

# LODGING HOSPITALITY

## Vantage Hospitality Stays on the Move

### Company looks to grow with Sabre, Possibly new brand

By Eric Stoessel  
December 12, 2011



Roger Bloss

In June of this year, Vantage Hospitality hit the 1,000-property milestone in the 12th year since its founding. Last week at its annual convention and trade show, founder and CEO Roger Bloss made it clear Vantage was far from done. Bloss and his company announced plans for an innovative renovation program, introduced a new digital and central reservations system partner and even discussed the possibility of buying an existing brand.

“This isn’t change for the sake of change,” said Chief Operating Officer and Chief Financial Officer Bernie Moyle during the announcement to members about the move to Sabre Hospitality Solutions as CRS provider. “We owe it to you to stay on the cutting edge.”



Bernie Moyle

Moyle was speaking about Sabre, but everything Vantage had on display at the Golden Nugget in Las Vegas last week was about staying ahead of the game. Not only will the relationship with heavy-weight Sabre open the door to more

mobile and social media booking applications, but Bloss believes the partnership will help entice larger ownership groups and management companies to consider the Americas Best Value Inn and Lexington Collection brands.

“We need to be in Chicago, New York, Miami and Los Angeles,” Bloss said during a press conference after the general session on Wednesday. “We have started talking to larger companies that have been with bigger brands and used these systems and they are excited. This really opens up doors.”

For the current 1,043 properties in the system — 1,018 with Americas, Canadas and Chinas Best Value Inns and 25 with Lexington — the shift to Sabre will also open several other doors. The transition from previous provider Genares will begin on Feb. 1 and the conversion won’t cost members anything. Booking fees will not increase either, said Moyle. Sabre COO Steve Fitzgerald said some mobile and social media applications would be available as soon as Feb. 1.

“Technology does not drive change – it enables it,” Moyle said. “This new venture with Sabre will allow Vantage to continue to bring our members the most comprehensive marketing and distribution tools available and empower all of us to make informed decisions that will result in more accurate forecasting, insights into rate and channel management, stronger revenue management tools, and ultimately, more occupancy at rates that enhance our members’ gross operating profit.”

Scott Anderson, president and CEO of hospitality consulting company High Country Hospitality, said 83% of ABVI’s revenue booked through its CRS came via online channels. Anderson has worked with Vantage this year to improve its digital distribution strategies and to grow Lexington Collection, Vantage’s soft brand.

Bloss added 43% of guests booking online are influenced by social media. “The world has moved online,” he explained as the primary reason for the change from Genares, a company owned by Vantage. Bloss stressed it wasn’t about money or corporate profits, but instead, the future.

Bloss also announced a renovation program he expected almost full compliance with. Partnering with vendors like American Hotel Register, Vantage will offer members three options to upgrade their properties, for \$1, \$2 or \$3 a day per room. All members in good standing will be able to take advantage of the program financed through Vantage and American Hotel Register.

“We know our competitors will be mandating property improvement plans,” Bloss said, “so we wanted to give our members options. This is all financed through our vendor associations and members won’t have to go to the bank. This will provide a solid return on investment within our freestyle philosophy letting [owners] do what [they] want with [their] property.”

Bloss also said he felt Vantage would be able to take advantage of the bigger brands’ hard push for PIPs this year and conversion opportunities would be ripe with owners looking for less expensive alternatives.

“I believe these [other] brands will push too hard, too fast, too soon,” Bloss told the media. He also openly spoke of Vantage’s goal of adding brands in segments other than where ABVI and Lexington sit.

“We have focused on multiple brands,” Bloss said. “We have a huge appetite to find an extended stay brand.” He added the company would consider launching one, but would prefer buying and improving an existing product.

Vantage will also go national this year with its TV ad campaign. A series of 10-second commercials will be embedded in nationally syndicated programs.

