

Knowledge Sharing Summit & Marketplace



Summit 2018 Workshop Sessions

Note: Workshop descriptions are still being edited and focused as speakers are confirmed. Some changes will occur as we complete the process.

Are your bookings up or down? Was 2017 a challenging year? What sessions at Summit might help?

Attend this opening session to learn why your business may be impacted in a negative way and how you can remedy the situation. Learn what sessions offered at Summit 2018 can improve your knowledge and your bottom line.

Heads in Beds

Ten Steps to a Successful Digital Marketing Plan

This informative and dynamic session will outline your journey to increased profitability by covering the 10 key steps to include in your overall revenue strategy for 2018. Digital marketing changes constantly and you cannot rely on treadmill marketing to achieve significant gains. Discover a focus for your marketing dollars and come away with a clear game plan. Exciting topics such as social influencer marketing, reservation recovery, experiential travel and the power of total revenue management will interest anyone who wants to beat the competition and increase market share.

Five Ways to Compete for Mobile-Centric Guests

Is your business ready to compete for mobile-centric guests? Learn how Google's "Mobile First" search algorithms are changing the marketing landscape. Compare mobile platforms - responsive, adaptive and AMP - to choose the best one for your business. Be sure your mobile site includes features that keep travelers engaged from travel search through the booking process. Get more guests!

Revenue Management – Your Path to Increased Revenue

The days of setting and forgetting your room rates are over. In this competitive market innkeepers must approach rates using 365-day pricing to help drive revenue up year after year and create a safeguard in down years. Learn when to make real time rate adjustments, what reports and environmental factors are crucial to make smart and educated decisions, how and when to use the OTAs to your advantage, and why revenue management can be critical in the ramp-up to an exit strategy.

Understanding the Power and Influence of Your Property's Imagery

What unique creative approaches are you taking to properly sell your property, express your message, and influence your guest experience? Learn best practices on how to visually tell your story - from your website to social media and beyond - to attract more customers, professionally and legally.

What's Next for Marketing?

Marketing your property is a constant challenge since how your guest receives information about travel experiences is changing practically every day. Do you know how to capitalize on micro-moments? What is RankBrain and how does it work? Is Siri the next voice of your Inn? What is a chatbot? Explore these topics and more in this session.

Expert Panel - Live Marketing Reviews

Learn more about website marketing by viewing particular pain-points of five websites selected from Summit early bird registrants.

Ten Steps to Making Google Happy and Improving your Revenue

Improve revenue before beginning a marketing program! A quality web presence is still the first step in building your base revenue from free to organic to local traffic. Discover the top 10 steps in creating a stellar, quality web presence that will make Google proud. Learn to utilize Google's online tests to validate that your website is following Google guidelines, including changes just around the corner that could either improve or demote your placement. *An Advanced Skills Building Session*

X-Ray Analytics

Analytics is an enormous tool, but what do you really need to get from it? This session dives into only the most important and relevant areas of it: how to determine the value of paid listings and advertising, prioritize visitor interests, and most of all, do it without wading through all that information that may be interesting, but is not useful for you. *An Advanced Skills Building Session*

Beyond the Free Stuff!

Is your paid marketing strategy adding to your bottom line? Explore how to navigate the changing world of paid travel search. Get advice on when to pass and when to say YES! A panel of travel professionals will help you decide the best fit with pros and cons of ad targeting, direct Online Travel Agency (OTA) connections, Global Distribution Systems, and directories like TripAdvisor, Airbnb, and BedandBreakfast.com. It's changing so don't get left behind! *An Advanced Skills Building Session*

Blueprint for Making 2018 the Best Year Ever!

This session is designed for innkeepers serious about dramatically improving their income, profits, and guest satisfaction with more specific examples than you'd expect, including an owner's 2016 and 2017 financials. Among topics to be covered are ways to achieve lodging profitability, staffing models, utilizing managers, improving guest satisfaction, and tracking ROI for lodging and weddings. The speaker will share a 50-item checklist that is an operational and financial blueprint to make 2018 the best year ever! *An Advanced Skills Building Session*

Website Conversion: Top 10 Tips to Increase your Conversion Rate

There is lots of talk about how to drive more traffic to your website but conversion rate optimization is often overlooked. In this session, dive deep into the top 10 tips you can use to increase the percentage of website visitors who ultimately make a booking. The speaker will share benchmarks so you know how your conversion rate compares to the industry average. *An Advanced Skills Building Session*

New and Aspiring Innkeepers

Running your Business so it Won't Run You

You love your inn, your location, and your guests. How do you keep your daily operation on track so that you enjoy the rewards of owning your own business? Taking the time to organize and to plan for the daily routine of the business operations will help clear your calendar and manage the many details that make up your operation. Who should be doing what and when? What do you do in-house and what do you outsource? Where is the payback for your efforts versus staff? Hear best practices from business savvy and successful Innkeepers.

