



FOREWORD

For Book:

**Gay and Lesbian Tourism: The Essential
Guide for Marketers**

Kimpton Hotels and Restaurants has always been supportive of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community. It only makes sense. As a company specializing in hospitality, our first priority will always be serving all people with dignity and respect.

Kimpton's gay and lesbian outreach program grew out of the company's diversity program. The company was founded in San Francisco in the early 1980's and we have always valued diversity in the workplace. While in the early years of the company, we did not have a recognized LGBT outreach program, the gay and lesbian community certainly recognized us. We were viewed as a perfect fit for the community, offering hotels known for their hip and unique environments, innovative guest programs, and personnel policies that established Kimpton on the leading edge of workplace equality. It was our corporate values that established our presence within the gay and lesbian community first.

Kimpton's relationship with the gay and lesbian community is based on sound business practices. We invest in marketing programs when we believe we will see a return on our investment. Research has firmly established that the gay and lesbian community travels frequently, is more brand loyal, and is more likely to stay in upscale hotels. But even an established gay-friendly company like Kimpton needed to learn the best practices of serving the LGBT community.

Unfortunately, we did not have a book like **Gay and Lesbian Tourism: The Essential Guide for Marketers** to help us. Instead we relied on our gay and lesbian employees for input as well as information from organizations like HRC and Out & Equal. First, we established gay-friendly work environments and personnel practices. While we had always given back to the community, we next looked at organizing our commitment with our annual Red Ribbon Campaign for HIV/AIDS charities across the country. Then we researched and implemented appropriate marketing and sales tracking strategies. Finally, we empowered our LGBT employees and guests to spread the word about Kimpton's commitment to the gay and lesbian community.

In 2006, we were able to track well over five million dollars in business from the gay and lesbian community, and we know that number is much higher if you count community members that have not yet identified themselves through our customer loyalty programs.

Of course none of this can be effective if your company is not authentic. Being gay-friendly is not just about throwing a rainbow flag on your brochures and programs. For Kimpton, being gay-friendly is about being true to our core corporate beliefs – of treating all of our internal and external customers with dignity and respect. We are thrilled that the LGBT market has fallen in love with Kimpton – and plan to continue to build the program. Not only is it the right thing to do – it makes sound business sense.

We are proud to include our success as a case study in this publication and we applaud Jeff Guaracino and his efforts to provide companies new to the LGBT market with a guide to market success.

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