Services, ITHQ Institut de tourisme et d'hôtellerie Québec 💀 😣

Mattresses

ADVERTORIAL

The invisible part of the mattress varies greatly from one manufacturer to another

Choosing the right mattress to meet customers' expectations and your budget calls for plenty of thought. I hope that our previous article answered your questions about mattress sizes.

In the next few articles we will analyze the more complex subject of the various materials used in making mattresses. We will begin with the inner core, the centre of the mattress.

The coils are unarguably a key consideration. At present there are two kinds of coils on the market: conventional and pocket coils. They are available in several sizes, heights and diameters. The gauge of steel used to make the coils can vary from one manufacturer to another, as can the number of coils inside the core.

There are other kinds of core material, too: polyurethane foam, memory foam and latex. These products are available in a number of different compressions and densities. There are also different types of cushioning materials that cover the mattress core. In short, you have to make a great number of choices.

Whatever you decide, it is essential that you do your research, and deal with a recognized firm and an experienced representative, who can guide you and help you select the right product – most importantly, at the right price.

Ronald Thibault,



Answers

to your questions

Are new technologies having an impact on the classification of establishments?

425 - For some classes of establishments, Internet access, computer jacks, business service centres, electronic locks, ATMs and camera surveillance systems are now part of the classification criteria or earn bonus points for the establishment.

Can classifiers reveal the classification results at the time of their visit?

 ${\it NO}$ - In fact, classifiers are <u>not</u> allowed to do so. The results must first be reviewed and corroborated by the operator service agent, who then sends them to Tourisme Québec and the operator, about four to six weeks after the classifier's visit.

Administrator of the official accommodation classification program



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The masculine gender is used merely for simplification.

No discrimination is intended.

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