

Super 8 Brand is 'Moving Forward ... Focused to Win'

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Building on the theme 'Moving Forward ... Focused to Win,' Super 8 Motels President John Valletta today told nearly 2,000 owners and operators attending their international conference that the brand will maintain its competitive position as the 'value lodging choice for guests of all ages' by upgrading standards and services.

This year, as part of the second phase implementation of product and service enhancements, the Super 8(R) brand has mandated in-room coffeemakers, new uniforms, name badges and a bath amenities package featuring a Hookless(R) shower curtain, multispray shower head and a curved shower rod. The brand also is upgrading its SuperStart(R) breakfast by offering cereal and milk in addition to coffee, tea, juice and assorted baked goods, and it is mandating that mattresses be replaced on a consistent schedule.

The first phase of the standards and amenities program, implemented during the last two years, included mandatory free high-speed Internet service, an alarm clock radio, hairdryer and minimum 24-inch TV with cable or satellite service including free premium channels. It also raised the bar on bath linens and bedding standards by requiring higher weights and thread counts. Also under the first phase, the brand introduced free local phone calls, free stays for children 17 and under (when staying with an adult family member) and 24-hour front desk service.

'Today's travelers are looking for specific amenities and services and we want them to find what they're looking for at Super 8,' said Valletta. 'The only way we can ensure Super 8's continued success in the future is by moving forward.'

Rosanne Zusman, Super 8 vice president of marketing, announced that the brand has signed an agreement with Petty Enterprises to become the official lodging sponsor of the Number 43 Cheerios/Betty Crocker Dodge driven by Bobby Labonte, a past Nextel Cup series champion.

'Research has shown that nearly 40 percent of our guests are interested in NASCAR, and our continued association with racing has created a definite preference for the Super 8 brand,' said Zusman. 'Investing in this sponsorship is an efficient and effective use of marketing funds.'

As part of the sponsorship, the Super 8 logo will be displayed prominently on the race car, driver and crew team uniforms, team trailers, pit boxes and transporters including merchandise haulers.

Also at the conference, the Super 8 brand unveiled its new room prototype designed by Back Lot Productions, an Atlanta-based retail design and brand development firm, to differentiate the brand from its competitors, attract the new generation of younger travelers and change the way consumers think about the brand.

The new room features a contemporary palette that provides a warmer, more residential experience; regionally themed headboard artwork that is expected to become a hallmark of the brand's identity; a contemporary platform bed; a custom, two-sided bed cover to suggest an upscale experience; a modular TV wall unit that affords additional storage and seating; and a two-tiered vanity.

The average age of a Super 8 guest is now at 'an all-time high,' Zusman said. 'As our core customer ages, the future of Super 8 depends on our ability to adapt the brand to embrace the next generation of customers while still meeting the needs of current guests. Recreating the interior experience will begin to position Super 8 as the economy lodging choice for the Gen X and Gen Y travelers.'

The room prototype is a result of a design challenge conducted among five top interior design firms to create a new Super 8 room that would appeal to current guests but also incorporate contemporary elements of interest to younger travelers.

'After reviewing presentations from all five firms, we evaluated each design for overall appeal, creativity, uniqueness and functionality for both the guest and the franchisee,' said Zusman. 'We then conducted research among our guests as well as economy and midtier travelers who weren't current customers. We knew we had a winner when nearly 70 percent of respondents said they would stay with Super 8 if the new prototype room was offered.'

The new room prototype is expected to be in market later this year.

Back Lot Productions is a Retail Design and Brand Development firm established in 2000 by graphic designer Tracey Barker and architect Bart Mills. It is based on the philosophy of Markitecture, marketing your brand through the built environment to evoke the designed emotional response from your customer.

The Super 8 brand features free continental breakfast and high-speed Internet access. Participating motels offer free local calls, fax and copy services and exercise facilities. Reservations and information are available by calling (800) 800-8000 or by visiting www.super8.com. All Super 8 motels are independently owned and operated under franchise agreements with Super 8 Motels Inc., a subsidiary of Wyndham Worldwide Corporation (NYSE: WYN.)

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