

## Hospitality R.O.I. METAPHOR - Let'S Play Ball! - By J. Ragsdale Hendrie

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Hospitality is one intriguing game we have chosen. We play in splendid venues, our Fans are enthusiastic with high expectations. Our competition often has the marquee players, bench depth, ace pitching and storied coaches. We field the best Team we can, mindful of injuries, slumps, steroids and scandals.

We are now at bat. We've got Product on third, Service on second base, and Facility on first. There are two outs, bottom of the ninth, the score is tied. From the dugout emerges our 'clean-up' man, the one to bring the batting order home. Confidently, he strides to the plate, taps his cleats with the bat, glimpses at the Coach, frowns at the catcher, stares down the pitcher - and takes his stance - bountiful talent, all business, muscled and composed. The duel begins!

The Hospitality Industry has extraordinary challenges which will dramatically transform how we conduct Business - now, in the future and ever more. It is our turn in the Batter's Box!

Can we deliver on our Brand Promise when our Guest struggles to even reach us? Airlines are further constricted, travel by automobile has been reduced, all other conveyances have comparable operating dilemmas. The Cost of Doing Business has skyrocketed, whether it be our utilities, insurance rates, supplies, produce or labor. The days of a full complement of trained, energetic and responsive staff are gone. Our Guest profile keeps changing, more nuanced or overt expectations evolving with frequency. It is very difficult to remain upbeat with such a volatile market. But, we are a proud sort, dedicated, passionate and committed to care for our Guest with the highest level of professionalism, respect and sensibility. We are confident our R.O.I. will be enhanced by that batter now at the plate, due to his R.B.I. (Runs Batted In) record. We would be thrilled to have a single and Product advancing from third base, ecstatic to witness a double with Service crossing the plate, awed with a triple and Facility touching home plate, and, of course, stunned with a home run and our man, providing a huge winning margin, grandly rounding the diamond. We may not get all four runs, but striking out is not an option. R.B.I.'s provide the margin for success and victory. That is the formula for the Hospitality Experience: R.B.I. = R.O.I.

Like any good manager, baseball or not, we have a Game Plan and have broken our Strategy down to sound Tactics. Given the vagaries of the game and our Business, we acknowledge the Value of R.B.I.'s:

R. - Reliability. We know what our Guest wants, we have asked them. They now fully expect us to perform as promised. We start with the basics: cleanliness, reasonable service, cordial attention and a well maintained building exterior and interior. As our price point elevates, reliability factors also rise, as expectations further escalate.

B. - Brand. This is our reputation in the marketplace. We have spent our time defining and refining what we are, as a means to influence Consumer confidence and decision making. This is exactly the time to remain steadfast with your Advertising Budget. We market our brilliance through effective Media. We have framed the Experience. Now, we must deliver flawlessly, recognizing that one misstep will be heard around the world.

I. - Innovation. We are responsive to our market with the flexibility and ability to do things differently. We surface new approaches, ideas and system components to continually enhance our product, service and facility. We involve our people in this process, for who knows better - those on the front line or their Manager?

Anachronisms are all the rage, make your own or borrow from sport. Whatever you choose, make it memorable, for the Experience must be a Grand Slam! Motherhood, apple pie and the timeless pastime of Baseball. Batter up, Hospitality. Go, Team, Go!

The author believes that Remarkable Hospitality is the portal to the Memorable Experience. Seek solutions at: [www.hospitalityperformance.com](http://www.hospitalityperformance.com).

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