

ABVI's 100% ROI Promise Purely Member Driven

By: Lauren Esposito
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CORAL SPRINGS, FL—Americas Best Value Inn (ABVI) is putting its money where its mouth is in the brand's ongoing effort to maintain positive relationships with its members. Now, if a member's return on investment does not exceed 100% of its membership fees, the fee will be waived.

This newest promise is the most recent of a series of somewhat unorthodox initiatives by ABVI to demonstrate the importance of the brand's relationships with its members. According to Roger Bloss, founder and CEO of parent company Vantage Hospitality Group and ABVI, while the brand has been successful, the satisfaction of its members is still just as paramount as it was when it was founded eight years ago. "We have grown so fast, but we've managed to stay ahead of that growth by maintaining a strong infrastructure," said Bloss. "And above all, we always want to be the best and maintain a strong relationship with our members."

Bloss noted that the 100% ROI promise is a natural extension of the way the brand has always operated. "With that fast growth, we always are focused on improving our members' ROI."



Roger Bloss

Bloss acknowledged that in spite of its greatest efforts, it is only inevitable that not every member will be completely satisfied and also may not report that dissatisfaction to the brand until it is too late. The new ROI promise will hopefully alleviate much of that problem.

"We've needed to find a solution to the 'silent customer,' the one that just tells us they are leaving and we did not even know there was a problem in the first place," Bloss explained. "We were asking ourselves what we could do to stop that. And now, by turning it into an actual brand component, our customers will help us better identify our weaknesses and we can work to rectify them."

Even in the short time since the 100% ROI promise has been in place, it has been very well received both by the ABVI team and its members. "We are a team and we always want to exceed members' expectations for the brand. The enthusiasm rises because we are all working toward the same goal," said Bloss. "And for sure, initiatives like this give us a very distinct competitive advantage."

And while the industry may be surprised about this uncharacteristic move, ABVI members certainly are not. "Our members are very active and run their properties to the best of their abilities, so they expect nothing less from us," Bloss commented, adding that standards

such as the 100% ROI along with other measures, such as allowing members to vote on their membership fees and the brand's more recent promise to waive first-year fees for new construction hotels, all demonstrate ABVI's confidence.

"We know how hard it is to get started in this business. We are willing to invest in our members and help them get off on the right foot. I'd much rather not collect any fees for a year and then have that member with us for many more years instead of collecting fees for a year and then they leave," said Bloss. "We want to build customers for life."

100%
ROI
PROMISE

The 100% ROI promise will be carried out in a manner similar to ABVI's existing monthly evaluations in which members rate the brand. "They rate us on a scale of one to 10 and anything less than an eight comes right to my desk and we act on it," Bloss explained, noting

it will be a win-win for both ABVI and the members. "It helps prevent us from being blindsided [by the 'silent customers'], and if a member is truly invested in our brand they will work with us to fix the problem."

Bloss added that while of course ABVI's initiatives are aimed at attracting new members, they also instill confidence in existing members to expand their portfolios to include multiple ABVI properties. "It is much more efficient to work to keep existing customers, especially in this industry where there are so many tightly-knit communities such as [the Asian American Hotel Owners Association] and the [National Association of Black Hotel Owners, Operators and Developers]. Positive word of mouth is gold," he said.

Although the hotel market seems to be turning downwards a bit, Bloss is confident initiatives such as the 100% ROI will help the brand continue to perform strongly. "The pipeline does look off, just a bit. But for the last few years we've been the fastest growing chain. Our first quarter pipeline for 2008 should meet or exceed last year's numbers and the membership development section of our website is up 40%, so the interest level is continuing to grow," he said.

And should a true downturn occur, ABVI will stand behind the ROI promise. "If there is a downturn, we know our members still have to pay their mortgages," Bloss said. "We take that very seriously and will help them get through a bad time."

