**Sex Trafficking: The Hospitality Industry’s Role and Responsibility**

**Abstract**

This research explores the issue of sex trafficking in hotels within the United States. Research was conducted regarding the prevalence of the issue, legal implications for hotels, resources available and current initiatives taken by companies. Surveys and interviews were conducted to identify the overall sentiments of hoteliers on the issue and potential solutions suggested by agencies that work against trafficking. The research identifies a strong need for training and increased awareness among hotels.

**Document Type**

Thesis

**Degree Name**

Bachelors of Science in Hotel Administration (BS)

**First Advisor**

Jan deRoos

**Keywords**

sex trafficking, hotel, hospitality, human trafficking, awareness, training, policy, traffickers, crime, legislation,

responsibility

**Subject Categories**

Criminology | Hospitality Administration and Management

**Comments**

**Required Publisher Statement**

Copyright held by the author. Reprinted with permission. All rights reserved**.**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The hospitality industry is an undoubtedly involved in the sex trafficking industry,

whether knowingly or not, due to the ease of traffickers to use hotels for trafficking. Hotels offer

anonymity, privacy, and non-traceability, making hotels a top venue for the crime. Hotels,

therefore, have an inherent responsibility to deter the crime and can be liable for failing to do so.

While most associate the crime of trafficking to developing countries, the issue is very prevalent

in the United States.

In this research, hotels and agencies were surveyed regarding the current sentiments of

the industry and potential steps for the future. It was found that while hoteliers feel that

trafficking is a global problem, they do not believe that trafficking is an issue in their own hotels.

In terms of potential initiatives to mitigate the problem, the two largest needs are increase in

training and awareness.

Therefore, hotels should be required to train all their employees on identifying and

reporting sex trafficking. Moreover, awareness materials should be made available in the hotels

in order to increase awareness among guests while also giving potential victims a way to seek

help and showing traffickers that they are being watched. By taking a stand against the crime,

hotels would decrease the ease of traffickers to perpetrate illegal activity, in turn saving lives and

providing freedom to the currently enslaved.

Citation:

Cavagnaro, G. L. C. (2017). *Sex trafficking: The hospitality industry’s role and responsibility*. Available from Cornell University, School of

Hotel Administration site: <http://scholarship.sha.cornell.edu/honorstheses/3>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the School of Hotel Administration Collection at The Scholarly Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in SHA Latin Honors Theses by an authorized administrator of The Scholarly Commons. For more information, please contact

hlmdigital@cornell.edu.