

# When Crisis Hit, Terrapin Hospitality Overcame by Focusing on Their People

*The hospitality industry was particularly hit hard by the outbreak of COVID-19. For Terrapin Hospitality, effective decision-making was critical if they were to overcome the several challenges and setbacks created by the pandemic.*

*Through their partnership with Olumo, they were able to gather crucial, timely insights from their people to identify how to navigate the pandemic and create a human experience at work.*

## THE PROBLEM

### *Decision-Making During Crisis*

The outbreak of COVID-19 has ushered drastic change and uncertainty across industries and organizations. This is especially true for the hospitality industry that has faced unparalleled challenges due to travel bans and social distancing. With these new policies, 2020 was the worst year on record for the hospitality industry with all-time lows in occupancy and revenue per available room.

*"Covid-19 has wiped out 10 years of hotel job growth"*

*Chip Rogers  
President of AHLA.*

Research by McKinsey suggests that the hospitality industry won't recover to pre-COVID levels until 2023 or later.

With the pandemic hurling the hospitality industry into a rapid downward spiral, sound decision-making is paramount. When a crisis throws an organization into a state of flux, this

serves as an opportunity to quickly adapt and pivot, positioning the organization to emerge stronger than before—provided that leaders make sound decisions. Conversely, poor decision-making can upend an already shaky situation and lead to organizational demise.

Unfortunately, for many organizations, times of crisis become wasted opportunities. Amid uncertainty, less effective organizations tighten up, close management doors, and limit decision-making to those at the top. With myopic perspectives, they struggle to deploy the right solutions. Effective organizations do just the opposite: They become more willing to listen and learn so they can get the insights necessary to succeed.

### *Terrapin Hospitality*

With its business and the livelihood of its people on the line, Terrapin Hospitality couldn't afford to take an ineffective approach to its decision-making. Discussing how to best approach their challenges at the onset of the pandemic, Terrapin CEO Tony Sherman said, "I knew that if we were to navigate the pandemic properly, we needed to understand firsthand what was happening at every location and on the front lines because making the right decisions relies on having the right insights. "

To gain timely information Terrapin Hospitality needed to collect insights from their people working at 28 properties distributed across the country that included hotel brands such as Marriott, Holiday Inn, Hampton Inn, Sheraton, Comfort Suites, SpringHill suites, and more.

Like Tony, Mardi Ketchum, CFO at Terrapin Hospitality, understood the importance of immediate feedback but recognized a few roadblocks. She said, "The key to solving any problem is to begin by understanding it—so the key to navigating the pandemic was to understand what our people were facing. However, surveys don't connect you to your people... and meeting personally with our employees wasn't viable because of travel restrictions."

*So how was Terrapin Hospitality going to get the insights they needed to succeed?*





## THE SOLUTION

### *The Human Experience at Work*

In order to connect with their employees in the midst of travel bans and social distancing, Terrapin Hospitality partnered with Olumo. Olumo introduced the concept of creating the “Human Experience at Work” by personalizing organizational outreach to its people so they feel seen and heard and taking their experiences into account when making decisions. Terrapin readily adopted this concept, recognizing that providing the highest level of employee experience was essential to being a choice employer and delivering a premium customer experience.

In their partnership with Terrapin, Olumo also provided thorough analysis of the insights and distilled them to actionable takeaways. They created a dedicated team that met with Terrapin’s HR department to keep them up to date on the latest data and identify next steps. For Ketchum, this made Olumo stand out from other feedback platforms. She stated, “We didn’t need a survey platform, we needed results. That is what I value most in our relationship with Olumo...We are now taking strategic steps and Olumo is there to hold us accountable.” Because of this partnership,

“Surveys are an ineffective process and don’t connect you to your people. We didn’t need a survey platform, we needed results. That is what I value most in our relationship with Olumo.”

— Marti Ketchum



Terrapin was able to respond immediately to the insights provided by those within the organization.

### *Giving Everyone a Voice*

To gather feedback from every individual at Terrapin, Olumo offered an approach that made the feedback process as convenient as possible by sending a weekly text. As Ketchum described it, "We really loved that Olumo engaged with our people through text. Many of our associates don't have corporate emails but they all have phones. We had tried various ways to connect before but text has proven to be genius. We are seeing 70-80% engagement on an ongoing basis." Additionally, many associates speak Spanish and Terrapin wanted to ensure that all voices were heard equally, no matter what language they spoke. Fortunately, Olumo supports multiple languages.

Once Olumo helped Terrapin gather insights from its people, Terrapin was amazed at the feedback. The leaders learned what they were doing well...but people also identified numerous issues because they had a safe way to give candid feedback. Olumo ensured that all feedback was anonymous and only provided data by location so Terrapin could identify their respective needs, problems, and solutions.

Ketchum observed the immediate changes Terrapin was able to make because of the insights received from its people. She stated, "I've been impressed with how open and engaged our people have been in providing new ideas. Olumo's 'One Thing' question asks our people what they would recommend to help us improve. One associate suggested better corporate communication and outlined a proposed newsletter. We just finished implementing this thanks to their feedback. We also identified the need for some leadership training and Olumo helped us schedule that. It's a step-by-step process but we are making great progress. "

Olumo offered Terrapin the added convenience of being a plug and play so it can be deployed throughout the organization in a matter of hours. Through a simple CSV upload or a connection to the organization's HCM, HRIS, or payroll provider the data is easily synced with Olumo. For Terrapin, this was particularly helpful. As Ketchum observed, "We have loved our HCM provider, Proliant. When we made the decision to move forward with Olumo, Proliant and Olumo worked to quickly integrate the systems. As we hire people, they are added to the Olumo platform without any additional work."

