

# CASE STUDY

This is not a typical case study, because these events happened in 2020, when everything in the hospitality industry was far from typical. However, the response and proactive measures taken by our hotel teams to survive and thrive during this time deserve to be highlighted. Read on to learn how this Hotel, in particular, did not cease operations for a single day and was able to achieve a 10 point premium in RevPAR in the first few months of a pandemic.

## OVERVIEW

The Hampton Inn LaGuardia Airport located in East Elmhurst, NY, has long been operated by Synergy Hospitality Management. With best practices in place and continued achievements in the market, the hotel was looking ahead to a strong performing 2020. On pace to exceed early predictions of Occupancy and ADR goals, along with airline crew business increasing for Q1, things were looking bright. Then came March 2020, and the hospitality market spiraled from the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. This study describes some of the tactics the hotel used to overcome one of the most destructive social and economic impact events to the hospitality industry in recorded time.

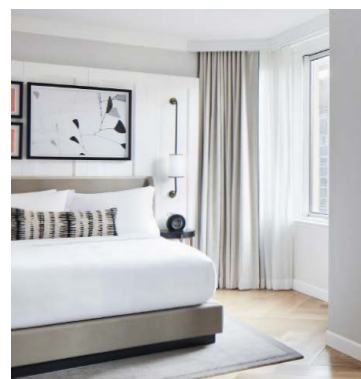


## GUEST & STAFF SAFETY FIRST

The initial response to the pandemic was to address the safety and wellness of our guests and team members. The team took a proactive approach to safety measures within days of city-wide restriction announcements. Even before city, state, or industry guidelines were delivered, the Hampton Inn team delivered a safe and comfortable accommodation and work environment through.

- **Communication** - A focus on safety and cleanliness to internal hotel teams, booking agents, and visiting guests.
- **Transparency** - Fostering an environment for collaboration, listening, and employing methods to raise concerns and act upon them.
- **Wellness Checks** - Established a wellness check for team members through the MyHotel Team app, which has long been a resource to the team through Synergy Hospitality Management.

Finding a balance in delivering a safe and comfortable stay in such unprecedented times is no easy feat. This Hotel was able to continue welcoming its guests with warmth and comfort, as well as protecting and providing guidance for staff. During the entirety of the pandemic (to date) no staff member has tested positive for COVID-19, verifying the measures taken by the team produced optimum results.



## BACKED BY HILTON

The relationship to the parent brand, Hilton Hotels, not only provided guidance, but also opportunity. The CleanStay initiative is not only for our guests but also for our associates. By caring for our team members, we care for our communities where we live and work.

**CleanStay Initiative:** Jim Norris, General Manager, along with his team, fully embraced the CleanStay initiative, a program that builds upon the already high standards of housekeeping and hygiene at Hilton properties worldwide. In collaboration with the makers of Lysol and the Mayo Clinic, Hilton provided our Hotel with actionable steps to keep our guests healthy. Additions to our cleaning procedures included:

- Hilton CleanStay Room Seal
- 10 High-Touch, Deep Clean Areas
- De-clutter Paper Amenities
- Guest-Accessible Disinfecting Wipes
- Contactless Check-In

## RESULTS

During the onset of the pandemic, the Hotel maintained a higher share of business than its competitive set. Location always plays a factor into the success or detriment of a hotel's performance, and with the abrupt halt of airline business due to the pandemic, it was believed that an airport market hotel would enter a certain tailspin. However, the Hotel sought alternative sources of business and was agile in its approach. The coordination of all the efforts undertaken by sales leadership financially supported the hotel through one of the lowest periods in the industry's history. Over the running 3-month average, the Hotel ranked at the top of its competitive set in RevPAR, ahead by more than \$10.

**110.4%**   **105.4%**   **116.3%**

Occupancy Index

ADR Index

RevPAR Index

*\*for the Running 3-months*

Beyond the positive sales results, there too were wins in customer satisfaction, keeping the warmth of hospitality front and center. The Hampton Inn enjoys the top spot, #1 of 10, according to TripAdvisor, and was acknowledged as a 2020 Traveler's Choice award winner - during a pandemic.

## SALES SOLUTIONS

The speed at which the team needed to pivot the sales approach was critical. A typical sales process or approach to sales maintenance had no place in trying to navigate forward. It was time to take an unorthodox approach to find alternative sources of business.

While it is standard course to accept and respond to generated RFPs, the team critical proactive outreach to Hilton National Sales. Bid submissions were returned at a record pace resulting in group commitments in less than a week. The rapid communication and thoroughness of response allowed the hotel to leverage the true benefit of being a Hampton Inn franchisee. In addition, as a direct result of personal outreach by sales leaders, the hotel benefited from large group business composed of FEMA, National Guard, and multiple health care professionals and staff.

## THE ROAD AHEAD

We believe that a positive culture is the foundation in driving our mission; *to create remarkable experiences for our guests, our team members, and our investors.* As COVID-19 has raged through the hospitality industry, revisiting our core values provided our team a roadmap to navigate this industry-shattering and unsettling time.

It is unknown if the road ahead will look the same as before, or if there is a normal to return to. What we do know is how we will respond. Our core values have shaped the way in which we have responded to the tumultuous journey of 2020, and will be a guiding light as we continue to navigate the road to a more stable and brighter future.

## About Us

Synergy is an ownership and management company providing premier services supporting the establishment of sound operating procedures in all aspects of hotel operations, with a key focus on revenue generation. This, in conjunction with the retention of the most highly skilled sales teams, consistently result in hotel performance which substantially surpasses our competitors.

Synergy Hospitality has the experience and drive to successfully manage hotel operations and create value through a positive and supportive work environment. For a free hotel management assessment, contact [stephen.field@synergyhotels.com](mailto:stephen.field@synergyhotels.com).