



by Peter Holmes

Vice President
of Business
Development

Hospitality Upgrade proudly welcomes Peter Holmes to the team.

Joan Arkins, our associate publisher, is officially "off the schnied." She is no longer the newest employee at *Hospitality Upgrade*. That distinction now goes to me, and I couldn't be happier about it. It is thrilling to be a part of this vibrant organization and I have found myself spending a great deal of time smiling since I got here.

As some of you know, I've been in and around the hospitality technology world for a long time. I left hotel operations in 1981 to take a job as an installer/trainer for **MICOR** in Phoenix – where I first met Jon Inge and David Sjolander, who were also working for MICOR. Several of us later moved over to **Hotel Information Systems (HIS)** and, after about two years of installing systems in places like Riyadh, Saudi Arabia (with none other than Rich Siegel), I made what felt like a very natural transition to a sales position. After opening the first remote HIS sales office in New York and, later, a similar sales office in Chicago for **Computerized Lodging Systems (CLS)**, I moved to **Lodgistix/Sulcus**, eventually serving as vice president of sales. I then spent five years at **Cynergy Corporation** before accepting a job running sales and distribution for **opentable.com**. The last two years I've spent outside the hospitality industry (although with some involvement in the gaming market) working for Cedar Enterprise Solutions selling a cutting-edge data visualization solution to Fortune 500 companies. While it was great to get exposure to

some of the largest companies in the world (Siemens has over 460,000 employees, for example.) I have to admit that I missed the warm and personal nature of the business relationships that I had formed in the hospitality industry.

I have known Rich Siegel for a little more than 22 years, having met him on the same day I met the woman that I would later marry (she was also in the initial training class at Hotel Information Systems). I count Rich among my very closest friends. I've

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worked for him before at Lodgistix/Sulcus and along side him at HIS and CLS. Although not always blindingly obvious from an outsider's perspective, Rich and I actually make a very complementary pair.

As I went through the discussion process with Rich and the rest of the Hospitality Upgrade team about the company's current state of affairs, I was struck with the uniformity of the candid, but overwhelmingly positive, assessments I received. The company has been doing very well, growing slowly but steadily after the not-unsurprising pullback that followed Sept. 11. The company's product offerings are extremely well received by its clients. In fact, it appears that

the level of customer satisfaction is higher here than it has been with any product or service I have ever been associated with. I truly believe that *Hospitality Upgrade* has reached the stage where any company that intends to sell technology-related products to the hospitality industry simply *must* be in the magazine.

When I individually pressed each of the employees to share their thoughts on the biggest challenges or obstacles to success the company faces – their answers appeared almost to be scripted, they were so similar. Without hesitation, each person said that, collectively, they have compiled a long list of ideas to expand the company. The only limitation they've faced in pursuing these ideas is in human resource and/or hours in the day. These people work hard making the current business run efficiently, and they just haven't had time to pursue these other ideas. That's where I hope to make a difference.

We soon will be announcing a creative expansion of our current offerings, both in print and online. We believe the online side of the business can be expanded significantly to service our readership and our participating vendors. What a great feeling it is to be part of *Hospitality Upgrade*, the No. 1 technology publication for the hospitality industry and Hotel Online (www.hotel-online.com), which by every available ranking of Web traffic is by far the industry's most popular general news site. Who says it is bad starting at the top? Keep your eyes on us over the next few months, as we'll have some very exciting announcements to make.

I will be attending a number of tradeshow and conferences over the next few months, so please look out for me and say hello. I'll be the guy with the big smile on my face.