## Transforming Human Analytics into an Actionable Strategy

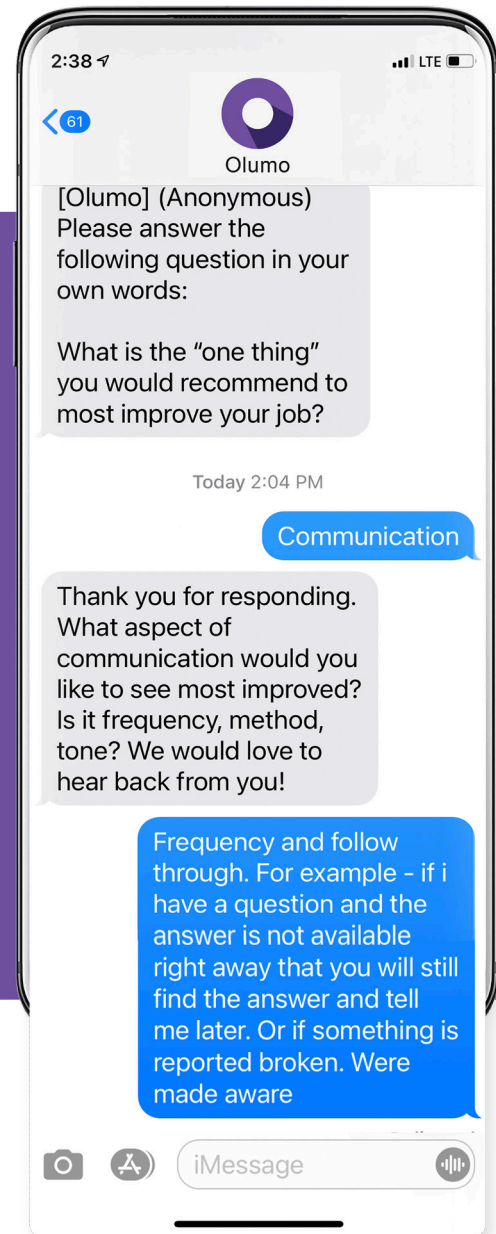
For Terrapin's leadership, Olumo has provided strategic support. While leaders want to hear from their people, they lack the time to monitor ongoing feedback. Instead, Olumo does all the proverbial heavy lifting by engaging in conversations with people every day. They then identify critical conversations and regularly review the data with leadership teams. This allows leadership to respond in real time to the pressing challenges voiced by their people.

For Ketchum, this allows her to know when and how to respond. She reflected, "Olumo helped us recognize that we need to take a measured approach to the feedback and look for trends. Tony and I love Olumo's daily emails that help us keep a pulse on the company." She continued, "Our CEO Tony now has a direct connection to the organization's front line and is actively listening. A recent Olumo conversation highlighted a deficiency in our bereavement policy. He immediately changed it."

As Peter Drucker said, "what gets measured gets managed." Olumo makes this possible by providing accountability to people and culture by making them measurable. While it can feel daunting to measure more elusive workplace aspects like culture and people well-being, Olumo solves this by providing visual heatmaps. These heatmaps quantify people's experi-

"One of the things that we really loved was that Olumo engaged with our people each week though a simple SMS text."

- Marti Ketchum







ences within the organization ranging from personal well-being and mental health to the systems and technologies they use. This data can then be used to immediately identify necessary improvements.

The “why” behind the numbers is delivered through Olumo’s conversational approach. Olumo engages in human-to-human conversations with an organization’s people to learn why they feel the way they do and to deliver the tactical insights organizations need to succeed.

By connecting organizations to their people, Olumo helps them take the first step in creating a more human experience at work. With Olumo’s partnership, Terrapin Hospitality is working toward achieving the Human Experience at Work certification and qualifying for the Top Human Experience Awards as they continue on their journey of becoming the employer of choice in the hospitality industry.

## THE RESULTS

When Terrapin first partnered with Olumo, they learned that Terrapin’s initial Employee Net Promoter Score (eNPS) was -5, a considerably low score. However, within the short span of 6 months, Terrapin achieved an eNPS score of +55. This massive improvement can be attributed to the fact that Terrapin’s people had begun to feel valued and heard, especially when their feedback led to specific strategic decisions and actions. Because Terrapin’s people felt like they now had a voice, their engagement, retention, and productivity increased, resulting in significant impact to the bottom line.

“What gets measured gets managed.”

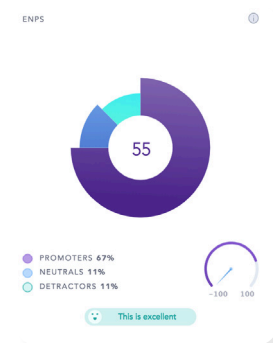
- Peter Drucker



Daily, monthly and annual visibility allows you to monitor and identify trends.



Olumo Heatmap immediately identifies where you are doing well and where you have opportunities to improve.



eNPS gives you the numbers you need to drive engagement.



## ABOUT OLUMO

Olumo delivers tactical insights to organizations surrounding their most important asset—their people. Olumo systematically engages with organizations to deliver timely and critical human analytics and strategic insights to create The Human Experience At Work. Olumo drives business results through their proprietary **L.E.A.P.** process as Olumo helps orga-

nizations to **L**isten, **E**ngage, take **A**ction, and measure **P**rogress. Olumo helps organizations become employers of choice as they become Human Experience certified and qualify for the Top Human Experience At Work Awards.

Learn more at: [www.Olumo.com](http://www.Olumo.com)

## The Human Experience Platform

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