

Hilton Garden Inn Unveils Ultimate Team Play

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Interactive Training Program Created by Virtual Heroes For Hilton Garden Inn Using Serious Games-Based Technology - the First in the Hospitality Industry

Hilton Garden Inn, the award-winning mid-priced hotel brand with locations throughout North America and Europe, today unveiled Ultimate Team Play - the first interactive training game to be used in the hospitality industry that utilizes game-based technology.

Created especially for Hilton Garden Inn by Virtual Heroes, Inc., Ultimate Team Play puts team members in a virtual Hilton Garden Inn hotel and in various scenarios, they will have to stop and decide what their best course of action will be to make sure they are able to fulfill a guest's request and/or complete a specific job task within a limited time. Their immediate or non-immediate actions toward guests-since guest interaction will be the primary focus of the game- will directly affect the mood of the guest as well as the hotel's SALT (Satisfaction and Loyalty Tracking) scores.

SALT is the real world survey tool used by the brand to measure and track guest loyalty, satisfaction and their overall experience at a particular Hilton Garden Inn hotel as well as thoughts on the brand in general. Surveys are sent via email to guests who have recently stayed at a hotel and the results of the surveys generate the SALT scores. Each survey asks the guest to rank their satisfaction on a variety of amenities and the aspects of their stay. The ranking scale is from 1 to 10 with 10 being the highest.

'We're excited to introduce a game-based program to enhance training for team members as well as make it fun and I want to acknowledge David Kervella who oversees the training programs for Hilton Garden Inn for spearheading and researching this capability,' said Adrian Kurre, senior vice president, Hilton Garden Inn. 'Ultimate Team Play allows our hotel team members to play their hotel specific role and show them how their various actions directly affect the guest and the hotel. Including SALT was key because it really emphasizes to the entire team that no matter what role they have or what job they do, each person ultimately affects the guest's overall hotel experience.'

Ultimate Team Play uses a branching dialogue system so team members will select their level of guest interaction from a list to best determine which response best suits each guest's demeanor and attitude while ensuring they are also completing their specific hotel duties (i.e., answering the telephone, checking guests in and out and interacting with guests in lobby) as efficiently as possible. Because guests already have their own set of values with varying degrees of anger and patience levels and flexibility, scoring will be based on the guest's happiness, how quickly, politely and correctly the team member performs.

'We are excited to use our advanced learning expertise, technology and artistic talent to help Hilton Garden Inn create the first interactive training game to be used in the hospitality industry,' said Virtual Heroes founder and CEO Jerry Heneghan. 'Ultimate Team Play leverages cutting-edge games-based technology in a realistic and immersive virtual Hilton Garden Inn environment where real-world hotel staff can further enhance their training and guest interaction.'

The overall goal of the Ultimate Team Play is to show hotel team members how their actions impact the hotel, affect the guest's mood which in turn moves the SALT scores up or down.

Ultimate Team Play will be the fourth component in the Hilton Garden Inn team member training program which includes:

Orientation - introduction to the Hilton Family of Hotels, the Hilton Garden Inn brand and their specific hotel

Ultimate Skills - understanding and learning job specific skills using a magazine-style training manual

Ultimate Service - DVD based-training modules that takes Ultimate Skills to the next level and provides team members with examples on how to deliver exemplary customer service

Ultimate Team Play - interactive game based training placing team members in a virtual Hilton Garden Inn hotel that shows how their actions affect guests and overall SALT scores

Orientation, Ultimate Skills and Ultimate Service training are required to be completed within 90 days of hire.

The initial interactive game will be beta-tested in select HGI locations in which team members will play the role of a front desk service agent. The full interactive game version set to launch to all Hilton Garden Inn locations in January 2009 will include positions in housekeeping, food and beverage, engineering/maintenance as well as front desk.

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