



COLUMBIA HOSPITALITY
CASE STUDY



“Thanks to Pivot + Levy’s work, Columbia Hospitality’s strategic direction is now described the same way by all employees, in all business development meetings, and across the board in all marketing materials. It has become crystal clear. As a result, our desire to add higher-end, larger hotel properties to our portfolio is exactly what is unfolding.”

Shelley Tomberg
VP Sales and Marketing
Columbia Hospitality Inc.

THE GOAL: Exceptional work required exceptional, effective positioning and sales materials

Since its inception in 1995 to manage Bell Harbor for the Port of Seattle, Columbia Hospitality had grown organically as an organization and found itself with a collection of upscale but disparate properties, ranging from large conference centers to boutique inns, each with its own set of needs. Additionally, their services ran the gamut from development consulting to property management. Just as they had grown organically, so too had their marketing materials; they lacked a unified message that would appeal to Columbia Hospitality’s new target market.

They needed to be able to convey their range of services in a simple, cohesive way and differentiate themselves in a crowded marketplace. Secondly, the sales and marketing department needed a highly flexible, easy-to-use and customizable set of sales and marketing materials. And finally, they needed to be able to convey their expertise to, and attract, property developers and investors building new upscale properties.

Pivot + Levy clarified the Columbia Hospitality value proposition and developed marketing materials that have opened the door to new opportunities.

Columbia Hospitality is a premier hospitality management and consulting company based in Seattle. It provides both operations and consulting expertise, covering a wide range of hospitality services for a broad range of award-winning inns and resorts, conference centers, and unique hospitality venues in the Western states.

The portfolio includes some of the region's most impressive properties, such as The Inn at Langley, Friday Harbor House, Bell Harbor International Conference Center, Kitsap Conference Center at Bremerton Harborside, and the Washington Mutual Leadership Center at Cedarbrook.

www.columbiahospitality.com

Getting to the heart of the matter

Pivot + Levy began by drilling down to find the commonality in operating a small specialty inn, organizing a banquet for 3,000, or working with a property developer –before it even breaks ground – to concept, name, market and run a property. They conducted interviews of key Columbia Hospitality staff and surveyed competitor service offerings and messaging. This data was then analyzed from the perspective of the end user and organized to create the messaging platform that then directed the development of the marketing system and brochure and informed the tone and content of the copywriting.

What became apparent was that Columbia Hospitality had a strong commitment to creating “exceptional experiences” for all their audiences: owners and their guests. For owners, what mattered was that Columbia Hospitality had the expertise to transform their dream into an enduring and profitable business and that their guests returned time after time. For guests, what mattered was that the attention to detail and service created an extraordinary event or stay. Columbia Hospitality delivered on all fronts – from services as broad ranging as guest services to accounting – because of its experienced leadership and management, and dedication to cultivating a culture of excellence with its employees.

Tying it together

Pivot + Levy used this operating philosophy as the basis of a competitive differentiator and to create a collateral system. The resulting sales collateral system shows the Columbia Hospitality breadth of services and exceptional experiences in words and visuals that all reinforce the message. The consistent copy and tone highlights people and experiences and their above-and-beyond approach, be it their approach to training, their culinary mastery or their established history of performance. The carefully selected visuals reinforce the story without ever having to read a word. The overall look and feel is one of distinction and dedication to quality.

Pivot +Levy also created a series of templates designed to work with the brochure and sales folder. This system allows anyone on the staff to quickly and easily create a customized presentation packet in-house for any manner of new business meeting. It's not only highly practical given Columbia Hospitality's lean staff and diverse audiences, it's also extremely cost-effective.

Exceptional Results

The “Exceptional Experiences” positioning has helped Columbia Hospitality clearly communicate their differentiation from their competitors when pitching new business. In the first quarter the new brochure has been used, Columbia Hospitality has seen a 200% increase in both pending and new consulting projects with high end luxury hotels in 4 Western states, including: a new management contact on an ultra-luxury hotel and spa in Sonoma, California; pre opening consulting services, marketing and management services for a luxury hotel in Sun Valley, Idaho; and, with developers of a five star luxury hotel in Aspen Colorado.