

Certification for High End Operators

Robert Kent has been planning that big vacation for some time now. Scanning his laptop screen, he has selected that exotic location, and is now vacillating between three fine hotels. All three are highly regarded, appear to be luxurious, and offer top drawer amenities. One is a five-star property, one is unranked and the other one is World Class Certified™. Robert has stayed at some questionable four and five star properties in the past, so those rankings hold little value for him. Likewise, an unranked property, in his opinion, carries too much risk for this special vacation. As such, he selects the “World Class Certified™” property and proceeds to book the hotel.



This scene above replays itself thousands of times a day, worldwide. For high end hotel operators, the value of the ranking and certification simply cannot be underestimated. Why are the rankings and/or certifications of a hotel property so important? Let's take a closer look at both perspectives:

The Guest Perspective

At the defining moment of making the hotel reservation, prospective guests employ a wide variety of factors into their decision making process including: rankings and certifications, user reviews, brand logos, web site quality, promoted amenities, affiliations, memberships, location, prior history of brand association and price. On balance, the guest will make the decision based on the importance of each of these factors.

The Hotel's Perspective

The goal is simple, and it's to maximize revenue per available room or RevPar. In order to drive this number up, hotel features such as a spa, restaurant(s), unique location and many other factors were considered prior to the hotel's construction and additional features may have been added since. Another key factor is the ranking, such as a star or other certification. The higher the rank or certification, the easier it is to justify a higher the room rate and of course, the RevPar increases.



Generally, at the very highest levels of luxury, there is less, but equally significant competition. The “Winner” in the competitive battle is usually the property that has achieved the highest level of ranking or certification. These properties in many cases promote themselves as a 6 or 7 star hotel, or claim other designations in order to obtain the top market position.

Deliver True Value

The high end market is extraordinary competitive. As such, the value of a top ranking or certification should not be underestimated. The best way to justify prices higher than competitors is to deliver true value that competitors cannot match. This means every aspect of your operation must be much better than good. It must be truly outstanding in every aspect, but especially in the realm of value delivery. If you do not continue to emphasize your value proposal relative to your hotel ranking and certifications, you will leave yourself vulnerable, thereby making it possible for your potential guests to price shop your hotel against your competition, even if your hotel actually delivers more value.

Now is the time to ensure that your entire team is fully aware of the value that your property holds for your guests. You need to ensure that your hotel is appropriately represented relative to certification as well. For those operators at the very top level, becoming a World Class Certificated™ hotel is one of the top methods available for you to highlight the value differentiators and secure the top marketing position for your business.



The face of luxury is changing and the industry has seen this coming for some time. Many wonder when the one-upmanship of the luxury game will end, and I’m here to say that it never will. Human nature says that we want more, never being satiated, and fortunately, there are those among us willing to risk everything in providing for those privileged enough to enjoy the very best. Don’t let the challenges of securing a top ranking or certification dissuade you from enhancing your reputation. It should be one of the most important items on your agenda this year!

By Kevin Moll (Chief Executive Officer, World Class Certification Services™)

World Class Certification Services™ is an independent certification body that sets the official standards of World Class Certification™ within the hospitality industry.

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