

The next-gen GM hotels need right now

 By [Guy Stehlik](#)

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Whether a general manager (GM) is appointed directly by a hotel's owners or by a hotel management company, there's little doubt that much of the success of the establishment rests on their shoulders.



Source: [123RF](#)

Typically, a GM will oversee every aspect of a hotel's operations, including HR, finance, food and beverage, events, front office, housekeeping, security, maintenance and refurbishments and, of course, guest relations. Throw in sales and marketing, and a GM is required to wear many hats.

But if you thought a GM's role was complex before the pandemic, consider how much more challenging – and nuanced it is now.

Living and working in the shadow of Covid has taken its toll. Tourism establishments are still dealing with the economic impact of the pandemic; staff across the industry have experienced untold stress and uncertainty; guests are returning, but with their own fears and concerns around Covid protocols; and management are grappling with issues they've never had to face before, as well as severely strained cash flows.

It's one thing that guests are starting to return, but it's another challenge entirely for hotels doing their best to recoup their massive financial losses of the last 28 months by reducing expenditure and raising work outputs – all in all taking a very conservative approach to re-staffing hotels to pre-pandemic levels.

Running a busy hotel on less than **optimal staffing levels** is seriously tough.

The world is also a different place. And as we get back to 'normal' certain trends are beginning to emerge in the hospitality industry, including touchless tech and digitalisation; multi-functional staff; fewer staff; highly-personalised guest experiences; bleisure travellers and workcations; health and wellness; and sustainability.

Despite the challenges, it's an incredibly exciting time – but in times like these, it needs a special GM at the helm. After all, your GM is going to re-energise your team, shape the working environment, set new goals (and motivate people to achieve them), focus on your vision – and deliver an excellent guest experience.

So what does today's GM look like, or more to the point, what skills should you be looking for?

In many ways, a next-gen GM also has the attributes of an old-school hotelier: happy to be deep in the trenches with their team; comfortable mixing with guests; visible on the hotel floor, especially during peak times like breakfast, check out, check in and dinner; and 100% service focussed.

In addition, they need to be in tune with the latest industry trends, norms and standards; up to speed in terms of their competition, market, region and audience; and confident to explore the latest tech.

Excellent GMs are those who are building amazing relationships with hotel guests, having a drink at the bar with loyal customers, making certain their staff are well cared for, and in return, that their hotels are thriving. They're decisive, resilient and able to keep a cool head when things go wrong.

And let's not forget adaptive. Covid aside, the hospitality industry has always been characterised by change. Whether it's cutting-edge tech, changing guest expectations or new social media platforms, a GM has to be open to change and happy to try new things.

Is this a lot to ask of one person? Possibly.

A good GM is critical, but it's not enough. At BON Hotels, for example, we believe that hotel owners must be exactly that – a hotel owner – and a GM must be exactly that – a GM. GMs still need leadership, direction, help, skills development and often supervision. When the lines get blurred between roles of ownership and day-to-day management, your hotel is typically set up for failure. That's why at a time when guests are looking for the extraordinary, getting the help of a hotel management company that can assist with guidance and expertise might just be the best investment you ever make.

ABOUT GUY STEHLIK

Guy Stehlik is the CEO and founder of BON Hotels and Director of BON Hotels International West Africa. Having vast experience in all aspects of Hotel Management as well as having owned his own hotels, Guy created BON Hotels as an "owner-staff-community-guest" centric company to herald in and define an exciting new era in hotel management.

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