

Brings New Style To Management

Pauli Plans To Be "Visible" at Kah-Nee-Ta

by Cynthia Stowell

If it's possible to keep a low profile and be highly visible at the same time, Kah-Nee-Ta's new manager Bill Pauli is doing just that.

On the job for just a month, Pauli has already made his relaxed but diligent management style evident. His sport shirts blend with the tourist scene but employees can easily spot him in the kitchen checking on dinner, attending department meetings, or making sure a guest is comfortable.

"I could sit in my office twenty-four hours and not have the foggiest idea how the resort is running," said Pauli. So he makes a habit of visiting departments and employees, his placid exterior belying the fact that he is observing, noting details, and hatching ideas on his feet.

It may disturb the manager if he sees three waiters doing the job of one, a bellhop who doesn't offer a cheery "good morning," or a maid leaving a room less than spotless. But it is not Pauli's style to raise a fuss on the spot. For him the chain of command must be preserved, meaning that visibility is fine but not to the point of interference.

The eight-week interim between the termination of Dan Myles's contract and the hiring of Pauli confirmed the effectiveness of a departmentalized approach to running the resort, noted the new manager. Now instead of the five-person management team there is the executive staff of nine department heads, carefully selected for their special expertise and given room to use their talents. The difference is that now there is a general manager at the top of the chart.

Pauli's "team" is directly involved in decision-making and largely responsible for day-to-day operations. Pauli is there for guidance and coordination and, of course, to take flak.

Surrounded with a staff he trusts, Pauli is ready to tackle the challenges Kah-Nee-Ta poses as a unique resort with the potential for prosperity that has somehow eluded the last four managers.



INSPECTOR - Kah-Nee-Ta Manager Bill Pauli can be found most anywhere, including in the kitchen making sure chef George Rica assembles his buffet salads to perfection. CDS Photo

Attracting the business

Fully aware of the "peaks and valleys of the resort business," Pauli plans to build up the "shoulder season," the weeks and months before and after the busy summer season. Happily, the traditional convention "seasons" coincide with these spring and autumn "shoulders," making large groups the logical targets of sales and public relations efforts.

In light of hotel consultant Basil Miaullis's suggestion that Kah-Nee-Ta has been spending a disproportionate amount on promotional activities, Pauli hopes to streamline the effort.

"The programs are here, the people are here. All we plan to do is make them more effective," explained Pauli. A meeting between Pauli, Miaullis, Sales Director Bob McLeod, and Rocky Marsh Public Relations produced a commitment to

pursue a more uniform marketing effort.

Creating an "aura" by "repeating the story again and again," is an effective promotional technique, said Pauli. This can mean making the Kah-Nee-Ta logo evident everywhere, from bills to napkins, establishing a color scheme not only for the facility but for its communications and advertising, and standardizing the language used to describe Kah-Nee-Ta.

Keeping customers happy

Once the guests have arrived, making them comfortable is "the name of the business," noted Pauli. After all, they are the ones who are "paying the freight."

Service must then be superior. As Pauli pointed out, "The food in the Juniper Room may taste differently to a guest based on his experience at the front desk."

Kah-Nee-Ta's "beautiful facility," recreational opportunities and locale may not be enough to keep customers coming back. But good service "that anticipates people's needs" will do just that, the new manager said.

It could be as simple as a maid's "hello," a newspaper at the door each morning, or an easily made reservation.

But it could also mean expanded transportation, a new water system, or a larger cocktail lounge. The Juniper Room menu was recently revamped to be more attractive visually and more appealing to the palate. The condensed menu devoted space to Indian cookery featured in Indian language. Pauli also said that winter packages are being developed as well as increased indoor activities, to make a winter vacation at Kah-Nee-Ta even more memorable.

Room evaluation cards will be recapped monthly and those with names and addresses will be responded to personally, said Pauli.

Making money for the Tribes

Kah-Nee-Ta has been plagued with high operational costs that have crippled its money-making ability. Pauli sees no difficulty in reducing the resort's expenditures.

Labor represents the largest single expense category and can be made much more efficient. In some cases one well-trained employee can do the job of three poorly-trained ones, suggested Pauli.

Inflationary costs of goods sold can not be controlled except by the close monitoring of waste, in kitchens, offices and throughout the resort.

"There is no magic wand that can be waved," but, as in service, it's the little things that count, said Pauli. Closed drapes can keep heat in or out and thermostats can be lowered to reduce energy needs.