Marketing for the New Innkeeper

With so many marketing options available, it is difficult to determine where to start. From website and OTA's, to working with local press and travel boards, to content management marketing, this session will help you prioritize where to spend your money, how much time to dedicate to each channel, how to track your efforts, and how to get the most bang for your buck.

Food Service Options and Opportunities

Breakfast is an important key factor in your success as an innkeeper and a terrific marketing opportunity. Options are as varied as the inns that offer them. Create a guest friendly and social media worthy breakfast offering and increase your presence and your ADR. Plan ahead, purchase wisely, do it well, and increase your bottom line. Get some expert advice on what to serve, when and how. Explore the pros and cons of full or continental, buffet or plated, and dining room layout.

Benchmarks for the New Innkeeper. How do I Measure My First Year in Business?

Besides looking at the bank balance, what other numbers and statistics should a new innkeeper look at to analyze their new endeavor? From occupancy to RevPAR, ADR, your google position, and TripAdvisor reviews, these professionals will sort out and guide you as to what's important in gauging your success in those first few years.

Financial Record Keeping

This session will explore the standard income and expense line items you should have in your P&L when establishing your inn model. Understanding standard costs are important in helping you create priorities in marketing, operational and capital resources whether a full-service property or a traditional bed and breakfast. The presentation will explore variations in revenue and expense line items based upon different models, and will take a look at expenses that should be accounted for when purchasing an inn.

A Beginners Guide to the New Inn Owners Online Presence

A new property owner's financial success depends upon an astute awareness of online presence. Many are unaware of the vast amounts of online access data they must acquire, handle or establish from the seller. In this session, seasoned industry experts share wisdom on how to navigate various aspects of intellectual property, provide a detailed overview of effective digital marketing strategies, and explain what it takes to keep Google happy.

Creating the Model Property Profile

How does one define the best property to purchase? What type of inn is best? Do you want full service? Do you like event planning and look forward to weddings? Where are you willing to relocate? Do your passions or interests match the location under consideration? How long do you see yourself in the industry? This session helps the aspiring innkeeper create a profile of wants and needs to measure against properties on the market.

The Guest Experience

What Makes a Good Cup O' Joe?

Take a closer look at options for coffee service. What kinds of coffee comes from different parts of the world? Is there a best bean to buy from a small-batch roaster? What kind of coffee service would please your guests: espresso? cappuccino? cold brew? Does one need one a wildly expensive coffee maker or espresso machine to produce these beverages? Does the guest brew their own or is it all on the innkeeper barista?

#You'veGotThisBreakfast

This session features beautiful breakfast ideas to please even the gluten free, lactose intolerant, and vegan guest with a tree nut allergy. The speaker defines dietary restrictions and food allergies, and the importance of avoiding cross-contamination. Watch as she demos simple, beautiful dishes made for the whole house yet is easily adapted to the guest with a dietary restriction.

Wellness Tourism

These popular buzz words in hospitality and tourism are a \$3.4 trillion economy defined as *travel for the purpose of promoting health and wellness through physical, psychological or spiritual activities*. How can B&Bs participate in the wellness tourism experience? A panel of innkeepers will share what it is to integrate wellness tourism into the B&B experience.

Managing a Sour Moment

Difficult days and challenging guests are sure to come your way. Using interpersonal tips and tricks, we will define communication and communication styles, and how it changes situationally. What are conflict styles, and how does one identify personal style, strengths and weaknesses, and when to employ strategies to disarm disgruntled guests and turn bad situations into good reviews.

Food Trends for 2018

Expectations from travelers about food evolve. Indulgence may mean being extra good to yourself – in a healthy way. Are today's guests craving breakfast bowls, creative breakfast sandwiches, or other new trends? Discover rustic dishes, ethnic influences, unique grains, and the latest vegan options that don't sacrifice texture, flavor or appearance.

Food Photography 101

With all the opportunities to share photos of sumptuous breakfast fare, afternoon repast, or a sinfully rich dessert buffet, learning how to take exceptional, enticing, high quality food photos is a skill every innkeeper should possess. Who better to hear from than talented, professional photographers who share their insights on lighting, composition, and equipment.

Your Inn's Unique Guest-Centered Experience

Part 1 identifies the uniqueness that belongs to an inn and the experiences it offers. Creating a unique experience is one of the factors that differentiates one property from another. What is a guest-centered experience? Have you defined your target market segment? Have you created concise descriptions of experiences and engaged guests?

Creating Packages that Support Your Inn Experience

Part 2 considers the experience your inn wants to provide guests as defined in Part 1 and focuses on creating packages that support those experiences. Attendees will move from table to table to talk about different types of packages with colleagues.

Moderators are innkeepers who are well-known for teaming with area businesses, hosting events onsite, selling through add-on packages, and taking advantage of area attractions for history buffs, culinary devotees, or nature enthusiasts.

Back of House

Keeping it Fresh

Your guest is changing and so are their tastes in decor, style, and amenities. It's not only the younger demographic that likes a cooler, cleaner, less cluttered look. Home decorating shows have spurred on the masses to seek a "new look" at an affordable price. No matter the age or history of your property, keeping changing guest preferences "top of mind" is important to your bottom line.

