

## How To Restore Your Lost Passion - By Mark Hamister

2007-02-02

---

The German poet Hebbel wrote that 'Nothing great in the world has ever been accomplished without passion.' Those are inspiring words when you're already inspired, but what do you do when your enthusiasm has dried up? There are four things that help me restore my passion when it's on the wane:

### **1. Start Something New**

In order to get passion back in the driver's seat, try getting involved in a new sector of business. Look for a job in a new industry, start a new business, or buy one. But whatever you do, follow Ben Franklin's words of caution: 'If passion drives you, let reason hold the reins.' When I look for new challenges, I take care not to stray too far from my present skill sets. Just because you're good at one or two things, you shouldn't assume that you can do anything.

I learned this when I entered the sports management business in the late 1990's. Although we had a number of great staff members, dedicated athletes, and many successes, we found that controlling the quality of play was an elusive and frustrating endeavor. The dynamics of league leadership and the agendas of other markets added to our dissatisfaction and caused us to disconnect from our core skills. Since my company has always been committed to providing quality service, the industry simply wasn't a match for us.

The hotel business, on the other hand, was a perfect fit. The Hamister Group, Inc. has a 30-year history of excellence in long-term care management. About 25 years ago we adopted a hospitality-based culture by studying the Ritz-Carlton and Disney operating models. We therefore knew that we could successfully transfer our skill sets into the hotel industry. We bought our 1st hotel in 2004 and our 10th in November 2006. I am now very passionate about hotels.

### **2. Serve Your Community**

Mitch Albom wrote that 'the way to get meaning into your life is to devote yourself to loving others, devote yourself to your community around you, and devote yourself to creating something that gives you purpose and meaning.' Serving others is both a great energy boost and a way to freshen up your leadership skills.

One of the most challenging experiences I have ever had was my 15-year participation in the Board of Directors of Independent Health, of a non-profit health insurer. Independent Health operates in a complex business sector and requires its board members to engage at a consistently high level. While serving on its board I learned a great deal about strategic planning and thinking. I was able to see a different response to my leadership skills, since participants were not my paid employees. The intensity of the challenges that Independent Health continues to provide keep my passion flowing and make me a better leader in my own company.

It doesn't matter what kind of project you choose-whether it involves the performing arts, aiding the disadvantaged, environmental preservation, etc.-as long as it's something you can be passionate about.

### **3. Get Curious About the Opinions of Your Front Line Staff**

I firmly believe in the words of Samuel Johnson: 'Curiosity is, in great and generous minds, the first passion and the last.' We have housekeepers and nursing aides who have not even finished high school, but they have become service experts through years of direct contact with customers. So be curious about what these people think and never underestimate the value of their input.

Take them out to lunch-without their managers-and ask them what can be done to improve business. Ask them how you can serve your customers better and how you can improve their working conditions. Even ask them what they think the company does wrong. Their feedback is likely to be helpful and eye-opening. And enforcing the changes they suggest will give you a renewed sense of purpose.

### **4. Refresh**

When hotels or assisted living facilities lose their competitive edge, you have two choices: perform a major refresh/renovation or exit. If you're going through a passion-low, the latter may seem to be the most attractive choice. But don't fold too quickly. Figuring out what needs to be done to remake your business can be a real energy boost.

One of our assisted living facilities became uncompetitive a few years ago and we had to decide whether to close the facility or commence a major renovation. We realized that it would take a large sum of money (the project ultimately cost \$10 million), so we wanted to evaluate the situation carefully. We spent a great deal of time talking to our customers and asking them what they wanted, a task which really helped us to reengage with assisted living. Phase 1 of this renovation-which is so extensive that we call it a Reinvention of Luxury Senior Living-was completed in late 2006. It included a Grand Lobby as posh as those of luxury hotels, a 5-star Dining Gallery, a 12-seat movie theater, oversized rooms with king and queen beds, and a Computer and Recreation Center facing a landscaped inner courtyard. How can anyone not be passionate about such a spectacular facility?

The same thing occurred during our recent refresh of one of our Marriott-branded hotels. We were due for a refresh, but after talking extensively with our customers, we decided to spend extra money and exceed the minimum refresh requirements for our property: we doubled the size of our breakfast room and added an Internet Cafe. These extra measures not only make us more competitive, but they also give us a greater sense of pride in our business. And pride also helps produce passion.

Mark Hamister is the CEO of The Hamister Group, Inc. and The Hamister Hospitality Group, LLC, a rapidly growing hotel management company. The Hamister Group is actively seeking hotel acquisitions and management contracts in the United States. For more details, please see our web sites: [www.hamisterhospitality.com](http://www.hamisterhospitality.com) and [www.hamistergroup.com](http://www.hamistergroup.com). Please feel free to send comments or questions to Mark at: [chairman@hamistergroup.com](mailto:chairman@hamistergroup.com).

This article comes from Hotel News Resource

<http://www.hotelnewsresource.com>

The URL for this story is:

<http://www.hotelnewsresource.com/article26093.html>

© 1998 - 2007 Nevistas and the author.

Brought to you by Hotel News Resource

*Distribute your news on our Network*

See what all the buzz is about at:

[http://www.hotelnewsresource.com/Info-news\\_account\\_info.html](http://www.hotelnewsresource.com/Info-news_account_info.html)