

Staying Smart

Have you seen the TV commercials for Holiday Inn? There are a couple campaigns—one is about the hot breakfast bar “scene” at the Inn and the other tells you how if you stay at a Holiday Inn you can just about perform brain surgery the next day. It’s all part of Holiday Inn’s branding strategy under the tag line “stay smart.” If you read the literature in the room, they have “smart” labeling in place. So, shampoo is just called “wash,” and soap is “cleanse” and conditioner is “tame.” This is in case you couldn’t figure out that shampoo is used to wash your hair, etc. I think it is a way to have a house brand instead of paying the royalties and/or higher cost for a name brand product like the ones found in other hotels.

I think “stay smart” is a smart tagline. Unfortunately, this is a case of marketing not being in touch with reality. For the past three nights I have stayed at a Holiday Inn Express in Rochester, NY. I didn’t sleep through one single night. Why? Because hotels are not built to be soundproof. That is not SMART. Why are people generally staying at a hotel? Because they need a place to SLEEP. Sure, some people use hotels as party suites or as places for a quick romp, but I would venture that most travelers are using the hotel as a base and a place to spend the night. The phenomenon of noise in hotels is not unique to Holiday Inn, but very few hotels are claiming that staying with them will make you act smarter. Very few people act smarter or otherwise with just a few hours of sleep. If Holiday Inn wants to be truly smart they will investigate how to make their rooms more friendly to sleep.