The Legal Challenges of Human Resources

Legal and governmental mandates are affecting even the smallest of businesses. Constantly increasing minimum wage, health care uncertainty, paid family leave laws, workers' compensation issues, unlawful terminations, and more can put the most well-intended innkeeper on the wrong side of the law. Our legal expert will speak to the workplace issues facing us today and how we can best adapt our practices to be in full compliance.

Staffing When the Employment Pool is Shallow

Finding the right people, training them, and continuing to develop them is a key component to business growth and stability. But a greater challenge arises when the employment pool for adequately equipped personnel is limited by geography, brain drain, or high employment. Learn the tools needed to hire and retain the best people in a competitive market and how to find emotional intelligence in addition to a skill set.

Improving Bottom Line Through or Financial Analysis

With the number of hotels, B&B's and inns exploding, what can we do now and in the longer term to effectively compete with them, and to improve the financial success of our lodging properties? Using case studies, the speakers will demonstrate how making some relatively simple and inexpensive changes to an inn and/or its business practices can improve the bottom line, bring more guests flocking to the door, and more buyers willing to pay the asking price when it's time to sell.

Credit Card Processing

How do you read that statement? How are fees determined? Processing basics including who does what in the processing world - your bank, your processor, the issuing bank, the acquiring bank, your terminal, any online processor, and gateways. Advanced discussions will focus on reservations and advance deposits, PCI requirements, security, EMV and NFC, (chip cards and Apple pay), and common problems. Chargebacks, how to avoid them and to fight them, will be covered. Innkeepers can bring their current statements for review.

What's New In Insurance

This session is interactive and includes claims case studies on employee discrimination, liquor liability, data hacking, civil authority and ordinance and law. Participants will learn how risk management can influence business decisions and the bottom line in unexpected ways. This workshop is a key professional education component for lodge and inn owners. Case studies will include liquor liability, harassment/discrimination suits, and exposure if data is hacked.

Data Defense 2018: Protecting Your Inn's Data

Data security is confusing to almost everyone and fighting the constantly emerging threats can feel a lot like playing an unending game of whack-a-mole. This session will finally explain, in plain English, what terms like PCI, EMV, encryption, and tokenization mean; how to better secure your inn's data infrastructure to prevent costly breaches; how to deal with the dangers of ransomware; and what you can do now to protect your business, your guests, your family and yourself from hackers, phishers, extortionists, and other cyber miscreants.

Operations Manual

What would happen if your inn had to run without you? Who holds the passwords? Where are the shut-off valves? What are the processes and procedures for dealing with out-of-the-ordinary situations? This session will offer a table of contents for creating or updating your property's guide on all of the where, what, when, and how of running your operation.

State of the Commonwealth

All Virginia properties are invited to this session. VTC representative will talk about Marketing Leverage Grants, and there will be updates on legislative initiatives and issues important to B&Bs throughout the Commonwealth.

Housekeeping Tips and Tricks to Save Money

Of course visitors expect guest rooms and common areas to be impeccably clean, fresh, neat and comfortable. Without spending a fortune on extra help, equipment and supplies, what should you do to prepare the inn to meet guests' expectations? What is the best "workflow" and "checklist" when cleaning guest rooms and common areas? When is it best to do your own laundry versus hiring a laundry service? What "green" products actually work?

Property Management Software Showcase

It's the most important piece of software in your business. And though all are designed to accomplish the same general tasks of processing reservations and providing data, there are many differences to consider depending on the type of property you have. From booking engine integration to report generation, the speaker will discuss a number of the practical factors to consider when selecting a PMS for your specific property needs.

Airbnb: Taking Advantage of New Opportunities

Airbnb began in an environment of non-regulation or taxation requirements until recently. Their "sharing economy" paradigm, coupled with extraordinary growth, was quite the disruptor in our industry. But the evolution continues. In this session, Airbnb will provide an overview of the changing direction of the company, and innkeepers currently using this channel will share examples of how working with this giant OTA can work to your benefit.

Maintaining This Old House

How great would it be to have Bob Vila at your beck and call whenever something went awry in your well lived-in property. There always seems to be a failure, leak, crack, or issue that goes beyond duct tape and a tube of caulking. Preventative maintenance is key now to avoid costly repairs later. You'll be introduced to new products, tools, and materials that last longer and reduce overall cost. And we'll troubleshoot common issues associated with septic systems, wells, and structures built in the 19th century.

Innkeeper Liability: The Evolution of Guest Safety

Guest safety should always be a concern for Innkeepers. Inadequate security has repercussions beyond guests losing belongings to theft. In our ever-litigious culture, this session will cover our legal responsibilities as innkeepers to insure a safe environment. It will also provide some new, higher-tech solutions to address safety issues that were not available even five years ago, while still respecting the quaint and historic nature of the property.