Miaullis's observation that Kah-Nee-Ta has not been charging enough for its rooms will be acted on soon, bringing the resort's rate schedule more in line with other resorts, said Pauli, and more effectively offsetting the costs of goods and service.

Kah-Nee-Ta as an employer

One of Kah-Nee-Ta's stated objectives, second only to making money for the Tribes, is providing employment and training opportunities to tribal members. Pauli said, "We want to encourage tribal members to apply and department heads to employ them."

Although entry-level jobs may be all that is available to the inexperienced applicants, there is room for advancement. "The opportunity is here for any tribal member who is willing to apply himself diligently," said Pauli.

High standards for hiring can foster employee pride, said Pauli, as can on-the-job support.

Pauli pointed to a dual responsibility: On the one hand, Kah-Nee-Ta management must ensure that the resort is a successful enterprise and provides jobs to members. On the other hand, employees must do their best to contribute to its success.

Pauli expects management and department heads to take an active interest in individual employees and their progress on an informal day-to-day basis as well as through formal training programs.

Kah-Nee-Ta is the only resort Pauli knows of that employs a training coordinator and facilitator to make educational opportunities available to workers. Not only are employees free to take correspondence courses and attend seminars and classes at established institutions (all reimbursable upon successful completion), but they are learning emergency first aid, CPR and EMT right at Kah-Nee-Ta.

But perhaps most importantly, training and recognition of employees should come from direct superiors in an atmosphere of positive work attitudes and regular incentives, said Pauli.

The "longest journey" of a tribal member through the ranks to the resort management can begin with such encouragement, which Pauli expects of his staff and of himself.

For Bill Pauli, it's the small improvements, the details, that will transform a struggling resort into a successful enterprise.

Those watching hope that Pauli is one of those details.

Pauli's Executive Staff

The "key executives" who with resort manager Bill Pauli will be overseeing the daily operations of Kah-Nee-Ta are nine department heads representing all phases of resort activity. They are:

OPERATIONS (gift shop, recreation, administration)
Garland Brunoe, Assistant Resort Manager
FOOD AND BEVERAGES - Robert Stahl
SALES - Bob McLeod
ACCOUNTING, PAYROLL - Lavina Hietala
TRAINING - Richard Macy
VILLAGE - Jim McDonald (assistant Village manager)
FRONT OFFICE - to be filled
MAINTENANCE - Tom Thorsen
HOUSEKEEPING - Mary Pauli

The five members of the eight-week interim management team formed the core of this staff. Pauli then removed the front office, maintenance and housekeeping from Brunoe's department and elevated them to executive status.

Pauli expects to utilize the expertise for which each of these specialists was hired, taking power from the manager's office and distributing it among his staff.

(Note: In accordance with tribal policy, a new executive housekeeper will replace Mary Pauli, who, as Bill's wife, cannot also be employed by Kah-Nee-Ta.)

From Alaska to Kah-Nee-Ta -
The Lodge is One Stop
in Pauli's Journey

When Bill Pauli was selected as manager of Kah-Nee-Ta on July 14, he was in his seventh month as Village Manager. There he supervised such varied operations as a restaurant, bathhouse, craft shop, cottages and tepees, and concessions.

Pauli feels he "brought responsive and responsible management back to the Village" by delegating duties to department heads, keeping employees informed, and always maintaining the proper chain of command.

Tribal management was sufficiently impressed with his skills to move him to the resort manager's office. It was not the first time Pauli had headed up a sizable facility.

Before Kah-Nee-Ta, Pauli spent 2½ years managing property in Alaska. For a year he ran the TravelLodge in Anchorage and for a year and a half he managed the J.R. Hickman

Company, which owned the largest hotel and block of commercial property in Ketchikan.

Prior to his stint in Alaska, Pauli ran the Inn at Otter Crest on the Oregon coast for a year and a half, helping the resort recover from bankruptcy. During that time, he filled in as manager at the Inn of the Seventh Mountain in Bend for four months — "a hell of a commute."

Nine years of Pauli's experience were gathered in Phoenix, Arizona as a partner in a hotel-restaurant consulting firm.

Born and raised in Chicago, Pauli started his hotel-motel career in Washington, D.C. Now 47 years old, he is settling into the manager's house at Kah-Nee-Ta with his second wife, Mary. But not forever. His dream is to one day operate his own business, and it is not likely Kah-Nee-Ta will be for sale.